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1. Introduction

The University recognises the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work, and looking after their own health and wellbeing. This policy sets out the University’s commitment to supporting employees who are carers and outlines the support the University offers, including the statutory right of employees to carer’s leave, additional unpaid carer’s leave provided by the University and signposts to further support and resources available. Employees have the right not to be subjected to any detrimental treatment because they have taken, sought to take, or made use of the benefits of carer’s leave.

This policy does not form part of employee’s contract of employment, and the University reserves the right to amend or withdraw the policy at any time.

2. Scope

This procedure is applicable to University of Nottingham UK employees from the first day of employment. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants, or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

Definitions

Carer	Carers UK define carers as employees with caring responsibilities that have an impact on their working lives. These employees are responsible for the care and support of ill, older or disabled family members, partners or friends who are unable to care for themselves.
Dependant	The Carer’s Leave act defines “dependant” to include: (i) a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, a person who lives in the same household as the employee (other than by reason of them being their employee, tenant, lodger or boarder), or (ii) the wider catch-all provision, of a person who reasonably relies on the employee for care
Long-term care need	The Carers Leave act defines a dependant of an employee who has a long-term care need if: (i) they have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months; (ii) they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, or (iii) they require care for a reason connected with their old age

3. Support for carers

Urgent or unplanned leave

Carer's leave is intended to be for planned and foreseen caring commitments however the University appreciates employees may need urgent time off which is not foreseeable. If employees need to take time off to manage an unexpected or sudden problem relating to a dependant and make any necessary longer-term caring arrangements, they should refer to the [Special Leave Policy](#).

Flexible working

Working flexibly may enable carers to balance their caring responsibilities with their work responsibilities. Employees can request to work flexibly under the Flexible Working process. This could be a short-term or formal flexible working arrangement.

Carers' network

The University of Nottingham [Carers' Network](#) is available for all University staff members who are carers. The network provides a forum for carers to provide mutual support and exchange information and ideas. It also acts as a mechanism for communication with the University, in particular Human Resources, and raises issues of policy, practice, and procedure. The network is supported by Human Resources. For more information please email: carers-network@nottingham.ac.uk.

Human Resources

For further information, please contact the HR Employment Services Team at: hr@nottingham.ac.uk.

4. Eligibility

All employees from day one of employment have the right to statutory carer's leave and opportunity to apply for additional unpaid carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant if they have a long-term care need. The provision for both statutory and additional unpaid carer's leave are detailed within this policy.

The amount of carer's leave is determined per employee, not per dependant. This means that an employee who is caring for more than one dependant (such as two elderly parents, or a disabled child and an elderly parent) is still entitled to only one week's statutory carer's leave within any rolling 12-month period.

Carer's leave applies to a wide range of caring situations, but excludes general childcare, except where an employee's child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need.

5. Statutory carer's leave

The Carer's Leave Act 2023 provides employees who are carers the right to one-week unpaid leave in any 12-month rolling period. One week leave is the same duration as the employee's normal working week (meaning an employee who works five days per week is entitled to five days' carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period). The leave can be taken in one continuous block, as individual days or as half days.

This can support employees to take the leave flexibly for planned and foreseen caring commitments.

6. Additional unpaid carer's leave

The University recognises that employees who are carers may need a longer period off work that goes beyond the statutory entitlement to carer's leave and therefore offers an additional provision for unpaid carer's leave, where employees can apply for up to a further 12 weeks leave within a rolling 12-month period.

7. Considerations during and after carer's leave

Employees should read the sections on annual leave and pension to ensure any implications are understood particularly surrounding pension benefits and membership.

Returning to work

An employee is eligible to return to work in the same job following any period of carer's leave.

If an employee wishes to return to work on a different contractual basis eg reducing their hours, they should have a discussion with their line manager and where relevant follow the flexible working process.

Employees not returning to work

Employees who decide not to return to work following a period of carer's leave must give the University written notice in accordance with their contract of employment.

The contract of employment continues throughout the period of carer's leave, unless either:

- a. the employee expressly ends it, by resigning
- b. it expires (eg ending of a fixed-term contract), in which case, the employee is entitled to be given reasonable notice of the ending of the contract in accordance with the University policy on the ending of fixed-term contracts. The employee is also entitled to any other relevant contractual pay including statutory redundancy pay where applicable if they are made redundant
- c. the employee's contract is terminated by the University in accordance with relevant notice procedures

In such cases, the right to return to the former job under the University's Carer's Leave Policy will have been overtaken by the expiry of the contract and will cease to be applicable.

Continuity of employment

When an employee returns to work, any period of carer's leave will form part of their continuous employment with the University and all other terms and conditions of employment will remain in place.

Annual leave

During any period of carer's leave, annual leave entitlement accrues at the contractual rate.

