WORK&CARE
THE NECESSARY INVESTMENT

Carers
AUSTRALIA

GUIDE FOR
EMPLOYERS

Combining Work and Care

Disclaimer

At the time of print all contents in this booklet were accurate. However, legislative change may impact upon employment arrangements in the workplace. For further information visit the Fair Work Ombudsman **www.fairwork.gov.au** or the Fair Work Commission **www.fwc.gov.au**.

For further information about the *Work & Care* Initiative please visit **www.carersaustralia.com.au** or email **work&care@carersaustralia.com.au** or phone us on **(02) 6122 9900**.

Statistics

All carer statistics in this Guide are sourced from the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

FOREWORD

Ara Cresswell
CEO Carers Australia

> "TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE, BUSINESSES NEED TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN SKILLED AND COMMITTED EMPLOYEES. IN AUSTRALIA THERE ARE MANY EMPLOYEES WHO COMBINE PAID WORK WITH CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH A DISABILITY, MENTAL ILLNESS, CHRONIC CONDITION OR TERMINAL ILLNESS OR SOMEONE WHO IS FRAIL AGED."

"Providing specific workplace arrangements for these carers has significant benefits for businesses including reducing recruitment and training costs by increasing staff retention, and increasing the productivity and job satisfaction of employees.

"This guide is designed to raise awareness of carers in the workforce, and provide advice and guidance on how employers can best support employees who have caring responsibilities.

"I encourage all employers, large and small, to evaluate their practices and look at what changes they can make to support carers in their workforce. It makes business sense to become a carer-friendly employer."

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INTRODUCTION

With advances in healthcare; the elderly, chronically ill and those with disabilities are now living longer at the same time as the working age population is decreasing in relative terms. As the proportion of Australia's population aged over 65 years continues to increase, Australia will soon reach the 'tipping point' for care, when there are likely to be fewer informal carers relative to the ageing population.

These demographic trends, along with an increasing retirement age and a greater number of older Australians choosing to age at home, will see more employees needing to take on a caring role than ever before. Many of these carers will be at the peak of their skills and career, therefore it is critical that businesses are able to retain these experienced employees.

Offering flexible workplace provisions which allow employees to combine paid work with an unpaid caring role is essential to enabling businesses to foster a productive, efficient and effective workforce.

The following Guide is designed to help your organisation take the necessary steps to identify and support carers within your workplace. It includes all you need to know about carers and what your organisation can do to become a carer-friendly employer.

ANYONE AT ANY TIME CAN BECOME A CARER – CARING IS AN ISSUE WHICH EVERYONE WILL FACE.

There are 2.7 million carers in Australia.

WHAT DO I NEED
TO KNOW ABOUT CARERS?

What do we mean by 'carer'?

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or terminal illness, and to those who are frail aged.

What do they do?

The nature and intensity of the caring role can vary significantly. Carers of someone with a physical disability or impairment might need to provide assistance with bathing, dressing, providing food and physical mobility, while those who care for someone with a mental illness might need to help manage symptoms, provide emotional support and assist with domestic tasks. Carers of people with chronic conditions often play a key role in medical treatment including taking the person to and from appointments, administering medications, monitoring vital signs and managing wounds and dressings. The caring role can also often involve coordination of services including arranging support staff, liaising with government departments to arrange income support and filling in application and assessment forms for assistance.

Not all carers live with the person they care for, particularly those who care for an elderly parent. This can often increase the time commitment of the caring role with additional travel to and from the person's home. For those who care for someone who is frail aged, the intensity of care required will also often increase over time.

**56% of carers
are female**

**44% of carers
are male**

How many of my staff are likely to be carers?

Almost 2.7 million Australians were identified as carers in 2012, which means that around 1 in 8 Australians or 11.9 per cent of the population have an unpaid caring role. Around 770,000 (29 per cent) of these are primary carers; those who provide the majority of care for another individual.[1]

The proportion of Australians who are carers generally increases with age, with 21.2 per cent of 25–44 year olds identifying as carers, and 40 per cent of Australians aged 45–64 years identifying as carers.[1]

While the intensity of the caring role prevents some carers from engaging in the workforce, there are many carers who combine paid work with their unpaid caring role, with 68 per cent of carers aged 15–64 years participating in the labour force.[1]
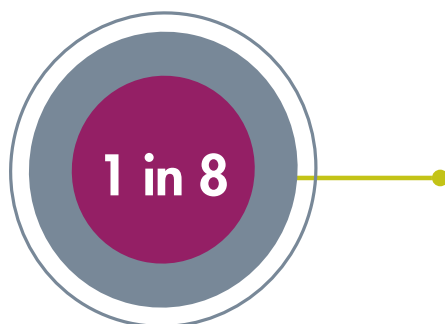
1 in 8 Australian employees are carers

Why do I need to support carers?

Due to advances in healthcare, Australians are now living longer. The working age population is also decreasing in relative terms, and people are retiring later in life at the same time as a greater number of older Australians are choosing to age at home. Together, these factors mean more working Australians will need to take on a caring role.

As the proportion of your workforce who have a caring role increases, it will become more important than ever to have workplace policies and procedures which support employees to combine work and care. With the majority of carers between 45–64 years[1], failing to hold on to these experienced employees represents a significant loss of investment in resources, time and knowledge.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE INTRODUCED FLEXIBLE WORKING AND SPECIAL LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CARERS HAVE JUDGED THEM A SUCCESS.

The message is – it makes business sense to care for carers.[2]

Carers in your workplace – Myth vs Fact

MYTH: Carers are generally unemployed females.
FACT: Carers actually represent quite a diverse group. 44 per cent of all carers are male. Over half (57.3 per cent) of male carers work, 44.4 per cent of these full-time.[1]

MYTH: Unpaid carers who combine paid work and care are generally employed in the disability and aged care sectors.
FACT: 29 per cent of all employed carers are technicians, trade workers or labourers. Over 16 per cent are employed in the construction, manufacturing and mining industries. A further 16.3 per cent are employed in the retail and hospitality industries.[1]

MYTH: Employed carers are only in low-skilled roles with no managerial responsibility.
FACT: 35 per cent of employed carers are managers and professionals.[1]

MYTH: As an employer, you would know if any of your employees were carers.
FACT: Some employees may become carers while they are in your workforce – for example through accident or illness of a family member or friend. Not all employees who have a caring role will want to disclose this information.

