

CARERS IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Contents

	PAGE
Policy statement	3
Policy scope	3
The application process	3
Information for carers	4
Monitoring	4
Appendix 1: Information Tool-kit for Managers/Head-teachers	5
Appendix 2: Information Tool-kit for carers	7

Policy Statement

“Monmouthshire County Council is committed to supporting carers in employment; helping them wherever possible to balance their caring responsibilities whilst fulfilling their employment commitments”

In its application, this policy seeks to ensure that there is no discrimination against employees either directly or indirectly on grounds prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 which covers age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation This policy is inclusive of partners of the opposite or same sex.

Policy Scope

This policy refers to carers.

“Carer means a person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or a disabled child; a person is not a carer for the purposes of this Act if the person provides or intends to provide care under or by virtue of a contract or as voluntary work.” Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Council seeks to be open and fair in relation to carers in their employ and are providing tool kits for Manager/Head teachers and carers to assist in consistent application.

Carers should expect to be able to:-

- Approach their line Manager/Head teacher in confidence and without prejudice to discuss their caring role and how they can manage that in their employment
- Agree an approach/contingency relevant to their role that will cover the likelihood of emergencies (this will depend on the particular situation of the individual concerned and can include the use of special leave, unpaid leave, flexible working etc. as appropriate).

Manager/Head teacher – whilst Managers/Head teachers have a duty to ensure business continuity and that service standards are maintained, both Manager/Head teacher and employee will expect to have a balanced conversation on the expectations of both parties.

The application process

- A meeting between carer and their Manager/Head teacher needs to be arranged allowing sufficient time and a suitable location to be able to cover the matters to be raised.
- In the meeting, consideration needs to be given to the nature of the caring role as well as the employee’s roles and responsibilities.

- A range of policies already exist to assist in flexible working and these need to be considered e.g. agile working arrangements, utilisation of leave including special leave and unpaid leave ,reduction of hours, job share , even exploring the option of another job role.
- The suitability, availability and practicality of any of these needs to be assessed and considered and a follow up meeting may be necessary.
- The aim of the meeting is to assist the employee in being able to balance their caring role with performance in their job.
- It is helpful to have a record of what actions are then going to be taken and a review date.
- In relation to the caring role itself, carers should be encouraged to request a carer's assessment from the Local Authority in which they live (if they have not already done so).

Information for Carers

- The Council will ensure that this policy and other policies related to flexible working are available on The Hub.
- Information for working carers will also be available on the Council website and internal staff bulletins/staff notice boards. This information will be updated by Carers Support and Information Officers.
- The provision of information sessions by the Monmouthshire Carers Project for staff who are carers, supported by information on the role of all Managers and Head-teachers which is contained in this policy.
- At exit interviews the Manager/Head teacher will discuss whether the caring role has been an influential factor in the carer choosing to leave, in which case, there may be a need to revisit whether any adaptation of the working pattern could assist in the carer maintaining employment.

Monitoring

The policy will be monitored annually by the Monmouthshire Carers Project Team within Social Care & Housing to ensure that changes to legislation or internal policies are included and reflected in the policy.

Appendix 1

Toolkit for Managers/Head teachers – Identifying Carers and providing support

Why the need for a toolkit?

There are many people working within Monmouthshire County Council who outside their place of employment continue with their role as a carer. This toolkit is intended to help you as a Manager/Head teacher to support carers working within your team/school. Carers in employment need to be supported in the workplace and the intention of this document is to aid you in offering practical and workable solutions.

If someone within your team/school identifies themselves to you as a Carer the following statement will clarify whether they fall within that role. This will then aid you in making decisions as to how you can both work together practically in order to balance work life needs.

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If a member of staff has been identified as a carer, support can be offered to allow employees to continue in their role as both a carer and employee.

The following lists a number of options that are available.

