

Carers' Leave Policy

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1. Introduction

At Strathclyde, we know that many of our staff are carers, providing substantial and regular unpaid care for someone who is ill, elderly, disabled or has a long-term health condition. We value the important role carers play in supporting the most vulnerable in our community. We're committed to supporting colleagues who have these responsibilities.

If you're a carer, please talk to your manager, and tell them about your circumstances so they can provide support.

In this policy you'll find information about what support is available for carers at the University, how to request time off, what pay you'll receive and more.

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#).

2. What is a Carer?

This policy applies to all employees of the University who provide, or intend to provide either:

- A substantial amount of unpaid care on a regular basis for someone who is ill, elderly, frail, disabled, or
- Unplanned care, where there is an unexpected change in circumstances or health of someone who is ill, elderly, frail, or disabled.

The person requiring care must be someone who reasonably relies on you for your assistance in all the circumstances. This could be a parent, child, partner, relative, close friend, or someone from your chosen family.

3. Registering as a Carer

To allow us to support you, you can register as a carer by updating your personal details via the HR tab on [Pegasus](#) (staff login required). If you don't have access to a University computer or laptop, you can log into Pegasus on the web using your own smartphone, tablet, or laptop. For more help, contact [Human Resources](#).

It's always a good idea to let your manager know you're a carer and talk to them about your circumstances. This is so they can fully support you and help you address any challenges you might have with balancing your work and caring commitments. We'll always handle things as sensitively as possible.

4. Our Carers' Network

Being a carer can be a rewarding but challenging experience, so we know how important it is that you look after your own wellbeing. Talking to other people who are also carers can be a great source of support and practical advice.

Once you register as a carer through Pegasus, you'll be invited to join our [Carers' Network](#) (staff login required). This is a support group for staff who have, or intend to have, carer responsibilities, or have had carer responsibilities in the past.

5. What Time Off is Available?

If you meet our definition of a carer and you've also registered as a carer on Pegasus, we'll give you up to 5 days (35 hours) paid leave per annual leave year (pro-rata for part-time staff) to help you carry out your caring responsibilities. For example, this leave can be used to:

- Attend healthcare and/or social work meetings and appointments.
- Attend appointments with solicitors and deal with legal matters.
- Attend meetings with schools, teachers, or other educational professionals.
- Attend appointments with external bodies who support and advise on caring related matters.
- Provide short-term care if normal care arrangements breakdown or following illness/ injury.

We know every situation is different, and the needs of individual staff will vary, so we always aim to be flexible in our approach. You can help us do this by talking to your manager regularly to help them understand the challenges you face. This is particularly important any time your circumstances or support needs change.

And remember, if you use up all your carers' leave entitlement for the year and an emergency/ unexpected situation arises, you may be entitled to unpaid time off under our [Emergency Time Off for Dependants](#) policy.

6. Requesting Carers' Leave

To help your manager plan for any absences, we ask that you provide them with as much notice as possible of your need to take carers' leave, normally at least one week. But we understand emergencies can happen and it won't always be possible to give notice, so don't worry, we'll always try to be flexible.

7. What Other Support is Available?

We know that as a carer, juggling work and caring responsibilities can be challenging. If you think you need additional support, please talk to your manager who'll discuss a range of options with you.

For example, you may feel you need a change to your working arrangements. This could be either on a temporary or irregular basis (please see our [Agile Working](#) toolkit – staff login required), or you may feel you need a permanent or more formal/ structured arrangement (please see our [Flexible Working](#) policy). Talking to your manager, you can discuss and agree ways to work in a more flexible way to suit your individual needs, such as:

- flexibility with start and finish times, or with lunch breaks.
- part-time hours.
- compressed hours (where you work your normal weekly hours over a shorter number of days).
- annualised hours (where you work full time at some times of the year and reduced hours at other times).
- working from home or the home of the person you care for (providing they live in the UK and a reasonable distance from your normal place of work, and providing your role is suitable).

Other options you may want to consider, depending on your circumstances, are:

- [Ordinary parental leave](#). If you're caring for a child under 18, ordinary parental leave allows you to request up to 18 weeks leave to care for your child.
- Buying [additional annual leave](#). Under our holiday purchase scheme, you can request to purchase either one or two additional weeks holidays. The cost of this is spread over 12 monthly deductions from your pay.

8. Further Information and Support

If you have any queries about this policy, please talk to your manager or contact [Human Resources](#).

And remember, we also have:

- Our free and independent Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider can offer support such as counselling. Visit our [Wellbeing Hub](#) for more information.
- an on-campus [Chaplaincy](#), which provides opportunities for you to spend time in worship, quiet thought, or meditation in a community environment. The team of multi-faith Chaplains can also provide bereavement support.

9. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please refer to our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.