

## **SUPPORT FOR STAFF WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES - MANAGER GUIDANCE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This guidance note provides further information to support managers of staff with caring responsibilities and should be read in conjunction with the [University's Supporting Family Life Policy](#) and [Procedure for Applying for Carers' Leave](#).

The University's Supporting Family Life Policy defines carers as "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. The care they give is unpaid."

With an increasing number of employees taking on caring responsibilities outside work it is important that managers are aware of the resulting demands placed on individuals.

### **SUPPORTING CARERS**

Staff with caring responsibilities are encouraged to register on the University's Carers Register. This is a formal list of employees who have identified themselves as carers and will be used as means of offering support, however this is an individual decision and access to Carers' leave is not dependant on them registering as a Carer. The information held on this register will only be available to you as their Line Manager and Human Resources (HR).

Once it is established that an individual has caring responsibilities appropriate dialogue can take place to build mutual understanding of the pressures faced and possible adjustments or support which may support an individual in work. There is a summary below of the support the University can offer

### **MANAGER'S ROLE**

Managers should recognise that every caring situation is different, and each case should be dealt with individually, with respect to the sensitivity and confidentiality of any caring circumstances.

Understanding potential challenges faced by staff with caring responsibilities is important to ensure managers are best placed to support their employees at work. There are many ways in which support can be provided and it is often small adjustments which can make a significant impact. As the nature of caring responsibilities can change, ongoing dialogue is encouraged to discuss and review reasonable options.

Managers are encouraged therefore to maintain open dialogue with staff to ensure there are opportunities for staff to raise any concerns or pressures they may be facing or to identify that they have caring responsibilities, should they wish to do so. It is important to note that it remains an individual's choice whether they disclose their caring responsibilities, however the greater the understanding of pressures faced the more likely it is that supportive arrangements will be successful.

Staff with caring responsibilities may not always be able to plan for when they need time off, so proactive conversations and having contingency plans in place may be able to mitigate the impact of any time off at short notice.

## **SUPPORT AVAILABLE – HOW TO FIND IT AND SIGNPOST**

The University's [Supporting Family Life Policy](#) outlines various support options which may be helpful to carers.

Managers should familiarise themselves with the options outlined within the policy and consider these during any conversations with staff, including signposting to external support resources and facilities such as the University's [Employee Assistance Programme](#).

The University's Supporting Family Life Policy makes provisions for additional leave. This takes the form of:

- Up to 5 days paid Carers' Leave (then up to 5 days unpaid Carers' Leave thereafter)
- Compassionate Leave
- Dependants Leave
- Emergency Leave

Managers should take time to understand these types of leave and how they may be used, as outlined in the policy. These leave types are requested/approved via the Cloud ERP and should not be unreasonably refused.

Managers should also familiarise themselves with the University's [Flexible Working Policy](#) as being able to work hours in a flexible way can prove very effective in supporting carers to achieve a greater work-life balance.

If you are unsure of any of the support available, then please contact your [HR Consultant/Partner](#) who can talk this through with you.

## **WHEN CARING RESPONSIBILITIES CHANGES OR ENDS**

Caring responsibilities can change or end over time due to the nature of the role. Where an employee no longer has caring responsibilities, similar dialogue should take place to ensure appropriate support is provided and to reflect on whether any agreed supports (e.g., flexible working) need to continue in their current form.

Further support for managers around the policy is available via your [HR Consultant/Partner](#).