



SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Carers Policy

This policy sets out the terms of agreement reached by those participating in the Council's Consultation and Negotiating Framework.

SMBC can provide information in a range of different ways, for example via the use of large print, audio, summarising large documents, interpretation, translation and British Sign Language interpreting services.

If you require this information in an alternative format or need assistance because English is not your first language, please contact your line manager or nominated Human Resources Advisor in the first instance for further support.

Carers Policy

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1.1	29.01.2019	Updated section 8.2 to show that carer’s leave can be taken in half days or full days
1.2	01.05.2019	Updated to include new Occupational Health and EAP providers
1.3	14.07.2020	Reworded section 10 on Emergency Dependant Leave to mirror the Leave of Absence policy
1.4	June 2022	Refresh due to hybrid working project review. Changes include reference to wellbeing tools, Foster Carer guidance, hybrid working and new Carers Network. Added change to give option to take Carers leave in hours as well as half or full days. In section 8.2 removed need to exhaust other options before using Carers leave. Removal of need to have 26 week’s service to request to take a Carer Break.

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1. Introduction

Solihull Council is a 'Carer Friendly' employer and recognises the valuable role carers provide in supporting their family, friends and the community. This policy relates to the support of employees with caring responsibilities to help them to achieve a balance between the demands of their jobs and personal caring responsibilities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees including those on fixed term contracts and casual/zero-hours workers.

This policy has been developed in line with the following legislation:

- **The Children & Families Act 2014**, which gives all employees the right to request flexible working.
- **The Employment Relations Act 1999**, which gives employees the right to take 'reasonable' time off to deal with unexpected situations involving a dependant.
- **The Equality Act 2010** brings together anti-discrimination acts and regulations. The Act protects carers against direct discrimination or harassment if they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example a disability.
- **The Care Act 2014** gives carers the same rights in respect of promoting wellbeing, accessing needs and providing support where necessary.

The Council has a 'duty of care' towards all of its employees. This places an obligation on the Council to manage and safeguard the physical and psychological wellbeing of carers. To support these objectives, the Council has a range of policies and guidance in place that aims to support wellbeing in the workplace. These policies and guidance documents can be found on the [Intranet](#):

- Sickness Absence Management
- Employee Wellbeing tools including [Individual Wellbeing Action Plans](#)
- Equal Opportunities Policy Statement
- Flexible Working
- Foster Friendly guidance
- Hybrid Working guidance
- Leave of Absence
- Ordinary Parental Leave/Shared Parental Leave

3. Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to supporting employees who have caring responsibilities.
- State the support and information available to carers inside and outside of work.
- Raise awareness and understanding of all employees and managers to the needs of carers.
- Support the recruitment and retention of carers, ensuring they have the same career opportunities as everyone else.
- Create a working environment in which employees feel able to disclose and discuss their caring responsibilities.
- Ensure the wellbeing of carers, recognising that caring can be physically and mentally exhausting.

- Ensure carers do not experience unfair treatment on account of their caring responsibilities

4. Definitions

The Council defines working carers as employees with significant caring responsibilities that have a substantial impact on their working life.

The term 'carer' should not be confused with care worker, or care assistant, who receives payment for looking after someone. It is recognised that carers' needs are different from the needs of employees with mainstream childcare responsibilities.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definition has been adopted for working carers:

'A person in full or part-time employment, who also provides unpaid care for a friend or relation who couldn't cope without their support' (West Midlands Association of Directors of Adult Social Services).

This could be caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, has a physical, sensory or mental impairment, is older and frail, or is affected by substance misuse.

Carers usually fall into one of the five following categories:

- **Adult Carers:** an adult caring for another adult such as a husband, wife, partner, son, daughter, parent, friend, neighbour or other relative,
- **Sandwich Carer:** Usually an adult who cares for a disabled child and finds they are also taking on the responsibility of caring for a parent or older adult,
- **Parent Carers of Children with disabilities:** an adult who cares for a child with a long-term illness or a disability,
- **Young Adult Carers:** aged between 16-25, caring for another with an illness or disability,
- **Young Carers:** a young person under the age of 18, who is in some way affected by the need, to take physical, practical and/or emotional responsibility for the care of another person, usually taking on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate for their age or development.