MYTH: Carers don't want to combine work with their unpaid caring role.
FACT: Of the 109,400 primary carers who are not employed, 25 per cent indicate they would like to be employed.[1]

MYTH: Carers don't have any formal qualifications.
FACT: Just under 19 per cent of all carers have a Bachelor Degree or higher. A further 30 per cent have a Certificate, Diploma or Advanced Diploma.[1]

"Becoming a carer is not dependant on or triggered by social background, job role or location; it can and will happen to most of us in our lives at some point, either temporarily or for a longer period."[3]

MYTH: If an employer offers flexible work options, they will be inundated with requests from carers.
FACT: Special leave entitlements are rarely abused by carers. Workplaces which have made special leave allowances available have rarely found instances where this leave has been abused. Availability of such leave is highly valued by carers, but they prefer to only use the leave if they absolutely need it and have no other options for using their own time to meet their caring commitments.

MYTH: Caring isn't an issue I need to think about.
FACT: Nearly all of us, at some point in our lives, will either become a carer for a family member or friend, or will need care ourselves.

35%

of employed carers are
Managers and Professionals
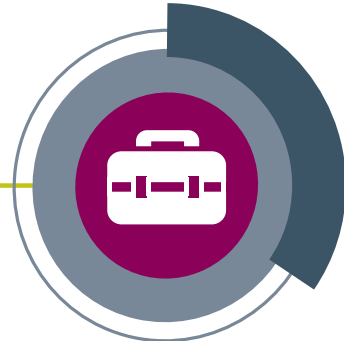
29%

of employed carers are **Technicians,
Trades Workers and Labourers**
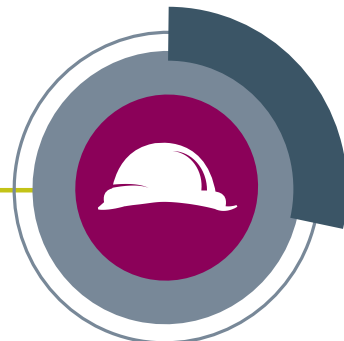
25%

of employed carers are **Clerical,
Administrative and Sales Workers**

11%

of employed carers are **Community and
Personal Service Workers**

THE BENEFITS OF SUPPORTING CARERS

➔ Reduced costs of employee turnover

The financial impact of staff turnover can be considerable – around a third of the annual salary of an employee.[4] This is due to the costs of recruitment, training a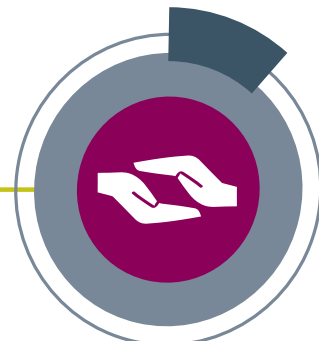nd the loss of productivity in the lead up to an employee leaving, and before a new staff member is up to speed. By providing flexibility which allows staff to balance work and care, your organisation is more likely to hold onto experienced employees.

"We are in no doubt that our staff retention levels are driven by our attitude to work life balance rather than the generosity of our remuneration packages."

Managing Director, Listawood[5]

➔ Increased productivity

Implementing flexible work practices can help an organisation to focus more clearly on outputs and outcomes, rather than concentrating on the hours that employees are at their desks. It helps to clarify tasks and encourages multi-skilling across teams. Furthermore, less stressed employees are more likely to be productive employees.

"Embracing flexibility enables people to work smarter and is critical to maximising productivity and building a high performance work culture."

Managing Director, Stockland[6]

➔ Improved service delivery

Fundamentally, if you look after your staff, they will look after your customers. Providing flexible provisions for employees such as extended start and finish times can also enhance the customer experience by providing services outside of standard business hours. This can be a competitive advantage for your organisation.

"Only a few people here still work a conventional five day week. The customers love it as we are open much longer and it hasn't affected the fees and charges."[7]

➔ Reducing employee stress and absenteeism

Employees who feel reluctant to request changes to their working practices or who are unable to utilise leave for caring responsibilities will often resort to taking personal leave to deal with caring emergencies. By providing workers with real options to help them balance work and care, and encouraging employees to take up these provisions, your organisation can reduce the stress of carers and reduce staff absenteeism.

CASE STUDY

BT Group is a British multinational telecommunications services company. Of its 102,000 employees, 75,000 work flexibly. The company found that the average increase in productivity for these workers was 21 per cent, worth at least £5–6 million. Annual staff turnover was also below 4 per cent (where the sector average is 17 per cent) and sickness absence among home workers averages below 3 days per annum. BT also found that stress related absence reduced by 26 per cent through flexible working alone.[8]

➡ Attracting quality workers

Implementing flexible working arrangements has been found not only to benefit existing employees, but also acts as an incentive for job-seekers to choose that employer. By virtue of the nature and demands of their caring role, carers are also often highly organised and committed employees who value supportive employers and are dedicated and loyal in return.

"We attract a higher calibre of employee than is often possible at a larger firm because of the flexibility we offer."

Management Consulting Firm[9]

➡ Increased staff morale

Staff who feel they are understood and supported by their employer are more likely to be loyal and productive workers. Investing in services and supports for staff that foster a positive environment will improve the workplace experience of all employees, and this culture can flow through the entire organisation.

"I personally go that extra mile for them, because I appreciate what they're doing for me."

Employee of utility company, caring for elderly parents[10]

➡ Building a resilient workforce

Regardless of whether your workplace currently has employees who identify as carers, it makes sense to implement carer-friendly policies. Providing staff with information about caring will help to build their resilience to potential change, and may improve their capacity to keep working if they need to take on a caring role.

"(In a caring emergency) you are not dealing with an absence, you are potentially dealing with a vacancy if you don't respond appropriately. The cost of recruiting is incomparable to the cost of 2–3 days' emergency leave."[10]

Policy Development Manager, HR utility company

WHAT CAN MY ORGANISATION DO TO SUPPORT CARERS?

You can take simple and effective action to help carers combine work and caring responsibilities. The key is to find a balance between your operational requirements and the amount of flexibility you can offer your staff.

"At Allens, our approach to flexibility involves more than establishing flexible work arrangements. We also consider how, when and where work is done. Our approach to flexibility involves a two way relationship that benefits our firm as an employer by engaging the people who work here."

Michael Rose, Chief Executive Partner, Allens[6]

Step 1: Use the Work & Care Self-Assessment Tool

The *Work & Care Self-Assessment Tool* (see **Appendix 1**) is a useful way to help your organisation assess what you know about carers in your workplace, and to promote discussion about what changes you might make to better support employees with caring responsibilities. It is not designed as a comprehensive evaluation of your performance in relation to carers; merely a way to instigate discussion around what areas your organisation may want to address.

The *Self-Assessment Tool* is a simple questionnaire covering four areas; Awareness and Support; Flexible Working; Leave and Working Arrangements; and Recruitment and Retention.

