

# Supporting carers as a line manager

This week is Carers Week, an annual campaign to raise awareness of unpaid caring, and the challenges that carers face. Carer-led charity VOCAL (Voice of Carers Across Lothian) has shared some tips on how line managers can support carers in the workplace.

## Why support carers

There are approximately 400,000 working carers in Scotland, but many unpaid carers leave employment because managing the two roles becomes too difficult. As a line manager, it's important to be aware of how caring can affect members of your team, and how you can support them.

There are many things that line managers can do to support carers. For example, we recommend familiarising yourself with [carers' legal rights](#), such as a right to time off in emergencies, and the [Carers' Leave Act](#). You can also create a supportive environment for your employees by encouraging open conversations about caring responsibilities.

## What you can do

The first step is to identify carers in your team. Some signs to look out for include:

- Increased use of annual leave, especially at short notice.
- Requests for flexible hours or working from home more frequently.
- Signs of fatigue, stress, or emotional strain.
- Mentioning increased responsibilities at home.
- Increased phone use for personal matters during work hours.
- Referencing relative's health, appointments, or needs in conversation.

If you know that someone on your team is a carer, then make sure that they are aware of their rights in the workplace. You can find more information about this on VOCAL's [website](#), or in their [free online course for working carers](#)

To create a carer-friendly workplace, there are various things you can do:

- Organisations can create their own carers' policy and ensure that employees have easy access to it.
- Consider having a 'champion' for carer issues, perhaps a member of the HR or wellbeing team, or a carer themselves could act as a central point of contact for carers. A top-down approach regarding openly talking about caring is important for an inclusive culture.

- Check out VOCAL's [Caring Employer service](#), which offers expert advice, training, and resources to create a carer-friendly culture, and support applications for a Carer Positive accreditation.

Without appropriate support, carers are more likely to experience stress, burnout, and may even leave the workforce. One in seven people in the workplace have caring responsibilities, and anyone can become a carer at any time; statistics show that caring affects men and women almost equally - at 48% and 52% respectively.

It's therefore highly likely that there are already carers in your organisation; it's in your interests to support them.