Caring responsibilities can have a disproportionate impact on the lives of young people and older adults in particular.

It is recognised that these five types of carer are broad groups and that all carers have differing and diverse needs. Some carers provide support from a distance, i.e. where they support a dependant who does not live with them.

The activities that carers undertake are wide ranging, including:

- help with personal care,
- attending medical appointments and treatment,
- help with mobility,
- managing medication,
- practical household tasks,
- providing emotional support; and
- help with care services, benefits, financial matters or administration.

4.1 Foster Carers

The Council is committed to support any employee who is a foster carer. Separate guidance on support given to foster carers can be found on the [Intranet](#).

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Line Manager's responsibilities:

Line managers are key to implementing this policy. Each carer's situation requires a different response from the manager, so managers should take into account the whole range of support options available when putting in place support for carers.

Key responsibilities of line managers include:

- Having identified an employee with caring responsibilities, ensure the employee has access and is aware of the support available to them. This may include Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme, completing a Carer's Agreement with the employee, using the Carer's Checklist and signposting to other policies and external support.
- Create a workplace culture that is supportive of carers, by encouraging employees to make use of the support offered to carers and encouraging discussion around carers' issues.
- Consider requests for flexible working, hybrid working and carer's leave promptly and make decisions in line with the needs of the service.
- To ensure carers are not treated less favourably than other employees.
- Liaise with HR if they have queries about the appropriateness and/or application of carer's leave for any given circumstance.
- Wherever possible, allow the employee to have access to a private telephone and receive appropriate calls in confidence.
- Ensure that time off for carer's leave, dependent care and carer's breaks are correctly recorded on Oracle.
- Review effectiveness of our carer support to the employee through additional one-to-one meetings with carers. Taking action where more can be done to help carers to stay in work.

5.2 Employee's Responsibilities:

- Raise any concerns with their manager, as early as possible, if they feel they are experiencing difficulties managing the balance of work commitments and caring responsibilities.
- Keep their manager as up to date as possible of any changes in circumstances.
- Be flexible with their line manager in assessing options and suggesting alternative ways in which responsibilities and tasks could be undertaken.
- To utilise the external resources available to carers (see section 12 and Appendix 5).
- To share caring responsibilities with other family members, where possible.
- To utilise the other existing arrangements that are available to employees within this policy (e.g. using flex, holiday, flexible working hours, hybrid working arrangements, unpaid leave etc.).
- Be prepared to consider alternative options when their preference cannot be accommodated for business reasons.

5.3 HR's responsibilities:

- Support and advise managers on the policy and promote the options available to them in dealing with employees with caring commitments.
- Maintain and regularly review this policy.

- Develop HR policies and procedures that promote and support the health and wellbeing of carers.
- Assist managers and liaise with Occupational Health, other medical professionals and agencies, as appropriate, in order to support employee carers in maintaining good mental health and wellbeing.
- Review effectiveness of our carer support through annual staff surveys, exit interviews and feedback from the Employee Carer Forum Network. Taking action where more can be done to help carers to stay in work

6. Carers' circumstances

Carers' needs are different from the needs of employees with mainstream childcare responsibilities, and the circumstances of caring are different from those of mainstream childcare.

Caring can be unpredictable and emotionally challenging. An employee may acquire caring responsibilities in an instance, for example, where the employee's parent has a stroke overnight, or caring responsibilities may develop over time, such as where the employee's partner has a debilitating long-term health condition or where a mental health condition deteriorates. With mainstream childcare, the child's development is more predictable as they grow older, go to school and become more independent. The milestones of caring may go in the opposite direction, for example an elderly parent may become more frail and dependent over time, and a disabled child may continue to have significant support needs when they become an adult.