Step 2: Know your workforce

A simple and cost-effective method of gaining more information about whether there are carers in your workforce is to conduct an employee survey. It is important that employees are assured of the confidentiality of this survey, and that identifying as a carer will have no negative impact on their role and job opportunities.

It will also be important for the survey to include information on what a carer is, and the sorts of roles they undertake, to assist employees who may not have self-identified with the term carer before.

You may want to compile a list of all the policies, programs and initiatives your organisation offers to support staff with caring responsibilities for your staff to review and provide feedback. Some employees may not be aware of all these policies so it is an opportunity to re-communicate their options for flexible work. Experience also shows that while many organisations may already have policies in place for employees, carers are often hesitant to take up policies if they are unsure how management will react.

Your survey could ask carers to identify any particular areas of concern they see as impacting on their ability to combine work and care, and if they want to request flexible provisions but feel unable to do so. This will highlight any organisational culture issues which may need to be addressed.

An employee survey will also be a useful way to let your employees know about your intentions to support those who combine work with an unpaid caring role and that input from carers would assist in the process of developing appropriate policies and procedures.

Remember that any of your employees may become a carer at any time, so it is important that there are ongoing avenues for carers to identify themselves, if they wish.

Step 3: Develop a plan of action

Having undertaken an employee survey, hopefully you will now have identified how many of your employees are carers, and potentially the key areas (e.g. working arrangements or leave entitlements) which are of greatest concern for those trying to balance work and care.

Seeking input from employees who are carers will be essential to ensure the effectiveness of any changes you implement. It might therefore be useful to ask if employees would like to volunteer their assistance in this process of developing a plan of action.

You may want to consider using the *Carer Action Plan Template* (see **Appendix 2**). This is a simple tool to help you identify changes that can be made in 7 key areas: knowledge of the workforce; recognition of carers; informing staff; supporting management; supporting carers; carer-friendly practices; and promotion awareness.

Remember communication is key

Lack of awareness is often a key barrier for employees requesting and taking up workplace policies which are designed to assist them in combining work and care. Once a plan of action, or a new carer policy has been developed, it is important this is communicated with employees and that new staff are informed when they join the organisation.

CARER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE PROVISIONS

1. Formal recognition

A first step to formal recognition of carers in the workplace can be to include carers in existing equal opportunity and diversity policies. This will illustrate that your organisation acknowledges carers and their needs.

Larger organisations may also want to consider developing a specific Carers Policy which outlines the support options available for carers within the workplace, as well as options available to employees with caring responsibilities such as flexible working conditions and leave arrangements.

An organisational definition of 'carer' will also be an important inclusion in any policy to ensure all employees and the management team are aware of who is entitled to certain provisions. The Employers for Carers group in the United Kingdom have developed the following definition which is used by many of the group's member organisations.

"Carers are employees with significant caring responsibilities that have a substantial impact on their working lives. These employees are responsible for the care and support of people with a disability, elderly or sick partners, relatives or friends who are unable to care for themselves."[5]

Organisations who already have policies around flexible working conditions and leave options for all employees may consider including the term carer so that these policies explicitly state that they are available to employees with caring responsibilities.

It is important that any workplace specific policies and procedures affecting working carers are developed or revised in consultation with employees to ensure that their needs and preferences for working arrangements and conditions are taken into account. Larger organisations developing a Carers Policy may want to consider establishing a carer reference group to provide input.

A sample Carers Policy can be found at the back of this resource (see **Appendix 3**).

CASE STUDY

Westpac has a comprehensive carer's leave policy which allows employees to care for someone in their family when they are sick or injured, recovering from surgery or involved in an emergency. They also offer a wide range of flexible work options, recognising that employees with caring responsibilities may need different types of flexibility, depending on their circumstances. For employees who care for an older dependent, Westpac offer an Eldercare Kit to help their employees understand what is available in the community, provide information on specific government and community support services and checklists to assist in making key decisions.[11]

2. Flexible leave arrangements

Policy/arrangement	Example of care situations
Carers' emergency leave For unforeseeable emergency incidents when leave is needed for a short period of time to care for a family member. If more time is needed, then absence usually becomes planned leave.	> To make longer term arrangements for a dependant's care. > To cover when existing arrangements break down. > To deal with an unexpected incident involving a dependent child at school.
Carers' planned leave Leave needed for a foreseeable event lasting for a defined period. If more time is needed, absence usually becomes a career break, or a review of working pattern/hours can be undertaken.	> Providing nursing care following hospital discharge. > Assisting a dependant to move accommodation. > Attending benefit/legal hearings with a dependant. > Attending hospital appointments with a dependant.
Career break or sabbatical	Used when a carer has to take a longer period out of the workplace, but wishes to return to their former job. Not necessarily exclusive for carers. Minimum period usually 3 months – 2 years.
Unpaid leave	Usually used when all other paid leave options are exhausted. Not necessarily exclusively for carers.
Purchased leave	To build up a bank of leave to be used for caring.
Matched leave	An additional period of leave offered by an employer to 'match' annual leave an employee has to take to provide care – often used to cover a period following hospital discharge.
Compassionate leave	Used mostly following bereavement.
Cost of replacement care covered by employer	To enable a carer to attend training, or perform work duties requested by the organisation – at a time when they would normally have caring responsibilities.

CASE STUDY

Lisa Jackson is the single mother of a 15 year old son and is also the primary carer for her mother who has dementia. The flexible work options she takes advantage of are working from home or her local Business Banking Centre on the days she has to be near home. "**Westpac Group** has been extremely supportive of my circumstances and the multitude of roles I have to fulfil in my life." Lisa says. "My manager allows me to shift my core hours so I can start work at 6am and leave early in the afternoon if I need to get my mum to a medical appointment. It's great to know that having the support when I need it won't negatively impact on my career or work opportunities."[11]

"Certainly flexible work looks different in different industries, but there is a business case for it even in the most blue collar workplace."[12]

3. Flexible working arrangements

Policy/arrangement	Description
Flexi-time	Flexible starting and finishing times – adjusting the working day to begin and end earlier or later.
Home-working or Tele-working	Working in a home or other environment, as oppposed to the normal workplace, often through the use of technology.
Annualised working hours	Completed contracted hours, but making adjustments to allow for shorter or longer days or weeks across the period of a year.
Job rotation	Moving from one job to another for a specific period to reduce work commitments during a period of care.
Term-time working	Working contracted hours but within school term times.
Self rostering	Team voluntarily agree shift patterns for managers to approve.
Job sharing	Two or more people fulfilling the requirements of a single post. Option of having a job share register within a company.
Split shifts	For example, arranged with a period of time in the middle of the day or afternoon.
Compressed working hours	Completing contracted hours in a shorter period than normal. For example, a 9 day fortnight.
Flexible Combination	Ability to pick and choose, e.g. increasing/decreasing annual or unpaid leave for a particular working pattern.
'Day extender'	Working predominantly in the office but also carrying out additional work at home in the evening.
Phased retirement	Reducing hours progressively over a certain period rather than ceasing work completely. Often involves a cross-over period where the retiring employee helps to train their replacement.

