Supporting Working Carers Covid-19 and Beyond

As the lockdown imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic is eased, many organisations are beginning to return to the workplace. This return to work will be challenging for employers and may also be a source of concern for many employees, including those with the added complication of caring responsibilities.

Since the beginning of Covid-19 there has been an increase of 400,000 carers in Scotland, bringing the total to an estimated 1.1 million. Now at 1 in 5 of the population, there is a strong chance that there will be carers among your staff so taking steps to support them at work is vital.

HOW CAN EMPLOYERS HELP STAFF MEMBERS WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK?

Gain a New Understanding

There has been a huge number of new carers since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, while those with prior caring responsibilities may have situations that have changed, such as losing access to support services or caring for someone who is shielding. Take the time to re-identify carers working in your organisation and have discussions about their current situation to understand how you can best support them in the workplace.

Explore New Ways of Working

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a big change in the way that we look at work but it is also a great opportunity to explore new ways of working.

Can you offer more flexible working that might better suit your staff, including those who have to balance work with their caring responsibilities and home life?

ACAS have a 'Return To The Workplace Process Map' which is available to download as a PDF from their website.

Consult on New Policies

As organisations return to the workplace, it will be necessary to put new polices and practices in place to stay in line with guidance on the Covid-19 pandemic and keep staff members as safe as possible. Remember to include carers in discussions on these workplace recovery policies to ensure that they are appropriate to their individual needs and circumstances.

Allow Carers to Connect

Many carers experience feelings of loneliness and isolation in their caring role. A good way to combat this is by connecting with other carers who will understand what they are going through and are able to act as a network of peer support.

Setting up a carers group with regular meetings allows carers in your organisation to support each other. When in-person meetings are unsuitable, there are many platforms that can allow group members to connect online such as Yammer, Slack, Teams or WhatsApp - so take a moment to think about which setup would be most appropriate and remember to promote the group to everyone in your organisation.

Signpost to Help

Although you might feel limited as to what you can personally do as an employer, an easy way for you to support staff who are carers is to signpost them towards other organisations and advice that can help.

Care Information Scotland has links to local and national carer organisations including Carers Scotland, as well as the network of carers centres across the country.
Visit http://www.careinfoscotland.scot/topics/support-for-carers.

Refer staff to your local carers centre as they will have more in-depth knowledge of support services relevant to the local area.

Get in touch

The Carer Positive Team is here to help you support carers in the workplace throughout Covid-19 and beyond. We have helpful information and resources on our website however if you have specific queries or concerns about supporting carers in your workplace, you can contact us by emailing info@carerpositive.org and we will be able to advise on your situation.

Visit our website for more information and resources

www.carerpositive.org

Or for more information contact the Carer Positive Team at

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