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Supporting Working Carers

June 2017

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Introduction

As the population ages, the number of people who become carers is increasing. This combined with changes in retirement age, means the demographic of carers across the country is altering significantly. This will become more complex as the changes in the retirement age means people will be working until much later than is currently the case and therefore juggling work and caring for longer.

Across the country there are a significant number of working carers, many of whom struggle to cope with managing their caring responsibilities alongside work. Some carers are forced to leave their jobs to care full-time as they feel unable to continue to work. This has a significant impact on the carer, their family, employers and the wider economy. Employers lose talent, skills and experience from their workforce and the cost to the economy is estimated to be £5.3 billion in lost earnings due to people dropping out of the workforce (*Age UK, 2012*). This figure has cost the exchequer almost £1 billion per annum (*ibid*). Therefore, supporting carers to remain in work can bring considerable benefits to carers, their families, employers and the wider economy.

The Project

This project worked collaboratively across the Yorkshire & Humber and the North West regions with working carers, carers groups and centres, businesses, employer and employee representative organisations and health and social care partners. The project was delivered through three sessions facilitated by Exploring Opportunities, a small independent company, with resources and support for the project being shared between Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) and Yorkshire and Humber and the North West Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Regions. The aims of the project were to:

- Raise the profile of working carers in the regions, the difficulties they encounter and the impact this has on them, their families, employers and the economy.
- Develop approaches to supporting working carers which will enable them to remain in employment and continue with their caring role.

- Promote the positive outcomes which can be achieved through the provision of appropriate support to working carers and the business case for businesses to support their working carers.
- Provide solutions which will assist in culture change and promote positive attitudes towards working carers by employers, including the health and social care sectors.
- Co-produce 'Top Tips' to help employers retain working carers in their workforce through appropriate support in the workplace.

Why this is important for carers and employers?

Those people in the workforce who are also caring for another individual, experience significant challenges and pressures:

“Juggling a job with caring is not likely to prolong my life!”

“I need my salary I am the main earner in our family. I managed well for the last 5 and ½ years working 30 hours a week. Now having to do 37 hours a week is unmanageable and I may lose my job.”

As such, it is crucial to help identify ways that can make the tensions of working and caring less challenging. In addition to the moral imperative to support working carers there is a clear business case for employers:

- **Increased staff morale** creating a happier workforce with loyal employees that feel valued.
- **Reduced sick leave** and absenteeism and associated costs.
- **Improved wellbeing** of employees.
- **High staff retention** reducing recruitment costs and those associated with training new recruits.
- **Excellent reputation** improving the organisations' ability to attract employees and become an employer of choice.
- **Recognition** in the community as a kind and caring employer.
- **Improved** service delivery and **increased** productivity.

Sefton@Work/Sefton Council in their Guide to Supporting Working Carers, (undated).



Demographics of working and caring

The world's population is ageing and it is projected that by 2050:

- People aged 85 or older will have increased more than fivefold.
- Europe will have the oldest population in the world.
- In the UK, 11 million people that are living today will exceed 100 years of age.

(DWP, 2011)

Globally, three times more people of working age will be supporting two billion ageing family members, and many of these will be combining caring with paid work *(United Nations, 2007)*. This means that the demand for care and support will rise dramatically in the next 30 years, putting further pressure on the growing population of unpaid carers who may find themselves caring for more than one person *(Census, ONS, 2011)*. It has been estimated that in the UK, the year 2017 will be when the numbers of older people needing care will exceed the number of working age family members able to meet that demand *(Pickard, 2008)*. Currently, 3 million people in the UK are juggling the complex issues of paid work and care *(Carers UK and Ipsos MORI, 2009)*.

Many of these people are typically aged between 50 and 64 years, and at the peak of their careers in terms of skills and experience *(Carers UK, 2015)*. The numbers in this group will rise in the next 50 years as the dependency ratio falls from 4:1 to 2:1

(European Commission, 2009).

The reality of this for businesses is that 10% of male employees and 14% of female employees will be in caring roles. This means caring is no longer the domain of women; men are now at risk of the disadvantages that career gaps and additional responsibilities can cause when seeking promotion *(Public Health England, Health@Work and Liverpool City Council, undated)*.

These demographic shifts, along with the falling birth rate, mean that it is essential for the UK to maximise its labour market participation. Success in this area will ensure opportunities for working carers exist alongside those for other 'protected groups'.

This must be supported by effective approaches that enable the workforce to manage complex family lives, particularly by promoting family first policies that span the age ranges. There are significant costs to individuals and families, businesses and the wider economy when carers feel that they have no option other than to give up work, reduce their hours or take lower paid or part-time jobs (*Carers UK, DWP and Ipsos MORI, 2009*). Carers UK/Employers for Carers (2013) identified that approximately 2.3 million adults gave up work to care for an elderly parent or disabled/seriously ill loved one.

An earlier Carers UK (2011) survey found that of the carers who had given up work or reduced their working hours to care, a fifth lost in the region of £10k-£15k a year, with an additional fifth losing between £15k-£20k of their income. Working carers who are older are more likely to experience a reduction in income of at least £30k when they take on increased caring responsibilities. This relates to the fact that many carers aged 55-64 have skilled or senior level jobs and earn more. The cost to employers of people leaving roles at this level can be significant and may exceed the £30k figure identified by Oxford Economics (2014).

Carers UK (2001) identified that three in five workers will have caring responsibilities, meaning that very few people will be unaffected by a loss of income as they leave work to care. This situation will have both social and economic ramifications that increases with the numbers forced to leave work. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) have also noted that 1 in 8 workers in the UK (3.8 million people) are now living in poverty – a figure that may include working carers. Helping people to successfully combine work and care is therefore both an economic and a social imperative.

For those who do sustain employment, 1 in 5 UK adults have felt that their work was negatively impacted upon because of their caring responsibilities, and more than 1 in 4 reported that caring had taken a toll on their work (*Carers UK, 2011*).



Why do carers leave work?

Carers identify two main factors that influence their decision to leave work. These are:

- The lack of workplace support.
- Changes to funding, and therefore the paid support available to the cared for person.

Workplace support

Caring is often a hidden issue in the workplace and subsequently carers can be poorly supported. A Carers UK survey (2013) identified that:

- Nearly 22% of working carers said that their employer was not supportive of their caring role.
- 25% said that, although their employer was sympathetic, they did not offer support.
- More than 12% did not have flexible working available to them.
- Nearly 5% had an unsupportive line manager.
- 7% had not felt able to disclose their caring responsibilities.

An additional survey of employers which focused on the business benefits of supporting working carers, found that less than 1 in 5 small-medium enterprises (SMEs) had policies in place to support carers (*Carers UK; Employers for Carers; Department of Health, 2013*). A further study found that nearly one in five employees with caring responsibilities for people with whom they did not live – ‘distance carers’ – were not receiving any workplace support and a similar number were not sure about the type of support available. The Carers UK (2011) survey identified that 48% of respondents wanted to see better information about what workplace support was available, as well as more publicity about, and recognition of, caring issues in the workplace (44%).

In 2016, Carers UK were still reporting that working carers experienced the following challenges:

- 38% of employee respondents who balance care and work are uncomfortable discussing caring in the workplace.
- 35% of employee respondents feel that their employer does not understand their caring role.

Regarding workplace support, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2016) noted that only 26% of employers have a formal written policy, alongside 8% who report having an informal verbal policy. Conversely, 38% do not have a policy nor do they have any intention of developing one. In addition, only 33% of the organisations surveyed offer paid leave options, though a greater number do offer unpaid leave (59%).

Similarly, research on sandwich caring, (looking after children or grandchildren at the same time as caring for an adult dependent) found that nearly one in five working carers had no specific support available in their workplace, while just over 1 in 10 were not aware of what support was available (*Carers UK and Employers for Carers, 2012*).

Although many employers do not yet see the challenges that working carers experience, some are becoming more aware of the issues and what the advantages of providing support are. This is supported by research from JELF (2017) which found that 89% of employer respondents want greater emphasis and encouragement from the government towards the provision of employee benefits for carers.

Meanwhile CIPD (2016) provides some examples of practical approaches businesses can introduce to achieve more flexible support in the workplace. These include:

- Flexible leave arrangements
- Flexible work arrangements
- Use of telephone and private time for calls
- Counselling
- Information and advice via employee assistance programmes.

Formal care and support services

Formal support structures around a person are provided via health and social care which are currently subject to unprecedented cuts in funding. This can result in regular refocusing of the way to deliver support to those most in need and cause significant challenges for working carers.