4. Planning leave

Asking all workers to notify management of their plans for leave well in advance (wherever possible) can assist you to balance the workload and personal needs of your team. Some caring responsibilities that require time off work can be planned ahead (such as specialist appointments) and you can expect carers to notify you about these absences in advance. Consider a team approach where all employees are encouraged to discuss their needs for flexibility together – this way team members can explore ways to accommodate everyone's needs.

However, remember that the nature of the caring role often means that issues may come up unexpectedly and carers may need time off without warning. By planning ahead and putting contingency strategies in place, such as identifying which team members can take over certain tasks or arranging for an employee to work from home, the impact of these incidents can be minimised.

EXAMPLE

Michael is a senior manager at a law firm. Last year his elderly mother had a fall at home and lost much of her mobility, confidence and independence. She increasingly needed assistance from Michael to undertake everyday tasks such as cooking and cleaning, but wasn't ready to move into residential care. Michael had been reluctant to discuss his new caring role with his employer for fear of being over-looked for promotion.

After finally telling his employer about his situation, Michael was given a Carer Resource pack which included referral information to a Carers Association which helped him to negotiate paid support for his mum through an aged care provider. Michael's manager also offered to let him work a compressed working week (weekly full-time hours in 4 working days) so that he could stay with his mum on the days that the support worker doesn't come in.

5. Recruitment of new staff

Advertise that you are a carer-friendly workplace and highlight the flexible working options available to employees. This will encourage carers to apply. Ensure any recruitment agencies hired to screen and interview applicants are also aware of your organisation's commitment to support employees who balance work and care and that this information is passed onto applicants.

Consider alternative avenues to advertise jobs which may be more likely to capture prospective employees with caring responsibilities such as community centres, hospitals or your state/territory Carers Association.

Ideally, internal staff conducting interviews should be fully across any carer policies and be aware of the key issues affecting employees with an unpaid caring role. Your Human Resources personnel may also want to consider altering interview questions or key selection criteria to focus on skill acquisition in different contexts rather than focusing only on previous paid employment. While many carers may have been out of the paid workforce for some time, they often gain a range of useful skills through their caring role which can be applied in other sectors and industries. For example organisation skills, multi-tasking, flexibility, managing a budget and problem solving.

Induction packs for new employees should also mention any Carer Policy that your organisation has as well as options for flexible working and leave arrangements.

6. Carer workplace supports

The type and range of supports you offer carers in the workplace will necessarily vary depending on the size of your organisation.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

Larger employers may implement EAPs for working carers or, for those organisations which already have EAPs in place, they may want to look at integrating additional carer-specific provisions. Supports may include access to free counselling services for individuals and families and wellness programs for employees that aim to reduce stress and anxiety.

Carer Networks

Establishing a Carer Network for employees will provide working carers with the opportunity to connect with other employees in a similar situation. These networks facilitate information sharing about the caring role, allow carers to gain new knowledge about available services and also provide the opportunity for carers to form support groups.

CASE STUDY

The **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)** Disability and Carers Employee Network was established in early 2014, delivering on an action in the ABS Workplace Diversity Action Plan 2013–17 to provide support to staff with disability and carers of people with disability. The ABS has offices in each capital city and the network is open to all ABS staff. There are currently around 60 members of the network and new members are regularly encouraged to join via all staff advertisements.

The network meets monthly via video conference, and members discuss work-related matters that may impact on people with disability and caring responsibilities and share personal experiences (for those that want to share). They also provide input into related internal and external initiatives. External guest speakers from carers and disability organisations, selected by network members, are also invited to talk at meetings. The ABS Senior Disability Champion attends the meetings and has helped to raise and address specific workplace-related issues raised at these meetings.[13]

7. Workplace facilities

Simple changes can go a long way. Allowing employees to access their personal phone or to be contactable at work can help to alleviate a carer's stress and concern about the person they care for during work hours. Access to a private room for conversations can also be useful to allow carers to discuss private matters relating to the care and support of their family member or friend.

Other useful facilities for working carers (which won't necessarily be available in all workplaces) include easy access to transport services or parking to allow carers to easily come and go during the day if they need to attend to the person receiving care.

"I have access to a telephone, so if I leave Mum in the morning and she is depressed or unwell, I can call her through the day. I can go somewhere private and have a chat with her without having to worry about what's going to happen 'til I get home."[9]

8. Information and advocacy

Many carers, including those who juggle work and care, will need professional support and guidance at some time. Providing employees with information on how to access external supports can be an important step in ensuring the sustainability of both their caring and work roles. Carers Australia and the network of Carers Associations in every state and territory can provide carers with information, advice and support. The contact details of each of the Associations are at the end of this publication.

By providing the *Work & Care Resource for Employees* to all new staff, your organisation can reach out to potential carers in the workforce instead of relying on working carers to identify themselves to management.

9. Multi-skilling the workforce

The more opportunities employees are given to undertake a variety of roles and tasks, the easier it will be to fill roles and complete projects when staff members are unexpectedly absent. Good communication and team work are essential to this. As part of long-term planning, developing a multi-skilled team brings several advantages. It encourages good team work and helps to ensure that the organisation can maintain services and meet business targets should a member of the team be absent. Multi-skilling also benefits all staff by adding to their skills and expertise and should therefore enhance their career development.

10. Return to work arrangements and programs

While every effort may be made by an employer to offer leave and flexible working arrangements, sometimes the nature and intensity of the caring role may simply be too much for the carer to continue balancing work and care. In these circumstances, the carer may have no choice but to leave their employment for a certain period of time.

The employee may be very keen to return to the organisation after their caring role ceases or is reduced, and as an employer you may need to assist their transition back into the workplace. Depending how long they have been away from the organisation, they may have lost confidence to undertake certain tasks, or simply be unaware of any changes that have occurred within the organisation or the way it operates. Return to work programs can help to ease employees back into the workplace, such as mentoring programs or a 're-induction' process which can bring employees back up to speed.

CASE STUDY

A global finance company in the US introduced a ten-week preparatory program providing returning individuals with an opportunity to sharpen their skills in a significantly changed work environment. The program is tailored to address individuals' concerns including their ability to transition into a new area of expertise.[14]

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING CARERS IN YOUR WORKPLACE

➡ Support and train management

The ability of an organisation to successfully implement new workplace policies which support carers is dependent upon the skills and knowledge of the management team to respond to carers' requests.