7. Identification and disclosure

Employees are not required to disclose to their line manager that they are caring for someone, but are encouraged to do so if their circumstances are likely to have an impact at work. This will help the Council provide appropriate support to the employee. Line managers will respect the confidentiality of any information provided to them in this regard.

Managers should be mindful that many carers are dealing with highly emotional issues outside of the workplace, so they may find it difficult at times to communicate their expectations and outcomes. When meeting to discuss their circumstances, the employee may wish to bring a work colleague for support which should be encouraged.

When an employee discloses to their line manager that they are a carer, the Council will process any relevant personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which an employee informs the Council of their caring responsibilities is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of supporting the employee in their caring responsibilities (for example when dealing with requests for flexible working).

Employees who are reluctant to disclose their caring responsibilities to their line manager, where there is likely to be an impact at work, are encouraged to approach their HR Advisor for initial advice. However, it is important to note that the matter will need to be raised with their manager at some stage for the appropriate support to be considered

Where a manager knows that an employee in their team has caring responsibilities, the manager should inform the employee about the support available. The manager can complete the Carer's Agreement with the employee, which will be treated confidentially. It is recommended to complete this form together in a 1-1 meeting.

The **Carer's Agreement** scheme is the starting point for a conversation about an employee's caring responsibilities and the flexibility required to manage them alongside work. The scheme documents the carer's needs at work and identifies solutions to those needs, and enables this information to

transfer with the carer if their job or line manager changes. It sets out the contact arrangements between the employee and his/her manager during emergencies. See section 12 and the [Carer's Agreement form](#) on the Intranet for further details. A Carer's Agreement would need to be regularly reviewed, at six month intervals as a minimum, or sooner if circumstances change.

8. Working arrangements

8.1 The Council offers a variety of flexible working options to carers. Any changes in working arrangements can be agreed on a short-term or long-term/permanent basis. Short-term requests can be agreed locally and do not need to follow the formal flexible working policy.

Below are examples of the possible options available to employees:

- **Flexitime:** The Council operates a flexible working hours' scheme for Core Council employees, which can offer some flexibility over the hours worked. For example, an employee may be able to work extra hours and use these to take time off work on another day. Alternatively, flexing start and finish times to help employees deal with caring commitments before and after work. Please refer to the [Flexi-time guidelines](#) for further information.
- **Working from home:** Employees who are able to work in a hybrid way, can discuss with their line manager to work wholly or partly from home, or from another place of work, as a temporary or permanent arrangement where it is suitable. There would be no need to put in a flexible working request in these cases. Please refer to the [Hybrid working guidelines](#) for further information on working in a hybrid way. Employees in job roles that do not offer the flexibility to work in a hybrid way, can submit a flexible working request under the [Flexible Working policy](#).
- **Job-sharing:** Employees may request to perform their job as a job-share, this is where more than one person performs work normally undertaken by one person.
- **Part-time working:** Employees may request to perform their role on a part-time basis, by working shorter days or fewer days per week.
- **Term-time working:** Employees may request to work on a term-time basis by taking unpaid leave during school holidays.
- **Compressed hours:** Employees may request to work their contracted hours over fewer working days.

Some carers may also wish to consider reducing their hours or duties or moving to a lower paid, less demanding job (where possible) to achieve a better balance of continuing in work while caring. Managers and employees should approach these temporary or permanent solutions with an open and creative mind, being willing to consider new and alternative options that balance both the individual's needs and operational requirements. For example, it may be possible in certain situations to temporarily reduce some of the employee's more demanding duties and allow a colleague to undertake them as a career development opportunity. Where it is possible to secure a position at a lower grade, the employee's salary will be adjusted to reflect the grade of the job being undertaken. In these situations, please speak to your HR Advisor on the practicalities of adjusting a role.

