

Boost for carers who will receive new unpaid leave entitlement under government-backed law

- new laws introduced entitling unpaid carers to 1 week of unpaid leave a year to support those most in need
- eligible employees will be able to take Carer's Leave regardless of how long they have worked for their employer

Millions of people across the UK who are currently providing unpaid care to dependant family members or friends will be entitled to unpaid leave under new laws backed by the government today (Friday 21 October).

Around 2 million of those providing unpaid care are thought to be doing so while balancing work alongside their caring responsibilities. With no dedicated statutory leave entitlement for these informal carers currently in place, many have to resort to taking other forms of leave to ensure they can care for those dependent on them.

The Carer's Leave Bill, introduced by Wendy Chamberlain MP and backed by the government, will introduce a new and highly flexible entitlement of one week's unpaid leave per year for employees who are providing or arranging care.

Carer's Leave will be available to eligible employees from the first day of their employment, meaning unpaid carers will be supported regardless of how long they've worked with their employer. Staff will be able to take the leave flexibly to suit their caring responsibilities and will not need to provide evidence of how the leave is used or who it will be used for, ensuring a smoother process for both businesses and their employees.

Business Minister Dean Russell said:

Carers play a vital role in our society, and it is only right that we support them so they can balance their caring responsibilities with their working life.

These reforms will not only better the lives of millions of unpaid carers across the UK, but also the friends and family that are dependent on their compassion every day.

Employees taking their carer's leave entitlement will be subject to the same employment protections that are associated with other forms of family related leave, meaning they will be protected from dismissal or any detriment as a result of having taken time off.

By making it easier for people to support their loved ones, employers are likely to benefit from less staff turnover and a reduction in recruitment and training costs by retaining employees who previously would have been unable to balance their caring responsibilities and working life.

Wendy Chamberlain MP for North East Fife said:

I am delighted that my Carers Leave Bill has passed its second reading today. When passed this will give millions of carers employments rights for the first time ever. It is a landmark change in how businesses support their employees.

I want to thank the carers and businesses who have spoken to me in support of Carers Leave. It is clear that this policy is a win-win. Carers, without whom our society wouldn't function, are supported to better balance work and home without burning out; and businesses have happier, more motivated workers with higher retention rates.

Helen Walker, Carers UK Chief Executive said:

We are thrilled that the government has supported the Carer's Leave Bill at its successful second reading. Having worked to support carers in employment for years, Carers UK's evidence shows Carer's Leave would make a significant difference to unpaid carers' lives, helping them stay in work and improving wellbeing by giving time off to attend appointments, arrange or provide care. As well as supporting families, it also makes business sense, helping retain skilled employees.

Today's reforms form part of the government's wider efforts to ensure more people stay in work with more employees on payrolls than ever before – and with unemployment at an all-time low.

The [government consulted on proposals for a Carer's Leave Bill in 2020](#), with a response to the consultation being published in September 2021.

[See full details of the Carer's Leave Bill.](#)

This bill amends or inserts new provisions into the Employment Rights Act 1996.

[More information about Carer's allowance.](#)