



Carers Leave Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

Cotswold District Council (CDC) prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This policy sets out the statutory right of employees to carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need, and other support that we offer to combine work with care.

We recognise the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work, and looking after their own health. We are committed to doing what we can to help ensure the health and wellbeing of employees with caring responsibilities is looked after.

The policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

2. Scope

This policy applies to employees employed by CDC. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the Council.

3. What is a carer?

A carer is anyone with caring responsibilities who provides care, assistance and support to any other individual who may be seriously ill or unable to care for themselves. You may acquire caring responsibilities overnight or they may develop over time.

Carers might find it difficult to distinguish their caring role from the personal relationship they have with the individual they are caring for, be it a relationship with a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, or friend. Therefore, some employees may not immediately identify themselves as a carer.

The activities that carers undertake are wide ranging, including but not limited to:

- Help with personal care
- Help with mobility
- Managing medication

- Practical household tasks
- Emotional support
- Help with financial matters or administration

4. Requesting support

We recognise that caring can be unpredictable, emotionally taxing, and a topic that not everyone finds easy to talk about. However, we encourage you to speak with your manager about any particular issues that you are experiencing to ensure that you are provided with the right support.

Although you are not required to share evidence or the details of who you care for and their needs, being as open as possible about your caring responsibilities helps us to explore how we can support you with any challenges you are facing. If for any reason you are unable to approach your manager, you can speak to HR.

Any information disclosed by you during discussions with your manager or HR will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

5. Entitlement to carer's leave

Whatever your length of service, you have a statutory right to take carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant if they have a long-term care need.

In the context of statutory carer's leave, a dependant can include:

- Your husband, wife, civil partner, partner, child or parent
- Any person who lives in the same household as you (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or employee)
- Any other person who would reasonably rely on you to provide or arrange care, such as an elderly neighbour

A dependant has a long-term care need if they have any of the following:

- An illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for at least 3 months
- A disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010
- Require care for a reason connected to their old age

This statutory right to carer's leave applies to a wide range of caring situations, but excludes general childcare, except where your child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need.

6. What carer's leave can be used for

Examples of when carer's leave could be used include, but is not limited to:

- Taking your disabled child to a hospital appointment
- Moving your parent who has dementia into a care home
- Accompanying a housebound dependant on a day trip
- Providing meals and company for an elderly neighbour while their main carer is away with work for the day

7. Amount of carer's leave you can take

The amount of carer's leave that you can take is up to one week in any 12-month rolling period.

A week of carer's leave is the same duration as your normal working week, meaning that a full-time employee is entitled to 5 days' carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period. If you are contracted to work 3 days per week, for example, you will be entitled to 3 days of carer's leave, and so on.

You can take the leave in one continuous block, as individual days, or as half days.

If you are caring for more than one dependant, you do not have a separate entitlement to carer's leave for each dependant.

8. Notice to take carer's leave

If you need to take carer's leave, you should submit your notice via email to your manager and HR.

We ask that you give as much notice as possible when requesting carer's leave so that we can plan for your absence. In any event, you must give notice in advance that is either twice the number of working days that you wish to take as carer's leave, or 3 days, whichever is earlier.

If you are unable to give the correct notice, approval will be at the discretion of your manager. Alternatively, you may be able to request emergency leave under our Time off for dependants' policy.

All carer's leave must be approved in advance by your manager.

9. Pay during carer's leave

Any leave taken as carer's leave is unpaid.

All other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue and pension contributions will continue to be paid.

10. Postponing your carer's leave

While every effort will be made to meet your request, we may postpone a period of carer's leave if we consider that your absence will disrupt business operations.

If a decision is taken to postpone your leave, your manager will consult with you to find an alternative leave period within one month of the carer's leave period originally requested.

Your manager will write to you within 7 days of receiving your notice, clarifying the reason for the postponement and the revised dates on which the carer's leave can be taken.

11. Cancelling your carer's leave

You can cancel your carer's leave and take it at a different time as long as you let your manager know before your leave has started.

You cannot cancel any carer's leave that has already begun.

12. Our commitment to you

Following your carer's leave, you have the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than the terms that would have applied had you not been absent. Your continuity of employment is not affected.

You have the right not to be subjected to any detrimental treatment (including being unfairly penalised, disciplined or dismissed) because you have taken, sought to take, or made use of the benefits of carer's leave.

If you are told not to take or request carer's leave, or you believe that you have been subjected to detrimental treatment because you have taken or requested carer's leave, you should report the matter to HR. Alternatively, you can raise it under our Grievance policy and procedure.

Any such behaviour will not be tolerated and may be treated as a disciplinary offence

13. Other types of leave

The statutory right to carer's leave is intended to be for planned and foreseen caring commitments. If you need to take time off to manage an unexpected or sudden problems relating to a dependant and make any necessary longer-term caring arrangements, please see our Time off for dependants' policy.

We recognise that you may need a longer period off work that goes beyond your statutory entitlement to carer's leave under this policy. In such cases, we may agree for you to take the time off work as annual leave.

We realise that flexible working can help navigate the challenges of caring while working. We enable a wide range of flexible working practices within the workplace. If you feel that you would benefit from a change to your working arrangements to help balance your work and caring responsibilities, we encourage you to look at our Flexible working policy.

If you feel that you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis, you should discuss and agree this with your manager.

14. External sources of help

There are various organisations that provide help and support to carers, including:

- [Carers UK](#), which provides help and advice for carers on employment rights, benefits and tax credits, assessments, and other practical matters for carers
- the [NHS website](#), which provides a wealth of information and advice for carers
- [Grace Care Consulting](#), which provides advice and support on care, special needs and neurodiversity
- [Age UK](#) and [Independent Age](#), which offer information and support to anyone providing informal unpaid care to an older person through a range of local services
- [Contact a Family](#), which provides support, advice and information to families with disabled children
- [Carers Trust](#), which works with other organisations to provide access for carers to breaks, information, advice, education, training and employment opportunities

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