

Human Resources
Goireasan Daonna

Carer Positive Guidance

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Introduction

The Highland Council recognises that employees have caring responsibilities which can become 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 the care they provide. However, juggling work and caring responsibilities can be extremely stressful.

Guidance

Unpaid Caring Responsibilities

Employees are entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

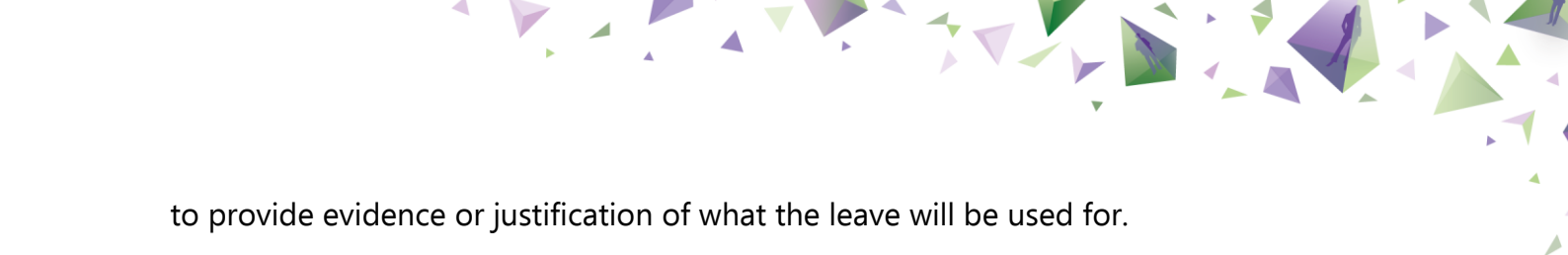
- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
- a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- care needs because of their old age.

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

Statutory Carer's Leave

All employees are entitled to 5 days unpaid carers leave per year (pro-rata), which can 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.

To apply for this leave, employees should speak to their line manager to advise of the dates required. If the request is for half a day or a day, the notice period must be at least 3 days. If the request is for more than one day, the notice period must be at least twice as long as the requested leave. There is no requirement for employees



to provide evidence or justification of what the leave will be used for.

Carer Positive Register

Joining the Council's Carer Positive Register provides employees further benefits such as paid Carer's Positive Leave. In order to qualify for the Carer Positive scheme, employees must first register themselves on the Council's Carer Positive Register. This can be done by completing the [Registration Form](#) and sending to HR@highland.gov.uk. To register, employees must meet the qualifying criteria below:

- they have at least 26 weeks continuous service
- be able to provide evidence of their caring responsibilities, for example through their local Carer's Centre such Connecting Carers (Highland) or from their GP.

If this type of evidence is not available, other forms of evidence that demonstrate a primary caring responsibility exists will be considered.

The Carer Positive Register will be held by HR in full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and placement on the register will be reviewed annually or following a change in circumstances. It is the responsibility of the carer to inform HR and their line manager of any changes in circumstances.

Carer Positive Leave

Paid Carer Positive Leave may be requested by employees with caring responsibilities who meet the criteria to join the Carer Positive Register. Although not an exhaustive list, some examples of when paid Carer Positive Leave may be requested include:

- to manage an unplanned or temporary caring emergency assisting a relative or partner who is ill or injured and is unable to look after themselves
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a relative or partner who is ill or injured
- to manage an unexpected breakdown of care arrangements for a relative or partner
- to manage the transition from home to care home or hospital to home/care home
- to provide support when caring for a terminally ill relative or partner

- to manage the hospitalisation of a relative or partner
- provision of kinship care.

Making a request for Carer Positive Leave

Once listed on the Carer Positive Register, employees wishing to apply for Carer Positive Leave should complete the [Request Form](#) and submit it to their line manager for consideration. Employees must give reasonable notice to allow their manager to consider their request.

Details of any shared Carer Positive Leave with a spouse, partner or family member who also works with the Council should also be included.

Upon receiving a request for Carer Positive Leave, the line manager should seek confirmation from HR of their employee's eligibility. Employees who are eligible can request a maximum of 5 days paid Carer Positive Leave in any leave year (pro-rata for part-time employees).

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

The Council provides access to other support for employees with caring responsibilities that may compliment or be an alternative to Carer Positive Leave. These include:


- Special Leave
- Flexible Working, including reduction in hours, compressed hours, home working
- Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health
- Annual Leave
- Flexi Time.

These options should be discussed between the employee and line manager to determine the most appropriate course of action based on individual circumstance.

Considering a request and reaching a decision

To consider a request for Carer Positive Leave, the line manager must obtain confirmation from HR that the employee is listed on the Council's Carer Positive Register. Managers should consider the circumstances of the request and inform the employee of the decision, aiming to respond within 5 working days.

