



People, Performance and Development Committee  
11 September 2023

## Carers Leave Scheme

### **Purpose of the report:**

To seek the Committee's approval for the provision of up to five days paid leave in any 12 month period pro rata for part time employees) for employees who are carers.

This report is being brought to People, Performance and Development Committee under its delegated powers in accordance with Section 2, para 6.13 (a) of the Constitution:

“determine policy on pay, terms and conditions of employment of all staff.”

### **Recommendations:**

1. It is recommended that the Committee approve the provision of up to five days paid leave in any 12 month period (pro rata for part time employees) for employees who are carers.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Approximately 11% of the UK workforce are also carers (source ONS/Employers for Carers. With an ever-aging population, this number is set to increase.
- 1.2 Carers leave is seen as a strong incentive to recruit and retain older workers in particular, but it is also very much a universal attraction as employees of all ages become carers.

1.3 In June 2023 Royal Assent was given to the Carers Act 2023 which gives employees an entitlement to up to 5 days unpaid carers leave. The provisions of the Act are expected to become effective in 2024. However, many employers have or are introducing schemes to provide up to 5 days paid carers leave. Local Authorities who have introduced these schemes include:

- Kent County Council
- Bolton Council
- Solihull Council.

1.4

## 2. Proposals

2.1 In the light of the above it is proposed that the County Council offers up to 5 days paid leave for employees to enable them to continue to balance their work and care commitments.

2.2 To be eligible for this leave an employee must be a carer for and have a relationship with the individual which falls within one of the below categories:

- A spouse or civil partner
- An employee's child
- A parent or parents of partner
- A person who lives in the same household as the employee (otherwise than by reason of being their employee, tenant, lodger, or boarder)
- A person who reasonably relies on an employee for care, for example an elderly neighbour with no relatives, who is living alone.
- In addition, the individual requiring care must have a long-term care need. The care need may be due to illness or injury (physical or mental), a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010 or issues related to old age.

2.3 Carers leave can be used to carry out a wide range of caring activities which may include one or a combination of the following;

- Providing personal support, such as keeping an eye out for someone, keeping them company and staying in touch. Accompanying someone to medical or other appointments.
- Attendance at appointments, concerning the welfare and care of above, (e.g. child guidance, making arrangements for resettlement of people in long-term sheltered accommodation/nursing home, psychiatric care etc).

- Providing practical support, such as making meals, going shopping for them, laundry, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, and other help around the home.
- Helping with official or financial matters, such as helping with paperwork, dealing with 'officials' (also over the phone and the internet), paying bills/rents/rates, collecting pension/benefits.
- Providing personal and/or medical care, such as collecting prescriptions, giving medications, changing dressings, helping them move around the home, getting dressed, feeding, washing, bathing, using the toilet.
- Making arrangements, such as dealing with social services or the voluntary sector, moving someone into a care home, making home adjustments or adaptations.

2.4 This list is not exhaustive, and Carer's leave may be granted for other reasons which fall under the spirit of this agreement

### **3. Implications**

#### **3.1 Financial and Value for Money Implications**

The proposal would not have significant financial implications as any leave taken would be subject to the normal exigencies of the service with appropriate notice.

#### **3.2 Equalities and Diversity Implications**

Being a carer is a protected characteristic because they count as being 'associated' with someone who is protected by the law because of their age or disability.

The policy ensures that as an employer the County Council supports these employees to carry out their caring responsibilities and also be effective in their roles.

#### **3.3 Risk Management Implications**

No risks have been identified.

#### **3.4 Implications for the Council's Priorities**

The recruitment, retention and motivation of key staff is critical to the county council meeting its priority objectives and achieving the aims of the Community Vision for Surrey. This assists with the Council remaining competitive in this area.

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**Sources/background papers:**