In addition to the above, longer-term or permanent requests to change working patterns should be made using the Flexible Working policy available on the Intranet. Managers are not bound to accept the request, but are required to consider it and if denied, must give reasons as to why it was refused.

It is acknowledged that in some places of work such as care homes and childcare facilities, it can be more difficult to offer employees homeworking and flexible working due to operational demands. However, all requests should still be carefully considered and all alternatives explored.

8.2 Other options available to carers/managers to consider

As well as flexible working options, carers and line managers can also consider using the following options to help the carer with balancing their work and caring responsibilities:

- **Purchasing additional annual leave:** Line managers will, where possible, approve annual leave requests from employees who wish to take time off to meet their caring responsibilities. The Council also operates a system whereby employees can buy up to 2 weeks' additional annual leave for Core Council employees (on NJC contracts). Further details are available on the Intranet [Purchasing of additional annual leave](#).
- **Parental Leave:** Employees will qualify for parental leave if they have worked for the Council for at least 1 year and have legal parental responsibility for a child under 18. Employees can take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child. A maximum of 4 weeks can be taken in one year for each qualifying child. Please refer to the [Ordinary Parental Leave](#) policy on the Intranet for further details.
- **Allowing employees to make and receive phone calls in working time:** Wherever possible, line managers will allow the employee the ability to make or receive calls or use other communication devices, in connection with their caring responsibilities and access to a private space to make/receive calls.
- In circumstances where an employee may be required to leave work early at very short notice to provide care, a temporary **car parking space** close to the workplace to enable them to get to and from work more easily should be considered, wherever possible.
- **Authorised paid carers' leave – up to 5 days** (or equivalent working week for part-time staff) per leave year may be granted towards caring duties at the discretion of the line manager. This leave is separate to Emergency Dependant Leave, which is intended for emergency situations (see section 10) and there is no qualifying period for eligibility for Carers' leave. If required, further unpaid leave may be granted depending on the individual's circumstances, with the approval of the Head of Service.
- **Carers leave can be taken in hours, half-days or full days** and should be recorded on Oracle (if half-day or full day). As leave in hours cannot currently be recorded on Oracle, managers will need to take a manual note of the hours used and then record on Oracle when half a day has been used. A carers leave record form can be found on the [Intranet](#). Employees should discuss with line managers, in advance, any leave which they can reasonably expect to need for their caring commitments so that managers and the other members of the team can plan work, meetings and other leave around those dates. Carers' leave not taken during the relevant year cannot be carried forward into the next year.
- **Carers Break:** A short-term, unpaid carer's break may be an appropriate option for employees who require a block of time off work to care for a dependant. The maximum duration of a carer's break is 3 months for each dependant. This will be available to employees who are providing care in situations such as providing end of life care to a dependant.

Carer's breaks are to be taken in blocks of a minimum of one week. This may be suitable in situations where the caring responsibilities can be shared with another person. A 'week'

is equivalent to the length of time an employee normally works during their contractual working week. Carers who have a long-term need for reduced working should consider making a request in line with the guidance given in section 8.1 above.

Requests for carer's breaks can be submitted by the employee to their line manager, detailing the circumstances of the request, on the application form found in Appendix 2. However, it is acknowledged that there will be occasions when it will not be possible to complete the form due to the urgency of the situation.

In circumstances where an employee is providing end of life care (or in other exceptional circumstances), consideration will be given to an element of paid leave where all other options have been exhausted, e.g. use of holiday, flexi, paid carer's leave etc. Approval for paid breaks is jointly required from the Head of Service/Assistant Director and the Head of Human Resources.

Please refer to Appendix 1 and 2 for further details of the eligibility of taking a Carer's break and the application form.

A Carer's Checklist listing all of the above options is available in Appendix 4 for carers and their line managers to consider to assist them with a work/life balance between caring and work duties.

9. Time off for attending appointments with the cared for person

Employees should discuss with their line manager any known leave needs relating to their caring commitments. This will help the manager and the other members of the team to plan work and other leave arrangements.