Pension

During periods of statutory unpaid carer's leave, pension membership and benefits will continue, however, employee and employer pension contributions will be adjusted in line with the reduced monthly salary amount for the leave period. Employees may choose to continue contributing at their normal contractual rate by indicating this on their notification form for carer's leave, in which case employer contributions will also continue at the employee's normal contractual rate.

For periods of additional unpaid carer's leave where monthly salary is reduced, pension membership and benefits will continue, however, pension contributions will be adjusted in line with the reduced monthly salary amount for the period of leave.

For periods of additional unpaid carer's leave where employees are in receipt of nil monthly pay, no contributions will be made towards their pension and leave may not count as pensionable service. It may be possible for employees (subject to scheme rules allowing for this) to repay the employee contributions upon their return to work. If they wish to do so, employees should indicate this on the notification form.

Employees should contact the Payroll and Pensions Team (email: payroll@nottingham.ac.uk or pensions@nottingham.ac.uk) to discuss the options available during a period of additional unpaid carer's leave to ensure any implications to their pension membership and benefits, such as death in service and ill health retirement, are understood. Employees can also contact their relevant pension scheme helpline directly.

Human Resources will be responsible for communicating the employee's pension repayment preferences detailed on the notification form to the University's Payroll and Pensions Team, who will liaise directly with the employee.

8. Notification process

Employees are not required to supply evidence in relation to their request for carer's leave.

Requesting statutory carer's leave

Employees should try to provide as much notice as possible when requesting statutory carer's leave. However, in any event, employees must give notice, verbally or in writing, to their line manager in advance that is either twice the number of working days that they wish to take as carer's leave, or three days, whichever is earlier when requesting statutory carer's leave.

Postponing statutory carer's leave

Requested dates for statutory carer's leave should not be unreasonably refused and every effort should be made to meet the requested leave dates in the first instance. However, the dates may be postponed if it is considered that the absence will unduly disrupt business operations.

If a decision is taken to postpone the leave, the employee's line manager must meet with them to find an alternative leave period within one month of the carer's leave period originally requested. The line manager will then write to the employee within seven working days of receiving their notice to take carer's leave, clarifying the reason for the postponement and the revised dates on which the carer's leave is to be taken.

Requesting additional unpaid carer's leave

Employees should aim to provide as much notice as possible when requesting a period of additional unpaid carer's leave either verbally or in writing. An employee should discuss their request for additional carer's leave with their line manager, Head of School/Department/Associate Director or another designated individual.

It is acknowledged there may be circumstances where granting a longer period of leave is not feasible. If additional unpaid carer's leave is refused, the line manager and employee should discuss possible alternative arrangements.

Leave agreed

Once the period of leave has been agreed, the employee or line manager should arrange to complete the notification form and submit this to the Human Resources Team at: hr@nottingham.ac.uk.

The Human Resources Department will, on receipt of the notification form, confirm the leave dates in writing and inform payroll accordingly.

Recording leave

Line managers should keep records of carer's leave as part of their normal absence management procedures.

9. Associated policies and procedures

The University of Nottingham has a number of other relevant policies and procedures, which employees may wish to refer to.

- [Special Leave](#) for unplanned and urgent domestic, personal and family reasons
- [Career Break](#) for extended unpaid leave from the workplace
- [Flexible Working](#) for changes to an employee's working arrangements, which differ from contractual terms
- [Ordinary Parental Leave Policy](#) for details of unpaid time-off for employees to provide care for their child(ren), as defined

Carer's Leave Process Flowchart

Process flowchart – statutory carer's leave

Step	Process
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to give required notice to their line manager of their intention to take carer's leave
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One week of unpaid leave in any 12-month rolling period
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave period is agreed by line manager and notification form is submitted by the employee or line manager to HR@nottingham.ac.uk HR@nottingham.ac.uk will confirm leave dates and inform Payroll accordingly
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the requested absence may disrupt business operations, an alternative leave period must be identified within one month of the carer's leave originally requested The employee's line manager must confirm any postponements in writing within seven working days of receiving the notice to take carer's leave, or earlier if applicable

Process flowchart – additional unpaid carer's leave

Step	Process
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to give required notice to their line manager of their intention to take carer's leave
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 12 weeks unpaid leave within a rolling 12-month period
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave period is agreed by line manager and notification form is submitted by the employee or line manager to HR@nottingham.ac.uk HR@nottingham.ac.uk will confirm leave dates and inform Payroll accordingly
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If additional unpaid carer's leave is refused, the line manager and employee should discuss possible alternative arrangements
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If alternative arrangements are agreed, employee or line manager will complete the notification form and submit this to HR@nottingham.ac.uk HR@nottingham.ac.uk will confirm leave dates and inform Payroll accordingly