



## Information Governance Team

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Dear Sir/Madam

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

**Request ID: FOI678440373**

Thank you for your request for information relating to Staff who are registered carers.

You have requested the following information:

#### **1. How many days of paid and/or unpaid leave per year can staff who are carers take?**

Carers can take up to five days of both paid and unpaid leave (pro-rotta for part time staff).

#### **2. When were the last changes made to the hours/days registered carers can take and what change was made?**

The last changes were made in April 2024. The changes which were made were that it became 5 days of paid leave and another 5 days of unpaid leave for the carers.

#### **3. Is your organisation a Carer Confident employer?**

We confirm that Coventry City Council are not currently a Carer Confident employer. However, the Council commissions the Carers Trust via Adult Services to provide a scheme for Employers.

#### **4. How many staff members are registered carers in your organisation?**

#### **5. How many days of paid and/or unpaid carer's leave were taken on average per registered carer in 2023 and 2024?**

In response to Questions 4 and 5, we confirm we do not hold this information and are informing you as per Section 1(1) of the Act. We do not record this information on our system.

**6. Was an Equality Impact Assessment completed for the policy?**

Yes.

**7. Was the policy reviewed alongside related policies, such as flexible working arrangements?**

Yes, the policy references our flexi-time and flexible working policy.

**8. Do managers receive training on the nature of being a carer and how best to support staff's individual needs?**

As part of our Managers' Induction, there is a briefing held on different types of leave we offer as an organisation.

**9. If there is training, is it mandatory?**

In response to Question 9, please refer to our response to Question 8.

**10. Is there a Carers Network in the organisation? If there is, does it have a senior sponsor and what is their role within the organisation?**

We confirm there is a Carers Network within the organisation. This Network does have a Senior Sponsor which was obtained via a Director Sponsorship.

**11. Please provide a copy of your carers leave policy as a PDF and email/direct me to the policy. If there is not a stand-alone document, please provide the policies that contain and reference this, such as special leave or time off for dependents and a copy/link.**

In response to Question 11, we refer you to the attached document.

**12. Was the carer's leave policy, or the policies that contain and reference this, co-produced with staff?**

The carer's leave policy was co-produced with trade unions and the Carer's Network.

The supply of information in response to a FOI request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: [infogov@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@coventry.gov.uk)

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email [icocasework@ico.org.uk](mailto:icocasework@ico.org.uk).

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

**Information Governance**

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## Carers' leave - Print version

We actively support employees who are carers.

If you have caring responsibilities we would encourage you to remain in work, by making adjustments to your working pattern whenever possible. A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support.

### Support organisations

#### **The Carers Trust Heart of England provides a one-stop shop for Coventry Carers**

- Information and advice
- Training and support – (both groups based and individual)
- Group based support
- Grants and practical support for carers
- Demonstrations of low-level equipment to help people live more independently
- Carers Assessments
- Outreach support at UHCW

The Carers Trust Heart of England can be contacted on 024 7663 2972 Option 1.

## CRESS

In addition, the Carers Trust Heart of England run CRESS, a Carers Response Emergency Support Service, that helps carers contingency plan in case of an emergency and can provide up to 72 hours of free support for carers if there is an emergency such as a hospital admission. This service can also provide support for carers to attend one-off significant events such as weddings, funerals and hospital appointments. You can register by contacting 024 7625 8816 option 1 or by visiting the website and downloading the referral form

[<https://www.carerstrusthofe.org.uk/practical-support-overview/emergency-care-services/>] and sending to [referral@carerstrusthofe.org.uk](mailto:referral@carerstrusthofe.org.uk) [<mailto:referral@carerstrusthofe.org.uk>].

## Alzheimer's Society

The Alzheimer's Society provide information and advice for carers who are looking after someone supporting someone with a diagnosis of dementia. They provide a peer support group and training in understanding dementia at different points in a journey. Initial referrals are made to 0333 150 345.

## Carers' Assessments

A Carer's Assessment is a good way to talk to a professional about your caring situation, the impact this has on you and what support you think might help. The Carers Trust Heart of England undertakes Carers' Assessments on behalf of the local authority. Call them on 024 7663 2972 Option 1. You can also complete your own online self-assessment

[[https://cid.coventry.gov.uk/kb5/coventry/directory/adult\\_social\\_care.page](https://cid.coventry.gov.uk/kb5/coventry/directory/adult_social_care.page)].