Management needs to understand who carers are, what the caring role entails and how caring responsibilities may impact on the ability of an employee to meet certain work requirements. Training and advice on how to respond to employee requests, as well as guidance on how to apply any changes to workplace policies, will also ensure that management is able to respond to employee requests for flexibility, fairly and consistently.

Implementing carer-friendly policies and practices in the workplace requires problem solving, communication, project management and clear decision making. Management needs to be encouraged and supported in their efforts by the Executive, and employers may want to consider offering training to management and team leaders to assist with change management.

Delegating responsibility for roster management and leave approval to a lower level of authority may also assist in timely responses to employee requests and minimises the need to share personal information across an organisation.

➡ Consider universal access

As an employer, you may decide that universal access to flexible arrangements is the most appropriate approach for your workplace. This will ensure that some employees don't feel that carers get unfair preference and reduces the extent to which management has to determine the relative 'deservingness' of employee requests.

Nevertheless, some decisions will undoubtedly still need to be made if there are multiple requests and not all can be accommodated at the same time. In these circumstances it is important for management to remember that carers sometimes have very little control over the timing and nature of their caring responsibilities. For example, it is often difficult to shift an important medical appointment, or to change when paid support workers can come to the home to provide replacement care.

➡ Compromise is ok

As an employer, you cannot be expected to say yes to all requests for flexibility as this may simply not be feasible with the operational requirements of your organisation.

The important thing to do if you can't meet a carer's request for flexibility is to communicate the reason behind this decision to the employee. After discussion you may discover that there is an alternative solution you can both agree to.

Even if no other option is possible, the carer will still feel more supported than if the rejection had been given without an explanation. Communicating that the employee is still welcome to make another request in the future is also important, as this lets carers know that you are still keen to address their needs as much as possible.

"I know that work will allow me time off for something important or immovable that dad needs me for, so I'm happy to make that time up and be flexible in return when work needs me to travel or work out of my usual hours."

Project Manager, working full-time[3]

⟶ Organisational culture is everything

Executive support

Without buy-in from the top, any new workplace policies and procedures are unlikely to get off the ground. It is vital that the Executive are on board with the carer-friendly agenda and understand the business benefits that can be achieved with its successful implementation. You may also want to consider identifying a **'Carer Champion'** in your workplace who can take responsibility for the implementation of any new policies, and who can act as a central point of guidance for working carers.

An understanding workplace

An organisational culture in which employees are encouraged to disclose their caring role and to discuss their needs for flexibility is important. However, management will need to demonstrate sensitivity to issues of confidentiality and understand that some employees may prefer that their personal circumstances are not shared with other employees.

Encourage take-up

While many organisations may already have workplace policies which allow for flexible working conditions, take-up of such policies is often low because employees don't feel comfortable requesting these without fear of disapproval or loss of future promotion opportunities. Employees need to not only be made aware of the existence of policies around flexible work, but actively encouraged to take them up, and assured that there will be no negative repercussions for doing so.

⊙ Broad awareness is essential; educate all employees

Raising awareness about carers across an organisation is important to help employees self-identify as a 'carer', because not all those who combine work and care will be linked in with carer services and supports. Furthermore, while not all employees with caring responsibilities will want to use the term carer (and nor should they be forced to), knowing that there are supports available specifically for carers can be crucial to the sustainability of their caring role, and in balancing this with their work responsibilities.

Remember, anyone can become a carer at any time. Nearly everyone will either provide care to someone else or will need care themselves at some point in their lives. Even if there aren't any carers in your workplace at the moment, chances are many will be carers in the future. Disseminating information about the caring role across an organisation can therefore help employees to prepare and become more aware of available supports. This may mean they will be less likely to need to drop out of the workforce or leave their position if they take on a caring role in the future.

Finally, the greater the 'carer-awareness' across the workplace, the more comfortable employees will be to request and take up flexible provisions and their colleagues are more likely to understand and be supportive of these policies.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING WORKING CARERS

1. Be open and clear about the policies and practices within your office and encourage staff to use them.

2. Without being intrusive, get to know your staff and what their circumstances are.

3. Be as flexible as possible and be prepared to compromise.

4. Be approachable and consultative.

5. Encourage all your staff to be aware of and understand your organisation's policies on diversity and equal opportunities.

6. Ensure that all your staff have easy access to employee manuals, intranet, staff newsletters or any other information for employees.

7. Openly support and reinforce the message of your organisation's policies and practices.

8. Lead by example. Remember, managers have demands on their time outside of work and need to achieve work life balance too!

9. Encourage staff with caring responsibilities to set up their own support group or join an existing network if you have one.

10. Above all, be fair and consistent in your approach to all your staff.

Source: Employers for Carers, UK **www.employersforcarers.org**.

WHAT DO I NEED TO OFFER EMPLOYEES?

The section below outlines the **National Employment Standards (NES)** which are the minimum entitlements that all employers must offer their employees under Australian law. An award, legislated agreement or employment contract can't provide for conditions that are less than the national minimum wage or the NES, and they can't exclude the NES.

The minimum entitlements are included in this guide as a reference point so you can make sure your organisation is complying. However, many organisations choose to go above and beyond these minimum requirements by offering their employees extra leave entitlements. For example, some employers offer their staff paid carer's leave that is in addition to paid sick leave, or may offer extra compassionate leave for employees.

Minimum employee entitlements

The National Employment Standards (NES) are 10 minimum employment entitlements that have to be provided to all employees – regardless of the award, registered agreement or employment contract that applies.

The NES establish minimum entitlements for permanent employees to receive:

> Paid personal/carer's leave.

> Unpaid carer's leave.

> Paid or unpaid compassionate leave.

Paid sick and carer's leave

Sick and carer's leave (also known as personal leave) lets an employee take time off to help them deal with personal illness, caring responsibilities and family emergencies.

The minimum entitlement to paid personal/carer's leave for an employee (other than a casual employee) is 10 days per year. Part-time employees get pro rata of 10 days each year depending on the hours worked.

NB: Carer's leave generally comes out of the employee's personal leave balance.

Who gets paid sick and carer's leave?

An employee may take paid personal/carer's leave:

> If they are unfit for work because of their own personal illness or injury.

> To provide care or support to a member of their immediate family or household, because of personal illness, injury or unexpected emergency affecting the member. A member of the employee's immediate family means a spouse, de facto partner, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of an employee; or a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of the employee's spouse or de facto partner.

