This template has been provided the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).

Use of this model policy is entirely at your own risk. The policy should be adapted to suit your own organisational needs, and you should ensure if meets your own specific requirements. You should also check this policy is compliant with the law and your organisation’s governing document. No liability rests with SCVO.

For more information see our information on [using SCVO templates](https://scvo.scot/support/using-scvo-templates).

Carer policy

Purpose

We appreciate that caring for a person can be very demanding; particularly when you have workplace obligations to fulfil. This policy aims to minimise, as much as possible, any difficulties you may experience at work and to ensure you aren’t prevented from being able to have an effective and fulfilling career.

Specifically, this policy covers areas such as the definition of a carer, the support we offer for carers, explains the role that both you and XX will play and includes the process for requesting a change to working patterns.

We have separate policies for other types of time off e.g. maternity, adoption or shared parental leave. You should refer to those policies, available from XX, for more information on entitlements in those areas.

What is a carer?

There is no single definition of a carer, and we are aware there may be employees who do not recognise themselves as a carer but simply a supportive and loyal family member or friend. However, a carer can generally be regarded as a person who provides unpaid support to another person, most commonly a family member or friend, who would not be able to manage without that support. So, if the support you provide is vital for that person and they are dependent on the employee for it then you could class yourself as a carer.

Caring responsibilities can take many forms and that might include looking after young children or someone who is disabled or frail.

The length of time you have supported a person does not have a bearing on whether or not you could be considered a carer. This may just be a responsibility you have taken on very recently but if you are providing indispensable support for another person then you would likely be classed as a carer.

There are many different types of care roles and we appreciate that people will respond to the demands in their own unique ways. XX also fully appreciates that the support a carer provides is usually not optional and certainly not insignificant. It can be a difficult experience and can adversely affect employees at work but we are committed to ensuring this challenge can be overcome by working in a productive and sympathetic way with our employees who provide care for another person.

**Support for carers**

Very often working with colleagues or focusing on a work task can be beneficial to employees who experience demanding and personal challenges. Being part of a team of people who work together can help take your mind off any stressful problems you have and the sense of workplace camaraderie can be a great help in these circumstances. Management will certainly always be available to respond to any problems – either private or workplace related - in a sympathetic way.

The key aim of this policy is to ensure employees with caring responsibilities are supported in the most appropriate way to help them continue to come into work and perform their role to their full potential.

The types of support required will range from simply demonstrating an understanding of the specific pressures faced by employees, to adjusting working patterns or making special arrangements for long-term unpaid leave.

**Employee responsibilities**

XX encourages employees to inform their manager if they are caring for someone and if they feel they need any support. We will work together with the employee to try to find a solution to any difficulties faced due to their role as a carer.

If you disclose to us that you have caring responsibilities, we’ll organise a meeting to discuss your responsibilities at home and how they affect your work life. Various options for support will be considered and our expectation is that a solution agreeable to both sides will be found.

**Manager responsibilities**

Managers will:

* always show consideration and empathy for requests for support
* ensure there will be a full discussion to gain a complete understanding of the circumstances and the effect it has on the employee
* ensure that employees are provided with guidance on the full range of options available
* ensure all employees will be treated fairly and consistently, while taking into account individual needs
* ensure all decisions are in accordance with XX’s procedures
* know where to direct carers if they need expert advice (for example employee counselling, occupational health, external carer support organisations)
* ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against employees because they have caring responsibilities. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an employee because of their association with someone who has a disability
* ensure full confidentiality for requests made for assistance.

**Carers Leave**

If you have caring responsibilities, you can take time off work to deal with unexpected events, for example a breakdown in normal care arrangements. Carers’ leave is unpaid, up to one week per year as per normal working hours. E.g., if you work 2 days per week, you would get 2 days’ carers leave.

**Flexible working and time off for carers**

One possible option to consider for an employee with caring responsibilities is to amend their working schedule or, if possible, changing working locations or patterns, e.g. working from home more often.

This could be done on a temporary basis as a trial. Every request will be thoroughly considered by management in a fair and consistent way but you should appreciate that an important factor will be the effect this alteration could have on the workplace.

]There is no automatic entitlement to have a flexible working request granted and if XX judges that a request is not feasible to implement then we will try to make alternative arrangements. Ultimately our aim is to make a mutually agreeable arrangement. Any such proposal should be discussed with XX before it is agreed.

**Time off for dependants**

All employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours in the event of an unforeseen emergency. There is no set amount of time off that is to be taken per event – this will depend on the exact circumstances.

(Optional) XX operates a time off for dependants policy which gives more information on this right.

**Extended leave**

XX may, at its discretion, agree that an employee may take an extended period of leave from work if this may be of assistance due to the employee’s personal circumstances. Extended leave for personal reasons is in addition to annual leave, parental leave or any other contractual entitlement to time off that the employee has. Our leave policy gives further information to employees about this.

**Parental leave**

Employees with a minimum period of one year’s continuous service are entitled to take parental leave in order to look after a child under the age of 18. Employees may take up to 18 weeks’ leave which will be unpaid.

**Flexible working**

The right to request flexible working applies to employees from day one of their employment. Such a request may take the form of a reduction in the number of days worked; hours worked per day etc. XX will consider all requests in a reasonable manner within a reasonable timeframe.

Full details of the policies listed above are available from XX.