

CARERS SUPPORT AT WORK GUIDANCE

1 Introduction

Angus Council recognises that employees may have caring commitments outside work. For carers, work can be a source of financial stability but may also provide a sense of independence and having a network outside of their caring role. However, undertaking a caring responsibility is often very challenging and stressful and can result in carers having to give up their employment because they are unable to cope with both roles.

Angus Council aims to create a working environment in which carers feel valued and supported to help them continue working for the organisation and at the same time ensure that operational requirements are met. It is recognised that there are key benefits for the organisation in doing this including reduced absenteeism, higher retention rates and fewer recruitment costs.

It is therefore important that the Council provides support and guidance to employees' who care for someone outside of work and this guidance has been developed to provide both employees and managers with a resource which will provide the opportunity for discussion and support around a carer's personal needs, balanced with service delivery.

2 Definition of Carers

A carer is an employee with significant caring responsibilities that have an impact on their working lives and who may provide care and support to a person who is dependent on them and who is affected by long term illness, disability or other condition or addiction and who could not manage to live independently without the employee's help.

A dependant is a spouse, partner, civil partner or child of the employee, anyone who lives with the employee as part of his/her family, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandparent-in-law, or other individual reliant on the employee.

Note: Many employees assist relatives or friends from time to time and provide valuable help and support but would fall out-with the definition of 'Carer'.

Caring responsibilities can vary from person to person due to the circumstances and the impact on the employee's work may fluctuate over a period of time. Caring can be unpredictable; it can happen suddenly or be a gradual build up. It can be time-limited to care for someone who is coming out of hospital, a more regular obligation of a few hours per week or a lifelong commitment to care for a disabled relative.

3 Carers Being Identified in the Workplace

Employees are not required to disclose that they are caring for someone, but are encouraged to do so. Line managers must therefore seek to provide opportunities for conversations that allow an employee who is a carer to discuss their situation.

It may be difficult for an employee who is a carer to identify themselves, so sufficient opportunity must be given to do so when and if the employee chooses to. Line managers should assure employees that their need for support and confidentiality will be respected. Opportunities for line managers to seek information could be during Induction, at one-to-one meetings/supervision, when an employee discloses they are a carer, during a sickness absence or health concern meeting or when an employee is displaying signs of stress.

4 Manager's Responsibility

Line managers are key to supporting employees who are carers.

Employees are encouraged to speak directly to their line manager in the first instance with regards to how they think their caring responsibilities may impact on their working lives.

Equally managers must, where appropriate, let employees know that they want to support them and explore together what is possible within the scope of operational needs. Knowing you care, and that they can have that conversation with you, can in itself be helpful and reassuring.

Line managers must, where appropriate:

- Set up a meeting with the individual, or at the individual's request for a meeting, discuss the impact on the employee and their work and consider appropriate supports. Human Resources may attend the meeting to provide any relevant advice and guidance, where appropriate.
- Ensure that a carer's situation is treated both sympathetically and confidentially.
- Consider all requests from employees for support based on an understanding of the situation and its impact on the employee. Furthermore, no employee should be unfairly discriminated against because of their caring responsibilities.
- Maintain an awareness of the possibility that where an employee is experiencing difficulties at work this may be linked to a caring responsibility that they have yet to disclose.
- Effectively communicate and raise awareness of the support that is available to employees who are carers within their teams. This could be through referring to this guidance in meetings, one-to-one discussions and other forums.
- Engage in relevant carer awareness training such as Equal Partners in Care e-learning at Level 1.

It is recognised that employees with caring responsibilities cannot always plan ahead for time off. Accidents and some illnesses can occur without warning, and care arrangements can break down unexpectedly. The ability to take leave in an emergency is important for carers, who may be called upon at short notice. It should be noted that employees have a statutory right to take unpaid, reasonable time off work to deal with unforeseen and emergency matters regarding a dependant.

Simple provisions, like having access to a telephone, being allowed to keep a mobile phone on, or getting privacy to make a call can be helpful to carers and reduces the worry of not being able to keep in touch with the person they care for. In addition, with regards to the timing and location of meetings if a manager is aware of times that may or may not suit the employee due to their caring responsibilities, these should be taken into account where possible when scheduling meetings. Moreover, the location of meetings should also be considered as this may have a detrimental impact on the employee and their dependant.

5. Carers – Support at Work Scheme (C-SAWS)

Should an employee wish to identify themselves as a carer then they should make their line manager aware that they have a caring responsibility. Thereafter commitment can be given to supporting identified carers and consideration given to the current support provisions as set out in section 6 and to those outlined below subject to service requirements:-

- Arrangements agreed between the employee (carer) and their line manager in relation to contact during time away from work.
- Access to stress management support (via employee assistance programme provider) for counselling and if recommended Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Facilitate stress assessment checklist.
- If requested by employee assistance programme provider, 3 additional counselling sessions guaranteed (currently maximum of 6 sessions).
- Carers health check – carers can receive an annual health check from the occupational health nurse.
- Introductions to relevant council services/agencies that could support them locally.
- Time off to attend peer support group – bi-annually.
- Flexibility around working hours, for example later start/early finishing times, longer lunch break and working from home. Consideration of approval of annual leave/ time off in lieu/ flexi leave at short notice.
- Keeping in contact - permission to have a mobile phone on (low/silent) and accessible at all times during work time.
- Flexible Working Requests – carer may submit more than one flexible working request annually. Any request/s made in relation to the provision of care will be considered sympathetically and will not be unreasonably denied but are subject to the provisions of the service. No salary protection is afforded in the case of a reduction in hours.
- Opportunity to feed into future provisions for carers working within the council.