When paid personal/carer's leave is taken, the minimum requirement is that an employee must be paid at their base rate of pay for the ordinary hours they would have worked during the period.

Unpaid carer's leave

The NES require that all employees, including casual employees, get two days unpaid carer's leave each time an immediate family member or household member of the employee needs care and support because of illness, injury or an unexpected emergency.

An employee may take unpaid carer's leave for each occasion as a single continuous period of up to two days, or any separate periods to which the employee and his or her employer agree.

Compassionate leave

All employees (including casual employees) are entitled to compassionate leave, also known as bereavement leave.

Compassionate leave can be taken when a member of an employee's immediate family or household dies or suffers a life-threatening illness or injury. Immediate family is an employee's spouse, de facto partner, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling (or child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of the employee's spouse or de facto partner). Employees can also take compassionate leave for other relatives (eg. Cousins, aunts and uncles) if they are a member of the employee's household, or if the employer agrees to this.

An employee may take compassionate leave for each occasion as:

> a single continuous two day period or;

> two separate periods of one day each or;

> any separate periods to which the employee and his or her employer agree.

If an employee (other than a casual employee) takes a period of compassionate leave, the employer must pay the employee at the employee's base rate of pay for the ordinary hours they would have worked during the period.

Casual employees are not entitled to any paid personal/carer's leave or compassionate leave. However, casuals are entitled to unpaid carer's leave or compassionate leave.

Right to Request Flexible Working Arrangements

The *Fair Work Act 2009* provides employees in the national workplace relations system with a legal right to request flexible working arrangements. To be eligible employees must have worked for their employer **for at least 12 months on a full-time or part-time basis**. Long term casual employees who have a **reasonable expectation of ongoing employment** are also eligible.

Who's eligible?

Employees are eligible to request flexible working arrangements in the following circumstances:

> The employee is a parent, or has responsibility for the care of a child who is of school age or younger.

> The employee is a carer – within the meaning of the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (see page 25).

> The employee has a disability.

> The employee is 55 or older.

> The employee is experiencing violence from a member of the employee's family.

> The employee provides care or support to a member of their immediate family or household who requires care or support because they are experiencing violence from the member's family.

NB: state or territory laws about flexible working arrangements apply if they give employees a better entitlement than the National Employment Standards.

What is a flexible working arrangement?

Flexible working arrangements may apply to:

> Hours of work (eg. changes to start and finish times).

> Patterns of work (eg. split shifts or job sharing).

> Locations of work (eg. working from home).

How should a request be made?

An employee must:

> Ask the employer in writing.

> Give details of the change they want.

> Give the reasons why they're asking for the change.

The employer must accept or refuse the request in writing **within 21 days** of getting the request. The employer can only refuse a request for specific reasons.

Accepting or refusing a request

Employers can only refuse on 'reasonable business grounds'. If an employer refuses a request, they have to give reasons. Reasonable business grounds include when the new working arrangements:

> Are too expensive for the employer to implement.

> Would result in a significant loss in efficiency or productivity.

> Would be likely to have a significant negative impact on customer service.

Other reasonable business grounds include:

> There isn't any capacity to change the work arrangements of other employees affected.

> That it would be impractical to change the working arrangements of other employees, or recruit new employees.

If there are reasonable business grounds to refuse a request for flexible working arrangements, employers should look at:

> How the change would affect the workplace's finances, efficiency, productivity and customer service.

> How easy it is for current staff to cover work.

> How easy it is to find someone else to do the work.

> The arrangements needed to accommodate the employee's request.

IF A REQUEST IS REFUSED –

the written response must include details of the reason for refusal.

Individual Flexibility Arrangements (IFAs): IFAs allow for variations to modern awards or enterprise agreements in order to meet the genuine needs of employers and individual employees while ensuring minimum entitlements and protections are not undermined. For more information on IFAs please visit **www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/policies-and-guides/best-practice-guides/use-of-individual-flexibility-arrangements**.

Protection against discrimination

Discrimination occurs in the workplace when an employer takes adverse action against an employee or prospective employee because of a protected attribute. Protected attributes include race, colour, sexual preference, disability and family or carer's responsibilities, among others. Adverse action includes firing an employee, not hiring someone or offering different and unfair terms and conditions compared to other employees. The Australian Human Rights Commission has produced a useful guide for employers on Australian discrimination laws which can be found at **www.humanrights.gov.au/employers/ good-practice-good-business-factsheets/quick-guide-australian-discrimination-laws**.

NB: The information provided in this section was accurate at the time of writing. However, legislative change may impact on employment arrangements in the workplace. For further information on employee entitlements visit www.fairwork.gov.au or www.fwc.gov.au.

The *Carer Recognition Act 2010*

The *Carer Recognition Act 2010* came into effect on 18 November 2010. The aim of the Act is to increase recognition and awareness of the role carers play in providing daily care and support to people with disability, medical conditions, mental illness or who are frail aged.

A *carer* is defined in the Act as an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it because that other individual:

(a) has a disability; or

(b) has a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness); or

(c) has a mental illness; or

(d) is frail and aged

An individual is not a *carer* in respect of care, support and assistance he or she provides:

(a) under a contract of service or a contract for the provision of services; or

(b) in the course of doing voluntary work for a charitable, welfare or community organisation; or

(c) as part of the requirements of a course of education or training.

To avoid doubt, an individual is not a *carer* merely because he or she:

(a) is the spouse, de facto partner, parent, child or other relative of an individual, or is the guardian of an individual; or

(b) lives with an individual who requires care.

The Act outlines the following obligations of all public service agencies:

(1) Each public service agency is to take all practical measures to ensure that its employees and agents have an awareness and understanding of the Statement for Australia's Carers.

(2) Each public service agency's internal human resources policies, so far as they may significantly affect an employee's caring role, are to be developed having due regard to the Statement for Australia's Carers.

There are also additional obligations for public service agencies that are responsible for the development, implementation, provision or evaluation of care supports (also known as *public service care agencies*). This includes an obligation to consult carers, or bodies that represent carers, when developing or evaluating care supports; to take all practical measures to ensure that it, and its employees and agents, take action to reflect the principles of the Statement for Australia's Carers; and to report on its compliance to the Act.

Individuals or bodies which enter into a contract or funding arrangement with a public service care agency to develop, implement, provide or evaluate care supports also have obligations under the Act. They are referred to as an **associated provider**. These obligations also apply when an associated provider enters into a contract or funding arrangement with another person or body to undertake all or part of the funded activities. The Act specifies that:

Each associated provider is to take all practicable measures to ensure that:

(a) its officers, employees and agents have an awareness and understanding of the Statement for Australia's Carers; and

(b) it, and its officers, employees and agents, take action to reflect the principles of the Statement in developing, implementing, providing or evaluating care supports.