One of the other main reasons carers give up work or reduce their hours is a lack of suitable practical support (*Carers UK, 2011*). Many carers find that the care and support services that are needed are inadequate, unaffordable or hard to access, and that information about them is difficult to find or navigate (*Carers UK, 2011*).

In the survey carried out within this project, 31% of working age carers had given up work to care or reduced their working hours for the following reasons:

- Support services were not flexible enough.
- The person they care for did not qualify for support.
- There were no suitable services in the area: they were too expensive or they were not reliable.

Yeandle (*2013*) also found that only a quarter of working carers felt that they had adequate support from formal services to enable them to combine work and care. Almost half of working carers said that they were affected by a lack of flexibility and sensitivity in the delivery of services, and most said they needed at least one type of formal service (*Yeandle, Bennett, Buckner, Fry, Price, 2007*).

Throughout this project there have been examples of people facing reviews of their loved one's care package and who were unsure whether they would be able to continue working afterwards. This situation is exacerbated as respondents suggested that work is rarely included in carer's assessments. Consequently, as the responsibility for caring shifts to families as a response to austerity it becomes harder for people to balance work and caring.



Impact on the wider economy

Age UK (2012) estimated the cost of lost earnings to the economy at £5.3 billion due to carers dropping out of the workforce (*ibid*). More specifically, Pickard (2012) identified the public expenditure costs of carers leaving paid work at £1.3 billion a year, based on the costs of benefits and lost tax revenues. However, the true cost through the benefits system could be even greater, as the number of people claiming Carers Allowance has increased every year since its introduction. Carers who have given up work to care and have no other, or low level, household income are also likely to receive other benefits and financial support, further increasing the costs to the state. Revenue of approximately £1 billion is also lost to the Treasury through the loss of tax and pension contributions (Age UK, 2012).

Caring can also lead to long periods of unemployment, almost 30% of respondents to the Carers UK survey (2013) spent over ten years out of work due to their caring role. As already noted, this is most likely to impact people aged between 45-64 years, when they are also at the peak of their careers. Giving up work at this age also means carers can struggle to return to the workplace when their caring responsibilities come to an end, resulting in long-term financial hardship in retirement.

The following quote is an example where a lapse in employment, due to taking on caring responsibilities, impacted directly on one persons' ability to return to the labour market:

"I had a recruitment company inform me that they were finding it hard to place me because I had a lapse of employment. I told them that the reason for the career break was that I was looking after my partner who had stage 3 bowel cancer and during the break I was acting as their personal assistant, managing diaries, attending meetings and appointments and giving emotional support. That's not that different to what I would have done as an Executive Assistant except I didn't get paid. Employers need to understand that a lapse isn't always bad and it doesn't mean they are not good candidates."

Cumbie, M. (posted on LinkedIn, April 2017)



The case for employers and businesses

CIPD (2016) identified five reasons why organisations should support carers at work:

- It is the right thing to do to be a good employer
- It improves work life balance
- It improves morale/engagement
- It improves retention
- It reduces absenteeism.

Alongside this, 45% of employers surveyed by the CIPD identified that the changes they have made to support carers made a positive difference to their organisational culture and all workers across their workforce.

However, only 13% of organisations provided any training to line managers to help them support carers and only 20% of employers know how many of their employees have caring responsibilities (CIPD 2016). JELF (2017) corroborates this in their study which identifies that 83% of employer respondents do not think that they are aware of all employees who act as carers out of work hours. This is despite the existence of established legal rights for carers to request flexible working and time off in emergencies (Carers UK 2016). However, whilst people have a right to request, the employer is not obliged to agree and it is this that can result in carers feeling they have no option but to leave work. This continues to be a significant and unhelpful loss of talent and may mean employers have substantial costs in terms of recruitment and lost productivity.

Further to the 2014 estimate of £30k for new recruitment, the Corporate Leadership Council estimates that the cumulative costs to an employer of an employee resigning are equal to an employee's last salary. In addition, the Hay Group suggests it could cost anywhere from 50-150% of their salary (Employee Engagement taskforce, 2012).

There is also lost potential in the workplace where skilled and experienced workers are operating in jobs that demand a lower skill level simply to gain the flexibility or locally based employment that enables them to continue to care. One interviewee in this project relinquished her management role to work on the checkout in a retail outlet to help manage the demands of supporting her son.

Absenteeism (to care or because of sickness) is also a serious issue in public and private sector organisations across the UK, with the CBI (2013) estimating the direct costs of absence at £14 billion. Carers UK as part of their Employers for Carers initiative worked with BT who identified a productivity increase of 21% a year through reduced stress and absenteeism, a figure of approximately £5 million on the bottom line. Centrica estimate a potential cost saving of £4.5m through reduced unplanned absenteeism and £2.5m through increased staff retention.

In summary, there are significant social and economic gains to be made from supporting carers to continue to manage their work and family lives:

- Individuals and families have better personal and financial health.
- Employers will experience improved retention of skills and experience, increased employee resilience in terms of health, productivity, performance and engagement.
- The economy will see improved output at lower cost, higher tax revenues and a reduced benefits bill.

(Carers UK and Employers for Carers, 2013)

What we did

To understand the needs of working carers and the employer's perspective, a range of different methodologies were used. These included:

1) A review of the literature, focused on:

- Demographic issues
- Working carers and their experiences
- The impact on the wider economy
- The business case for employers
- Good practice.

2) Data collection including working with individuals and groups across Yorkshire and Humber and the North West, this reached 137 respondents. Techniques included:

- A series of three workshops with a core group of individuals.
- Engagement with Trade Union Congress (TUC), CIPD, and employers.
- Focus groups with parents of children with a learning disability.
- 16 semi structured interviews.
- An online survey to ascertain the views of working carers.
- Webchats with parents of people with a learning disability, one focused on those in employment and one targeted at people unable to work but who had a desire to do so.
- Interviews with good practice sites.

3) Analysis of all data collected to identify themes.

The workshops were key in co-producing the top tips for Employing Working Carers. Councils across Yorkshire and Humber and the North West Regions were invited via the ADASS branches to become involved in this TLAP funded project.

As a result, 13 councils indicated their interest. Each Council was asked to identify 3 participants from the following areas:

- Carers
- Carers organisations
- Human Resources
- Commissioners
- Businesses
- Carers leads.

The workshops were structured as a series of three with a core group of participants from the above list.

Workshop one focused on the experiences, challenges, wants and needs of working carers, and identified a list of requirements and support needed from employers. Workshop two addressed the needs and experiences of businesses in relation to the working carers' agenda. This helped participants to understand the interface between the outcomes from workshop one and two.

The final workshop tested out the top tips developed from the outputs of the first two workshops. In addition, participants considered the ways to use the tips and ways to disseminate the information.

What people told us

The respondents in this study were extremely generous in the information they provided to the project team. Some respondents articulated that they were well supported in their work roles and had good employers:

“Thankfully mine are amazing, but I feel I could not change employers as they may not be as flexible with me.”

As would be expected, these positive experiences were also balanced with people who felt pressured and were struggling to maintain employment or had given up working altogether. What is clear from the full range of respondents (including workshop participants), is that each carer’s situation is fundamentally different. Consequently, what works for one person will not necessarily work for another.

What makes it hard for carers to stay in work?

Many carers described the overwhelming feelings of guilt they experience. This was reiterated in the interviews and workshops with people articulating they felt guilty for:

- Not being at home supporting their loved one.
- Having to leave work early.
- Imposing on co-workers when they had to leave.
- Not pulling their weight as much as other members of the team.

“Performance at work has been affected, have not had that great performance appraisals, have felt like the ‘weakest link’ in my team due to being too tired to do fast-changing, mentally demanding work effectively.”

Respondents also identified other things that made it hard to stay employed. These included:

- The needs of the cared for person.
- Feelings of unreliability.
- Pressure from peers.
- The need to be able to respond to emergencies.

- Managing appointments, particularly the volume of health and social care ones.
- Lack of wrap-around child care provision for children over 11 that have a disability.
- Inability to take unpaid leave to meet emergency needs and attend appointments.
- Challenges of completing the myriad of forms required to ensure loved ones' needs are met effectively.
- Cuts in social care funding.
- Exhaustion.

What helps carers to stay in work?

When questioned about what would make it easier to stay in work, people focused on what they needed from the support structures funded by statutory services around the disabled/older person and the challenges the system creates for them.

Responses included:

- Flexible use of short breaks provision to support carers to continue working.
- No set restrictions to the hours available to have short breaks to support work commitments.
- Better support for 11+ year olds with disabilities outside school and college hours.
- Flexibility in using direct payments to support carers to stay in work.
- Simplify the social care/welfare system so that it does not make excessive demands on the carers' time.
- Flexible transport structures to support young people's education and training provision.
- Control over the timing of appointments.
- Timely and effective responses from councils – as per their agreement.
- Mediation/ brokerage service to manage council timescales when not delivering effectively.
- Effective support for people managing direct payments.
- Support to navigate the system and understand best practice, rights and entitlements.

