



**Report of:** Leeds Anchors Healthy Workplaces (Working Carers) Sub Group

**Report to:** Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board

**Date:** 28 April 2022

**Subject:** Leeds Anchors Healthy Workplaces (Working Carers)

Are specific geographical areas affected? If relevant, name(s) of area(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## Summary of main issues

The Anchors Healthy Workplace (Working Carers) sub-group considers Employers for Carers to be best practice and encourages organisations, to implement the following actions:

- Adopt the leadership commitment appended to this report
- Sign up to membership of Employers for Carers
- Roll out working carer e-learning module to all line-managers
- Promote 'Carer Aware' e-learning to all staff
- Introduce a working carers group or staff network
- Introduce a working carers passport scheme
- Consider applying for the Carer Confident benchmark
- Promote the Digital Resource for Carers for all staff
- Promote Employers for Carers for other employers in Leeds

## Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and the progress of the work led by The Anchors Healthy Workplace (Working Carers) sub-group.

- Invite Health and Wellbeing Board members to support the approach outlined in this report including actions set out in paragraph 3.10 of this report.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress to improve support for working carers following an earlier report to Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2020.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Working Carers are people who balance their paid employment with providing unpaid care for a relative or friend who, because of health and care needs, would not be able to manage without that help.
- 2.2 Working carers often feel uncomfortable discussing their caring role in the workplace and many struggle to manage combining their caring role with employment. This can lead to valuable members of the workforce leaving work to care which has a significant impact on the carer, their family, employers, and the wider economy.
- 2.3 As the number of people providing unpaid care increases, so does the number of working carers. Carers UK now estimate that over a quarter of all workers are juggling work and care.
- 2.4 The report to Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2020 reinforced the fact that working carers are an integral part of the workplace and acknowledged that the level and type of support can be improved and built upon.
- 2.5 The report also set out relatively straight forward actions that could be developed in partnership going forward with a further update to be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board in due course.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The Anchors Healthy Workplace (Working Carers) sub-group was established to oversee next steps and included staff from Leeds City Council, NHS organisations in Leeds and Carers Leeds. Broadly speaking the sub-group considered:
- Policy and leadership commitment
  - Best practice
  - Training
  - Influencing and encouraging other employers
- 3.2 The Anchors Healthy Workplace (Working Carers) sub-group have developed a leadership commitment which is appended to this report. The commitment can easily be adapted by any organisation and sets out clearly an organisations recognition of, and commitment to, working carers.
- 3.3 Leeds City Council are members of Carers UK 'Employers for Carers' which provides access to best practice guides, toolkits and other resources which are up to date and together in one place. The membership model allows NHS

organisations in Leeds and employers with fewer than 250 employees to full membership benefits under the umbrella of the council's membership.

- 3.4 Line managers need to be aware of the issues working carers face, and to understand what is available to balance the needs of the business with those of the carer and other members of their teams. Employers for Carers includes a handbook for managers and an e-learning module which helps line managers to:
- understand caring and its impact
  - identify carers in the workplace and their needs
  - outline the business case for their support
  - understand the legal requirements for supporting carers
  - explore practical and sustainable ways in which you and your organisation can support them
  - understand the different nature of caring situations and the range of options available to managers
- 3.5 Employers for Carers also includes an e-learning module (Carer-Aware) which is designed to help staff identify themselves or others as carers and learn how to get support. It will also help line managers or other teams with employee wellbeing responsibilities to understand what carers may need in the workplace and how to best support them.
- 3.6 Many organisations now have a working carers group or staff network which can provide information, signposting and support as well as reaching out to working carers who might not realise they are caring, and enable them to access the network and other carers' support. Employers for Carers includes a toolkit for developing and sustaining a working carers network.
- 3.7 Many organisations are also introducing Working Carer Passports which are essentially a record of a conversation between a working carer and their line manager about caring responsibilities and the ways that the organisation will support the working carer. Employers for Carers includes a toolkit for introducing a working carers passport scheme as well as case studies from organisations that have implemented a scheme previously.
- 3.8 'Carer Confident' is a national benchmarking scheme which supports organisations to build a positive and inclusive workplace for staff who are working carers and to make sure they are recognised, respected and supported. Carer Confident has been designed to support organisations to work progressively through three levels, (Active, Accomplished, Ambassador). Employers for Carers members can apply to the scheme at a significantly discounted rate.
- 3.9 Membership of Employers for Carers also provides free access for all carers in Leeds to a range of digital resources that can support their caring role, including e-learning, information guides, Jointly care coordination app, My Back Up guide to emergency planning.

