

## Briefing: Paid carer's leave around the world

July 2022

### INTRODUCTION

1. This briefing provides an overview of paid caring leave legislation/systems around the world. It is a snapshot of the different approaches to carer's leave provision in a variety of countries, not an exhaustive list.
2. Carers NI does not necessarily endorse any of the laws/systems covered below.

### AUSTRALIA

3. In Australia, the National Employment Standards – 11 minimum entitlements for all employees that are enshrined in the Fair Work Act (2009) – includes paid sick and carer's leave. <sup>[1]</sup>
4. Both come under the same entitlement, with full-time employees entitled to 10 days per year of paid sick and carer's leave for each year of service with an employer. The number of days is pro-rata for part-time employees.
5. Employees can use the paid leave to provide care for a member of their immediate family or household who is sick, injured or experiences an unexpected emergency. 'Immediate family' is defined as a spouse/former spouse, de facto partner/former de facto partner, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling. It also covers a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of the employee's spouse/former spouse or partner/former partner.
6. When using carer's leave, the employee must receive, as a minimum, their base rate of pay for the ordinary hours they would have worked during the period.
7. In a 2018 survey, 35% of people in Australia who were juggling employment with unpaid caring for an older family member said they had used carer's leave during the previous 6 months. <sup>[2]</sup>

### BELGIUM

8. In Belgium, carers are entitled to a range of paid leave options to provide care for someone:
  - Full suspension from work for a period of one month, potentially extended to up a maximum of 6 months. This entitlement is available to full and part-time staff.
  - Reduction in working hours to half the usual amount, for a period of 2 months per person in need of care. This entitlement is available to full-time staff only.
  - Reduction in working hours to four-fifths of the usual amount, also for a period of 2 months per person in need of care. This entitlement is available to full-time staff only.

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see:

- <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/sick-and-carers-leave/paid-sick-and-carers-leave#tools-and-resources>.
- <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/fact-sheets/minimum-workplace-entitlements/personal-leave-and-compassionate-leave#:~:text=A%20member%20of%20the%20employee's,or%20former%20spouse%20or%20de>.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government (2022). Carer leave issues paper. Available at:

<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/carers-leave/issues/carers-leave-issues.pdf>.

9. An unpaid carer is defined under these provisions as someone who continuously or regularly helps/supports a person with a need for care. They must have a “relationship of trust or a close geographical relationship with the assisted person”, but there are no additional restrictions around the type of relationship (e.g., only spouses or siblings etc.).
10. For full-time workers, the leave is paid at a basic flat rate: <sup>[3]</sup>

Type of carer’s leave	Basic gross amount per month
Full suspension	€921.83
Half reduction	Under 50 years old: €460.91 Over 50 years old: €621.37
One-fifth reduction	Under 50 years old: €156.36 Over 50 years old: €234.54

11. For part-time staff, the rate is calculated pro-rata.
12. Payments are made by Belgium’s National Employment Office, not the carer’s employer.
13. Evidence suggests that Belgium’s system of carer’s leave helps to partially reduce carer poverty by allowing carers to continue in employment in some form while also meeting their caring responsibilities. <sup>[4]</sup>

## JAPAN

14. In Japan, employees are entitled to family care leave to support a spouse, de facto spouse, parent, child, parent-in-law, grandparent, sibling or grandchild who requires constant care due to a serious illness or disability. <sup>[5]</sup> The purpose of the leave is to allow the carer to take time away from work “in order to make necessary arrangements so that they can subsequently combine work and care provision”. <sup>[6]</sup>
15. The care leave is available for a period of two weeks or more at a time, with a limit of 93 days leave over the whole lifetime of the person receiving care.
16. This care leave is paid at 67% of a worker’s usual earnings.
17. Research on the impact of Japan’s carer’s leave provision suggests that access to caring leave in cases of sick or disabled parents/parents-in-law reduces the probability of a person having to leave their job to care by over 7 percentage points. <sup>[6]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.onem.be/fr/documentation/montants-baremes/interruption-de-carriere-credit-temps#24780>.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2016). EPSN thematic report on work-life balance measures for persons of working age with dependent relatives: Belgium. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15814&langId=en>.

<sup>5</sup> Blum, S (2017). 13<sup>th</sup> International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research. Available at: [https://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/k\\_leavenetwork/annual\\_reviews/2017\\_Leave\\_Review\\_2017\\_final2.pdf](https://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/user_upload/k_leavenetwork/annual_reviews/2017_Leave_Review_2017_final2.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Niimi, Yoko (2021). Juggling paid work and elderly care provision in Japan: Does a flexible work environment help family caregivers cope? ADBI Institute working paper series. Available at: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/688621/adbi-wp1228.pdf>.

## SPAIN

18. In Spain, employees are entitled to two days leave per 'event' to care for a seriously ill child or for other family reasons, including serious illness or hospitalisation of a relative. The entitlement is extended to four days if travelling is required for work. Payments are made by the person's employer. <sup>[5]</sup>
19. For a period of up to two years, employees may also take full leave, or reduced working hours of between one-eighth and one-half, to care for a dependent relative due to severe illness, disability or old age. If they live with the cared-for person, and depending on their level of dependency and the household income, the carer may receive payments from the state – which were worth up to €542.85 per month in some regions of Spain in 2016 (a more recent figure was unavailable in the course of researching this briefing). The carer will be credited with social security contributions, which impact on pension payments and health cover, for the first year.
20. People working in the public sector in Spain can also work half of their usual time/hours for up to one month without a loss in earnings if they are caring for a seriously ill child, partner or parent, including in-laws.

**For more information please contact:**

**Craig Harrison**

Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Carers NI

[craig.harrison@carersni.org](mailto:craig.harrison@carersni.org)