This is important, since the demands from statutory services can play a significant role in the exhaustion and time demands on carers, as the quote below indicates:

“Because after 4 years of my child having multiple exclusions and hundreds of meetings and being called up at the drop of a hat to collect and not being able to work even 9 to 3, I was no longer able to continue working even with an incredibly flexible employer.”

When respondents were asked, what was needed from an employer to make working easier the most frequent response was flexibility. Flexibility included the ability to:

- Work from home
- Change shifts/working days at short notice
- Flexible start and finish times to the working day
- Annualised hours contract
- Part time working
- Time to talk, care and compassion towards carers
- Trust.

“Trust that I will do the work required, not necessarily in conventional working hours.”

During the interviews stories emerged of people having successful careers and aspiration for promotion, only to find that when they had a child with a learning disability, or a physical disability that this was no longer something they could manage. For a small number of respondents this resulted in them choosing to become self-employed. This was potentially due to the pressure and demands to balance work and caring occurring earlier in the persons' career rather than at the point when they were well established in work, as often happens when caring for an older person.

Respondents who have chosen this route stated this was because of the flexibility and control over their diaries, since being self-employed allows them to work around the demands and needs for the person they care for:

“Because I could choose my own hours and be very blunt about why sometimes I didn't work. I felt better saying I'm not working tomorrow as my son has a hospital appointment (and so I won't bill you) as opposed to 'Is it ok if I take the time off?' It was the only way that I could carry on working.”

For many, this transition to self-employment was not directly related to the career they had previously held. For example, one person who worked within the probation service now operates a plumbing business with their partner. In addition, some people who were self-employed have given up work due to the complexities of researching for information and preparing for meetings about their son or daughter. Such were the demands and the need to get this right that they had no time left to run their business.

Other respondents felt self-employment, as it is inherently more flexible, would be an ideal solution for them, but they had not found their 'business idea'. The CReate project developed a pop up stall for carers to present and sell their own products. They enabled carers to understand the legal aspects of transacting and provided support to ensure successful outcomes for those involved, some of whom have continued to operate their own small craft business. This could indicate a need to provide business advice to help carers develop a business plan and provide support in doing this.

Finally, people were asked what would be useful for the government to consider or legislate on, the responses included:

- Making rights relating to flexible working a legal right for people with caring responsibilities.
- Increase the threshold of Carers Allowance to allow people to work more hours/earn more money without losing benefits.
- Simpler approach to assessments.
- Incentivise employers to provide opportunities and the flexibility that working carers need.
- Ensuring current Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) legislation was enacted in the spirit it was intended.
- Guidance for councils on their childcare sufficiency duties with a view to more affordable childcare for those over 11 who have a disability.
- Include payment of nannies as part of childcare costs as is currently allowed with registered childminders.
- Include working carers in diversity monitoring protected groups.
- Ensure the financial benefits systems supports people to work and care.



Key Themes

Three key themes were identified from the analysis of the interviews, webchats, the survey and the workshops:

- Personal context
- What needs to be in place
- Getting the issue on the agenda.

Personal context

The workshops clearly identified the need to understand the individuality of each persons' experience. Whilst there was an acceptance that policies need to exist and that these should ensure equitable opportunity for employees, being able to flex these to meet different circumstances was identified as critical.

Guilt was also noted as a player in the responses, this impacted on peoples' willingness to be identified as a carer. Some respondents also articulated guilt at not meeting their loved ones' needs as well as for not being a 'good' team member due to their competing responsibilities. Participants also stated that even with supportive employers they still experienced guilt when having to take time off at short notice. The level of guilt that people feel is such that they are often reluctant to put themselves forward for new roles. Participants also stated that they were reluctant to apply for promotion because they feared the increased demands that this may bring and an inability to deliver the expectations of the role alongside the demands of caring.

Effective delivery of the following top tips within any business should help to alleviate the above challenges:

- Get to know which of your employees are working carers.
- Ensure that your managers are equipped to support working carers, and do so!
- Develop and/or review your workplace support and policies, in order to ensure that they are flexible, responsive and explicitly support working carers.
- Ensure job opportunities and promotions are flexible, and support applications from working carers.

What people need

Throughout the project, the theme of what people need to support them to remain in work remained prominent. The most important ask within the interviews, webchats and workshops was flexibility. This need for flexibility is critical both in terms of managing repeated appointments but also in the ability to respond to crises. Some organisations were identified as being very supportive and flexible. In this project these organisations tended to be those within the retail and public sector. This relates to their business need to have a flexible workforce able to meet the demands of a 24hour service. The outcomes were therefore, mutually beneficial.

Understanding of the carer's individual situation by employers and team/staff members was also seen as essential. This was related to feelings of guilt due to the extra work placed on remaining team members when one person leaves at short notice. One respondent identified the experience of being on the receiving end of sarcastic comments when they were treated differently to their peers. The impact and the associated stress of these situations is significant. A further example was provided from someone working in the financial sector whose partner has a serious mental health issue and a daughter who has autism. Whilst their line manager is supportive and open to talking about caring responsibilities, they also placed him in performance management due to missing deadlines and occasionally making mistakes.

To ensure such situations are minimised, it is important to consider identifying carer champions at all levels within the organisation, including board level and senior managers. Establishing such roles gives both clear leadership and validity to the challenges experienced by working carers. It can also help if the champions create opportunities to meet with people in the organisation and enable carers to discuss their situation, and then communicate positive outcomes from such discussions.

Organisations often have policies that promote flexibility around childcare, however far too often these do not extend to include dependent adults, despite the similarities in responsibility. 'Family First' policies that include adult dependents rather than child friendly policies would improve the experience of working carers significantly.

The role of line managers in both effective business and staff satisfaction is crucial. This project clearly articulated that managers are important as they often know staff the best. Generally, they also have some knowledge about team member's home life, and are often the people that implement the organisation's human resources policies.

Therefore, the experience of staff is dependent on what managers know, how they interpret policies, and how they act. Participants in this project have provided examples of staff who are seen as problematic when external caring commitments conflict with work requirements and the work ethic. In this context, people may be perceived as easier to 'get rid' of than 'support'.

In addition, ensuring line managers were clear about how to access Employee Assistance programmes would enable better workplace support. Managers are critical in ensuring working carers are aware of Employee Assistance programmes and other types of support and they have an important role in signposting people to what is available both within and outside of the organisation. This group is in a unique position to observe behaviours, identify stress and signpost to interventions that minimise the impact of stressors in a way that sustains productivity within the organisation.

Resolving these situations are supported by delivery of the following top tips:

- Ensure that support is in place and is clearly communicated to all staff.
- Ensure that working carers have opportunities to support one another.

Getting the issue on the agenda

Getting employers to engage in providing workplace support to working carers is a challenging process. The evidence from this project is that lead in times for gaining support to this way of working can be upwards of a year.

Key in achieving good engagement is being clear about the business benefits for supporting working carers. Information such as impact on sickness, absence, productivity and clarity about the cost of implementing these approaches helps form part of the business case. Whilst generic statistics can be helpful, research or questioning about specific business related data can be much more powerful. Through this process, managers can begin to see the real benefits to their business of supporting working carers.

Improved retention can result in reduced costs. For example, Centrica estimates a potential cost saving of £2.5m through increased staff retention, alongside £4.5m through reductions in unplanned absenteeism (*Employers for Carers, 2015*).

It is important for employers to think about the business benefits when embarking on a journey to support working carers. Fundamental, is the need to consider how the business will identify those members of their workforce who have the additional role of supporting another adult. Examples of good practice include: adding a question to application forms, including working carers in protected groups, monitoring approaches, inclusion in supervision, staff surveys and audits. Evidence from this project and the literature is that carers are unlikely to disclose their situation unless they feel the environment is highly supportive, if indeed they identify themselves as a carer in the first place.

Sitting alongside the need for employers to consider the need of working carers is the role of health and social care. Significant numbers of respondents in this project were concerned that changes to social care packages specifically, would result in them being unable to continue to work. Statutory organisations need to find an appropriate mechanism to address this issue to ensure that people are not forced to leave work to support their relative when statutory funding is removed. Critical in decision making, is the need to consider the long-term costs to health and social care as well as the wider economy if people are not able to continue to work.

This links with the following top tips:

- Monitor, evaluate and review your approaches to supporting working carers.
- Communicate clearly that you are a working carer friendly employer, and what additional support you offer.