- 3.10 The Anchors Healthy Workplace (Working Carers) sub-group considers Employers for Carers to be best practice and encourages organisations to implement the following actions:
- Adopt the leadership commitment appended to this report
  - Sign up to membership of Employers for Carers
  - Roll out the working carer e-learning module to all line-managers
  - Promote 'Carer Aware' e-learning to all staff
  - Introduce a working carers group or staff network
  - Introduce a working carers passport scheme
  - Consider applying for the Carer Confident benchmark
  - Promote the Digital Resource for Carers for all staff
  - Promote Employers for Carers for other employers in Leeds
- 3.11 Carers Leeds has facilitated a Working Carers Employers Forum for a number of years and has seen membership of the forum grow. The purpose of the forum is to exchange best practice and learn from each other, to work through challenges collectively and to try out new ideas and innovations in a safe environment. There are now over 30 employer members of the forum of different sizes and from different sectors. The forum is hoping to produce promotional material for Carers Week in June 2022 to influence and encourage other employers to get involved.
- 3.12 During the COVID pandemic there has been a significant shift towards working from home and hybrid working. Working carers' experiences varied with some reporting that working from home had improved their work life balance and made balancing work and care easier, while others found work a respite from their caring role and that they struggled to be able to concentrate on work while at home.
- 3.13 It is vital that implementation of the actions proposed in this report consider lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and that flexibility in the hours and places people work is maintained to ensure that working carers can stay in paid work.

## **4 Health and Wellbeing Board governance**

### **4.1 Consultation, engagement and hearing citizen voice**

- 4.1.1 Citizen and stakeholder engagement informed the development of the Leeds Carers Partnership Strategy which includes 'providing support for organisations and businesses to become more carer aware' and 'increasing the number of working carers who are receiving support from their employer, (e.g., working carers passport)' as key objectives
- 4.1.2 The Anchors Healthy Workplace (Working Carers) sub-group included staff from anchor organisations and also from Carers Leeds.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 Caring for as little as five hours a week can have a significant impact on employment prospects, with those caring for more than 10 hours a week at marked risk of leaving the labour market altogether. Men and women who care for 20 or more hours a week are much less likely to be in higher level jobs.
- 4.2.2 Working carers can pay a heavy price in terms of their own health. Those with heavy caring responsibilities are 2 to 3 times more likely than workers without caring responsibilities to be in poor health.
- 4.2.3 Unpaid care is different to mainstream childcare and as such, requires a different response from employers. Having the right policies and practices in place are crucial to employer resilience and this does not always need to be complicated or costly. For example, a small change in working hours or access to a private telephone can make all the difference to both the carer and the organisation and represents good value when compared to advertising and recruitment costs.

### **4.3 Resources and value for money**

- 4.3.1 There is evidence to show that the impact of staff turnover, absence and stress as a result of juggling work and caring could be costing UK businesses over £3.5 billion every year, so there are significant savings to be made by better supporting carers to manage work alongside caring

### **4.4 Legal Implications, access to information and call In**

- 4.4.1 There are no legal implications, access to information or call in implications to this report.

### **4.5 Risk management**

- 4.5.1 There are no risk management implications to this report.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 Effective support for working carers makes perfect sense for employers as well as for staff who are working carers. The actions set out in paragraph 3.10 of this report will enable organisations to support the implementation of the Leeds Carers Partnership Strategy which in turn:
- Supports the Leeds Health and Care Plan system-wide focus on prevention and early intervention, promotes carer health and wellbeing, and prevents carers from experiencing ill-health and financial disadvantage.
  - Supports the Best City Ambition and the mission to tackle poverty and inequality by setting out the priorities and objectives that, when taken together, will promote the health and well-being of carers and young carers in Leeds, and reduce the health and financial inequalities that carers experience due to caring.

## **6 Recommendations**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and the progress of the work led by The Anchors Healthy Workplace (Working Carers) sub-group.
- Invite Health and Wellbeing Board members to support the approach outlined in this report including actions set out in paragraph 3.10 of this report

## **7 Background documents**

### **7.1 Appendix - Leadership commitment**

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**How does this help reduce health inequalities in Leeds?**

Carers experience health inequalities as a direct consequence of their caring role and this can be compounded further for these carers who juggle caring with employment. Effective workplace support for working carers will enable better conversations between working carers and employers meaning carers will be better supported to stay in work.

**How does this help create a high-quality health and care system?**

Effective workplace support for working carers benefits not only carers by maintaining and promoting their health and well-being, but also the health and well-being of the person they care for. Carers play a significant role in preventing, reducing or delaying the needs for care and support for the people they care for, which is why it is important that we consider preventing carers from developing needs for care and support themselves.

**How does this help to have a financially sustainable health and care system?**

Well supported working carers are more likely to achieve a good balance between work and caring and will be contributing to the economy through national insurance and taxation. Conversely, poorly supported working carers are more likely to give up work, become isolated and develop needs for care and support for themselves as well as the people they care for.

**Future challenges or opportunities**

The Carer Confident Benchmarking Scheme provides an opportunity for organisations to work progressively from being an organisation that actively supports working carers to being recognised as an ambassador.

**Priorities of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21  
(please tick all that apply to this report)**

A Child Friendly City and the best start in life	X
An Age Friendly City where people age well	X
Strong, engaged and well-connected communities	X
Housing and the environment enable all people of Leeds to be healthy	X
A strong economy with quality, local jobs	X
Get more people, more physically active, more often	X
Maximise the benefits of information and technology	X
A stronger focus on prevention	X
Support self-care, with more people managing their own conditions	X
Promote mental and physical health equally	X
A valued, well trained and supported workforce	X

The best care, in the right place, at the right time

X