



LEEK TOWN COUNCIL

CARERS POLICY

Approved 21st May 2024

1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 This policy outlines the support that Leek Town Council offers to staff who have caring responsibilities, to ensure a healthy work-life balance, and to aid recruitment and retention of staff.
- 1.2 The council recognises a carer as someone who has a substantial amount of regular unpaid caring responsibility or who has unexpected care responsibilities where there has been a change of circumstance.
- 1.3 The Council recognises dependants as being children up to the age of 18, or adult children with certain disabilities, or infirm parents who live with, or who are the responsibility of Council employees.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY:

- 2.1 The Council recognises that staff who have caring responsibilities may find that work is particularly challenging in these circumstances.
- 2.2 The Council is committed to supporting carers in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - **Identification as a Carer:** Members of staff are encouraged to identify themselves as a carer, where appropriate, to the Town Clerk.
 - **Discussion of support needs:** carers are encouraged to request support where required, in accordance with this policy. Sympathetic consideration will be given where support is requested by carers in accordance with this policy, based on a shared understanding of the situation, its impact on the Carer's work and the need for consistency of

treatment with other staff in a similar position. These discussions are confidential.

3. PROVISIONS:

- 3.1 The Council recognises that there will be many and varied adaptations to the working role that may prove effective.
- 3.2 To support the discussion with the Town Clerk, caring responsibilities are standing item on the agenda for all 'one to one' review meetings.
- 3.3 There is a range of potential support options for carers including:
 - Flexible working: carers employed by the Council for 26 weeks or more can request temporary or permanent changes to their working patterns to suit their individual needs as a carer.
 - Ordinary Carer's Leave: carers employed by the Council for one year or more can request up to 18 weeks' unpaid Ordinary Parental Leave, to care for their dependant.
 - Home-working: staff can request remote working options.
 - Special Leave (Time Off for Dependants; Compassionate Leave): The Town Council's **Annual Leave and Special Leave Policy** provides further details of the types of time off that may be appropriate for carers.
 - Applications for leave and amended working patterns noted above will be considered in accordance with the terms of the relevant policies. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate a carers needs, this will be the subject of discussion and cannot be guaranteed.

4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

- 4.1 The Care Act 2014 came into force in April 2015, with some elements coming into force in April 2016.

It put in place significant new rights for carers in England including:

 - a focus on promoting wellbeing.
 - A right to a carer's assessment based on the appearance of need.
 - a right for carers' eligible needs to be met.
 - a duty on local councils to provide information and advice to carers in relation to their caring role and their own needs.

- a duty on NHS bodies (NHS England, clinical commissioning groups, NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts) to co-operate with local authorities in delivering the Care Act functions.

4.2 Under the Equality Act 2010, no individual should be discriminated against in service provision, employment or education because of the following:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marital status.
- Race.
- Religion/belief.
- Sex or sexual orientation.

Further to this, a carer cannot be discriminated against based on their association with a disabled person.

4.3 The Children and Families Act 2014 gives young carers and young adult carers in England a right to a carer's assessment and to have their needs met (if the assessment shows this is needed).

4.4 The Care Act and the Children and Families Act should work together to make sure the needs of the whole family are met and inappropriate or excessive caring by young carers is prevented or reduced.

4.5 The rights of parent carers have also been addressed within the Children and Families Act. A local council has a duty to provide an assessment to a carer of a disabled child aged under 18 if it appears that the parent carer has needs, or the parent carer requests an assessment.

4.6 Any employee, not just carers, may be able to apply for flexible working under the Employment Rights Act 1996.

4.7 Since 2014, anyone has the right to request flexible working for any reason as long as you have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks.