

Carer Positive Policy



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Introduction

The Highland & Western Isles Valuation Joint Board acknowledges that many of our employees have complex daily demands of caring for dependants and dealing with emergency situations. It is also the case that some of our employees may need to provide long term care for a chronically and/or seriously ill dependant.

This policy provides employees with approaches to meet their caring responsibilities ensuring that flexible working arrangements are promoted for all employees and that requests are considered fairly and objectively, subject to service delivery requirements being met.

The purpose of this policy is to support the Board in managing carers' leave requests with a fair and transparent process, to support employees who are carers to balance home and caring commitments.

For the purposes of this policy, a carer is defined as "someone who provides unpaid support to a dependant who is affected by long term illness, disability or addiction who could not manage without this help".

A dependant is a "spouse, partner, parent, grandparent, civil partner or child of the employee, or anyone who lives with the employee as part of their family and is dependent on the employee".

Commitments

The Board is committed to encouraging a positive culture of support for carers, recognising the demands of balancing work and caring responsibilities.

The Board recognises that employees can have caring responsibilities which can be challenging and may impact their ability to balance their work and home life.

For carers, work can often represent a lifeline, not only financially, but in providing a life outside of caring. However, juggling work and caring responsibilities can be extremely stressful.

The Board acknowledges that carers undertake a wide range of duties, including but not limited to:

- Help with personal care
- Help with mobility
- Managing medication
- Practical household tasks
- Emotional support
- Help with financial matters or paperwork

The Board has an extensive range of other policies which support flexible working, these include:

- Requests for variation to working arrangements (flexible working)
- Parental Leave
- Special Leave
- Flexible Working Hours
- Flexible Retirement

Principles

The Board recognises the implications of, and its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and this policy enhances the support and assistance available to employees who have a responsibility of caring for a dependant who is affected by long-term illness, disability, or addiction.

The Board recognises that from time-to-time employees will need to balance work and caring responsibilities and seeks to provide appropriate support for employees. The provisions within the Carer's Policy means that some employees may be able to remain in employment where they would otherwise have needed to resign to provide care to a dependant.

A flexible working approach for carers can:

- attract and retain staff
- reduce stress
- increase resilience and productivity
- reduce sick leave
- improve service delivery and increase staff morale.

The Board is committed to raising awareness of the role and demands of carers in the workplace through the implementation of an Employee Carer Support Network, awareness raising publications and training.

The Carer Positive Scheme

Carers wishing to benefit from the Scheme must first elect to join the Board's Carer's Register which will be maintained by the Assessor/Central Admin Team. The register is a formal list of employees who have identified themselves as carers and who have satisfied the qualifying criteria (as set out in the guidance and application form).

In order to discuss carer needs, flexible working or Carer's Leave the employee's line manager will seek confirmation from the Assessor/Central Admin of the employee's inclusion on the Carer's Register. This information will be disclosed confidentially.

Placement on the register will be reviewed annually or following a change of circumstances in line with best practice on Data Protection. It is the responsibility of the carer to inform their line manager of a change in circumstances.

Access to the Carer Register can offer the following benefits:

- Flexible Working - Subject to needs of the service this can be temporary/permanent or short/long term. The ability to vary working hours and to work flexibly is key to enabling carers to balance their caring role and work allowing them to continue in employment.
- Carer's leave - Up to 5 working days per leave year and can be used flexibly in either full or half days.
- Keeping in Contact - Permission to have a mobile phone on during working hours, to always be accessible during work time.
- Carer Support - Carers can request to speak to a qualified and confidential counsellor through the Employee Assistance Programme if required.
- Employee Carer Support Network (Carers Connected) - Carers can choose to attend Employee Carer Support Network once a month for half an hour, during lunchtime.

There is a presumption that Carer's Leave will be granted. However, in circumstances where services would be unduly disrupted if leave was taken during the period identified and business continuity is critical, the leave may be refused or postponed, and the manager's decision is final.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of the Highland & Western Isles Valuation Joint Board.

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be subject to regular monitoring and review in line with legislative and organisational change.

Useful Contacts

Support	Website	Telephone	Email
Unison	Unison Highland Branch	01463 715891	
GMB	GMB - Find Your Regional Office	01463 233088	
Young Carers Support Line	Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs	01463 723563	
Young Carers Connecting	Connecting Young Carers	01463 723560	carers@connectingcarers.org.uk
Mobilise Highland	Supporting Unpaid Carers	N/A	
Partners in Advocacy – Highland Carers	Independent Advocacy for Carers	03305 330238	carers@pia.scot
Samaritans Inverness Branch	Samaritans Inverness	116 123 (Free from any phone)	
Alcoholics Anonymous National	Alcoholics Anonymous	0800 917 7650 (Helpline Free)	help@aamail.org
Cruse Bereavement	Cruse Scotland	0800 802 6161 (Free helpline)	
Relationship Scotland	Relationships Scotland	0345 119 2020	
Highland Council Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	Employee Assistance Programme		
Alzheimer's Scotland	Alzheimer Scotland	0808 808 3000 (Helpline:24/7) or 0300 373 5774 (dementia advisor)	
Anxiety UK	Anxiety UK	03444 775 774 (Infoline:24/7)	
Kinship Care Support Scotland	Kinship Care Scotland	0800 028 2233	advice@kinshipscot.org
Befrienders Highland	Befrienders Highland	01463 712 791	info@befriendershighland.org.uk
Change Mental Health	Change mental Health	0808 8010 515	advice@changemh.org

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