



<b>POLICY/PROCEDURE INFORMATION (Policy no HR038)</b>	
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Carers Policy</b> <i>(This policy is non-contractual and is subject to periodic review and will be amended according to service development needs).</i>
<b>Applicable to</b>	All employees of Nottinghamshire Hospice
<b>Target Audience</b>	Others such as agents, consultants and other representatives of Nottinghamshire Hospice may be required to comply with the policy as a condition of appointment.
<b>Date issued</b>	30 Apr 2024
<b>Next review date</b>	30 Apr 2027
<b>Lead responsible for Policy</b>	Director of People Services
<b>Policy reviewed by</b>	Director of People Services
<b>Notified to (when)</b>	Strategy and Corporate Governance Group 30 Apr 2024
<b>Authorised by (when)</b>	Strategy and Corporate Governance Group 30 Apr 2024
<b>CQC Standard if applicable</b>	Well-led
<b>Links to other Hospice Policies</b>	<a href="#">Disciplinary Policy and Procedure HR024</a> <a href="#">Family Leave Policy HR002</a> <a href="#">Working From Home Policy HR020</a> <a href="#">Bullying and Harassment Policy HR022</a> <a href="#">Grievance Policy HR023</a> <a href="#">Flexible Working Policy HR030</a> <a href="#">Sickness Absence Policy HR003</a>
<b>Links to external policies</b>	Nottinghamshire Carers Association Carers Policy
<b>Summary</b>	This policy outlines the support Nottinghamshire Hospice offers to staff that have caring responsibilities and the guidance it provides for managers.
<b>This policy replaces</b>	Carers Policy HR0038 2023-4

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Staff should refer to the Hospice website the most up to date Policy. If the review date of this document has passed it is still valid for 3 months. After that staff should seek advice from their clinical lead or manager.

<b>VERSION CONTROL</b>		
<b>Status</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Original policy written by Director of People Services	Feb 2023	
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Updated control sheet and published on website	May 2024	

## INDEX

<b>Section</b>	<b>Contents Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.	Introduction	4
2.	Definition of Carers	4
3.	Identification and Disclosure	5
4.	Time off to Care for Dependants	6
5.	Flexible Working Policies	6
6.	Practical Support	9
7.	Working Time	10
8.	Mental Wellbeing	10
9.	Line Managers	11
10.	Communication, Awareness Raising and Training	12
11.	Protection from Discrimination	12
12.	Monitoring and Review	12
13.	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	12

<p><b>1.</b></p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Nottinghamshire Hospice recognises that our people are the organisation’s most valuable asset and understands that employees have a life outside of work including responsibility for looking after children and/or other caring responsibilities and that they may need support to combine work with care.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outline the support Nottinghamshire Hospice will offer to our employees that have caring responsibilities.</li><li>• Offer guidance in order for them to balance their working and caring commitments effectively.</li><li>• Aid recruitment and retention of employees with caring responsibilities.</li><li>• To provide support to managers so that they can effectively support their people.</li></ul>
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>Definition of Carers</b></p> <p>For the purposes of this policy, a carer is defined as someone who is responsible for the care and support of disabled, elderly or sick partners, relatives, children, or friends who are unable to care for themselves. The organisation recognises that caring experiences vary – a working carer may be providing constant support or a few hours a week. The care may be at home or they may need to travel to support someone. Caring might be a sudden experience or a more gradual process.</p> <p>The organisation acknowledges that carers undertake a wide range of duties including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help with personal care</li><li>• Help with mobility</li><li>• Managing medication</li><li>• Practical household task</li></ul>

- Emotional support
- Attending hospital appointments
- Liaising with Medical/Social Care Teams
- Help with financial matters or paperwork.

Employees to whom the organisation offers support in line with this policy may not recognise themselves as carers, for example employees who support a dependant who does not live with them. The organisation shall not treat those with caring responsibilities less favourably than other employees.

### 3. Identification and Disclosure

**Employees** are not required to disclose that they are caring for someone but are encouraged to do so. This will help the organisation provide appropriate support to the employee. The line manager and/or HR will discuss the support options available. Together they can explore and agree what is possible and suitable.

**HR** will seek to provide advice about supporting carers (including leave arrangements) to line managers and employees as necessary. They also have a responsibility to record carers' leave and inform payroll of any required adjustments to pay and benefits contributions.

