

Guidance document for Manager's dealing with Carer's Leave.

Carers play an important role in families, communities and broader society by supporting others to have a better quality of life. While caring can be extremely rewarding, it can also be stressful and isolating. Undertaking caring responsibilities alongside paid work may worsen these difficulties

Ensuring the university has a clear and supportive policy can encourage carers to seek support when needed. Creating a culture of support within the university will support carers to feel comfortable in the workplace and able to raise any issues they may be experiencing.

Colleagues will need to give notice before taking leave. Colleagues are already entitled to take emergency time off for dependants (this is unpaid). Carer's leave is intended for planned and foreseen caring situations that carers wish to prepare for.

Manager's responsibilities

Managers are responsible for the dissemination and implementation of the Carer's Leave policy within their teams and signposting to relevant sources of advice or support.

It is important, where possible, to encourage colleagues to talk to their manager about their carer responsibilities so that there is a shared understanding of the responsibilities and where leave might be needed. However, once eligibility for Carer's Leave is established (see the policy), **managers do not have the right to ask for proof of carer appointments etc.**

Managers can liaise with their HR Manager to seek professional advice and guidance on the implementation of the policy. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that colleagues are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the policy and understand what is expected of them.

It is very important that Carer's Leave is recorded correctly and promptly. This is because there are pay elements that need attention immediately the Carer's Leave is given and to ensure that colleagues are treated fairly and consistently across the University. As there are elements of both paid and unpaid leave for Carer's Leave, please ensure that the completed Carer's Leave form is sent to HR to allow for payroll amendments where these are needed.

Managers should be supportive towards colleagues who are carers so they can continue to work alongside their caring responsibilities. Managers (and the University) have a duty of care to consider the employee's health and wellbeing. We recognise that these duties also have to be managed alongside the need to run the team and ensure the delivery of work. Please seek the advice of HR if you need support with this.

HR responsibilities

HR are responsible for overseeing the introduction, operation and monitoring of the policy and reporting on its use. HR are also responsible for providing training and guidance to support line managers on the implementation of the policy.

HR are responsible for promoting the adoption of consistent and fair application of the policy. HR may be asked to report on the use of the policy across areas to the senior team.

Operation of the Policy

Colleagues have access to a variety of different types of leave, depending on their individual eligibility for each. They have annual leave which may need to be used for a range of issues to do with their domestic situation or responsibilities as well as for 'holidays'. They have access to emergency leave (Time off for Dependents) where they have to respond to an urgent issue to resolve care. This is unpaid. There are specific types of paid leave for parents around maternity, adoption, shared parental leave, paternity leave and managers should refer to the relevant policies in the first instance. There is also compassionate leave but this is limited to specific circumstances and close family members (see the policy for definitions). There is a Flexible Working Policy which enables colleagues to request working patterns that may help them with their work/life balance (eligibility for Flexible Working is a day one right and is not dependent on carer responsibilities).

It is important for reasons of fairness, consistency and equal access for colleagues across the university that managers apply authorisation of leave clearly and fairly. It is also important that all leave is recorded so that the university can manage its duty of care towards individual colleagues and understand the use and effectiveness of its policies, as well as contribute to statutory and regulatory reporting on leave.

1. Establish the eligibility for Carer's leave – the policy outlines the eligibility criteria.
2. If possible, have a conversation with the colleague so that you are aware of their carer responsibilities and how these may need support/impact on their work. Remember that caring for someone can be very unpredictable and difficult to plan for, and requests may come at a difficult time for the team.
3. If someone discloses their role as a carer to their manager it should be treated as confidential and any consent to share this information with others in the team should be made explicit. Leave must be communicated with HR.
4. Once colleagues have identified themselves as carers and established their eligibility they do not have to prove or demonstrate their need any further. That means, for example, they don't have to show an appointment letter for the person they care for, they don't have to explain what the purpose of the carer leave request is beyond making it clear that it is a request for Carer's Leave.
5. The manager should meet the Carer's Leave request if this is possible. If not, the policy gives guidance on how leave may be delayed if there is a pressing business need to do so.
6. It will be helpful to use the Carer's Leave form to collect the relevant information and keep track of Carer's Leave authorisation and whether this is

paid or unpaid. The leave can be taken flexibly, i.e., not in whole days or blocks of days -see the policy for guidance.