

# Your rights at work as a carer



If you look after a family member or friend, it is important to know your rights as an unpaid carer, and know how to access support when you need it.

You don't have to tell your employer that you are a carer, but doing so may help you manage your work and leave arrangements better and open up other avenues of support, such as from colleagues.



Balancing work with caring can be very challenging, so it's good to understand your rights as an employee.

There are two sets of rights you need to know about:

- **Contractual rights**  
These are set out in your contract of employment and are additional to your statutory rights.
- **Statutory rights**  
Everyone is entitled to these by law.

## Your contractual rights

Check your contract of employment or staff handbook to see what you are entitled to. Many organisations now have a Carer's Policy which will also give details of your rights as a carer at your workplace.

## Your statutory rights

### The right to carer's leave

Under The Carer's Leave Act 2023, as a carer, you are entitled to one week of unpaid leave each year. The actual number of days you can have is based on how many days you usually work in a week, for example if you work three days a week, you are entitled to three days carer's leave a year. You can take these in a block or individually over the 12 months.

You are eligible for carer's leave from the first day of employment. Your dependant person does not need to be a relative but needs to have either:

- A physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than three months.
- A disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010).  
See [www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010](http://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010))
- Care needs because of old age.

Your employment rights, such as holidays and returning to your job, are protected during carer's leave. See [www.gov.uk/carers-leave](http://www.gov.uk/carers-leave)

You need to give your employer notice of your need for carer's leave.



## The right to request flexible working

Flexible working includes hybrid or home working, part time hours and more. You can make up to two requests for flexible working in a 12-month period and employers must have a genuine business reason to refuse requests.

For a list of flexible working options and the reasons why your employer could refuse your request, see [www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/work-and-career/the-flexible-working-act-2023](http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/work-and-career/the-flexible-working-act-2023)

## The right to time off for emergencies

You are entitled to reasonable time off work to deal with an emergency involving anyone that depends on you and this leave can be taken without you giving notice.

Emergency leave is usually unpaid but have a look at your employment contract to check.



## The right to parental leave

If you care for a child (under 18) and have continuous employment with your employer for one year, you are entitled to parental leave. This is usually unpaid and taken in blocks of a week or more at a time, up to four weeks each year.

For more on parental leave, see [www.gov.uk/parental-leave](http://www.gov.uk/parental-leave)



## The right to protection from discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 protects people who care for someone who is an older person or who has a disability as the carer is associated with someone who is protected by law. For example, you cannot be turned down for a job or treated less favourably because of your caring role.

See [www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010](http://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010)

## Other information

At Caring Together Charity, we work with organisations to achieve to our Carer Friendly Tick Award which demonstrates how they work to identify, understand, and support carers in their workplace. To find out more about this, please contact us.



For further information on your rights as a working carer, contact us or see the Carers UK website: [www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/work-and-career/your-rights-in-work](http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/work-and-career/your-rights-in-work)

For information on your other rights as an unpaid carer, see the fact sheets on our website: [www.caringtogether.org/download-resources](http://www.caringtogether.org/download-resources)

For more information please contact us  
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[caringtogether.org](http://caringtogether.org)

 Caring Together Charity  
No unpaid carer in crisis