Human Resources will record identified carers for the purposes of coordinating the peer support network, providing any specific advice and maintaining the policy and guidance provisions.

6 Relevant Angus Council Policies & Guidance to Support Carers

The following provides details of relevant policies and guidance provisions Angus Council already has in place to support employees who are carers:-

Agile working
Annual Leave and Buying and Banking Leave
Alcohol and Drug Misuse
Chaplaincy
Employee Assistance programme
Flexitime Guidelines
[Flexible Working Procedure](#)
Flexible Working Opportunities
Leave
Leave of Absence
Parental Leave
Safety Health and Wellbeing – stress, mental health and wellbeing
Time off for Dependents
Time off in Lieu

Visit our website for further information specific to [Support for Carers](#).

7 Other Assistance

Employees with caring responsibilities are encouraged to take advantage of independent organisations and facilities which may provide them with additional advice and support, a list of these can be found in Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Useful Links

Name	Contact Information	About
Action on Hearing Loss	www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk	Provides information, care and support about deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus
Age Scotland	https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/	Dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life
Alcoholics Anonymous	https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/ contact 0800 9177 650	helping people to recover from alcoholism.
Angus Carer's Centre	http://www.anguscarers.co.uk/ 8 Grant Street, Arbroath DD11 1JN Telephone: 01241 439157	This is an Angus based support organisation who provide information, advice and a range of services to carers located in the region and the surrounding areas from stress management, carers support groups, counselling, home visits and training opportunities for carers to build their knowledge, skills and confidence. Carers' centres help carers connect with other people in the same situation.
Angus Council Welfare Rights	Contact via the ACCESSLine on 03452 777 778.	Welfare rights advisors offer free confidential help and advice with for e.g. benefits you are entitled to and in completing forms.
Alzheimer Scotland Action on Dementia	https://www.alzscot.org/ 0808 808 3000	Supports people with dementia and their families
Anxiety UK	https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/ contact 08444 775 774	for those affected by anxiety, stress and anxiety based depression
British Heart Foundation	https://www.bhf.org.uk/	Information and advice about heart disease
Carer's UK forum	https://www.carersuk.org/forum	Carers often feel lonely and isolated, and peer support can help reduce this. By registering on this UK forum Carers can gain advice and support if they want to talk or just to access the online information and support available.

Coalition of Carers in Scotland	http://www.carersnet.org/	exists to advance the voice of carers by facilitating carer engagement
Citizens Advice Scotland	https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/	Scotland's largest independent advice network
Cruse Bereavement Care	https://www.cruse.org.uk/ 0808 808 1677	Support following the death of someone close
Dementia Friends Scotland	http://www.dementiafriendsscotland.org/information-sessions/	Free interactive training course that will provide an understanding of how to interact with people with dementia
Diabetes UK	https://www.diabetes.org.uk/	information and support for those with diabetes
GOV.UK	https://www.gov.uk/	The best place to find government services and information
NHS Tayside	http://www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk/index.htm 01382 660111	Provides A-Z list of NHS services
ME Association	http://www.meassociation.org.uk/about/what-is-mecfs/	Provides advice and support for those living with ME
MS Society	https://www.mssociety.org.uk/ 0808 800 8000	Enable people with MS to live life and secure care and support they need
MacMillan Cancer Support	https://www.macmillan.org.uk/ 0808 808 00 00	Information for people with cancer and their carers
Maggie's Centre	https://www.maggiescentres.org/ 0300 123 1801	Support anyone with cancer, you can talk to and get support from a range of professionals.
National Autistic Society	http://www.autism.org.uk/	Advice on all aspects of autism
Office of Public Guardian in Scotland	http://www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk/	Information regarding Power of attorney, access to funds, Intervention and Guardianship orders
Refuge	https://www.refuge.org.uk/ 0808 2000 247	For women and children against domestic violence
Pain Association	http://www.painassociation.com/	Delivers professional led pain

Scotland		management in the community
Relationships Scotland	https://www.relationships-scotland.org.uk/ contact 0345 119 2020	Scotland's largest provider of relationship counselling, family mediation and child contact centre services.
Royal National Institute for the Blind	http://www.rnib.org.uk/ 0303 123 9999	Provides practical and emotional support for blind and partially sighted people
Samaritans UK	https://www.samaritans.org/ contact 116 123	A safe place for you to talk any time you like, about whatever's getting to you. You don't have to be suicidal.
Stroke Association	https://www.stroke.org.uk/ 0300 3300 740	Provide support and advice on strokes, stork care and treatment

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