

Human Resources
Goireasan Daonna

Carer Positive Policy

Poileasaidh Cùramaiche Dheimhinnich

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Document Control

A: Version History

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1.2	01/04/2024	Jane Henderson Amanda MacLaren	Review Policy
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B: Document Approval

Name	Title	Role
Elaine Barrie	Head of HR	Final Approval
Louise McGunnigle	HR Manager	Final Reviewer
HR Sub Group	TU Representative	Reviewer
		Author



Introduction

The Highland Council acknowledges that many of our employees need to juggle the demands of caring for dependants (as defined by the Care Act in Scotland 2018). This Act makes it simpler for unpaid carers to be identified as needing support with their caring role and makes getting this support easier.

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

It is also the case that some of our employees may need to provide long term support for a chronically and/or seriously ill dependant. By recognising the demands of balancing work and caring responsibilities the Council seeks to foster a culture of support.

The Council is committed to raising awareness of the role and demands of carers in the workplace through the implementation of an Employee Carer Support network.

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support employees who provide unpaid care to enable them to balance work, home and caring commitments utilising the Carer Positive Passport and Carer Positive Leave.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that the provisions detailed are promoted for all employees and requests for support are considered fairly and objectively whilst taking into account service delivery requirements.

The application of the Carer Positive Policy provides employees with a solution to meet their caring responsibilities whilst enabling them to remain in employment.

Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to all Highland Council employees except for those on Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions who have separate arrangements in place.

Please see [NHS policies](#) for staff under Agenda for Change (NHS) Terms and Conditions.

Policy in Practice

Definitions

Unpaid Carer

Unpaid carers are those who give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they are expected to need care for more than 3 months
- a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- care needs because they are elderly.

The dependant does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care.

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

- help with personal care
- emergency care-related situations
- help with mobility
- managing medication
- practical household tasks
- emotional support
- help with financial matters or paperwork.

Statutory Carer's leave

All employees are entitled to 5 days statutory **unpaid** carer's leave per year (pro-rata), which must be taken as full or half days. An employee does not need to be on the Carer Positive Register to be eligible for this leave.



Carer Positive Leave

In addition to statutory unpaid carer's leave, Highland Council employees who are unpaid carers may be able to benefit from up to 5 days paid Carer Positive Leave per year (pro-rata).

An employee who wishes to benefit from this must meet the criteria and apply to join the Carer Positive Register for our Carer Positive Scheme.

Carer Positive Register

The Carer Positive Register is a formal list of employees who have identified themselves as unpaid carers and who have satisfied the qualifying criteria (as set out in the guidance and application form). The Carer Positive Register is a confidential document held by HR. Being a member of the Carer Positive Register enables employees to benefit from the Carers Connected Support Network, a Carer Positive Passport and paid Carer Positive Leave.

Carers Connected Forum

Carers Connected is an online Council forum for any employee who wishes to attend. Through the Carers Connected network, employees have an opportunity to chat to other unpaid carers at the Council and share their experiences. The group will also feature guest speakers from external organisations who provide additional information and support.


Carer Positive Passport

The Carer Positive passport is available for members of the Carer Positive Register. It is designed to provide a documented record of an individual's needs, which will allow them to work to their full potential in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Awareness of the passport is important for employees and managers and is available to all eligible employees at any time during their employment.

Policy Principles

The Council recognises the implications of, and its responsibilities under, the Equality Act 2010 and the provision of this policy enhances the support and assistance



available to employees who have a responsibility of caring for a dependant as defined above.

All employees are entitled to up to 5 days **unpaid** statutory carer's leave (pro-rata). Employees do not need to join the Carer Positive Register to use this leave.

If employees meet the criteria required to join the Carer Positive Register, they can benefit from the Carer Positive Leave, which is up to 5 days **paid** leave per year (pro-rata).

Where employees who are on the Carer Positive Register share unpaid caring responsibilities for an individual, both employees must share the Carer Positive Leave provision. For example, if a couple have caring responsibilities for a relative, Carer Positive Leave could be shared with one employee receiving 3 paid days and the other employee receiving 2 paid days.

The Carer Positive Scheme

Carers wishing to benefit from the Scheme must first elect to join the Council's Carer Positive Register.

In order for a manager to consider any employee requirements (carer's leave, flexible working etc.) they must first check with HR that the employee is included on the Carer Positive Register. This information will be disclosed confidentially.

Placement on the register will be reviewed annually or following a change of circumstances. It is the responsibility of the carer to inform their line manager and Human Resources of any change in circumstances.

Carer Positive Passport

The Carer Positive Passport details the employees circumstances and requirements along with the support the Highland Council provides.

The ability to vary working hours and to work flexibly is key to enabling unpaid carers to balance their work with their caring responsibilities allowing them to continue in employment.

Employees can consider utilising Flexible Working to support a temporary/permanent or short/long term change.



Carer Positive Leave

Requests for Carer Positive Leave can be made in hours, half days or full days.

The manager should discuss the circumstances leading to a request for Carer Positive Leave prior to approval. Where requests are made, the needs of the service and requirements of the job will be taken into consideration.

On occasion, where services would be unduly disrupted, Carer Positive Leave may be refused or postponed. Where a request for Carer Positive Leave is refused, employees have the right to submit an appeal to the appropriate Head of Service (HoS) and should do this in writing outlining their reasons for appeal. The Head of Service appeal decision is final.

Keeping in Contact

Employees with caring responsibilities should be given permission, where appropriate, to have a mobile phone on their person during working hours so they are accessible during work time.

Carers Connected Forum

Employees can choose to attend the Carers Connected forum to network with other like-minded people.

Guidance

Guidance, information and tools relating to the management of this policy have been developed and will be maintained in accordance with the Highland Council Partnership Framework.

Guidance, procedures and associated documentation can be found on the HR Microsite – see Quick Links below.

Equality Impact Assessment

The Policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening which shows a positive impact on gender and age with other protected characteristics considered neutral impact.



Legislation

The development and application of this policy is guided by:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Employment Act 2008

Monitoring

The application of this policy will be monitored through the Highland Council Partnership Framework and the Corporate Resources Committee.

Quick Links

The Hyperlinks listed here will redirect you to the related guidance, letters, information, and relevant organisations mentioned in this policy.

HR Microsite	Click Here
Carer Positive Page	Click Here
Employee Assistance Programme	Click Here
Equalities in Employment	Click Here
Flexible Working	Click Here
Homeworking Guidance	Click Here
Leave Arrangements	Click Here
Long Term Conditions	Click Here
Mental Health & Wellbeing Toolkit	Click Here
Mental Health Representative List	Click Here
Special Leave Policy	Click Here
Stress Management	Click Here
Ordinary Parental Leave & Time off for Dependants	Click Here
NHS PIN Policies	Click Here



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