## Support for carers' guidance

Coventry City Council actively supports employees who are carers and encourages them to remain in our employment by offering workplace

adjustments to meet caring responsibilities.

## Who is considered a carer?

A carer is anyone, who looks after another person, (partner, parents, children, anyone living in the household and any person who relies on the employee for care), who needs Long Term Care.

Long-term care need is defined as illness or injury (either physical or mental) that requires or is likely to require care for more than three months, is a disability under the Equality Act 2010, or is related to old age, and whom, because of their illness, frailty, disability, mental health problem or addiction, cannot cope without the support of the employee. The care provided is unpaid.

## Background Information:

There are approximately 35,000 people providing unpaid care in Coventry. Around 3000 of these are under the age 25.

We know that these statistics are unlikely to truly reflect people who are providing care, because many people do not recognise themselves as having caring responsibilities and are first and foremost a Mum, a Dad, a son, daughter, friend or relative. Some people take on caring responsibilities quickly, following a sudden illness or accident but for most, caring can often be a very incremental process, building up responsibilities over time, as the person they care for health declines. It is said to take on average 2 years for someone to notice their caring role.

It is predicted that 1/7 employees in a workplace will be providing care to another person and this is likely to be higher within a local authority or NHS service.

In a recent survey completed by the council (January 2020) we identified that:

- 86% of caring workforce are caring for an adult / 13% caring for a child

- Most people do not live with the person they are caring for 67%
- 52% of our caring workforce were looking after a parent
- 87% of our caring workforce have provided care for over 2 years
- 70% of our caring workforce are providing over 10 hours – to over 50 hours of support a week.

Caring can be an emotive subject, not only can it have a huge impact on someone's physical health, mental wellbeing and financial wellbeing, it's likely to impact on their opportunity to spend time with wider friends and family and do the things they enjoy. Many people experience worry and sometimes grief in relation to the person they for.

It is important that employees who are carers understand their rights and have access to good information and support. Relevant policies that help Managers support employees who are caring are as follows;

## **Support available**

### **Flexible working**

Carers' can request flexible working, in the same way as every employee, an employee may make a request for flexible working, which may include a request to change their working hours, time and place they want to work. Requests will be reviewed and balanced in the needs of the service.

For further information on Coventry City Council's Flexible Working Policy, please refer to the Intranet.

### **Emergency Leave for Dependents**

There is a statutory right allowing employees to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies in relation to a dependant of an employee, and to make necessary longer-term arrangements.

The statutory right entitles an employee to a reasonable amount of time off in order to take action which is necessary to:

- provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted,
- make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or seriously injured,
- deal with the death of a dependant
- deal with the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant, or
- deal with an incident involving an employee's child, which occurs unexpectedly while the child is at an educational establishment.

This policy is not intended to provide on-going support for dependants but only to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies that can support to deal with the immediate need.

For further information on Coventry City Council's Compassionate Leave and Emergency Time Off for Dependents policy, please refer to the Intranet.

## **Parental Leave**

An employee may request unpaid leave of up to four weeks each year for each child (born or adopted) for which they have responsibility up to their eighteenth birthday. This is subject to a maximum of 18 weeks. Parental Leave is intended to be for periods of planned leave for parental purposes.

Further information on Coventry City Council's Parental Leave Policy [<https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/human-resources-policies/parental-shared-parental-leave-pay>].

## **Banked Hours Scheme**

An employee who is not covered by flexitime, can accrue time and take this time as leave. An employee can "bank" hours to a total of 5 days per annum or pro rata for part-time employees, or 3 days pro rata, for those employees who have not accepted the new holiday arrangements, and who are still on the "old scheme". The scheme is a Banking Scheme and it does not amend current practice within service areas regarding TOIL arrangements, except where there is a mutual agreement that hours (up to the limits described) will be changed from TOIL to banked hours.



Further information on Coventry City Council's Banked Hours Scheme [<https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/human-resources-policies/annual-leave/7>].

## Leave Purchase Scheme

The Leave Purchase Scheme is a salary sacrifice scheme that is compliant to HMRC legislation. It gives employees the opportunity to buy (not sell) additional leave on top of their usual holiday entitlement, subject to Line Manager approval. Requests should only be approved by managers where no alternative arrangements will need to be made to cover the additional leave dates requested by the employee. Employees can buy up to 10 additional days or 74 hours (pro rata for part time employees) for the 12-month period between April and the following March.