To see the full Act visit www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/c2010a00123

HOW WILL I KNOW IF CHANGES HAVE HAD AN IMPACT ON WORKING CARERS?

To make meaningful change to organisational practices for working carers, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of carer policies and programs will be essential.

Employee satisfaction survey

If your organisation conducted an employee survey before developing a **Carer Action Plan**, you may want to conduct a follow-up survey 6–12 months later to determine if staff needs and concerns are being addressed, and to ascertain whether carer-awareness across the organisation has improved.

Monitoring employee sickness, absence and turnover rates

Monitoring employee sickness, absence and turnover rates may also provide key indicators of how successful changes have been in achieving real savings to the business bottom line. Collecting evidence of these financial benefits will also be crucial in sustaining support from the Executive for ongoing carer-friendly policies and procedures.

Monitor take-up and report on progress and outcomes

To measure the impact of changes to workplace practices, it is also important to monitor the take-up of specific flexible working and leave arrangements and to develop a clear picture of what arrangements employees require.

Your organisation may also want to consider integrating reporting on the progress and outcomes of a **Carer Action Plan** into your standard business reporting. This will help to ensure that these policies are mainstreamed into normal business operations.

Share your findings – become an Employer Champion

Assisting Australia's working carers to combine employment with their unpaid caring role requires greater awareness across the community about the business benefits of being a carer-friendly workplace. Employers who have demonstrated leadership in supporting unpaid family and friend carers can play an important role in sharing their achievements by becoming an Employer Champion. This can help us raise awareness across the community and encourages other employers to follow your lead.

CARERS AUSTRALIA WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!
Contact us at **work&care@carersaustralia.com.au**.

Carers Australia would love to hear about your achievements in becoming a carer-friendly workplace. Employer Champions can assist Carers Australia in developing an evidence base of best practice approaches to supporting carers in the workplace by providing case studies on the business benefits of becoming a carer-friendly workplace. Carers Australia can also assist Employer Champions to promote their efforts in the media.

CARER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE EXAMPLES

CASE STUDY

Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC) has introduced a variety of flexible working practices to support its reputation as a forward thinking employer. It offers comprehensive workplace support in the form of in-house networking groups and employee assistance programmes, and embeds it in the organisation's activities through diversity and performance management programs.

"In today's society, increasingly more of us have caring responsibilities – as parents, as children of ageing parents and as carers of disabled dependents – and we at PwC are striving as an organisation to adapt to this."

Sarah Churchman, Head of Diversity and Inclusion at PwC9

CASE STUDY

The **UK Ministry of Justice** is a large scale employer with approximately 95,000 employees across around 900 sites. Its employee carer network is longstanding and has around 2,000 members. The aims of the network include to raise awareness, provide policy input into relevant areas, challenge attitudes, and identify and support carers' champions. The network benefits from having a Champion on the Management Board, and produces a monthly newsletter.[9]

CASE STUDY

RailCorp (Australia) maintains a Carer's Register assisting employees who are caring for an immediate family member or member of their household who has a permanent or long term illness or disability. This allows for a less bureaucratic approach to approving carer's leave, the processing of medical certificates and the ability to offer up-to-date information and network opportunities for registered carers.[15]

CASE STUDY

Commonwealth Bank Australia – As part of its Opening the Door for Gender Diversity initiative, the CBA embarked on a progressive approach to building a flexible workplace. CBA has implemented a range of practices that replace the traditional emphasis on face time and 'presenteeism' with a focus on results. Innovative flexibility programs available to all employees include:

> Formal Flexible Work Options and Leave Programs including flexible working hours; location of work (including telecommuting); part-time work and job-sharing opportunities.

> Career Breaks – anyone can take from several months up to three years off.

> Additional purchased leave – employees can purchase up to four weeks of additional leave a year as a form of self-funded leave.[15]

KEY CONTACTS FOR CARERS

Carers Australia

Unit 1, 16 Napier Close, Deakin, ACT 2600
Phone: **(02) 6122 9900**
Email: **work&care@carersaustralia.com.au**

The Carers Associations

Carers ACT

Head Office
2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt, ACT 2615
Phone: **(02) 6296 9900**

Carer Advisory Service

Call **1800 242 636** for information, support, planning and referral advice to help you in your caring role.
Operating Monday to Friday 9am–5pm.

The Carer Advisory Service and a range of other support services are available through the state and territory Carers Associations.

Carers NSW

Head Office
Roden Cutler House, Level 18, 24 Campbell Street, Sydney, NSW 2000
Phone: **(02) 9280 4744**

Carers NSW also have offices in Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Newcastle, and Tweed Heads.

Carers NT

Head Office
59 Bayview Blvd, Bayview, NT 0820
Phone: **1800 242 636**

Carers NT also has offices in Katherine and Alice Springs.

Carers Queensland

Head Office
15 Abbott Street, Camp Hill 4152
Phone: **(07) 3900 8100**

Carers Queensland also have offices in Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Cairns, Gold Coast, Hervey Bay, Ipswich, Mackay, Rockhampton, Roma, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, and Townsville.

Carers South Australia

Statewide Office
66 Greenhill Road, Wayville, SA 5034
Phone: **(08) 8291 5600**

Local carer support is available from Carers SA in the Western, River Murray and Mallee, Eyre, South East and Northern Country regions.

Carers Tasmania

Head Office
64 Burnett Street, North Hobart, TAS 7000
Phone: **(03) 6231 5507**

Carers Tasmania also have offices in Launceston and Burnie.

Carers Victoria

Level 1, 37 Albert Street, Footscray, VIC 3011
Phone: **(03) 9396 9500**

Carers WA

Head Office
182 Lord Street, Perth, WA 6000
Phone: **1300 227 377**

Other contacts for carers

Centrelink

Carers line and People with disability: Monday to Friday 8am–5pm, **132 717**.

Lifeline

Phone: **13 11 14**

Lifeline provides 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.