Quick wins and opportunities

This project identified some quick wins for businesses and councils to support working carers. Quick wins for businesses include:

- Employee Assistance Programmes.
- Assistive technology.
- Partnerships with the health and wellbeing services in the local council.

Employee Assistance Programmes

Many large organisations develop a range of approaches to assist employees, including counselling, occupational health and financial education. For small and medium (SME) sized organisations this can be a challenge, however some employee assistance programmes are available for organisations to buy into. These can help with the resource and capacity issues that providing an 'in house' option can create. The cost of buying into such programmes should form part of the business case and the benefits to the business measured against key indicators e.g. reduced absence and productivity.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology has gained significant momentum to support changes in funding, and to enhance opportunities and independence for individuals. However, it is currently underused in its ability to support people to maintain employment and continue caring. Consequently, there are benefits to be gained if businesses support and encourage working carers to utilise assistive technology approaches during working hours. Some of the national carers pilots 2015- 2017 tested the effectiveness of using Assistive Technology to support people to stay in work. Within Cheshire and Warrington some working carers found the use of technology, specifically Rally Round enabled them to remain in work and manage their home life and caring roles more effectively. One person used Rally Round to help her gain control of her own business and her home life in a way that helped her to move from feeling completely overwhelmed to feeling in control and able to manage her working life. Another lady felt able to go to work and leave her husband at home with the assistance of a falls monitor and Rally Round. This meant she knew when her husband needed support and could use Rally Round to manage the support he needed.

However, in some areas the picture was very different. One site offered assistive technology free to all working carers within their project, on this occasion take up was minimal as people did not want to use it. The reasons for this varied from person to person, but included a lack of trust and skill-set in using it.

Partnerships with the health and wellbeing services in the local council

Councils employ Health and Wellbeing Officers' whose role is to support the development of an effective employment offer that sustains health and wellbeing. These roles often sit across a range of organisations, including Public Health, business development teams and the third/voluntary sector, and are funded as part of a wider commitment to influencing the determinants of health. A key activity would include businesses engaging with this group of staff to help them with the working carer agenda. These services may be particularly useful for SMEs who do not have the capacity or resources to employ or buy in such expertise.

Having identified quick wins for businesses, opportunities also exist for councils to achieve some more immediate outcomes. The quick wins for councils, specifically in relation to getting working carers and their issues on the agenda within businesses include working with:

- Council's Local Economic Development infrastructure and links with business development networks.
- National Organisations e.g. Employers for Carers, Trade Union Congress, Skills for Care.
- Further and Higher Education using widening participation strategies to support young adult carers into and to sustain employment.
- Commissioning and recommissioning services.

Council's Local Economic Development infrastructure and links with business development networks

Local economic development teams within councils have a range of networks and connections. These often include employers and Human Resource professionals. Gaining the support of this team for the working carer agenda can increase access to businesses significantly, raise awareness of approaches to supporting working carers and thereby improving the support available exponentially.

National Organisations. E.g. Employers for Carers, Trade Union Congress, Skills for Care

Employers for Carers is a national organisation with over 110 employers who have committed to effectively support working carers. Working with this and other organisations such as the TUC, CIPD, Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Skills for Care will enable the message around working carers to be disseminated extensively throughout the business community.

Further and Higher Education using widening participation strategies to support young adult carers into and to sustain employment

Links into further and higher education are critical in supporting young carers into work. Examples were provided during the workshops of young carers without aspiration to work due to their caring role. The lack of aspiration, ability to see how they could manage to work and still care, the lack of expectation from family members, combined with the ability to receive carers allowance at the age of 16 means that many young carers do not enter the labour market. If this culture is to be challenged this will necessitate joint approaches between all the relevant organisations but particularly the schools and colleges. Providing information to support a range of choices and responses, including self-employment is also important as is an understanding of the ways in which courses and apprenticeships may need to flex to support young carers involvement.

Commissioning and recommissioning services

Public sector organisations can make a public stance through their commissioning/recommissioning activities to ensure all successful contractors have explicit policies and strategies to support working carers, either through Social Return on Investment or more formal contractual requirements. The Social Value Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.



Challenges

Through the workshop, interviews, survey and the webchats this project identified the following challenges to supporting people to work and care. These challenges are addressed under the following areas although some challenges will resonate across more than one area:

- Employers
- Government and statutory services
- Third sector organisations
- Working carers.

Challenges for employers

- Understanding how the working carers' agenda can affect their business.
- Identifying working carers in their workforce.
- Managing individual bespoke responses in a world demanding fairness, equality and consistent treatment.
- Ensuring line managers understand policies, and what flexibility is acceptable to the business and their role in the process.
- Creating environments that enable carers to speak up without recrimination.
- Supporting carers' needs whilst maintaining business continuity.
- Local branches knowing what their head offices have committed to nationally, and being supported to understand and implement this.

Challenges for Government and Statutory services include:

- Ensuring national policies and entitlements do not deliver contradictory outcomes or perverse incentives.
- Providing leadership for the consistent delivery of working carers' statutory and contractual rights, e.g. flexible working.
- Providing leadership to facilitate the move from 'child friendly' to 'family first' policies across all ages.
- Identifying funding to research the quantifiable benefits of employing carers for the individual, business, statutory services and the wider economy.
- Ensuring sufficient funding and support is available to allow working carers to maintain employment and contribute to the economy.

Challenges for Third Sector organisations include:

- Being able to use business language and examples to promote the working carer agenda.
- Flexing beyond normal working hours within the current resource envelope to meet the needs of working carers.

Challenges for working carers include:

- Knowing that you are a carer and what support is available for people who have caring responsibilities.
- Having the confidence to speak up in the workplace without the risk of a negative response.
- Remaining in work if support packages are reduced.
- Experiencing different treatment due to inconsistent application of organisational policies.



Learning

Learning points were identified throughout the project. The purpose of these is to help any organisations or businesses focus their efforts more effectively. The learning points are as follows (some learning points will resonate across businesses and statutory and third sector organisations):

For businesses

- The existence of working carer champions at a senior organisational level ensures this agenda remains current and effective.
- Ensuring working carers and line managers are aware of flexible working policies and how they should be applied ensures that all staff have equality of opportunity.
- Understanding how you will manage emergency situations across the team before they happen enables business continuity.
- Developing the business case helps to sell the associated investment to your board/owners and staff.
- Developing an action plan and reporting regularly on this to the senior team ensures the effectiveness of your solutions demonstrates the impact of your investment and develops sustainability.
- Maximising the use of social media is a cost-effective way to provide information and support.

For statutory and third sector organisations

- Focus your effort. Trying to engage too many employers can dilute your ability to be effective with those whom you have engaged.
- Use business facing organisations, e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Federation of Small Business (FSB), to promote the business case to their members, therefore reaching a wider audience.
- Approach as many people in as many parts of the organisation as possible to ensure the message gets through.
- Ensure strong links with local Benefits Advice Service.
- Use stories. These are a powerful way to get your message across, and one that people can understand.
- Third sector organisations are often more willing to be flexible and engage with this agenda.
- Use creative approaches to engage businesses e.g. social media, drama.
- Co-produce any work with working carers.
- Be persistent and credible.



The Top Tips

The full top tips document can be found at: www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/toptipsworkingcarers.

Top tips are a useful and popular way of giving people practical information that is accessible, easy and quick to read. Therefore, this approach is a useful way to inform employers about the challenges of working carers, and engages them in providing workplace support for their staff with caring responsibilities. The top tips were co-produced with a core group consisting of carers and carer representative organisations, employer facing bodies and employers, as well as statutory organisations. The group also identified what employers needed to understand if they are going to develop strategies to support those people in their workforce who have caring responsibilities. Employers need to understand:

- The challenges faced by working carers.
- Why it is important to support working carers.
- The business benefits which can be accrued by supporting working carers.
- How you can best support your working carers.
- The potential risks to your business/organisation should insufficient support be provided to working carers.

Through the co-production process three groupings were identified as a useful way of presenting the top tips. These groupings are:

- What do you need to know?
- What needs to be in place?
- Maintaining the momentum.

What do you need to know?

- Get to know which of your employees are working carers.

What needs to be in place?

- Identify leaders for working carers within your organisation.
- Develop and/or review your workplace support and policies, in order to ensure that they are flexible, responsive and explicitly support working carers.
- Ensure that support is in place and is clearly communicated to all staff.

- Create opportunities for working carers to support one another.
- Ensure job opportunities and promotions are flexible, and support applications from working carers.

Maintaining the momentum

- Monitor, evaluate and review your approaches to supporting working carers.
- Communicate clearly that you are a working carer friendly employer, and what additional support you offer.