To take part in the scheme employees agree to an amendment in their terms and conditions which allows Coventry City Council to reduce their basic pay, before tax and national insurance, by the amount they specify on the application form. The cost of the additional leave is then deducted from the employee's salary over a 12-month period, after which pay reverts back to the previous level, should a further additional leave application not be agreed.

The Leave Purchase/Unpaid Leave Scheme is open to all Coventry City Council employees other than those who are:-

- school based employees and/or those employed on a term time contract,
- already covered by a pre-existing arrangement for Annual Leave, such as employees under a TUPE, National or Collective Agreement,
- in their probationary period.

The Council introduced the opportunity for employees to purchase 'unpaid leave' last year. The purchase of additional holiday can significantly affect the pension benefits of members of the Local Government Pension Scheme who have membership prior to 2014. The impact of purchasing unpaid leave with these benefits is lower. (See example at the end of this document)

Employees cannot access both schemes at the same time, they must purchase additional leave or unpaid leave. Employees also cannot combine addition leave or unpaid leave.

The corporate annual leave purchase scheme is available where employees can purchase up to 10 days annual leave pro rata, which is open to Carers throughout the year, subject to management approval. In addition, carers can purchase up to a further 10 days 10 additional days or 74 hours (pro rata for part time employees) for the 12-month period between April and the following March, to support their caring responsibilities. Therefore, please discuss your leave request with your line manager in first instance.

Further information on the Leave Purchase Scheme

[\[https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/myrewards/leave-purchase-scheme\]](https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/myrewards/leave-purchase-scheme).

## **Career Break Scheme**

The Career Break Scheme applies to any employee of Coventry City Council, wishing to take a break from employment for a minimum period that can be discussed with your manager if the reason is caring responsibilities otherwise the policy states it is for two years and a maximum of six years. The employees have to have completed at least one year's satisfactory service with Coventry City Council, and who terminates their employment for one of the following reasons:

- to have a child;
- to take care of children or dependents in need of care (including elderly, disabled or sick dependents);
- to undertake long term, full-time study relevant to the job in which they are currently employed by Coventry City Council.

However, consideration will be given to applications for access to the scheme for other reasons. Any employee who is not accepted onto the Scheme will receive, in writing, the reasons why their application has not been successful. Entrance to the Scheme will be effective from a date to be agreed between the applicant and the service. This will usually be from the date of termination of employment.

Further information on Coventry City Council's Career Break Scheme [<https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/human-resources-policies/career-break>].

## **Extended (or Accumulated) Leave Scheme**

The Extended (or Accumulated) Leave Scheme enables all employees who have completed one year's continuous service Coventry City Council on or before 1<sup>st</sup> April in the annual leave year in which the period of extended leave is to be taken, to take a period of extended leave. The scheme excludes teachers and school-based employees.

An employee must have completed a further three years continuous service following one period of extended leave on or before 1 April in the annual leave year in which any second or subsequent period of extended leave is to be taken.

Employees are required to save part of their annual leave and to accumulate it, to deal with unusual individual requirements for longer period of leave. The scheme requires an employee to take a substantial part of their leave in this way.

The scheme is based on the granting of permission to accumulate annual leave and carry it forward from one year to another to provide a 'long leave period'. The aim of the scheme is to enable employees to meet unusual circumstances. Although, the scheme is concessionary.

The type of situation which the scheme is designed to meet would normally involve travelling abroad, or other special circumstances where the normal annual leave entitlement is not of sufficient length. There will need to be strong personal grounds to justify granting the concession, e.g. visiting close relatives of the employee or spouse or taking part in a major national or international event

Urgent compassionate circumstances requiring extended periods of absence will be treated separately but with regard to the existence of the scheme.

Further information on Coventry City Council's Extended (or Accumulated) Leave Scheme [<https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/human-resources-policies/annual-leave/8>].

## **Flexitime Scheme**

The flexitime scheme provides employees greater freedom to regulate their working hours by extending the working day, allowing earlier start and later finish times and by permitting greater variability at the lunchtime period, which is subject to management approval and service needs. If you are not sure whether flexitime is available to you, please discuss the option with your line manager.

