

## Factsheet G5 – Carers and Employment

Carers can face difficult choices about balancing work, caring and finding support services to help stay in work. Today there are increasing numbers of people in the workplace with caring responsibilities. In recognition of this changing and diverse workforce, the government is actively encouraging employers to allow flexible working patterns.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (which came into effect on 1 October 2010), carers are now protected from being treated less favourably, directly discriminated against, or harassed, because they are caring for someone who is disabled.

Useful government information on this employment legislation can be found on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website. Carers in Hertfordshire can print this out for you if you do not have internet access.

### Telling your employer

It is important to tell your employer about your caring commitments. Caring can often be unpredictable and care arrangements complex. If you want to work, it is often in your employer's best interests to consider making reasonable changes to your work pattern so that you can continue caring too. Keeping the communication lines open between you and your manager is vital if you are to manage work and give your employer notice in time to make arrangements when you are away. You could also speak to your colleagues, human resources manager or staff association to see if there is existing support available at your workplace.

### Parental Leave

**Parental Leave should not be confused with Shared Parental Leave, which is a new entitlement for eligible parents of children due to be born or adopted on or after 5 April 2015.**

#### Key points:

- Employees must have completed one year's continuous service with an employer to qualify.
- 18 weeks of unpaid leave can be taken up for children and adopted children under 18 years.
- Leave may be taken straight after the birth or adoption or following a period of maternity leave.
- Employees will need to request leave giving at least 21 days notice before the intended start date.
- Employers may ask for the notice to be in writing

## Flexible working for parents and carers

All employees, including parents of disabled children under 18, who have worked continuously as an employee for 26 weeks have the right to apply to work flexibly. Since April 2007, under the Work and Families Act 2006, the same rights have been extended to carers. For this legislation a carer is defined as someone caring for an adult who:

- Is married to, or the partner or civil partner of, the employee
- Is a near relative of the employee (parent, parent-in-law, adult child, sibling, sibling-in-law, uncle, aunt, grandparent or step relative)
- Falls into neither category, but lives at the same address as the employee

## How do I apply?

You must apply in writing, explaining your caring responsibilities and the change you would like to make to your working arrangements. You should also consider the effect this might have on your employer's business and how this might be accommodated. The application must not be a repeat of one made in the previous 12 months and your employer must be given a reasonable time to consider and implement it. Employers have a duty to take requests seriously. Although they can say 'no' to your request, they will need to demonstrate clearly why this is so.

More information can be found in the ACAS leaflet 'The Right to apply for Flexible working' which can be found [here](#).

## Flexible working arrangements

You could discuss the following options with your manager:

- Part/time, flexi/time, job sharing or home working
- Annualised or term-time hours
- Flexible holidays to tie in with alternative care arrangements
- Compressed hours, staggered hours or shift work

## Time off in Emergencies and special leave arrangements

You are entitled to a 'reasonable' amount of time off to cover an emergency to do with the person you care for.

You may also be offered:

- Carer's leave
- Compassionate leave
- Borrowing/buying leave
- Career breaks

## Useful contacts and websites giving further information

### **ACAS** (Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Advisory booklets include changing patterns of work, flexible working and other topics.

Tel: 0300 123 1100

### **Carers UK**

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Latest on legislation.

Tel: 0808 808 7777

### **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Helps people resolve their money, legal and other problems with a network of offices throughout the country.

### **Working Families**

[www.workingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk)

*Waving not drowning* network also supports families who are combining work and caring for disabled children.

Tel: 0300 012 0312

[www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk)

*The information contained on this sheet is correct at the time of issue.  
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