Using the Top Tips

The top tips can be used in a range of ways by employers, statutory services, business facing organisations, trade unions, third sector and organisations such as TLAP and ADASS. The following provides some examples.

Employers can use the tips:

- As part of new starters induction
- In training and team meetings
- In marketing and recruitment activity
- As a tool to develop policies, strategies and/or an action plan
- As a way of keeping on track and reviewing progress
- Within press releases and articles
- To help form their pledge to working carer
- To start conversations.

Statutory Services can use the tips:

- As an employer
- When commissioning services, products or developments
- In elected member training
- When engaging with employers in economic development activity
- Within transformation plans
- Within partnership agreements and memorandum of agreements
- To inform thinking, discussion and priority setting within Health and Wellbeing boards.

Third Sector organisations both national, regional and local can promote the business case and the top tips:

- As an employer
- On their websites and in newsletters and through networks
- In National Carers Week to raise awareness of the issue
- To engage and develop partnerships with employers.

Business facing organisations, e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development can:

- Promote the business case and the tips to employers
- Provide advice and guidance to support employers
- Run events to ensure an ongoing focus on the issues facing working carers.

Trade Unions and employee facing organisations can:

- Promote the business case and the tips to employers and trade union members, including events and newsletters.
- Develop a Charter and gain sign up from employers and businesses.
- Lobby national government and relevant bodies to include the issue in policy development.

Think Local Act Personal and ADASS and other national and regional organisations can:

- Ensure the agenda is included in national discussions, e.g. developing a national campaign to raise awareness, develop the 'brand'.
- Promote the business case and the top tips to businesses in their sector.
- Include in performance frameworks where applicable.

Disseminating the Top Tips

The initial responsibility for disseminating the top tips lies with Think Local Act Personal in partnership with ADASS Yorkshire and Humber and the North West. In addition, once launched, local councils and their partners will need to develop local dissemination strategies. The core group identified some low cost approaches that could be used by both national and local organisations and groups. These are:

1) Engage with other organisations

- Business facing organisations, e.g. CIPD, FSB, CBI, LGA, Business in the Community, Chambers of Commerce.
- Trade Union Congress/The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).
- Insurance companies
- Charities
- Investors in People networks
- Local networks and groups, e.g. Rotary, Women's Institute, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Area Committees and Groups, Independent Churches, General Practice and Health Centres, Hospitals, Libraries.

2) Delivering information

- Carers week
- Conferences, events and workshops
- Local news/radio
- Professional publications
- Social media
- Online blogs
- Newsletters and E-zines.

3) Using 'Champions'

- Challenge local business leaders to take the message to board level
- Carers partnership boards
- Councillors
- Corporate sponsor/champion.



Conclusion

Supporting working carers to sustain employment and to gain progression in their career is challenging. The solutions are complex and necessitate businesses, statutory services, government and the individual to play their part. The good practice examples show some employers are making significant progress and are finding that doing so is beneficial to the business as well as to the individual. Whilst this progress is encouraging, there is still a long way to go before all carers feel able to both speak up about their challenges in the workplace and feel supported in managing some of the competing demands they experience. Throughout this project, the biggest message has been that flexibility in the workplace is necessary, and whilst this is easier in some organisations than in others, it is the factor that can truly help make a difference.

“We need nothing, other than flexibility and understanding. You just can’t be in two places at once. We understand there is no magic solution in the workplace.”

The top tips are a starter for employers to begin the journey to improving the situation for working carers. They are not a prescriptive list but suggestions for organisations to consider in the context of their own business needs. Used thoughtfully, they can help determine the actions required to move towards supporting those in the workforce who are meeting time challenged issues both at work, and at home.



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Appendix 1: Good practice examples

A Kirklees Investors in Carers

Directors: Fatima Khan-Shah, Portia Roberts Popham

Introduction

As a service, Investors in Carers aims to work in collaboration with organisations to maximise the carer economy in a sustainable and transformative way by using the Carers Charter accreditation as a strategic framework. If done effectively we can support organisations to deliver services within a reduced budget whilst not compromising on quality or patient outcomes. Investors in Carers is committed to supporting our partners to develop carer friendly approaches where the contribution of Carers is recognised and valued.

Investors in Carers supports individual organisations through the accreditation process by offering project management and consultancy. The Charter was developed in partnership between North Kirklees Clinical Commissioning Group, Greater Huddersfield Clinical Commissioning Group, and Kirklees Council and is led by carers.

Within their first year of operation, Investors in Carers will have accredited organisations such as West Yorkshire Police, Kirklees Active Leisure, Kirkwood Hospice, Calderdale and Huddersfield Foundation Trust, South West Yorkshire Partnership Trust, Carers Count and Yorkshire Children's Centre.

A critical element in the formation of the Charter has been the legitimacy from carers combined with the strategic intelligence and the win-win mentality of the approach.

What is it?

It is a Carers Charter that provides organisations with a strategic framework to support transformation to a carer friendly employer, in a way that supports system wide change and efficiency gains without compromising on quality. Carers are central to the whole process relating to the charter.

Challenges

The team have experienced many challenges on the journey, including:

Question: Why working carers, when there are so many other groups we could focus on?

Response: Most of those other groups will have a carer supporting them behind the scenes. Support them and you are supporting the person as well.

Question: Won't this cost my business a lot of time and money?

Response: Doing this well is not an easy fix, however it is an investment in the future and the long-term sustainability of your organisation.

Question: What if we get it wrong?

Response: The answers to how you support carers is not an instant fix, but an ongoing journey that is best solved by working with carers themselves.

Benefits of the approach

The major aim from within the programme is to recognise and harness the potential of working carers. In fulfilling this ambition, it is expected that organisations can reduce staff turnover and reduce sickness and absence.

National data indicates that both areas can provide financial savings. In addition, it is expected that by supporting working carers, organisations will experience increased loyalty and sustain skills and expertise within organisations resulting in savings within the recruitment budget. Finally, it is expected that by effectively supporting carers to remain in jobs this will benefit the Health and Social Care system.

Contact: fatima@investorsincarers.com

B Leeds City Council – Working carers network

What it does

Leeds City Council's intranet site is called Insite. The Insite home page is displayed each time someone logs onto a Council computer. The home page provides access to key messages, discussion forums, blogs and events.

The Carers Staff Network is found within the 'Staff Room' section of the site alongside other staff networks (e.g. BME, disabled people and LGBT). At the time of its launch, the Carers Staff Network was publicised on the front page of Insite. Although, most of the other networks meet up from time to time, the Carers staff network remains virtual.

The Carers network page provides:

- Information and signposting for carers who work for Leeds City Council – about employment policies, rights, local services etc.
- Guidance for managers to support carers in the workplace.
- An opportunity for sharing and networking.

Opportunities

Whilst being a valuable resource there are still opportunities to further develop the concept. An example of this would be to disseminate appropriate messages to carers in the workforce. It is also important to understand how often it is used and how useful people find it. This is a further piece of co-produced work that is needed to support the development of the network.

Further developments of the network will be discussed as part of the local working carer discussions. The Leeds Carers Partnership has established a Steering Group to oversee and co-ordinate the various initiatives to support the Working Carers agenda in Leeds.

Leadership for this work is coming from senior levels including the council's Chief Executive who has emailed all council staff about the importance of identifying as a Carer and the importance and business benefits of supporting employees who are carers. The working carer agenda is further supported by the Leeds Commitment to Carers which is a key statement of intent setting out the value and importance of identifying and supporting carers, including carers in the workplace.

Contact: Ian.Brookemawson@leeds.gov.uk

C Carers Leeds – Supporting working carers

What we are doing

At Carers Leeds, we are working with several high profile employers and employers' organisations in the Leeds area to create a city-wide culture of understanding and support for working carers within the city.

Why we are doing this?

We feel that employers often do not appreciate the extent of carers in the workforce, and the impact this responsibility has on the individual and the business.

Our aim is to change thinking amongst employers in the city to recognise that 1 in 7 of their workforce are carers, and to provide them with a mutually supportive environment. Key to our service is an understanding by employers of the business reasons for supporting working carers.

All our activities in this area are employer driven with Carers Leeds providing the co-ordination and specialist carers input.

Service Aims

- Raise awareness of working carers issues with employers in Leeds.
- Develop an understanding of why it is important for employers to care about working carers.
- Work with employers and working carers to identify and provide practical ways to advise and support them.

Practical action

- Information and training for employers, managers and employees.
- A physical and online Working Carers Employers Community.
- On line information and "chat forum".
- Interactive toolkit for employers.
- Acting as champions to promote our activities in the city.
- Case studies of successes.
- Technology and its use within organisations.
- Individual working carer support.
- Individual employer support.

