

ARE YOU READY?



What you need to know and do before
the Carer's Leave Act becomes law

The Carer's Leave Act 2023 could come into force as early as April 2024, by which time you need to be prepared to deliver changes to the way you offer support to all unpaid carers in your workforce.

Carers UK have been leading the campaign to get this vital support for working carers to be introduced and are here for you to explain the reasons why caring is a workplace issue, what the new law will mean for employers and why it is good practice to support carers in the workplace. We'll help you make sure you are ready for when the law is in place.



What is a carer?

You may not have really thought about carers in your workplace. Caring for an older, disabled or seriously ill family member or friend is something that we often just do without seeing ourselves as a carer. For some of us it's sudden: someone you love is taken ill or has an accident, your child is born with a disability. For others caring creeps up unnoticed: your parents can't manage on their own any longer, your partner's health gets gradually worse.

So, here are three important reasons why you need to act now to get ready for the Carer's Leave Act.

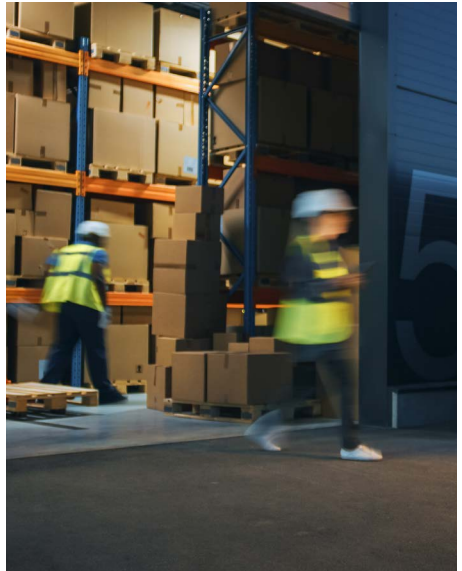


Many employers have never really thought about the unpaid carers in their workplace

FACT: More than one in seven people in any workplace is a carer.

That's millions of people across the UK facing the daily pressures of juggling their unpaid caring role with work. The strain of doing so has meant hundreds of thousands of carers have had to leave the labour market – 600 people per day, on average. And if unsupported, many working carers also face being tired, stressed and struggling to manage their own health as well.

Yet caring is often still invisible in many workplaces, with 'carers hidden in plain sight'. Many workers don't see themselves as carers and may therefore not come forward for support. Others may not think workplace support applies to them or feel uncomfortable about raising personal, sometimes emotionally difficult, issues at work.



Carers UK can help you understand how you will have to provide support to unpaid carers within your workforce, the importance of creating an environment where carers feel supported, and provide advice on ways to help carers identify both themselves and their needs.



Carer's Leave has moved from Bill to Act and will mean changes for you

FACT: The Carer's Leave Act, (formerly the Carer's Leave Bill), has received Royal Assent and is due to become law in 2024.

This landmark new workplace law, covering employees in Great Britain, will:

- introduce a new and flexible entitlement to one week's unpaid leave per year for employees who are providing or arranging care for a relative or dependant
- be available from the first day of their employment
- allow employees to take the leave flexibly for planned and foreseen caring commitments
- offer the same employment protections to employees taking this leave that are associated with other forms of family-related leave, meaning they will be protected from dismissal or any detriment because of having taken time off.

The Act will give rights to over 2 million employees in Great Britain who are carers. It will also mean that employers will need to think about their employees with caring responsibilities and introduce support for carers.

With in-house teams working with both employers and policy makers – and as a charity with the needs of carers at the heart of everything we do – Carers UK is uniquely placed to support you in making sure you are up-to-speed with your legal requirements under the Act.



Supporting carers in your workplace makes great business sense

Employers who recognise caring and address support for carers know that their employees benefit hugely from early recognition and support in the workplace.

- Evidence from employers shows that Carer's Leave supports retention and recruitment, as well as the health and wellbeing of staff with caring responsibilities.
- Employers who offer Carer's Leave say that they have been better able to retain valued staff.
- Research shows that two-thirds of working carers who have taken unpaid Carer's Leave report that this has made their caring role easier, whereas without access to it 1 in 10 are at risk of reducing their hours or giving up work.

The Carer's Leave Act will mean that more carers – in more workplaces – can see staying in work as a realistic option, bringing financial benefits both to them and their employers.

This is an issue whose time has come. With the average person in the UK now having a 50:50 chance of caring by 50 – long before they reach retirement age - caring is becoming the norm, rather than something that is done by a minority. So, as well as being good for employees, it makes business sense to care for carers.

Through working with Carers UK to get ready for the introduction of this law, by joining our Employers for Carers or Carer Positive (in Scotland) schemes, or by applying for Carer Confident status, you'll be showing your staff that you value them as employees and recognise the unique challenges they may face when also caring for someone.

While the new right is to unpaid leave, a growing number of employers now offer paid (as well as unpaid) Carer's Leave.

The Act is also likely to prompt other forward-thinking employers to go further than the law and introduce paid leave to help stay ahead with staff recruitment and retention.

What are the next steps for introduction of the law?

The Carer's Leave Act 2023 has now received Royal Assent, with regulations to be published. The law could come into force as early as April 2024.



Information on the latest developments will be published on our Carers UK and Employers for Carers websites.

Our Employers for Carers service, which helps businesses and employers to support and retain carers in their workforce, will also be offering practical support to organisations who are members, to implement the new Act.

What should you do next?

It's vital that you prepare for the introduction of this new legislation – and that your staff know that you support unpaid carers in the workforce. So, register your interest in hearing from Carers UK all the latest news, information and briefings, plus details of how you can access our stand-alone set of resources including training sessions and webinars, a toolkit and e-learning resources.

Visit carersuk.org/carers_leave_act to register to hear more

Additionally, we will continue to deliver support for implementation through Employers for Carers membership.



“Retaining carers in the workplace also benefits businesses, with evidence from employers showing that supporting working carers helps to improve staff retention rates and productivity.”

*Wendy Chamberlain MP,
Sponsor of the Carer's Leave Bill*



Employers for Carers

Informed by business and supported by the specialist knowledge of Carers UK, Employers for Carers (EFC) provides practical, 'hands-on' help to employers to support the carers in their workforce.

Launched as an employers' membership forum in 2009, EFC now has over 230 member organisations covering around 2.8 million employees across the public, private and not for profit sectors.

Member services include a dedicated web platform with a range of practical resources including e-learning, toolkits, model policies and case studies, access to expert training and consultancy and employer networking events. EFC's UK-wide employer benchmarking scheme, Carer Confident, launched in 2019, now has 60 accredited employers who are building a supportive and inclusive workplace for staff who are or will become carers.

To find out more visit employersforcarers.org



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