



Carer Friendly Workplace South Tees Quality Mark

Employer Resource Pack



Recognising and Supporting
Working Carers

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This resource pack has been developed to support your organisation on becoming a carer friendly workplace.

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the **Carer Friendly Workplace South Tees Quality Mark**.

Across South Tees, thousands of people combine paid employment with caring for a family member, friend or neighbour who could not manage without their support. Whilst caring can be rewarding, it can also impact a person's wellbeing, finances, career progression and ability to remain in work.

Employers have a vital role to play in helping carers balance work and caring responsibilities. By creating supportive workplace cultures, organisations can improve staff wellbeing, retention, engagement and productivity whilst helping carers remain in employment.

The Carer Friendly Workplace South Tees Quality Mark is awarded to employers that have created a supportive work environment for staff who are, or will become, carers.

This resource pack provides practical guidance, tools and ideas that can help you on your journey to becoming a carer friendly workplace.



Understanding Working Carers

What is a working carer?

A working carer is someone who combines paid employment with providing unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who could not manage without their help due to illness, disability, frailty, addiction or mental ill health.

Many people do not recognise themselves as carers. Instead, they see themselves as:

- A husband, wife or partner
- A parent
- A son or daughter
- A sibling
- A friend or neighbour

As a result, many carers remain hidden and may not access support that could help them.



KEY FACT

1 in 7 of the workforce are juggling work and care in the UK.

Why Supporting Working Carers Matters

Supporting carers is not only the right thing to do, it makes good business sense.

Benefits for employees include:

- Improved wellbeing
- Reduced stress and burnout
- Greater job satisfaction
- Increased confidence to seek support

Benefits for employers include:

- Improved staff retention
- Reduced absenteeism
- Increased productivity
- Improved employee engagement
- Reduced recruitment and training costs
- A more inclusive workplace culture

KEY FACT

An estimated **600 people a day** give up work to provide unpaid care



When carers are supported to remain in employment, everyone benefits.

Identifying Hidden Carers

Many organisations already employ carers without realising.

Employees may not identify as carers because they:

- See caring as part of family life
- Are unaware support is available
- Worry about being treated differently
- Fear it may affect career opportunities

An employee with caring responsibilities might:

- Need flexibility around appointments
- Take unplanned leave
- Appear tired or stressed
- Frequently check their phone
- Turn down additional responsibilities
- Be concerned about someone at home

Key trigger words to listen out for include:

“I help look after....”

“I support.....”

“I take care of...”

KEY FACT

An estimated **£37 billion** a year is lost due to carers not being able to work.

Creating a Carer Friendly Workplace

Creating a carer friendly workplace is about culture as much as policy.

Consider:

- Having visible leadership support
- Appointing a Carer Champion
- Including carers within equality, diversity and inclusion work
- Raising awareness throughout the organisation
- Encouraging carers to identify themselves

Small changes can make a significant difference.

Managers play a key role in helping carers feel supported and should:

- Listen without judgement
- Respect confidentiality
- Explore practical solutions
- Review support regularly
- Signpost employees to specialist support where appropriate



Flexible Working and Practical Support

Every organisation is different, but examples of support may include:

Flexible Working

- Flexible start and finish times
- Hybrid working
- Home working
- Compressed hours
- Temporary adjustments

Leave Arrangements

- Paid Carers Leave
- Emergency leave
- Compassionate leave
- Time off for appointments

Wellbeing Support

- Employee Assistance Programmes
- Counselling services
- Wellbeing initiatives

A Working Carers Network

- Peer support
- Shared experiences
- Help shape workplace policies and support
- Online or in-person

KEY FACT

68% of carers who are employees said they felt stressed or anxious at work, while 64% said they found it difficult to concentrate at work. *

*Source: Carers UK, State of Caring 2025: The 'tipping point', published 2026.

Carer Passport

A Carer Passport is a document that provides carers and their line manager with information about how the employee's caring responsibilities impact their work.

It helps carers and managers record agreed support arrangements.

Carers can use this tool to start a conversation with their manager about their caring responsibilities.

Benefits include:

- Avoiding the need for carers to repeatedly explain their situation
- Creating consistency when managers change
- Supporting regular reviews
- Recording agreed adjustments



A Carers Passport template and promotional materials are available to download here
<https://www.carerspasports.uk/employment/resources/>

Carers Assessments

Many carers are unaware that they are entitled to a **Carers Assessment** (or Carers Conversation) from their local authority.

It is not an assessment of how well someone is caring. Instead, it looks at what the person needs to support them in their caring role and maintain their health and wellbeing.

A Carers Assessment considers how caring affects a person's wellbeing and identifies support that may help.

This could include:

- Respite opportunities
- Emotional support
- Advice and guidance
- Support services
- Training opportunities



Employers should be aware of Carers Assessments and encourage carers to explore support available to them.

It is carried out by the local authority where the person being cared for lives.

For **Middlesbrough**
call **01642 065070**

For **Redcar & Cleveland**
call **01642 771500**

Signposting and Local Support

Employers do not need to provide all support themselves. Local organisations can offer specialist support, advice and information. Carer support services available across South Tees include:

- **We Care You Care**
Information & signposting for all carers
www.wecareyoucare.info
- **Carers Together**
Support for carers aged 18+
www.carerstogether.co.uk
- **The Junction Foundation**
Support for young carers aged 5-15
www.thejunctionfoundation.com
- **Teesside Mind**
Emotional wellbeing support for carers aged 18+
www.teessidemind.org.uk
- **Mobilise**
Online peer support for carers aged 18+
www.mobiliseonline.co.uk
- **Dementia Action Teesside**
Support for people living with dementia and their carers
dementiaactionteesside.org

Providing clear signposting can make a significant difference to employees with caring responsibilities.

Raising Awareness

Awareness is key to helping carers identify themselves and access support.

Ideas include:

- Carers Week activities in June
- Promote Carers Rights Day in November
- Promote support in staff newsletters, intranet articles
- Use posters and displays
- Organise awareness events
- Share employee stories

Regular communication helps employees identify themselves as carers and know that there is support available

KEY FACT

The average person has a 50:50 chance of providing unpaid care by the age of 50 – long before reaching retirement age



Case Study

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) is one of the largest mental health and learning disability trusts in the UK. Over one third of staff are also unpaid carers. What they do:

Working Carers Network

80+ members; meets monthly via Teams and in person. Provides a safe space for carers to share experiences and access peer support.

Executive sponsor: Chief Nurse, ensuring senior-level influence

Carer Passport Scheme

Framework for open conversations between carers and managers. Agreed support and flexibility built into day-to-day work

Resources & Partnerships

Dedicated intranet hub, carers' toolkit, and local support links. Collaboration with local carer organisations. Marks Carers Week and Carers Rights Day annually

“ We aim to create a workplace which helps staff balance work, service needs and caring responsibilities,” Helen Cooke, Health & Wellbeing Strategic Lead

*“Having the support of my manager gives me peace of mind that I can care for my mum when I need to,”
Sarah Morris, Employee*