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CARER'S POLICY

Policy Statement

This policy is integral to the organisation's commitment to being a great place to work for everyone, and it seeks to benefit the welfare of individual colleagues; retain valued colleagues; improve morale and performance and enhance the reputation of Public Health Wales.

- The policy brings together all relevant supporting organisational policy and procedures.
- It describes our commitment to supporting those with caring responsibilities, and enabling them to find a balance between caring and professional roles.
- It complies with the Carer's Leave Act 2023 and subsequent Regulations 2024 - <https://www.gov.uk/carers-leave> which includes:
 - From 6 April 2024, colleagues will be entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:
 - a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
 - a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
 - care needs because of their old age
 - The dependant does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care.
 - Colleagues are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of work for PHW. Their employment rights (like holidays and returning to their job) are protected during carer's leave.

Carers will be encouraged to use all relevant policies and schemes available to find a suitable balance to support their working and caring responsibilities. For example, flexible work and agile working principles should be implemented in a flexible way which supports colleagues with a caring responsibility.

Managers are required to be supportive of colleagues with caring responsibilities in enabling them to combine working and caring responsibilities that meet both the needs of the individual, and the organisation.

The 'We Care' network will amplify carers' voices from across the organisation and will monitor compliance with this policy.

This policy also contributes to our responsibilities under the [Carers' Leave Act 2023](#), the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [Social Services and Well-being Wales Act 2014](#) and supports our commitment to our colleague networks.

Policy Commitment

Public Health Wales is committed to creating a vibrant, inclusive, and healthy culture where all our people are supported to thrive.

As an organisation, we have a duty of care for our staff and, in line with our values of working together with trust and respect to make a difference, we want all staff to be treated with dignity, trust and respect, and with a kind and compassionate approach.

We are committed to creating and nurturing a positive, flexible and sustainable work environment. Our commitment is to be an exemplar organisation for wellbeing, where our staff are supported to ensure that their experience of work enables them to be healthier, happier in work, and able to be at their best.

Public Health Wales recognises that colleagues with caring responsibilities may find it difficult at times to balance working life with a caring role.

This policy provides a framework for consistent and fair practice when considering the caring responsibilities of our colleagues and support that may be needed to help them balance their working and caring commitments, whilst still progressing in their career.

The organisation will not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the basis of a person's caring responsibilities and we aim to give carers the same recruitment, training and career opportunities as colleagues who do not have caring responsibilities. Colleagues who have identified themselves as a carer will not be treated unfairly or disadvantaged as a result.

Supporting Procedures and Written Control Documents

[All corporate policies and procedures are available on the Public Health Wales website](#)

- [Special Leave Policy](#)
- [Flexible Working Policy](#)
- [Work How it Works Best Policy](#)
- [Annual Leave Policy](#)
- [Employment Break Scheme](#)
- [Family Leave Policy](#)
- [Managing Attendance at Work Policy](#)
- [Mental Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [My Contribution Policy](#)

- [Being Our Best Framework](#)

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, and staff on secondment within Public Health Wales, enabling them to balance their working and caring commitments.

It provides advice for managers on supporting colleagues with caring responsibilities and information for colleagues on options available to balance their working and caring commitments.

Impact Assessments	List here all the impact assessments that have been completed for the Policy including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA)
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Accountable Executive Director/Director	Neil Lewis, Director People & OD
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Disclaimer

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Summary of reviews/amendments

Version number	Date of Review	Date of Approval	Date published	Summary of Amendments

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1. Introduction

Public Health Wales is committed to creating a vibrant, inclusive, and healthy culture where all our people are supported to thrive.

We are committed to creating and nurturing a positive, flexible and sustainable work environment. Our commitment is to be an exemplar organisation for wellbeing, where our staff are supported to ensure that their experience of work enables them to be healthier, happier in work, and able to be at their best.

Public Health Wales recognises that colleagues with caring responsibilities may find it difficult at times to balance working life with a caring role.

This policy provides a framework for consistent and fair practice when considering the caring responsibilities of our colleagues and support that may be needed to help them balance their working and caring commitments, whilst still progressing in their career.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, and staff on secondment within Public Health Wales, enabling them to balance their working and caring commitments.

It provides advice for managers on supporting colleagues with caring responsibilities and information for colleagues on options available to balance their working and caring commitments.

3. Definition of a Carer

Public Health Wales defines Carers as any colleagues who care, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction needs their help.

These caring responsibilities may be wide ranging and include (but are not limited to):

- personal care
- help with the dependant's mobility
- assistance with the management of medication
- practical support such as housework, help with financial matters and administration
- attending medical and other appointments
- emotional support.

A caring responsibility may happen overnight, with someone close to you suddenly becoming ill or having an accident. It may also be a more gradual commitment, such as for elderly or disabled dependants who need help, or for a dependent or partner living with a progressive or degenerative condition.