Managers should discuss the request with the employee, taking into account the



employee's personal circumstances, clarifying the reasons for the leave, and ensuring that Carer Positive Leave is the most appropriate option as other alternatives may be more suitable. Consideration should also be given to the operational impact on service delivery before reaching a decision on the request. Costs should be considered based on what is reasonable and fair, taking into account the circumstances of the request such as business continuity.

Managers should aim to inform the employee of the decision within 5 working days.

Once the leave has been approved, the manager should submit the leave agreed on MyView.

If a request for Carer Positive Leave is refused, the manager must provide the employee written confirmation including the business reasons for the refusal. The employee can appeal this decision to the Head of Service.

In the event that two employees of the Council share caring responsibilities for a relative, only one request for Carer Positive Leave can be approved unless the two employees are able to 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 three days and the other employee receiving two days.

This is not applicable for **statutory, unpaid carers leave**, whereby all employees are eligible for up to 5 days **unpaid** carer's leave (pro-rata).

Carer Positive Passport

If agreement is reached the employee and line manager should complete a [Carer Positive Passport](#). The Carer Positive passport is a record that identifies the employee as a carer in some way and sets out the offer of support, services or other benefits in response from the Council. The Carer Positive Passport will help to improve and embed identification, recognition and support for carers in the day-to-day life of the Council.

The Council has an extensive range of policies which support adjustments to normal working hours, these include:

- Flexible Working Arrangements (Hybrid and Flexible Working)
- Parental Leave
- Special Leave
- Flexible Retirement



Carers Connected Support Network

Working and caring for someone can be physically demanding and emotionally stressful. Many carers may feel unsupported, isolated and alone, sometimes talking to someone in a similar situation can help.

Carers Connected is an online Council network for people who manage both work and caring responsibilities or support a family member or work colleague who has caring responsibilities. Through the network, working carers can meet and share their experiences and find out more about the support available. Carers can explore what support facilities are available from the Council and its partners and connect with others to share experiences in a safe, confidential and relaxed setting. As well as an opportunity to chat to other carers at the Council, the group will also feature guest speakers from organisations who provide support.

Please speak with your manager beforehand as although the intention is for Carers Connected to meet outwith core business hours, some events may take place in working hours.

Plus One Card

Carers may be eligible for a [Plus One Card](#).

The Plus One Scheme has been developed to help make access to leisure and recreational services easier for disabled customers. The scheme provides a free pass to the person who is supporting a disabled customer (the 'plus one') to attend any participating venues or events.

Confidentiality

Information relating to Carer Positive Leave should be recorded, maintained and processed confidentially and securely by the relevant Service and HR. Information processed may include manual or electronic records and will be done so in line with the General Data Protection Regulations i.e. retention of relevant information and will be used only to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

Useful Contacts

Carers' Information Support line	01463 723 560
Welfare Support Team	0800 090 1004
Human Resources	01349 886610 HR@highland.gov.uk
Trade Unions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNISON • GMB • UNITE • EIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 01463 715891 • 01463 233088 • 01224 213 125 • 01382 458270
Carers NHS	Carer NHS Website Young Carers Support line 01463 723563 Young Carers main office 01463 723575 email: youngcarers@connectingcarers.org.uk
Mobilise Highland (online support for unpaid carers In Highland)	Mobilise Highland Website
Partners in Advocacy - Carers	Carers Advocacy Highland Tel: 07458 048 827 carers@partnersinadvocacy.org.uk
Samaritans	Samaritans Highland Website 116 123 (free from any phone)
Alcoholics Anonymous	AA Website National Helpline 0800 9177 650 (Free phone) help@aamail.org
Cruse Bereavement	Cruse Scotland Website Free Helpline: 0808 802 6161
Relationship Scotland	Relationship Scotland Website 0345 119 2020
EAP	Highland Council Employee Assistance Programme
Alzheimer's Scotland	Alzheimers Scotland Website 0808 808 3000
Anxiety UK	Anxiety UK Website Helpline: 03444 775 774 Text support: 07537 416 90
Connecting Carers	Connecting Carers Website 01463 723 560 (10am-4pm)



	carers@connectingcarers.org.uk
Kinship Care Support Scotland	0800 028 2233
Befrienders Highland	Befrienders Highland Website 01463 712 791
Change Mental Health	Change Mental Health Information Line: 0300 323 1545 (M-F 9am- 4.30pm) Office Number: 0131 662 4359 (M-F 9am-4.30pm) info@changemh.org

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
Plus One Card	Click Here
NHS Pin Policies	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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