Flexible Working

- Flexible starting and finishing times
- Compressed working hours
- Annualised working hours
- Job sharing or part-time working
- Agile working
- Term-time working
- Flexible holidays to fit in with alternative care arrangements

Each request will be considered on its own merits with the individual circumstances taken fully into consideration. However, it must be noted that the Manager / Head-teacher must fulfil the needs of the service and therefore it might not always be possible to agree to a new working pattern. In such circumstances, the reasoning why the request cannot be accepted should be clear to the applicant from the notice of the refusal, which must include the reason and an explanation. But there will be circumstances where the applicant may believe that their request

has not been properly considered and may want to appeal. This is all outlined in the Flexible Working Policy,

Special Leave Arrangements

- Emergency leave
 - a disruption or breakdown in care arrangements
 - if a dependant falls ill, has been assaulted or in an accident including when the victim is hurt or upset rather than physically injured
 - to deal with a child during school hours
 - to make longer term arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
 - to deal with the death of a dependant
- Compassionate leave
- Buying back leave
- Career breaks

Workplace Support

- Carer-aware managers/Head teachers at all levels
- In-house information and advice
- In-house support/networking groups
- Access to external counselling provider

Other measures

- Reasonable notice if overtime or working away from home is required.

When setting up a meeting ensure:

That you allocate a reasonable amount of time;

That the employee is aware the meeting is in confidence and will not prejudice them;

That the meeting is free from interruptions

Be mindful that many carers are dealing with highly emotional issues outside of the workplace, so they may find it difficult at times to communicate their expectations and outcomes from the meeting. They may wish to bring in a work colleague for support which should be encouraged.

In summary, carers are looking to their managers/Head teachers for the following:

Understanding - someone at work who understands the conflicting demands of their working and caring responsibilities, and can help manage them more flexibly.

Advice and information - Managers/Head teachers should be aware of provisions made for emergency leave and additional flexible leave arrangements. They should also be able to signpost employees to information. Additional information will be available through the Carers Support and Information Officers.

Flexibility - *often short term* but including

- time off for emergencies
- flexible working arrangements
- flexible leave arrangements

Appendix 2

Toolkit for Carers

Identifying carers and supporting the Caring role

Carers look after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability. The care they provide is unpaid.

If you believe you fall into the category of a carer, and you need the support of Monmouthshire County Council, now or in the future, this toolkit is intended as an aid to identify ways you and your Manager/Head teacher can work together in order to fulfil your roles of both carer and employee.

1. You need to arrange a meeting with your Manager/Head teacher, ensuring they have allocated a reasonable amount of time for this, and it is conducted in a confidential manner free from interruptions. You may want to bring a work colleague (or TU rep) with you who knows your situation and will help you state your case.
2. Before you arrange the meeting identify what it is you need from your Manager/Head teacher in order for you to fulfil your role as both an employee of Monmouthshire County Council and a carer.
3. State clearly (maybe in written format) in your meeting how your caring role has impacted on your job, and what you would like to work towards, with your Manager's/Head teachers co-operation, in order to reduce pressure within your current job.
4. Be willing to explore all possibilities with your Manager/Head teacher as to how you can come up with a workable solution, and do not be afraid to make suggestions.

You may find it helpful to complete the following information before approaching your Manager/Head teacher so that you can use it as a basis for your discussion.

1. Do you work full-time or part-time?
2. Who are you looking after _____
3. How long have you been a carer for? _____
4. Do you have help in your caring role? If yes where does your help come from?

5. Do you have arrangements in place to help you stay in work e.g. home care support, family support, neighbours etc.

6. Do you have arrangements in place to support the person that you care for if an emergency occurs?

7. Do you want to tell your manager anything else about your caring responsibilities in relation to home/working arrangements?

8. Ask for the leave options available to be explained to you. If you can have time off ask how your absence will be recorded: i.e. annual leave, compassionate leave, unpaid leave, additional paid leave.

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9. Think about and also ask if there is anything that could be done in the work place that will help you to continue working and caring?

If you would like any additional information and advice, you can contact People Services HR on 01633 644400 or Carers Support Officers on 01600 730513.

Your Manager/Head-teacher and HR Adviser will treat any information disclosed to them in complete confidence.

Version Control

Title	Carers in Employment Policy (including school based employees)
Purpose	To specify the terms by which the Council provides support to carers in our employment
Owner	People Services/ Social Care & Health
Approved by	JAG (21 November 2016), Cabinet
Date	October 2016
Version Number	1
Status	APPROVED
Review Frequency	Annual
Next review date	2017-18
Consultation	People Services, Head-teachers, Trades Unions, JAG, People Board (15 November 2016), Cabinet