The flexi time core hour restrictions from 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 3:30pm can be flexed for Carers who require time off to undertake their caring responsibilities and can make up their working hours either during that day or another day that week. Employees should inform their line manager where they need their working hours to be flexed during to their caring responsibilities, as management approval should be sought based on the service needs.

Further information on Coventry City Council's Flexitime Scheme Policy [<https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/human-resources-policies/flexitime>].

## **Time off to attend medical appointments with those whom you care for**

Employees with caring responsibilities have a statutory right to take unpaid statutory carer's leave from day one of their employment. This policy sets out the City Council's Position on employees taking time off for this purpose whilst ensuring the Council's operations are not unduly affected. The term "dependant" for these purposes is prescribed in law and replicated in this policy. Employees will not be subject to detriment for taking carer's leave.

## **Entitlement**

You are entitled to take up to one-week unpaid Carer's leave per rolling 12-month period, **pro rata for part time employees**, to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need. You can request to take your entitlement in a continuous block or separate occurrences, but each occurrence must be at least one-half of your working day.

For these purposes, a week is based on the number of days you normally work in a week. If your normal working time varies from week to week, a week is your average working time in a week taken over the previous 12 months.

A dependant is defined as a:

- spouse or civil partner
- child
- parent
- person who lives in the same household but is not a tenant, lodger, boarder or employee
- person who reasonably relies on you to provide or arrange care. This could be, eg an elderly neighbour.

A dependant has a long-term care need if:

- they have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months
- they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010
- they require care for a reason connected with old age.

The Organisation recognises that people other than those listed above in relation to whom the statutory right applies may depend on you for assistance. Requests for time off in relation to these people should be made to your line manager but these will be considered separately to requests for statutory carer's leave.

You are not required to provide evidence of your eligibility in relation to a request for carer's leave.

**Carer's leave entitles eligible employees to take planned leave to provide care, or to plan for it, in non-emergency situations.**

# Requesting Carer's Leave

Employees who want to take a period of carer's leave should make a request to their manager. The request:

- Can ask for all or part of the leave they are entitled to.
- Must specify that the employee is entitled to take carer's leave in terms of the person to be cared for, they will take leave in order to provide or arrange care for that person and they have not exceeded their entitlement.
- Must specify the days on which the employee wants to take leave.
- Must, if the leave relates to part of a day, specify this fact.

## Postponement of Leave

The regulations allow employers to postpone a request for carer's leave in certain circumstances.

If service needs deem the request to be reasonable, for the employee took carer's leave at the time they have asked for, it can be postponed for up to one month.

The new period of carer's leave must be for the same length of time as the original request, and the new date can be determined by the employer after having consulted with the employee.

The employer will then need to write to the employee setting out the reason for the postponement and the new agreed date of leave. This letter must be given to the employee as soon as is reasonably practicable but no later than whichever is earlier out of:

- Seven days after the employee submitted the request.
- The earliest day or part-day of the leave originally requested.

## Pay for time off



In addition to the unpaid provision above, Coventry City Council recognise that carers often attend medical appointments with those whom they care for, using their own annual leave entitlement to attend these appointments. Therefore, Coventry City Council will approve for a carer to attend up to 5 paid medical appointments a year, with the person they care for, up to a maximum of 5 days per year pro rata.

The same provisions as above apply, in that this is **Pro Rata for part time employees**.

## Other policies

You have a statutory right to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with emergencies involving your dependants. If you need time off in an emergency to care for a dependant, you should read our time off for dependants policy.

Your entitlement to time off on the loss of a child is set out in our policy on parental bereavement leave, including details of eligibility, pay during time off and other support available.

If you wish to make a request for parental leave to care for a child, you should read our parental leave policy

[\[https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/human-resources-policies/parental-shared-parental-leave-pay\]](https://intranet.coventry.gov.uk/human-resources-policies/parental-shared-parental-leave-pay).

## Additional Information

Find out more about support to carers looking after someone who lives in Coventry at: [www.coventry.gov.uk/carers](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/carers)

[\[http://www.coventry.gov.uk/carers\]](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/carers)

If the person you care for doesn't live in Coventry you can find out about carers services in their area from the Carers Trust national website

[\[http://www.carers.org/carers-services/find-your-local-service\]](http://www.carers.org/carers-services/find-your-local-service).