For carers that work in a hybrid way, appointments can be attended in the working day using carer's leave, as agreed in advance with the line manager. Or the employee may wish to take unpaid leave or use flexi-time where paid carer's leave has been exhausted.

Where hybrid working is not possible, the carer should discuss and agree the arrangements in advance with their line manager. This may include taking unpaid/paid carer's leave (depending on the number of paid days already used); taking annual leave, using flexi-time, or make the time up.

10. Emergency Dependant Leave

Employees with caring responsibilities cannot always plan ahead for time off. The ability to take leave in an emergency is important for carers, who may be called on at short notice.

Employees have the statutory right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to assist or make arrangements for the care of their dependants, known as 'Emergency Dependant Leave'. There is no qualifying period for eligibility. Line managers may grant up to **3 days** paid leave (this is not pro-rata'd for part time employees) during a 12 month rolling period for carers, depending upon the circumstances at times of urgent and unforeseen need. This type of leave is for emergency use only and not for pre-planned occurrences, for which the Carer's Leave entitlement can be used.

Paid compassionate leave may also be granted on other grounds such as the critical illness of a close relative. Employees who wish to take time off for dependants should refer to the Leave of Absence policy on the [Intranet](#). Managers should ensure that this is recorded correctly on Oracle.

Core Council employees on the flexi time scheme may be able to make up the hours lost at another time, at the line manager's discretion, where this would be appropriate.

11. Bereavements

In the sad event of the death of the cared for person, the Council grants employees the ability to take compassionate leave. Employees should refer to the Council's Leave of Absence policy on the [Intranet](#) for further details.

Employees should be reminded of the Employee Assistance Programme details so that they can access emotional support and counselling where appropriate. The service also can provide advice on handling practical matters and benefits following a death.

Details of bereavement charities that offer bereavement counselling and advice can also be found via the [Employee Wellbeing](#) pages of the Intranet.

12. Other support for Carers

Employees with caring responsibilities, together with their line manager, should also consider whether or not the following adjustments and support mechanisms would help to combine work with caring duties:

- **Carer's Agreement:**

A Carer's Agreement scheme has been introduced to support SMBC employees who have specific caring responsibilities. Where adjustments are made to working arrangements, the Carer's Agreement form will provide a record, which can be reviewed if the employee's job role changes or their caring responsibilities change. The agreement can include details such as any temporary working arrangements, adjustments to the role/workplace e.g. allowing access to take personal calls at work regarding caring responsibilities etc. The agreement also sets out contact arrangements between the employee/manager during emergencies. The contents of the agreement are confidential and a copy is kept by both the employee and line manager which should be regularly reviewed.

The Carer's Agreement template can be found on the [Intranet](#) and an example of a completed Agreement can be found in Appendix 3.

- **Occupational Health:**

Health Management Limited (HML) provides a comprehensive occupational health service which is focused on pro-active intervention to help support employees stay in work or to assist those rehabilitating after a period of long-term sickness absence. Line managers can contact the Occupational Health team directly to discuss the management of particular health conditions. Referrals to Occupational Health are made online by the line manager on the HealthHub website following a discussion with the employee: <https://hub.healthmanagement.co.uk>.

Further details and instructions can be found on the HR section of the Council Intranet/school's Extranet.

- **Employee Assistance Programme**

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is an employee benefit designed to help employees to deal with personal and professional problems which could be affecting their home or work life, health or general wellbeing. The programme is run by an organisation

called **Health Assured**.

This is a confidential facility that will provide information, expert advice and structured counselling by telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service gives employees a place to turn for support any time of day or night, 365 days a year. Support is available for whatever issues you might be facing; personal or work-related problems. The service can offer information and advice on some of the practical issues that carers may face, including benefits and allowances, organising respite care, health advice, financial and debt management and obtaining specialised equipment.

To use the confidential service, you can contact the freephone number **0800 028 0199**.

