

Carer Passport

As a carer positive exemplary employer, over the years we have developed a range of policies to support our working carers in line with our values – we are fair, we are helpful, we value learning and we are collaborative.



We are **fair** – We are **helpful** - We are **great collaborators** - We **value learning**

Introduction

Welcome to the Carers passport, firstly can we say what it is not. It's not a policy, it's not a process or a procedure. So, what is it? It's tool that has some guidance for our carers and managers for when carers are unsure how to take that first step and open the discussion on caring with their manager around their caring and work responsibilities. The outcome of which may be that both you and your manager decide that a more formal approach is needed such as a flexible working request or it may just mean that now your manager is aware of your situation. Either way, we are there to help.

What is a Carer Passport?

A Carer Passport is a tool to help you explain to your manager what your current caring responsibilities are and how these may impact upon your work and personal life. It is a way of opening the conversation with your manager, allowing you and your manager to fully discuss the circumstances with the intention of seeking a mutually acceptable solution to your caring requirements, balanced with the needs of the service. It can also act as a record of the discussions and the agreements reached, should you wish to do so. This passport compliments current support provisions already in place.

Your Carers Passport is a living document and should be updated/adjusted as your caring responsibilities change over time.

Aspects of your caring role may be highly personal, and you are not required to discuss these in detail if you do not wish to do so. It is up to you, as a carer, to determine how much information you wish to share, however, it is important for you to share enough information for your manager to understand the issues and challenges you may face.

What Will it Cover?

Whilst this is a voluntary form, it can be used to discuss all options open to you such as your right to request flexible working, special leave and support provisions (i.e. flexi time, employee counselling) and also any other reasonable adjustments which help to support you at work and with your caring responsibilities.

This tool does not replace any HR Policy i.e. Flexible Working, Carers Policy etc. This is simply an aid to open up discussion should you wish to do so.

Once completed, you and your manager should agree how the document is stored.

What are the benefits of a Carer Passport?

- It can help to create a supportive working culture where staff feel that they have 'permission' to talk about their circumstances in a safe environment.
- It can also help to communicate existing workplace support for carers, signposting carers to current policies that may help and that they may not be aware of.
- It can help us retain valuable staff who are combining work and care.
- Increased employee engagement, motivation, morale and commitment.
- This passport embodies our values we are fair, we are helpful, we are great collaborators and we value learning.

So how does it work?

Employee Responsibilities

- You should contact your line manager and arrange to meet with them to discuss your caring responsibilities.
- The meeting will give you and your manager the opportunity to discuss the issues you have identified. You may find it helpful to talk through the following questions (this list is not exhaustive):
 - What are your caring responsibilities?
 - How do they affect your work?
 - What impact does work have on your caring responsibilities?
 - Do you already receive any support in work to help combine caring with work?
 - What further support would help you?
 - Do you need to apply for flexible working to continue your caring responsibilities?
 - What would help ensure that the needs of the team/organisation continue to be met?
 - Do you need any support from occupational health, the employee counselling service or external organisations?
 - Do you need any equipment from the department to support your combined role i.e a mobile phone or laptop?
 - How do you expect your caring responsibilities to change in the future.
- Remember that you will need to follow the procedures in the relevant policy if, for example, you want to apply for flexible working.
- You should review the passport if your circumstances or job role change.

Manager Responsibilities

- In line with our values, Renfrewshire Council aims to create a climate in which employees are confident that they can disclose information about the challenges they face in combining caring responsibilities and work in a supportive and confidential setting.
- As a manager, your actions and decisions are of great importance in considering any steps which might be taken to assist them in their work.
- This passport is a tool that you and the employee can use to help you do this.
- When you receive a request from an employee, you should arrange to have a meeting with that person as soon as possible.
- Prior to the meeting, you may wish to familiarise yourself with relevant HR policies.
- Managers should treat information contained in the passport and discussions with individuals about their caring responsibilities in the strictest confidence.
- It is for the individual to decide how much to disclose about their caring role. However, it is important that, as a manager, you are able to understand how it affects their day-to-day work and what you can do to support them.
- Remember the employee may not be aware of current policies and the kind of flexibilities you may wish to consider with them are:
 - options for flexible working including part-time, compressed hours and job sharing
 - use of flexi time and carers leave to cover appointments etc
 - arrangements for notifying you and making cover arrangements for immediate, short term crises
 - any likely need for paid or unpaid special leave

- other support mechanisms for example Occupational Health, Time for Talking, Advice Works
- any issues around working temporarily in a different location if the person being cared for does not live locally.
- Agreements on these and other issues should be recorded in the passport and regular reviews set in place to discuss any changes.
- Managers should refer to the relevant HR policies, for example, the Flexible Working Policy where the carer wants to change their working pattern.
- It is important to remember that the passport belongs to the employee involved and is confidential. Should you move to another post, you should not pass the form to the next manager without the permission of the employee concerned. Nor should you send it to another manager if the employee moves post.
- Remember this passport is not a formal policy, it is a tool to help you and your employee to have an open and constructive discussion around their needs and requirements as a working carer and the support that is available to them.
- The end of this process is the stage at which you and the employee should agree if a change of more formal working arrangement is required using the appropriate HR Policy.

Note of discussion:

What is your current caring situation and what impact does this have on you and your work:

What flexibility/reasonable adjustments can be made to help support you with your caring responsibilities whilst balancing the needs of the service:

Next Steps – are there any actions for you or your manager i.e. apply for flexible working, apply to join the carers register using the appropriate policies.

Employee Name_____

Manager's Name_____

Date_____