

Factsheet



Supporting carers in your workforce makes good business sense

Introduction

This factsheet shows how by taking some simple steps businesses can support their employees who have caring responsibilities, whilst at the same time ensuring that the business remains productive and also benefits from being a caring employer.

Why is it important?

Carers UK have identified there are over 3,000,000 working carers in the UK. That means 1 in 7 of your workforce (Source: Employers for Carers) could well be juggling the demands of their job with the demands of being an unpaid carer.

The definition of a carer:

"A carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends whose health or wellbeing could suffer without this help. This could be caring for a relative, partner, child or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems."

Source: Crossroads Care Wales.

When an employee becomes a carer:

Firstly it's important to understand that becoming a carer is often unplanned and could affect any member of your staff at any time – so it really does pay to be prepared. Remember 3 out of 5 people become a carer at some point in their lives.

Additionally when a member of staff becomes a carer they will find that:

- it can be difficult to predict when someone needs care
- the level of care can and does vary
- emergencies happen and can't be planned for
- medical and social services often work to rigid appointment times
- care may need to be given at short notice.

Employers can help support staff who are carers by adopting a flexible working approach. In doing so not only is the business acknowledging the need to be supportive, it is also

ensuring that staff can continue to do their job effectively whilst also being able to undertake their caring duties.

The business benefits:

- less disruption to productivity
- increased staff loyalty
- reduced stress and absenteeism
- enhanced employer employee relations
- reduced staff turnover
- retained skills
- enhanced reputation as a best practice employer.

Practical support:

There are a number of simple and effective ways your business can offer practical and highly valued assistance. These include:

- Adopting a flexible and remote working strategy
- Developing a career break scheme
- Making provision to allow unpaid leave
- Having a procedure in place for emergency leave
- Providing access to a telephone
- Creating an open culture where staff can talk and gain support.

This isn't a prescriptive list and its worth considering what your business can do taking into consideration your operational requirements.

Next steps

- If your business is in the Convergence area visit www.agilenation.co.uk to see how the Evolve programme could help you
- Learn more about carers at www.carersuk.org, www.employersforcarers.org, www.carersweek.org and www.crossroads.org.uk
- Contact Kathy Proudfoot, Carers and Employment Officer, Crossroads Care Wales, Kathy.proudfoot@crossroads.org.uk
- Talk to your staff about caring
- Develop an employer's policy on carers.



The Agile Nation project provides workplace support and development for women and businesses in the convergence area of Wales, to find out more visit www.agilenation.co.uk