**Line Managers** will be familiar with the organisation's policy, framework or guidance for supporting workplace carers. Line managers should encourage employees to discuss their caring responsibilities with them and should assure employees that their need for support and confidentiality will be respected. Employees who do not wish to disclose their caring responsibilities to their line manager are encouraged to approach the Hospice's Carer's Champions.

Where a line manager knows that an employee in their team has caring responsibilities, the line manager should inform the employee about the support that the organisation offers carers and encourage them to access the support offered.

**Co-workers** will be educated, wherever possible, on what it feels like to be a working carer and what they can do to understand and support their colleagues.

#### 4. Time off to Care for Dependants

Employees will be entitled to unpaid leave from day one of employment to give or arrange care for a 'dependent' who has:

- A physical or mental illness or injury that means they are 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 dependent does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care.

The organisation recognises that every working carer's circumstances are different and therefore the support required should be specific and relevant to their individual needs. The following situations have been considered:

**New care** – the organisation recognises that an employee who has just become a carer will need time and flexibility to set up the caring arrangements.

**Short term care** – an employee with temporary or provisional care responsibilities will be able to take time off at certain intervals and this will be accommodated through one or more of the options noted in section 5 below.

**Long term care** – the organisation recognises that an increase in caring responsibilities may mean a change in personal circumstances and a request for more flexibility or a change to work patterns.

#### 5. Flexible Working Policies

##### Short-term Options

**Critical Illness or Event Involving an Immediate Family Member** - the organisation recognises that employees may need time off to deal with critical illnesses or events involving immediate family. The ability to take leave in an emergency is important for carers, who may be called upon at short notice. See Other Leave Policy HR004 for further details.

## **Carers Leave**

You have a right to take one week of unpaid leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time you usually work over 7 days. E.g. if you usually works 3 days a week, you can take 3 days of carer's leave.

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

If you need to care for more than one person, you cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependent. You can only take one week every 12 months but can use the week of leave on more than one dependent to:

- provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted
- make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- take action required in consequence of the death of a dependant
- deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependant and/or
- deal with an unexpected incident involving the dependant where another establishment is responsible for them.

A dependant for the purposes of this policy is anyone else who reasonably relies on you to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action of the kind referred to in Section 4 of this policy.

Whether action is considered necessary will depend on the circumstances, including nature of the problem, the closeness of the relationship between you and the dependant, and whether anyone else is available to assist. Action is unlikely to be considered necessary if you knew of a problem in advance but did not try to make alternative care arrangements.

If request for Carers leave is for half a day or a day, the notice period must be at least 3 days. If the request is for more than one day, the notice period must be at least 3 days.

least twice as long as the requested leave. E.g. if request is for 2 days, the notice period must be at least 4 days.

This is different to time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant (reasonable time off allowed). See Other Leave Policy HR004.

We will not refuse a carer's leave request but can ask you to take it at a different time if your absence would cause serious disruption to the organisation.

If we ask you to delay it, we will:

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

If you fail to notify us as set out above, you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under our [Disciplinary Procedure](#) for taking unauthorised time off.

**Annual Leave** – it is possible to use your annual leave entitlement to support with any immediate or emergency care situation. This will be paid leave in line with your annual leave entitlement. Please seek approval from your line manager in the usual way for any annual leave you would like to take.

**TOIL** - you may have accrued TOIL (time off in lieu of notice) in your role and this may be used to support with any immediate or emergency care situation. This will be paid leave in line with [TOIL Policy](#). Please seek approval from your line manager in the usual way for the TOIL you would like to use.

### **Longer-term Options**

#### **Flexible Working Request**

All employees have a right to request flexible working after they have worked for 1 day and can make 2 flexible working requests within 12 months. Flexible working requests should be made in writing and should include details of the revised working pattern you are seeking, how you think this may affect the organisation and how you think this can be dealt with. Only 2 requests are allowed in a year. As your



