



The Working Carers Initiative Information for Managers

Carers look after family; partners, friends and neighbours in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability.

- *The care they provide is unpaid*
- *Working Carers are juggling paid work with unpaid care*

Did you know?

Reponses from the Devon County Council staff survey show that:

- 1 in 5 Devon County Council staff are juggling work and caring responsibilities
- Almost one quarter of these are caring for more than one person.
- Almost 80% are between the ages of 40 to 59 years

Research from Carers UK indicates that:

- There are approx 3 million working carers in the UK
- 3 in 5 people will become a carer at some stage in their lives
- The Work and Families Act 2006 comes into effect on 6th April 2007
- It gives carers the right to request flexible working.
- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 8 men working part time are carers.
- By the year 2036 the economy will need an additional 2 million people (only one quarter will be school or college leavers)
- By the year 2036 there will be almost 7 million people aged 75 or older in the UK
- Two million people become carers each year and 2 million people cease to be carers.
- Caring can be long term (e.g. a child with a earning disability) or short term (e.g. a terminally ill partner)
- Carers often give up work to care – you could lose valuable staff.

What can you do?

- ✓ Be aware of the issues facing working carers (see Top Tips for Working Carers)
- ✓ Be aware of your staff who are carers
- ✓ Listen to and offer support to your staff who are carers.
- ✓ Be conversant with the policies of your organisation which you could use to support working carers such as
 - Compassionate leave
 - Emergency time off for dependants
 - Parental leave
 - Work – life balance
 - Dependant and child care
 - Job share
 - Career break
 - Other special leave/time off
 - Home working
 - Managing Absence
- ✓ Be prepared to be flexible.
- ✓ Be aware that carers often need an instant response to crisis situations
- ✓ Develop a supportive team environment
- ✓ Encourage carers to seek support from within the team – colleagues can be very supportive.
- ✓ Refer carers to the Carers Link for more information.
- ✓ Help staff to be flexible in their work to accommodate caring responsibilities and deal with emergencies.
- ✓ Do not confuse carers with people who **work** in care - careworkers, medical staff, community workers.

Have you seen?

The following are a few of the websites which give more information on working carers:

www.carersindevon.org.uk

www.carersuk.org/Employersforcarers

www.acecarers.org.uk

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www.carersindevon.org.uk