Or you can use the email facility on their website or via the instant web chat facility via the website:

www.healthassuredeap.co.uk using the following login details:

Username: **Solihull**

Password: **MBC**

There is also '**My Healthy Advantage**' **Mobile App** and an Online Health & Wellbeing Portal that offers employees access to online webinars, factsheets and tailored programmes online, allowing them to take control of their wellbeing independently, or alongside their counselling support. The 'My Healthy Advantage' app provides an enhanced set of wellbeing tools and features designed to improve your mental and physical health by using personal metrics to set goals and achievements. It is available on the Apple Store and Google Play store and you will need to use the **employer code which is MHA109491**.

- [Employee Wellbeing pages of the Intranet](#): The Employee Wellbeing section of the Council's Intranet has links to lots of local and national resources for caring, charities and campaigns.

SMBC Carers Network –The Carer network was set up to recognise and support the employee carers at the Council. It can be both a source of information for carers as well as a way to improve their wellbeing and provide an opportunity for peer support. The group meet on a quarterly basis and discuss the key issues facing carers, sharing experiences (if they want to) and tips, discussing how to balance work and caring responsibilities, gathering ideas and feedback to help shape Council carer strategies and policy. For more information please contact the Council's Wellbeing Lead, Deryn Bishop, in Human Resources.

- [Guide for Employed Carers](#) – A useful document for carers detailing carer's rights at work, rights to an assessment and how to get the support you need.

Outside of work, all carers have a right to an assessment of their needs as a result of the Children and Families Act if you care for a child with an illness or impairment, or the Care Act if you care for an adult. This right also applies if you haven't yet started to provide care but intend to do so. For more information and FAQs, please visit the Solihull Council website pages on the [Care Act](#).

- **Credit Union** – A facility to save monthly through SMBC salary deductions. The aim of credit unions is to encourage its members to save regularly and/or provide loans to members at very low rates of interest.

- **Jointly**- a free, innovative mobile and online app designed to support carers. It provides a central place to store information about the person you are caring for. Set up appointments, allocate tasks, save files and notes, manage medication and lots more. Visit www.carersdigital.org using the free access code: DGTL2992.
- You can do an **online check** of your entitlement to benefits as a carer by using the government's **Benefits Adviser calculator**.
- **Trade unions** - if you are a trade union member, you can seek help and guidance from your trade union representative.
- Details of other support available to carers can be found in Appendix 5.

APPENDIX 1

CARER'S BREAK

What is a Carer's Break?

A Carer's Break is a temporary unpaid break from work, to care for a dependant. The purpose of a Carer's Break is to enable carers some additional flexibility to deal with short-term requirements. Examples of the way that a carers' break might be used are:

- To set up and/or settle a dependant into a new care arrangement;
- To support a dependant who has an acute caring need (such as following an accident/operation, or due to illness or disability);
- To care for a dependant at the end of their life.

Carer's breaks are to be taken in blocks of a minimum of one week, up to a maximum of 3 months. A 'week' is equivalent to the length of time an employee normally works in a contractual week.

In circumstances where an employee is providing end of life care (or in other exceptional circumstances), consideration will be given to an element of paid leave where all other options have been exhausted, e.g. use of holiday, flexi, paid carer's leave etc. Approval for paid breaks is jointly required from the Head of Service/Assistant Director and the Head of Human Resources.

Who is eligible for the scheme?

- Employees must have caring responsibilities as detailed in section 4 of the policy.

Parents wishing to take unpaid leave for family responsibilities which fall under the scope of the provisions of the unpaid parental leave scheme should use that scheme.

How do I apply for a Carer's Break?

The employee should give as much notice as possible to apply for a Carer's Break, although it is acknowledged that in certain circumstances, caring responsibilities can be unforeseen. To apply for a break, the employee should complete the Carer's Break application form and discuss the anticipated length of the break with their line manager as soon as possible. In all situations, the respective HR Advisor should be consulted to jointly determine the most appropriate arrangements for the employee.

