

## **CARERS SUPPORT LEAVE SCHEME – to be referenced in Leave Policy**

This scheme applies to employees with significant responsibilities that have a substantial impact on their working lives. These employees are responsible for the care and support of their children, relatives or friends who are older, disabled or seriously ill who are unable to care for themselves.

Carers Leave is available where an employee who has responsibility for children or close relatives is faced with an emergency, for example:

- sudden illness of either of the above, where arrangements for their care need to be made;
- a need to spend time with a child or close relative who is seriously ill;
- the breakdown of normal carer arrangements leading to serious domestic difficulties;
- the need to make longer term arrangements to cope with a care problem.

### **Scope**

This scheme applies to all Council employees except those directly employed by schools.

### **Expectations of Managers and Employees**

It is often easier for employees to talk about childcare responsibilities than to discuss caring responsibilities. Employees are not required to disclose to their line manager that they are caring for someone, but are encouraged to do so. This will help the line manager to provide appropriate support to the employee. Line managers should encourage employees to talk about their caring responsibilities with them whilst respecting the employee's confidentiality concerning this information. However, whilst some employees may want to talk about their caring responsibilities beyond the essential details, others will wish to keep the division between work and home more distinct. Line managers are encouraged to recognise that different individuals will be comfortable with differing levels of disclosure and will have varying needs in relation to both practical and emotional support.

## Leave Provisions

Up to the equivalent of two working days may be granted as paid leave in a twelve-month period ((pro rata for part-time employees), though in exceptional circumstances, this can be increased with the agreement of the Service Lead. This is in addition to the unpaid emergency leave provision detailed in the Council's Leave Policy.

The amount of leave granted will be dependent on such factors as:

- the availability of other members of the family to contribute to the care required;
- the age of the child
- the level of support needs of the person cared for

Employees should consult their line manager as soon as possible about their request for carer leave.

## Recording

Employees must request approval for Carers' support leave on Agresso, the Councils employee self service system.

## Advice and support

The Council subscribes to the national Employers for Carers network, established by Carers UK, which provides information directly to both managers and employees about balancing work and caring for dependents. The Employers for Carers site can be accessed by following the link to register [efcdigital.org](http://efcdigital.org) using the Council's membership #EFC1769 when registering.

Many national and local charities and community groups will have online and face-to-face support for carers, enabling individuals to seek information and advice and make connections with others in similar circumstances. Some of the main charities that provide national support to carers, or who work with carers relating to specific issues, are:

- Carers UK: <http://www.carersuk.org/>
- Carers Trust: <https://www.carers.org/>
- Age UK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>
- Mind: <http://www.mind.org.uk/>
- Alzheimer's Society: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>
- Macmillan Cancer Support: <http://www.macmillan.org.uk/>

Slough Borough Council commissions Slough Council for Voluntary Services to deliver our local Carers Support Service [www.sloughcarerssupport.co.uk](http://www.sloughcarerssupport.co.uk) or 01753 303428 which provides local information and advice help connect carers to local support. Carers are also encouraged to notify their GP surgery if they have caring responsibilities in order to access support. This includes information about local carers' support services, flexible appointment times, referral for a carer's assessment, access to a free flu vaccination and health checks to those aged over 45 years.

This is by no means exhaustive. Facebook groups, online message boards and other social media networks are increasingly ways in which support and advice can be found.

Employees can also access the Council's EAP support - [insert details](#)