	<p>employer we must have a sound business reason for rejecting any request. The Hospice's <a href="#">Flexible Working Policy HR030</a> can be found on our website, N drive or requested via the HR team.</p> <p><b>Parental Leave</b></p> <p>This is unpaid time off that employees who are parents can take to spend time with their child up until the child's 18th birthday. A parent can take up to 18 weeks Parental Leave in total for each eligible child as long as they meet the qualifying criteria. If you have 2 children, you can take up to 36 weeks in total. There are usually restrictions and most parents will not be able to take more than 4 weeks per child per year.</p> <p><b>Home Working</b> – the organisation has a <a href="#">Working From Home Policy</a> and a <a href="#">Hybrid Working Policy</a>, details of which can be found on the Hospice website. The policies outline eligibility requirements for homeworking, the process for applying for and accepting this and how such an arrangement will work in practice. Due to the nature of many roles at the Hospice, home working may not be possible.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Practical Support</b></p> <p>Employees with caring responsibilities, together with their line manager, should consider what other practical support would help to combine work and caring duties. Such support may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carer's Champion – trained employees who are a point of contact to signpost employees with caring responsibilities to potential support and options.</li><li>• The use of their mobile phone or telephone access for emergency calls or to be contactable in the event of a crisis or emergency.</li><li>• Health and wellbeing support initiatives.</li><li>• Providing information about external sources of support such as helplines etc.</li></ul>

**7. Working Time**

The Working Time Regulations 1998 require the organisation, as your employer, to ensure that employees do not work more than an average of 48 hours a week unless they have signed an agreement opting out of this limit on their weekly hours.

This limit on your working hours each week takes account of any time spent working for other employers. Regardless of whether the person you are caring for meets the definition of an “employer” we intend to assess the amount of time that you spend caring to ensure that your health and safety is protected. Therefore please notify the HR team in writing of any formally designated hours that are allocated to caring responsibilities each week.

If the hours that you spend caring each week vary considerably and are designated more informally, in response to particular needs, we intend to review with you periodically the average amount of time that you spend on caring responsibilities, in order to protect your health and safety.

We will deal with any requests by employees to change their working patterns (such as working part-time) due to caring responsibilities on a case-by-case basis. We will try to accommodate your wishes unless there is a justifiable reason for refusal, bearing in mind the needs of our organisation. It is helpful if requests are made as early as possible. The procedure for making and dealing with such requests is set out in our [Flexible Working Policy](#).

**8. Mental wellbeing**

We recognise that there may be occasions when caring responsibilities result in staff feeling that their mental health is suffering. Anyone who feels that they are suffering from stress which is impacting on their work should follow the steps set out below.

If you believe you are suffering from stress and that this is impacting on your ability to fulfil your role, you should discuss this with your line manager in the first instance.

Once an issue affecting your health comes to the attention of your line manager, we will discuss with you what steps can be taken to address that issue. Those steps

may include any of the following:

- a) A review of your current job role, responsibilities, workload and working hours. Adjustments may be agreed to these, on a temporary basis and subject to further review, where appropriate.
- b) Referral for medical advice, treatment and/or a medical report to be provided by the Occupational Health Department, our medical advisers or any specialist or GP who has been treating you.
- c) If you are on sickness absence, discussion of an appropriate return to work programme. Our [Sickness Absence Policy](#) may be applied.

Information about stress, mental health and mental wellbeing is highly sensitive. Every member of staff is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required when dealing with information about stress or mental health whether they are supporting a colleague or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a workplace policy or procedure.

**9. Line Managers**

Line managers play a key role in supporting employees and promoting an open culture in their teams and hold regular one-to-one conversations with team members. As part of any conversations around objectives and performance, the line manager should ask about wellbeing and workload, giving employees the opportunity to raise any issues they would like to discuss beyond work matters.

Each carer's situation requires a different response; therefore line managers should take into account the whole range of organisational support and existing policies available when putting support in place for carers. Employees need to be confident that they will not be treated less favourably if they take up the organisation's support.

Line managers should create a workplace culture that is supportive of carers by encouraging employees to make use of the support and existing policies offered to carers and encouraging discussion around carers' issues.

<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Communication, Awareness Raising and Training</b></p> <p>The organisation is committed to raising awareness of the role and demands of carers in the workplace. This policy will be communicated to all employees the Hospice’s internet site and internal email communications.</p>
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Protection from discrimination</b></p> <p>Carers who have caring responsibilities must be treated in the same way as comparable employees who do not have caring responsibilities and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.</p> <p>If you believe that you have suffered a detriment due to your caring responsibilities you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure (<a href="#">Grievance Policy</a>) or <a href="#">Bullying and Harassment Policy</a> both available from the Hospice’s website. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b>Monitoring and Review</b></p> <p>This policy will be reviewed in line with the recognised arrangements and monitored to ensure its continuing effectiveness.</p>
<p><b>13.</b></p>	<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b></p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.</p>