Whilst each request will be dealt with sensitively, the granting of a Carer Break and the length of the break will be entirely at the Council's discretion and will depend on the needs of the service at the time in question. Line managers are expected to give careful consideration to all requests ensuring consistency of approach after seeking advice from HR. Where it is not possible to agree a request, alternatives should be explored.

Carer's Breaks will count as a period of continuous service so you will normally accrue annual leave. You should give as much notice as possible if you wish to return before the end of an agreed break period, so that the line manager can make arrangements for your return and end the cover arrangements.

If more time off work is still required, this would be outside of the Carer's Break scheme and will require a discussion with the line manager. It may be that the employee has to resign if they require ongoing time off to care, but the Council will ensure that all other options have been exhausted first. If the employee does not return to work following the Carer Break, they must give the Council written notice of their intention not to return and that they are resigning from the organisation.

For any further assistance on Carer's Breaks and how a period of unpaid leave can affect your pension and other benefits please refer to the FAQs document on the [Intranet](#), or contact your HR Advisor.

APPLICATION FOR A CARER'S BREAK

**DATA PROTECTION
FAIR PROCESSING NOTICE**

All information supplied on this form may be held and used as detailed below:

The form will be passed to the Human Resources department to process your Carer's Break leave. The line manager will also retain a copy of the form to manage the Carer's Break and to allow effective workforce management.

The information you provide may be shared with third parties such as the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), HMRC and pension scheme providers.

For further information about how we use your information please refer to the Council's Data Protection Policy on the [Intranet](#) and Privacy Statement on www.solihull.gov.uk.

NAME:	
JOB TITLE:	
DIRECTORATE:	
EMPLOYEE NO:	

REQUESTED START DATE OF CARER BREAK:	
ANTICIPATED LENGTH OF CARER BREAK:	
REASON FOR TAKING A CARER BREAK: (Please provide details of who you will be caring for)	
EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE:	
DATED:	
LINE MANAGER NAME:	
LINE MANAGER SIGNATURE:	
DATED:	
OUTCOME: If denied, please give reasons for declining request with a written explanation.	
DATE EMPLOYEE NOTIFIED:	

Requests for paid leave should be forwarded by the Line Manager to your Head of Service and Head of Human Resources for consideration, with this form.

EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED CARER'S AGREEMENT

(Blank template agreement forms can be found on the [Intranet](#))

<p style="text-align: center;">Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council CARER'S AGREEMENT EXAMPLE Private and Confidential</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Copy of this Carer Agreement to be retained by the employee and line manager</p>				
EMPLOYEE: Mary JOB TITLE: XXXX		MANAGER: XXXX JOB TITLE: XXXX		DATE: XXXXXX
Details of caring responsibilities?	How does this impact on the employee, in maintaining their role at work?	What adjustments would help?	Agreed actions	Review date
<p>Mary is the sole carer for her adult son, who was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia 12 years ago.</p> <p>Mary's son is extremely vulnerable and relies on constant reassurance from her at all times.</p>	<p>Mary needs to be available to offer him support and occasionally has to leave the office at short notice. This causes Mary to worry about the impact it has on the team at work.</p> <p>Mary needs to attend medical appointments with her son every other month.</p>	<p>An informal arrangement put in place so that son is able to call her at work if he is having an episode. Use of a private meeting room to take the calls.</p> <p>Allowing Mary to leave when her son needs her and to also work from home two days a week</p>	<p>Mary to use a nearby meeting room to take any calls. Line Manager to explain situation to rest of team (but maintaining confidentiality of situation).</p> <p>Mary to advise Line Manager of any advance medical appointments.</p>	To begin on DATE and review situation every 2 months.
Mary also has an elderly mother who suffers from various health conditions. She	Mary may need to respond to emergency situations and ask for	An informal agreement in place so that Mary can leave	Agreement in principle between Line Manager and Mary that she can leave in emergency situations. Mary should	To review every 2 months.