There are also a number of condition-specific health consumer associations which may be able to direct you to supports including Alzheimer's Australia (www.fightdementia.org.au) and Palliative Care Australia (www.palliativecare.org.au)

APPENDIX 1

Carer Workplace Self-Assessment Tool

Awareness and Support	Yes	No
1. Are you aware of how many carers there are within your workplace?		
2. Do you encourage employees to disclose any caring responsibilities they may have?		
3. If an employee self-identifies as a carer, are there processes in place to discuss flexible working options?		
4. If yes, does this include both at the commencement of employment and if a person's circumstances have changed during employment?		
5. Do you use internal intranets, newsletters and other internal communication channels to distribute information to promote carer-awareness?		
6. Do you provide employees who are carers with any information on where to access carer supports?		
7. Are there any supports provided to carers within the workplace? (e.g. a carers group)		

Flexible Working	Yes	No
8. Does your organisation have a formal policy or procedure in place for carers?		
9. Are managers supported to promote flexible working options?		
10. Are managers trained to respond to requests for flexible working?		
11. Are there formal processes in place to consider requests for flexible working?		
12. Are management made aware of the right to request flexible working arrangements outlined in the *Fair Work Act*?		
13. Are employees made aware of the right to request flexible working arrangements outlined in the *Fair Work Act*?		
14. Do you actively involve staff in the development of policies and procedures which are designed to assist employees who are carers?		
15. Would you know if an employee had reduced their hours due to their caring responsibilities?		

Do you provide any of the following?

Leave and Working Arrangements	Yes	No
16. Carers leave – Either planned or emergency, for all carers (not just those with dependent children).		
17. Career break – For when an employee needs to take a longer period out of the workplace.		
18. Purchased leave – To allow employees to build up a bank of leave which can be used for caring responsibilities.		
19. Matched leave – An additional period of leave offered to 'match' annual leave which an employee can take to provide care.		
20. Compassionate leave – For example, following a bereavement or when a person receiving care moves into institutional care.		
21. Unpaid leave – For when other leave options have been exhausted.		
22. Flexi-time – Flexible start and finishing times.		
23. Home-working/Tele-working – Allowing employees to work outside of the office.		
24. Annualised working hours – Completed contract hours, with adjustments to allow for shorter or longer days or weeks across the period of a year.		
25. Job rotation – To move from one job to another for a specific period to reduce work commitments during a period of care.		
26. Term-time working – Working contracted hours but within school terms.		
27. Job sharing – Two or more employees fulfilling the requirements of a single post; or an organisational job share register		
28. Split shifts – To allow an employee to undertake caring responsibilities during certain times of the day.		
29. Compressed working hours – Completing contracted hours in a shorter period than normal (e.g. a 9 day fortnight).		
30. Day extender – Working predominantly in the office but also carrying out additional work at home in the evening.		
31. Phased retirement – Reducing hours progressively over a certain period rather than ceasing work completely.		
32. Flexible combination – Ability to pick and choose, e.g. increasing/decreasing annual or unpaid leave for a particular working pattern.		
33. Graduated return from leave – To assist an employee to adjust to combining work and care.		
34. Does your organisation actively promote any of these working and leave options?		

Recruitment and Retention	Yes	No
35. Does your organisation monitor the cost of recruitment and training?		
36. When filling new positions do you consider full-time, part-time, job-share and other flexible working arrangements?		
37. If yes, do advertisements for new positions specifically mention that flexible arrangements are available?		
38. Does your organisation monitor attrition rates?		
39. Do you conduct exit interviews with staff to ascertain the reasons for leaving?		
40. If yes, does this include questions about caring responsibilities?		

Sample Carer Action Plan Template

Domain	Area	Action	Who is responsible?	Timeline	Deliverable/Outcomes
Recognition and Awareness	e.g. Knowledge of the workforce	Develop & conduct an employee survey on workplace policy & provisions for working carers.	Human Resources	Developed and distributed within 4 months. Repeated annually.	The executive are aware of the rate of carers within the workforce & employee knowledge, utilisation & satisfaction with existing provisions.
	e.g. Recognition of carers	Develop a formal carer policy.	Senior Management with input from staff who are carers.	One-off, reviewed every 24 months.	Carer policy is signed off by the executive & endorsed by the board.
Supporting Carers	e.g. Informing staff	Employees who are carers are given the Work & Care 'Guide for Employees'.	Line managers	Within 3 months & then ongoing.	Employees who identify as carers receive the Guide and it is included in future induction for new staff.
	e.g. Supporting management	Management are given information about carers & training on responding to requests for flexible working arrangements.	Human Resources	12 months.	Training is incorporated into the professional development of the management team.
Evaluating Outcomes & Sharing Best Practice	e.g. Evaluation	Repeat employee satisfaction survey, monitor changes to absence & turnover rates and measure use of flexible work and leave arrangements.	Human Resources & the Executive	12–18 months after baseline survey & policy change.	Outcomes are measured including; changes to attrition & absence rates (& any savings made); changes in employee satisfaction; provisions most utilised.
	e.g. Promotion of carer-friendly practices	Examples of workplace support for carers are promoted on the organisation's website & highlighted in internal communications	Communications team	Updated every 6 months	Staff across the workforce are aware of best-practice examples. Prospective employees see the organisation as an employer of choice.

APPENDIX 3

Sample Carers Policy

You can replace ** as appropriate to adapt this policy for your organisation.

1.1   ** recognises that some people have caring responsibilities and acknowledges carers will constitute a part of the workplace. Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged. ** further recognises that employees may find it difficult to combine paid work and caring responsibilities. We have therefore adopted the following code of good practice in order to support employees who are carers.

1.2   This policy is fully supported by and integrated with other relevant policies such as:

   > Flexible Working Policy

   > Working from Home Guidelines

   > Leave Policy

1.3   This policy applies to all employees of **

1.4   We reserve the right to amend this policy from time to time.

1.5   Staff will not be discriminated against on the grounds of their caring responsibilities. For further information, please refer to the Workplace Diversity Policy.

1.6   Employees are not obliged to disclose to their line manager that they are caring for someone but will be actively encouraged to do so. All line managers should ask their staff if they have caring responsibilities, and will have due regard to issues of confidentiality concerning this information.

1.7   ** welcomes comments and suggestions from all staff on how the organisation may further improve the working environment so it is better equipped to deal with the varying needs of carers within the workplace.

1.8   All employees will be entitled to request time off in order to attend to the sudden needs of the individual they care for. For further information, please refer to the Special Leave section of the Leave Policy.

1.9   All employees are entitled to request work flexibility options (e.g. part-time, work from home etc) in order to attend to the needs of the individual they care for. For further information, please refer to the Flexible Working Policy.

1.10 All employees with caring responsibilities will be entitled to use a telephone at work in connection with their role as a carer. For further information, please refer to the Electronic Communications Policy.

1.11 ** understands the difficulty that some carers face and is committed to providing as much support as is reasonably practicable. We invite carers within our workplace to access and use the resources we make available to carers in the wider community e.g. advice and information etc.

Approved by ** Date ** .

Source: Employers for Carers UK **www.employersforcarers.org**.

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NOTES

TO FIND OUT MORE VISIT THE CARERS AUSTRALIA WEBSITE

www.carersaustralia.com.au