Challenges

- Developing ways for employers to identify who their working carers are.
- Demonstrating to employers that this is a growing issue.
- Getting the message out to SMEs.
- Funding our service as Carers Leeds is a charity dependent on commissioned work.

Learning points

- Involve employers right from the start.
- Don't tell employers what to do.
- Make support and interventions practical and commercially focused.

Contact: Andrew Walsh, Working Carer Coordinator. Val Hewison, Chief Executive.

D Bury carers in employment pilot

This project is one of the nine national pilots funded by the Department of Work and Pensions and the Department of Health. The information below is Bury's initial reflections on the work they have done. The more formal evaluation of all pilot sites forming part of this national project will be published in late 2017.

Overview

- The pilot aimed to support unpaid carers to remain in paid employment.
- Support took the form of funded assistive technology, by acting as an intermediate to ensure carers access wider provision and via employer engagement (to resolve workplace issues).
- All support was tailored to individual circumstances and encourages independence of the cared for person through technology, social interaction and/or exercise.
- All support via the pilot was completely free and accessible outside working hours or during lunchtimes, to minimise the impact on the employee/business.

Challenges

- 7 referrals to the Carelink Service were cancelled, by the cared for, who refused entry at the door. The pilot officer subsequently had to mediate between the carer and cared for person.

- Most referrals onto the Carers in Employment pilot were made at crisis point, whereby the employer and employee relationship had broken down and/or the carer was at very high risk of leaving employment.
- The Pilot's ability to influence employers was minimal due to national policies. For example: employees have the right to apply for flexible working, but nearly all applications that were supported under the pilot were rejected.
- A high proportion of carers were not claiming accessible benefits. The pilot officer spent a lot of time supporting the submission of benefit applications (primarily in the evening).
- Four carers have fallen out of employment due to bereavement, stress and health conditions, despite extensive support.
- A high proportion of working carers were unwilling to allow the pilot to engage their employer. Rationale for this includes:
 - Not wanting to disclose that the employee is a carer.
 - The carer felt unsupported in the workplace.
 - A relationship breakdown between the supervisor/manager and carer.
- Geographical barriers and referrals into the appropriate provision i.e. the carer or cared for do not live in the Bury area. This complicated service eligibility and the referral process.
- Small employers, who employ 1 to 9 employees, found it difficult to implement carer friendly policies.

Key Learning

- The needs of working carers are very complex, emphasised by the number of support plans and warm handovers to existing provision.
- Domiciliary care did not ease the integration of the assistive technology. This was notably due to Carelinks' comprehensive implementation process and regular reviews.
- Over 90% of working carers were unable to use their leisure card, for discounted leisure access to the gym, swimming, etc. more than three times over a one year period. In nearly every case, time limitations are the attributed barrier.
- Engaging employers with solely the carer agenda proved difficult. In contrast, more employers have engaged since the carer agenda is part of a wider offer to employers.
- Feedback has been collated from carers regarding ways to improve and develop local carer and wider provision. Particularly with a stronger emphasis on working carers and providing carer support outside of the traditional 9- 5, Monday to Friday.

- The referral process between organisations could be simplified, to maximise the impact of each carer enquiry.

Key Achievements

- 180 carers received a bespoke support plan, with a warm handover to local carers and/or wider support provision.
- 72 Carelink contracts have been funded and data, tracking the impact, continues to be collated.
- Supported a bid for ERDF funds to embed carers as a priority group in the business start-up support across Greater Manchester.
- Working and unemployed carers have been embedded, as a priority group, into the local employment and skills strategy.
- A dedicated Employment, Health and Skills Event provided a platform for working and unemployed carers to access support, live job vacancies and wider opportunities.
- Established a dedicated business networking event, providing a platform for employers to engage carer and wider health support services.
- Established two 'meet the provider' events, to strengthen cross organisational working (notably between carer, health, employment and skills organisations/providers).
- There has been a significant increase in the number of referrals into local carer support services. The 180 support plans encompassed, on average, more than 5 warm referrals into carer or wider provision.
- The Pilot worked in partnership with over 120 organisations – referring into, or receiving referrals from, the pilot.

Sustainability

- The carers' agenda has been inbuilt into the Workplace Wellbeing Support Programme.
- The When You Can Programme, to promote the health and wellbeing of working carers, has been established.
- A Working Carers Social Group, which is led by carers, has been set-up.
- A toolkit for employers and employees has been established to promote employee rights and employer responsibilities regarding working carers.
- Engaging carers via the GP social prescribing model (Better Life for You Programme).

E KPMG carers network

Background

KPMG, as a highly successful business, is clear that to remain successful it must be the 'employer of choice' with high rates of staff retention. Central to this is the corporate belief that staff welfare is critical. KPMG have an approach to this that is embedded in the concept 'Bring your whole self to work'. This means staff are encouraged to bring their interests, hobbies, background, skills and their challenges into the work environment. This is seen to bring added value to the organisation and its culture. It is also seen as critical in relation to business continuity, since staff who do not feel valued will be able to leave and take up a role with any competitor should they so choose. The impact of the loss of a member of staff is well understood, including costs, the risk of lost clients and the time taken to upskill any new replacement. The organisation view supporting working carers and other staff groups as a win-win outcome.

KPMG carers' network

KPMG run a carers network, with a current membership of 100. A recent company survey indicated that 1:8 members of staff were carers, highlighting one of the network's challenges. The network has a chair, who has lived experience of caring. As KPMG have a range of such networks the responsibility of running the network is part of the accepted work role of the chair. The chair has given up to 20% of their time to fulfill this function alongside their main role. The chair is the main contact point for carers who wish to join or have an issue they need support to resolve, in addition to being the contact for managers who may need help understanding how to effectively support a person. The chair also organises publicity about the network and the networking sessions that they have.

The network has been in existence for 10 years, and it started with a request to HR to establish the group. This was supported, and the group developed.

Approximately 5 years ago it became part of the formal Inclusion and Diversity infrastructure that exists within the organisation. As KPMG is a national organisation with approximately 14,500 staff it has a range of offices across the UK. The network is working towards establishing a champion within each of these buildings. With the intention of providing opportunities for more face to face contact where needed. Currently the chair meets with or has an initial telephone conversation with each new member of the network. This is to enhance the feeling of being involved in something useful and supportive and to ensure people feel welcome. This is particularly important since carers have little time to give freely and therefore need to be valued when they do.

The network runs several 'sandwich and chat' sessions over lunch time, which are well received and take on a range of different approaches, including guest speakers, films or networking conversations. Several supportive relationships have developed because of this approach. People joining these group sessions are clear that conversations held within the room are confidential and that people are attending as working carers, not staff members with hierarchical roles and responsibilities. All activities are held at lunch times to ensure that there is no conflict with carers' other commitments.

Challenges

The main challenge within the group is developing the membership, since the 100 strong current membership is not reflective of the 1 in 8 people in the organisation that are in a caring role. Efforts have been made to achieve this, including features in the organisation's newsletter and attending staff induction sessions. The current approach is for members of the network to speak to one person a day about the role of the network. This is however challenging as it is acknowledged carers are extremely busy and not all carers are happy to be known as carers due to perceived risks of the impact on their job role. Overcoming this will be complex, but will remain on the agenda until successful completion.

Contact: hugh.neal@kpmg.co.uk

F Supporting carers in employment – Sefton@Work

This project is one of the 9 national pilots funded by the Department of Work and Pensions and the Department of Health. The information below is Sefton's initial reflections on the work they have done. The more formal evaluation of all pilot sites will be published later in 2017.

Why did we do this?

The aim of the pilot was to help deliver good practice learning about carers in employment and provide practical assistance to individual working carers that will contribute to the achievement of our wider aims as articulated in our Sefton Carers strategy:

"We aim to ensure that vulnerable carers of all ages in Sefton are valued for the role they play, have access to information and support which allows them to be self-sufficient, to gain help they need to learn, develop and thrive in their communities, and have access to opportunities for a life outside caring resulting in a feeling of improved wellbeing. We aim to ensure that carers and those they care for have a voice and are listened to when services are designed to ensure they meet their needs."

Certain characteristics of Sefton supported this need – an ageing population, an employer base made up of primarily small and micro companies (often with limited HR support) and a significant number of part-time jobs in the borough.

Aims of project

The project has three strands:

- 1) Focus on identifying and working with local employers to improve working practices for carers.
- 2) Identifying and supporting working carers, providing practical support, information advice and guidance, personal assistance and funding.
- 3) Supporting young workless carers to gain and sustain employment linking in with our current Youth Employment Gateway offer.