Not everyone recognises themselves as Carers; the care of an ill, older or disabled loved one is often just considered a part of everyday life for many people. Employees providing this care may not even identify as a Carer themselves, remaining unaware that support is available to them both inside and outside of work.

You can self-declare your status as [a working carer on ESR](#). The purpose of this will be for gathering data on the workforce, to help provide a true number of the working carers across the organisation. The information will not be visible to your line manager.

Colleagues are encouraged to let their line manager know that they have caring responsibilities so that appropriate support is provided, through the [My Contribution](#) process and the [PHW Workplace Passport](#). Such information will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy.

4. Support for Carers

The organisation has a staff network for Carers called the 'We Care' Network and you can contact them on PHW.WeCareNetwork@wales.nhs.uk You can find information about the network and how to join it [here](#). The network meets regularly and provides a safe space for carers across the organisation to confidentially share concerns, information and to be listened to.

The organisation recognises that caring responsibilities can be unpredictable, demanding and impact on the Carer's health and wellbeing, and we aim to provide as much support as is reasonably practicable for individuals.

Colleagues with caring responsibilities for children should find out about the parental leave available, outlined in the [Family Leave Policy](#) Flexible working and emergency leave may also be useful to you.

Colleagues with caring responsibilities for adult dependants can apply for the following options for support:

- a) [Flexible working](#) (including options for flexitime, compressed hours, homeworking, job-sharing, part-time

working, term-time working, annualised hours, shift-swapping, voluntary reduced time

- b) Paid emergency leave for dealing with unexpected issues at short notice, more details to be found in the [Special Leave Policy](#).
- c) Unpaid Carers Leave – up to 5 days per year please see provisions for the [Carers Act 2023](#)

Carer's leave may be taken:

- as a single block
- as a number of shorter periods of hours (to covers appointments etc) and half days, full days, half-week and week blocks.

Colleagues should contact their line manager as early as possible to inform them of the particular caring commitment and to request leave.

Where a colleague has to accompany someone to a planned appointment, they should give their line manager as much notice as possible. [Ideally any notice required is proportionate to the amount of leave being taken and with no notice required for periods below 3 days.]

For colleagues who have ongoing caring responsibilities for a dependant, these will be dealt with on an individual basis. Any difficult to resolve situations should be referred to the People and Organisational Development (People and OD) team for advice and support by emailing PeopleSupport.PHW@wales.nhs.uk .

The organisation will provide temporary cover wherever possible, where there is a lengthy absence due to caring responsibilities.

- d) [Additional Annual Leave purchase scheme](#) – up to a maximum of 10 days for full time colleagues, pro rata for part time, may be purchased in the leave year from April to March. Refer to the link above for information on making an application for additional annual leave.
- e) [Work How it Works Best](#) – the needs of colleagues with caring responsibilities may be very simple and may not require time

out of the workplace, but may require flexibility and understanding.

- f) On site parking is available at some but not all PHW sites. At CQ2, there are limited spaces in the multi storey car park on site.

Each Directorate has an allocation of spaces which may be pre-booked. Each Directorate operates a different system, so please contact your line manager to find out more about this.

You first need to register your car with Facilities – send an email with your name, directorate and car reg to PHW.Facilities@wales.nhs.uk and the information will be forwarded to the landlord of the carpark and Facilities will make a note for their database. It's usually 48 hours before plate is added.

- g) Confidential support is available for individual colleagues from the [employee assistance programme](#) and this may include counselling if appropriate, in addition to practical information and advice.

Support and further information is available from:-

- [We Care Network](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#)
- [Occupational Health](#)
- [People and Organisational Development Directorate](#)
- [Trade Union Representatives](#)
- [Employee Wellbeing pages](#)
- [Carers Wales](#)
- [Employers for Carers](#)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 People Managers

Managers have a responsibility to seek out and take advantage of any opportunities to learn about Carers and the ways in which they can support them in the workplace.

[Employers for Carers](#) provide training through our corporate membership. To get logon details, please [contact the Co-Chairs](#) of the We Care network.

Managers should make every effort to ensure that all colleagues are aware of this policy, and understand their own and the employer's responsibilities.

Managers should encourage colleagues to disclose that they have caring responsibilities through ongoing discussion of Carer's issues and highlighting the support available. This can be undertaken both ad hoc and as part of the My Contribution Process and through encouraging use of the [PHW Workplace Passport](#).

Managers should discuss the Carer's support options available for colleagues. For any questions in relation to these discussions, contact [People and OD](#) in the first instance.

Managers will consider all requests for Carer's support sympathetically and will not discriminate against those colleagues who have caring responsibilities. All colleagues must be treated fairly and consistently. Colleagues need to be confident that they will not be treated less favourably if they take up any support available to Carers.

