Are you a Carer Aware Employer?

Why do I need to be Carer Aware?

It is estimated that 1 in 7 employees are unpaid Carers. They are working in a paid role, alongside supporting a family member, friend, neighbour or child with additional needs.

As an employer, you can support your employees in a number of ways which we have outlined in this document.

Research has shown that, caring can have a substantial impact on people's careers. Each year over **250,000 people** give up work to be a Carer – this is the equivalent of 600 resignations per day. This means in turn that businesses lose individuals with a vast array of skills and talent. Losing staff to caring has a significant cost for employers.



For those who remain working, being an unpaid Carer without the right support can result in poor mental health, financial complications, and a higher risk of burnout from having to juggle too much on a daily basis.

The benefits of understanding and accommodating working Carers within their workforce includes:

- **Improving your staff retention**
- **Reducing staff absences**
- **Increasing productivity**
- **Reducing recruitment costs**
- **Reducing stress**
- **Improving morale within your team**
- **Attracting new talent**
- **Recognising the skills which Carers bring to your organisation**
- **Creating an environment where people feel more valued and can flourish**

Caring for someone may not mean that an employee will be in this situation for a long period of time. They may take on a short-term caring role or their situation may fluctuate due to the condition of the person which they support. Carers support a wide range of individuals with varying degrees of support need. This could be due to physical disability, long term health condition, mental health or addiction there is no one size fits all.

People become Carers for various reasons and each situation is individual.

As an employer showing understanding is beneficial and evidence indicates where an employer is open about their own personal experiences of unpaid caring and the challenges which may arise that this can create a culture of openness.

One Gloucestershire
Transforming Care, Transforming Communities

Gloucestershire Carers Hub is a commissioned service by Gloucestershire County Council and NHS Gloucestershire.

Checklist to help you become a Carer Aware Employer



Staff Carers Network

A Carers' network within an organisation is a great way for employees to connect with each other. They can share hint's, tips, experiences and provide emotional support when needed. Some working Carers' can feel alone in their caring situations so having someone who understands could support them.



Carers Policy

A specific policy dedicated to Carers' is the best way to outline that you are a Carer Aware employer. You may wish to include some employees who are unpaid Carers in the development of the policy. This will allow you to understand your employees' personal circumstances along with knowing what matters to them. The policy should include a definition of a Carer and any new starters should be made aware of the policy and its content.



Wellbeing Support

Do your employees have access to an Employee Assistance Programme, discounted memberships or access to counselling? You may want to consider what is in place for employees to support their own wellbeing. If the employee is a Carer, they can access the Carer support service offered by Gloucestershire Carers Hub which includes access to the Carer Aware discount card. We also run Be Empowered for Carers to receive information to support them in their caring roles.



Line Manager Training

Are your line managers aware of unpaid Carers within your workforce? Do they have an understanding of how to discuss caring situations with employees. Contact Gloucestershire Carers Hub by emailing **careraware@peopleplus.co.uk** for more information on training which can be provided to support.



Flexible Working

Flexible working can allow many unpaid Carers to remain employed where they may not otherwise be able to. It allows you to retain valued and experienced staff. It allows them to work around the person who they support and relieves them of added stress and pressure. Individual circumstances are different, and this should be considered when discussing flexible working with employees.



Paid or unpaid Carers leave

A number of organisations offer unpaid Carers within their workforce leave, either paid or unpaid. Consider how you would support your employees should something arise in their caring role which means they need time off.



Carer friendly recruitment

Does your website show that you are Carer Aware when you are recruiting for new roles? Do you promote the work you do for your unpaid Carers who are in your workforce? Are current employees who are Carers encouraged to apply for promotions? Are you considering flexible work patterns with your new roles to accommodate unpaid Carers in your workforce? If you need support on how to promote your vacancies to Carers email us: **careraware@peopleplus.co.uk**



Contingency Planning

If you know of an employee who may need to be off work due to their caring responsibilities, consider what can be done to support that person to fulfil their role. Could they work from home or temporarily take a different role? It may never happen, but it will be good for the employee to know that they have cover in place should they need to take emergency leave or that they can take parts of their role to do at home if suitable.



Workplace Champions

Consider appointing Carer workplace champions who know about your companies' policies, Carers' legal rights and support which may be available to Carers within your workplace. They don't need to be an unpaid Carer to carry out this role. Managers can also connect with allocated champions to ensure a consistent approach.



Staff surveys

Asking your staff questions within a survey allows you to obtain knowledge about your existing workforce. Do you know how many unpaid Carers' there are in your workforce? When designing the survey, you may wish to include a definition of a Carer to help them understand what you are asking of them.



Carer Passports

You can hold information either virtually or physically in a Carer Passport. This can hold information about your employee's caring role and what support they may require at work. This can help if your employees are managed by different personnel as the information is transferable. Decide who within the organisation will hold the passports.



Talk about caring

Encourage line managers and team leaders to talk about employees unpaid caring responsibilities in their 1-2-1 meetings and appraisals. If you think an employee is struggling or is stressed, could it be because of the caring responsibilities at home? What would support that individual Carer in their situation? Would they benefit from support from lunch and learn sessions, being able to take phone calls within their working day? Ask if they have anything which would support them. This can be reviewed at future meetings and will give you more of an understanding of what your employee may need. The more that caring responsibilities are talked about, the more comfortable employees will feel. Remember, not everyone will want to discuss their role.



Free Carer support services

Make employees with caring responsibilities aware of the free support services which are available to them.

The Gloucestershire Carers Hub are here for them to provide a variety for services for free.

These include:

- **Information, Advice and Guidance**
- **Wellbeing support**
- **Signposting**
- **Contingency Planning**
- **Support**
- **Benefits and financial advice**
- **Full Carers assessments**
- **Training, social gatherings and activities**
- **Access to the Carer**
- **Aware Discount Scheme**
- **Professional counselling service**
- **Peer Support**

We can be contacted Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am - 5pm or Tuesday and Thursday 8am - 8pm

0300 111 9000
If no one is available to take your call please leave a message

carers@peopleplus.co.uk
www.gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk
Facebook: **@Gloucestershirecarershub**
Twitter: **@GCarersHub**
Instagram: **Gloucestershire_Carers_Hub**

Healthy Workplaces Gloucestershire Accreditation

Healthy Workplaces Gloucestershire are there to support you and your employees to develop a healthy workplace. They recognise businesses that are committed to health and wellbeing through the Gloucestershire Healthy Workplaces Award.

As businesses, our people are our greatest asset. Few if any businesses would thrive without their workforce and so it makes absolute sense that we support our people to be as healthy as they can be. Evidence shows that healthier workplaces can **increase productivity, reduce sickness absence, save money and increase profitability**.

The team at Healthy Workplaces would love to come and meet with you to explore how you can work with your employees to make your workplace a healthier place to work - and how you can be recognised for the great work you are doing.

Call Healthy Workplaces on **0800 755 5533** or email **workplaces@ablhealth.co.uk**



Bereavement Support

You may wish to consider supporting your employees through times of bereavement. It is important to remember that Carers may experience grief differently if they have been supporting someone for a long time. It may make them feel lost. Extra support at this time can help Carers to feel valued and also that they are supported by you as an employer.