What the project did

STRAND 1

- 10 employers involved in Best Practice Consortium.
- Lead employer – Champion and network established.
- Focused on sectors with significant part-time and female employees.
- Improved working practices for carers in the workforce.
- Health and wellbeing charter framework for local businesses.
- Employer and Employee Carers Pledge developed.
- 'Guide to Support Working Carers in Sefton' available.

STRAND 2

- Consulted with a group of carers to identify good practice and improve service delivery.
- 54 Carers engaged in the project.
- Helped carers to overcome barriers to sustainable employment through an 'enabling pot'.
- 'Out of hours' support network via employment of a part time support at Sefton Carers Centre aimed at working carers.
- 27 Carers accessed financial support at a cost of £2,621.
- Used assistive technology e.g. panic alarms, key safes, use of GPS technology to provide 24/7 care.

STRAND 3

- Provided funding of up to £500 per person for employability support.
- 26 young workless carers accessed information, advice and guidance and other employment related activities.
- 14 young carers moved into employment.
- 13 young carers accessed financial support at a cost of £1,711.

Challenges

- Identifying carers on a voluntary basis sometimes proved difficult as some individuals, particularly young people, did not want to be labelled as a 'carer'.
- The need to engage with employers that may have been doubtful as to the impact of introducing new paperwork and processes reflecting the needs of carers. Positive feedback was gained from those businesses involved in the network and the subsequent development of the pledge and the guide.
- Identifying the number of carers in any workplace – lack of information held by employers relating to their workforce.
- Re-engaging carers who had successfully moved previously into employment with Sefton@work – the conversation was sometimes sensitive due to the changing nature of the carers' relationship with the person they cared for. Sadly, circumstances meant some people were no longer caring.

Learning Points

- Many carers were unaware of the potential support available to them, whether through the Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors, or through benefit support.
- Current carers allowance rules cap the amount of earnings per week which can impact on the progression of carers in the workplace and encourage the part-time nature of employment for those with these responsibilities.
- Some carers, particularly young carers, disliked the label and were reluctant to be 'categorised'.
- Often a small outlay can provide daily peace of mind for carers, such as funding for key safes or similar.
- Young carers looking to move into employment benefited most from accessing support to gain employment, i.e. interventions such as funding for travel costs and work clothing.
- Working carers employed by those companies and involved in the development of the carers pledge and Guide for Employers, gave positive feedback in the gained 'trust' in disclosing information around care responsibilities, and improved levels of communication.



Appendix 2: Mapping

Working Carers Good Practice Examples

Name of Project/ Initiative	Organisation	Lead person and contact details	Further detail	Hyperlink
Carers Staff Network	Leeds City Council	Ian Brooke-Mawson t: 0113 3784183 m: 07595 211095	'Insite' – internal web page The network page set out to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information for carers who work for Leeds City Council – about employment policies/ rights/ local services etc.• Guidance for managers re supporting carers in the workplace.• An opportunity for sharing and networking.	n/a – internal web page
Supporting Working Carers	Leeds Carers Centre	Andrew Walsh e: Andrew.Walsh@carersleeds.org.uk Val Hewison e: Val.Hewison@carersleeds.org.uk	Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To raise awareness of Working Carers issues with employers in Leeds --To develop an understanding of why it is important for employers to care about working carers.• To work with employers and working carers to identify and provide practical ways to advise and support them.• To develop a community of proactive employers in the Leeds area.	www.carersleeds.org.uk/

Name of Project/ Initiative	Organisation	Lead person and contact details	Further detail	Hyperlink
The Working Carers and Employers Project	Gateshead Carers	Steve Cowen e: Steve.Cowen@gatesheadcarers.com	Gateshead carers support local employers to help them recognise and support carers within their workforce. The aim is to ensure that local organisations and line managers are familiar with legislation in relation to carers and are aware of other simple methods of supporting carers in the workplace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free advice services for employees and employers. • The Carer-Friendly Employer Charter. • Working Carer and Employers Toolkit. • Working Carers and Employers eLearning website. 	www.gatesheadcarers.com/services/new-working-carers/
Carers in Employment	Bury Council	Amanda Huntbach e: A.huntbach@bury.gov.uk Steph Boyd e: s.boyd@bury.gov.uk	Business Toolkit. Quality of life wheel (conversation tool in development). Bury Council has been awarded Government funding to support carers remain in paid work. This, offers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pilot to support working carers using assistive technology. For further information about the assistive technology element of the pilot see: Caring responsibilities www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11639 • Assistance for carers to help them access support, services and information will be provided by a dedicated officer. • Support and guidance to employers, to better understand how to support working carers. Each element of the project aims to support working carers to balance their work and caring.	www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11846

Name of Project/ Initiative	Organisation	Lead person and contact details	Further detail	Hyperlink
Bury Working Carers Employee Group	Bury Council Six Towns Housing	t: 0161 253 7469 e: R.Pakeman@bury.gov.uk Bury UNISON 17 Knowsley Street, BL9 0ST	The principal aim of the Carers Employee Group is to work towards ensuring that the Carers perspective is proactively incorporated within Bury Council and Six Town Housing's policies and planning processes and procedures; and to assist with developing good practice.	www.theburydirectory.co.uk/kb5/burydirectory/service.page?id=re9uv-9voGs
CReate	Carers Resource Centre Bradford and Airedale, Harrogate and Ripon, and Craven Carers Centre	www.carersresource.org/contact/jsengel@carersresource.org.uk	Carers juggling a job and the demands of looking after someone are the focus of the CReate service. CReate programme – Carers' Resource Employment and Training Enterprise. Aims to help carers to stay in work; support them to manage their working and caring responsibilities; to assist carers in finding a job or returning to a career, or boost their skills and confidence. Works with local employers in Bradford, Craven and Harrogate districts to increase awareness and understanding of carers' issues and to encourage the adoption of carer-friendly policies. Offers advice on and support with employment, training and personal development for carers who are looking for employment or who are working. One-to-one support and careers guidance. Information on learning, training, work and volunteering opportunities. Help with interview skills, CVs, applications and all the tricky stuff. Understanding and advice on how to balance caring and work. Supporting employers to become carer friendly. Group workshops to learn and build skills.	www.carersresource.org/news/newly-funded-create-service-has-special-focus-on-working-carers/

Name of Project/ Initiative	Organisation	Lead person and contact details	Further detail	Hyperlink
Supporting Carers in Employment Sefton@Work	Sefton Council	Contact Name: Sefton@Work t: 0151 934 2610 e: seftonatwork.info@sefton.gov.uk Alison Gallagher Alison.Gallagher@sefton.gov.uk	Guide to Supporting Working Carers in Sefton Employer/ Employee Pledge Aims of Pilot: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to test new approaches and form part of the national pilot of 10. • Strand 1 – Focus on identifying and working with local employers to improve working practices for carers. • Strand 2 – Identifying and supporting working carers, providing practical support, information advice and guidance, personal assistance and funding. • Strand 3 – Supporting young workless carers to gain and sustain employment linking in with our current Youth Employment Gateway offer. 	www.seftonatwork.net/
Durham Carers	Durham County Council and partner CCGs		Online guidance and support.	www.durhamcarers.info/article/10485/ Employment
Investors in Carers www.investorsincarers.com	Kirklees Council + CCGs	Investors in Carers Floor 4, Civic Centre 1, High Street. Huddersfield HD1 2NF e: Info@investorsincarers	Accreditation, Project management and Consultancy Supporting organisations to work with Carers in a more transformative and innovative way using several tools.	www.investorsincarers.com/
Tyneside Working Carers	North Tyneside Carers Centre	t: 01916432298	Rights and responsibilities advice for working Carers.	www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk/what-we-do/support-for-carers-in-employment
Support for Carers in Employment – Stoke	The Dove Service National pilot	Dudson Centre Hope Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 5DD t: 01782 683155 e: info@thedoveservice.org.uk	Counselling service and support group.	www.thedoveservice.org.uk/