checks on her every day after work.	<p>time off at short notice to attend to her mother.</p> <p>Caring for two people is taking its toll on Mary and is affecting her wellbeing.</p> <p>Consider if there are any other family members that could share the caring role.</p>	<p>at short notice in emergency situations without worrying. Manager to identify cover arrangements in the team to alleviate any worry or stress from Mary on work building up in her absence.</p>	<p>notify NAME in the Line Manager's absence.</p> <p>Line Manager to provide Mary with copy /refer her to the Carer's policy, Employee Wellbeing intranet pages and the Employee Assistance Programme for support and advice for Carers.</p> <p>Complete an individual Wellness Action Plan with Mary to help her identify and manage when she is feeling stressed.</p>	<p>Ensure that Mary's wellbeing is discussed at her 1-1 meetings.</p>
I consent to my Line Manager retaining a copy of my Carer Agreement				
Signed and agreed by Employee		Date		
Signed and agreed by Manager		Date		

CARER'S CHECKLIST

Below is a checklist of various solutions for carers and their line managers to consider to assist with a work/life balance between caring and work duties.

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure carer has been given details of the Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health (when applicable) and signposted to further carer information.	
Consider flexible working (temporary basis or permanent) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of hours - Flexible working patterns - Compressed hours - Homeworking - Re-arranging shifts/rotas 	
Using some annual leave / purchasing additional leave if needed	
Using flexi-hours scheme (where available)	
Consider moving to a lower paid, less demanding job (only where appropriate)	
Understand the statutory right to unpaid time off for dealing with emergency situations for dependants (SMBC offer up to 3 days paid leave in crisis situations – see Leave of Absence policy for details)	
Consider Parental Leave (if have children under 18) if appropriate	
Explain the right to have Paid Carer's Leave – allows time off to deal with carer duties (up to 5 days per year – pro-rata for part-time staff). Explain about a Carer's Break – a break from work to undertake carer duties where appropriate (Between 1 week – 3 months)	
A Carer's Agreement has been drawn up between employee and their line manager	

Other resources available to carers / useful links

- **Carers Trust Solihull**- Independent information and support for carers. <http://www.solihullcarers.org/>.
- **Carers Trust** - Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers.
- **Carers UK** provides expert information and advice that is tailored to your situation. They can champion your rights and support you in finding new ways to manage at home, at work, or wherever you are.
- A useful booklet from **Carers UK** on how technology devices can make life much easier for carers is available on the [Intranet](#).
- **Macmillan Cancer support & Marie Curie Cancer Care**
- **Alzheimer's Society & Dementia Friends**
- **Solihull Mind (for Solihull residents)** www.solihullmind.org.uk. Contact number 0121 742 4941/743 4237 email: contact@solihullmind.org.uk
- [Age UK](#)
- **NHS choices** have a website that offers information and practical advice for anyone experiencing mental ill health issues. For more information, go to www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth.
- **Rethink Mental Illness** is the largest national voluntary sector provider of mental health services, offering support groups, advice and information on mental health problems. For more information, go to www.rethink.org or call 0300 5000 927.
- [MS Society](#)
- [The Stroke Association](#)
- **Solihull Integrated Alcohol Service (SIAS)**. This service helps individuals and their families to overcome drug, alcohol and gambling dependency. <http://www.sias-solihull.org.uk>
- [EASS \(Equality Advisory Support Service\)](#) – This is a helpline to advise and assist individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights.
- [EHRC \(Equality and Human Rights Commission\)](#) – This is an independent government service that provides information, advice and support on equality and rights at work.
- [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) – This service provides free advice on issues affecting people's lives, work, benefits, debt and money, family and housing.
- [Department for Work & Pensions](#) – Information about benefits for carers.
- [ACAS](#) – for advice on employment law, the Equality Act and your rights.