The organisation will take seriously and investigate any complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, using the agreed procedures and respecting confidentiality.

All requests for Carer's support must be dealt with confidentially and in a timely manner, in accordance with the data protection policy.

Managers will support colleagues in informing their colleagues about the situation if appropriate, and only with their express permission.

5.2 Colleagues

Colleagues are encouraged to inform their manager if they are caring for someone and need any support, so that they can best balance work and care commitments.

Colleagues are encouraged to note their Carer status on ESR, and to consider joining the We Care staff network.

Colleagues should report any instances of harassment, victimisation or discrimination experienced because of their caring responsibilities.

6. Process - How to take carer's leave (Carers Leave Act 2023)

Colleagues need to give their employer notice before they want their leave to start. The request does not have to be in writing, however

for monitoring take up of this leave, colleagues are asked to use the Special Leave Application Form. Unpaid leave needs to be put on ESR by payroll. Line managers need to forward the completed form to NWSSP.Payroll.PHW@wales.nhs.uk . Colleagues do not need to give evidence of their dependant's care needs.

Carer's leave may be taken as a single block, or as a number of shorter periods of hours (to covers appointments etc) and half days, full days, half-week and week blocks.

Colleagues should contact their line manager as early as possible to inform them of the particular caring commitment and to request leave.

If you need time off to look after someone in an emergency, please refer to the [Special Leave Policy](#).

Employers cannot refuse a carer's leave request but can ask the colleague to take it at a different time. They can only do this if the colleague's absence would cause serious disruption to the organisation.

If they delay it, the employer must:

- agree another date within one month of the requested date for the leave
- put the reason for the delay and new date in writing to the colleague within 7 days of the original request, and before the requested start date of the leave

7. Process - How to record status as a Working Carer on ESR

- Log into ESR
- On the Main Portal page, scroll down to "My Personal Information"
- At the bottom of this box is a blue button, "Update My Information"
- On the next screen, click on the "My Wellbeing Information" to the right of "My Address" and "My Emergency Contacts"
- Here you can use the radio buttons on a range of options, including Working Carer
- Click on "Save" to complete the update.

8. Workplace Passport

[The passport](#) has been developed with the aim of improving the ease with which employees can liaise with their current or new managers regarding support and/or adjustments they may need.

It is a voluntary document which you can share with as many or as few colleagues as you want and helps the organisation to help you by ensuring the support required is in place.

The Passport is supported by the [Being Our Best Framework](#) and [Work How It Works Best](#) way of working.

9. Advice and guidance

In the event that individuals need to use this Policy/ Procedure/ Scheme, advice and guidance can be sought from [People and OD](#).

10. Records Management

All documents generated under this procedure are official records of Public Health Wales and will be managed and stored and utilised in accordance with the Public Health Wales' Guidance on Record Retention and Destruction.

11. Equality, Welsh Language and Health Impact Assessment

This policy is inclusive of all staff regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. An Equality, Welsh Language and Health Impact Assessment has been completed and has not identified any potential negative impacts (unintended consequences) or gaps.

This policy will be made available in Welsh on our Policy webpages.

12. Review and feedback

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time or sooner if required.

The named lead will monitor this policy to ensure it is compliant with current legislation, to ensure it is effectively implemented, and ensure that it is reviewed in accordance with the timetable for review.

We are continually looking to improve our employment practices and welcome any feedback you may have in relation to this Policy. Feedback can be provided by emailing, [People and OD](#). You may also wish to feedback via your Trade Union representative.

Appendix 1 – Extract from Carers Act 2023

[Carers' Leave Act 2023](#)

Summary

From 6 April 2024, colleagues will be entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
- a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- care needs because of their old age

The dependant does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care.

Colleagues are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of work for Public Health Wales. Their employment rights (like holidays and returning to their job) are protected during carer's leave.

Length of time to be taken

Colleagues can take up to one week of leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 3 days a week, they can take 3 days of carer's leave.

They can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days throughout the year.

If a colleague needs to care for more than one person, they cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependant. They can only take one week every 12 months. They can use the week of leave on more than one dependant.

If a colleague is a parent, they can take up to 18 weeks' [leave to look after their child](#). This is separate to carer's leave. More information is provided in the [Family Leave Procedure](#) in section 10.1.

Colleagues with irregular working patterns

Work out how much carer's leave the colleague can take if their working hours change each week.

1. Add up the total number of hours worked in the previous 12 months.
2. Divide that total by 52 (or however many weeks since they started the job, if they've been in the job less than a year).

This is the amount of leave they can take as carer's leave.

If a colleague wants to take carer's leave in their first week, use the amount they're expected to work in a week as the amount of leave they can take.