Name of Project/ Initiative	Organisation	Lead person and contact details	Further detail	Hyperlink
Carers in Employment	Cheshire West	Fran Miller t: 01606 333125 m: 07870 972245 e: Fran@Cheshirecarerscentre.org.uk Cheshire and Warrington Carers Trust, 146 London Road, Northwich, CW9 5HH	<p>This project aims to support them to remain in employment, and to provide local employers with practical advice on how they can identify and support carers in the workplace.</p> <p>Raising carers awareness of their rights at work Identifying carers who are in, or are thinking of returning to work.</p> <p>Information days for carers about their rights as employees</p> <p>Raising awareness of services available to them to enable them to remain in work.</p> <p>Working with local employers to help them identify and support carers. Develop a carer friendly best practice checklist.</p> <p>Workplace road shows to promote information and support available.</p> <p>Rally Round: Secure online network that enables a carer to share tasks Invited friends, family and volunteers can see the tasks and select the jobs they can help with.</p> <p>Work in partnership with Wellbeing to raise awareness and promote a wide range of assistive technology available</p> <p>Work in partnership with Wellbeing to raise awareness and promote a wide range of assistive technology available.</p>	cheshireandwarringtoncarers.org/services/carers-in-employment/
Supporting Working Carers Northamptonshire	Northampton Cares	123 Midland Road, Wellingborough Northamptonshire, NN8 1LU.	<p>Our Supporting Working Carers project focuses on supporting Carers who are in paid employment. We are working with employers to encourage them to maintain Carers in employment and support Carers among their workforce.</p>	www.northampton-shire-careers.org/working-carers

Name of Project/ Initiative	Organisation	Lead person and contact details	Further detail	Hyperlink
Carers in Paid Employment	Bristol and South Gloucestershire Carers Support Centre	t: 0117 958 9985	This service offers support to carers and employers, to help carers stay in work. It is a partnership project between Carers Support Centre with South Gloucestershire Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group. It is one of nine pilot sites in England trialing support for carers in paid employment. carers-in-paid-employment-leaflet-employers-web.pdf carers-in-paid-employment-leaflet-carers-web.pdf	www.carersupportcentre.org.uk/our-services/carers-in-paid-employment/
Employers Toolkit – Supporting Working Carers	The Crossroads Alliance Partnership Council CCG Housing Third Sector	Carer Employment Support Worker t: 0300 123 9121 e: CESS@alliancehomes.org.uk	www.alliancehomesgroup.org.uk/media/1747/employers-toolkit-final-version-3.pdf	www.alliancehomesgroup.org.uk/
Local Employers Guide to Supporting Carers in the Workplace	North East Lincolnshire County Council and NE Lincs. NHS Care Trust Plus NE Lincs. Carers Centre	Nicola Pullman, Carers Development Manager t: 01472 629162 e: nicola.pullman@nhs.net	https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/nelincs/asch/documents/local_employers_guide_supporting_carers_2016_v3_october_green.pdf	www.westcheshirelocaloffer.co.uk/kb5/cheshirewestandchester/directory/service.page?id=CduCyE3laF4
Employers for Carers scheme	East Sussex County Council Employers for Carers	Allyson King e: allyson.king@eastsussex.gov.uk t: 01323 747314	http://cftc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EfC-membership_Offer-to-SMEs_October-2016-ak-002.pdf	www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/employers-for-carers

Name of Project/ Initiative	Organisation	Lead person and contact details	Further detail	Hyperlink
Community Led Support wellbeing services linking closer with parent/ carers groups	Doncaster	Jane Rodgers e: Jane.rodgers@doncaster.gov.uk	<p>The Community Led Support is a new way of working primarily led by social care. Buildings are being identified to become 'Hubs' – a collaborative approach for agencies to come and access information advice and guidance, taking services to the community without the formal pathway of being assessed within their own homes. These assessments are now called 'conversations'. There are three tiers.</p> <p>Tier 1 – conversation – where people phone in for advice and have a strength based conversation.</p> <p>Tier 2 – A visit is arranged through an appointment system and they receive information advice and guidance at one of the Hubs.</p> <p>Tier 3 – Social care and other professionals support and plan care with the person based on their strengths.</p> <p>Working parent carers groups receive specific IAG tailored to their needs/requests through the support from a wellbeing officer.</p> <p>The first point of contact is over the phone by asking a series of questions and respond by providing the customer with information relevant to their needs and requirements.</p>	n/a

National Resources for Employers

Initiative	Lead Organisation	Further detail	Hyperlink
Carers Scotland	Scottish Government	What is Carer Positive? Carer Positive aims to encourage employers to create a supportive working environment for carers in the workplace. Accreditation approach. The Carer Positive process is aimed to be clear and straightforward, based on a simple self-assessment process, with employers describing how they meet the criteria expected at each level of the award. Where possible, this should be accompanied by evidence of their policies/activities.	www.carerpositive.org
Rights and responsibilities advice for Parents and Carers	ACAS	Uses Webchat approach. Rights and responsibilities advice for Parents and Carers.	www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1362
Caring for someone while working	Northern Ireland Assembly	Employee rights and responsibilities.	www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/caring-someone-while-working
Workplace Wellbeing Charter	Public Health England Health@Work	Employer guidance.	www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk/media/Carers%20Topic%20Guide.pdf
Employers for Carers	Carers UK	Online resources and guidance for employers. Provides off the shelf and bespoke training for employers Membership organisation. We are employers like you – large and small. Employers for Carers has evolved from a pioneering group of employers committed to working carers and is backed-up by the specialist knowledge of Carers UK. Our key purpose is to ensure that employers have the support to retain and manage employees with caring responsibilities.	www.employersforcarers.org

Initiative	Lead Organisation	Further detail	Hyperlink
Distance Caring Toolkit	Employers for Carers/Carers UK	This short and simple Employers' Toolkit has been produced by EfC to help you: Recognise the contribution made by distance carers in your workplace and the challenges they face. Reach out to hidden distance carers in your workforce who might not recognise that they are caring. Let all carers, including distance carers, know about the support and services that they can access.	www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/staff/humanResources/pdf/EfC-Distance-Caring-Toolkit1.pdf
My Family Care	My Family Care	Specific ways to support your working parents and carers, or need advice on where to start. My Family Care is passionate about helping employers with their work and family strategies AND implementing employee solutions. Commercial – consultancy, training, resources www.myfamilycare.co.uk/case-studies-and-downloads/employers-guides.html	www.myfamilycare.co.uk/build-pack/
Toolkit: Supporting Carers at Work	BiTC Business in the Community	This toolkit sets out the importance of supporting carers at work, sets out good practice in workplace policies and gives examples of what businesses are doing now.	http://age.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/supporting_carers_at_work.pdf
Carers in your Work-force Matter: Toolkit and Guidance	Skills for Care	A guide for employers – helping to identify and support unpaid carers in the workforce.	www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/Skills/Carers/Carers-in-your-workforce-matter---complete-pack.pdf
Macmillan at Work Support for Employers	Macmillan	Training and support in the workplace. Free toolkit.	www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/work-and-cancer/if-youre-an-employer/index.html#161443
Carers Toolkit and Progress to date (2014/15)	NHS England	NHS England and its partners have developed a toolkit to help health and social care organisations work together in identifying, assessing and supporting the wellbeing of carers and their families.	www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/commitment-to-carers/carers-toolkit/ www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/comm-carers.pdf

Good practice (from Employers for Carers)

Organisation	
Bank of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers network (virtual). • Looking to extend "Reasonable Adjustments" policy to carers.
Age UK (Head Office)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support when caring comes to an end. • Planning for retirement advice for carers. • "Extending working life, supporting carers and planning for retirement" booklet produced. • Ensure that all line managers understand their policies that support carers. • Counselling line for staff (inc. Carers). • Financial planning help for carers. • Mid-life career review (for all staff but particularly pertinent for carers). • Staff carers group (face to face).
Islington Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers forum (100+ members) that meets quarterly, speakers invited to attend e.g. mindfulness. • Carers are part of staff induction – ask if new member of staff is a carer, but all staff are told about employee rights e.g. flexible working, career breaks etc. • Adverts for recruitment mention flexible working and compressed hours. • Jointly app available free to all staff. • 5 training days (these can be paid job or caring role related). • Special leave/disability special leave (10 days per year) for appointments, caring role related absence. • Details of Employers for carers on their intranet/website. • HR champion for working carers. • Staff assistance line. • Flexible retirement request. • Health assessments for all staff.
Credit Suisse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Manager's Guide to Carers and Mental Health" produced for line/senior managers. • Coffee drop ins for carers to come together. • Senior management input/buy in.
Price Waterhouse Coopers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPACE network (Supporting Parents and Carers and Everyone else) to eliminate exclusion. • Flexible working offered from the outset if a carer. • 1,200 members of SPACE. • Confidential support – does not get fed back from SPACE to line manager (unless carer specifically asks for this).
Department for Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers passport allows employees to leave the workplace to carry out urgent caring responsibilities. This has improved unplanned absenteeism.
Centrica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One month paid carers leave. • Flexible working hours. • Carers policy. • Supporting information and training for manager.



Think Local Act Personal

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) is a national strategic partnership of more than 50 organisations committed to supporting the continued implementation of personalisation and community-based health, care and support.

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