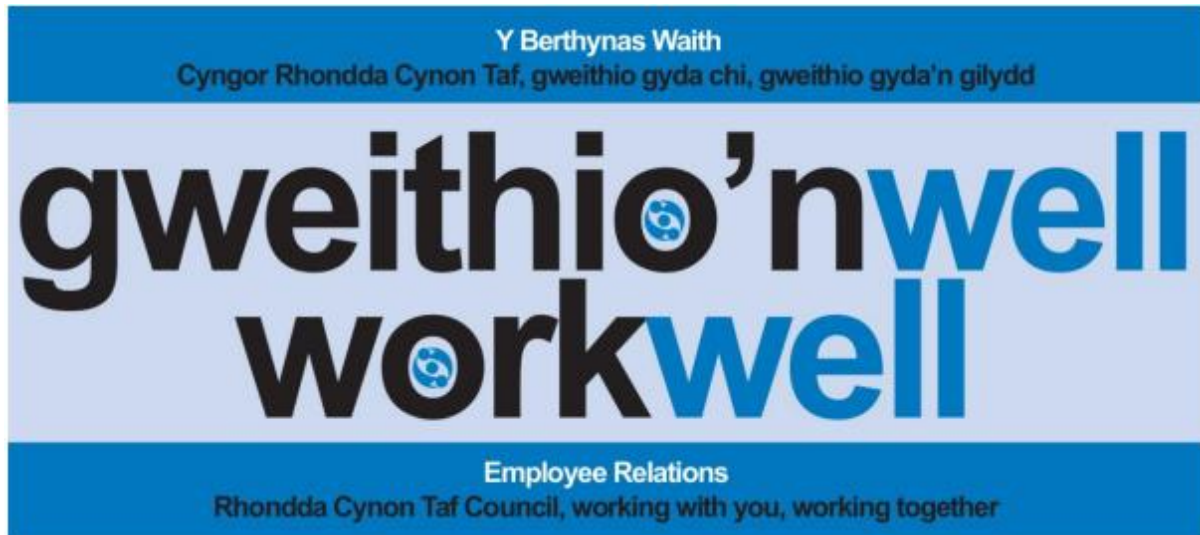


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Working Carers **Guidance**

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh

Contents

Purpose of guidance.....	2
Introduction.....	2
Definition of an unpaid carer.....	3
Carers rights at work.....	3
Existing leave arrangements.....	4
Communication.....	6
Abuse of Provisions	6
Equal Opportunities.....	6
Appendix 1: Decision tree	7
Appendix 2: Guide to support options for unpaid carers	8
Appendix 3: Joining form – Working Carers Mailing List	11
Appendix 4: RCT Carers Support Project Referral Form	12
Appendix 5: Working Carers Support Plan	13

Purpose of guidance

This guidance has been developed to address the needs of unpaid carers working for the Council. The Council intends this guidance to support employees with caring responsibilities and enable them to balance these effectively with their employment responsibilities. It also ensures that managers apply a consistent and equitable approach in supporting employees who are unpaid carers.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council:

- Values the skills and loyalty of their employees.
- Affirms that employees of the Council will not be discriminated against because of their caring duties.
- Ensures all working carers are aware of the support and benefits available to them as employees and as unpaid carers.
- Is committed to supporting employees with caring responsibilities in maintaining a work-life balance.
- Will willingly work in partnership with employees who have a caring responsibility to explore viable options to support them in their employment.
- Ensure that caring responsibilities is not a barrier to the recruitment and retention of staff.

Introduction

The terms 'unpaid carer' and 'working carer' are used throughout this guidance to describe employees who have unpaid caring responsibilities in addition to their employment role. This is not the same as Care Workers, who are paid to carry out care work, however Care Workers may have additional caring responsibilities separate from their paid employment and would in that case also be considered an unpaid carer or working carer.

It is the employee's responsibility to inform their manager of any caring responsibilities so that the appropriate support can be discussed and provided. All discussions regarding the caring role will be kept confidential.

This guidance aims to set out:

- The support available to unpaid carers in the workplace.
- How working carers can join the RCT Council Working Carers Mailing List.
- The leave of absence arrangements available to unpaid carers.
- How line managers and working carers can agree a Carer Support Plan.

Definition of an unpaid carer



“CARERS LOOK AFTER FAMILY, PARTNERS OR FRIENDS IN NEED OF HELP AND SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENT LIVING, BECAUSE THEY ARE ILL, FRAIL OR HAVE A DISABILITY.

THE CARE THEY PROVIDE CAN BE PHYSICAL, SOCIAL OR EMOTIONAL. THIS DEFINITION INCLUDES YOUNG CARERS AND PARENT CARERS OF DISABLED CHILDREN.

THE TERM CARER INCLUDES PEOPLE WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE A RELATIVE AND WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE LIVING WITH THE PERSON THEY CARE FOR. THE CARE THEY PROVIDE IS NOT PART OF AN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP AND IS UNPAID EXCEPT FOR CARERS RELATED ALLOWANCES”.

The Council appreciates the demands that caring responsibilities can make on the employee. We recognise the importance of supporting employees whilst they are caring so that they can successfully manage the balance between home life and employment responsibilities.

‘Caring responsibilities’ can take many forms; long term, short term or on an emergency basis.

It must be recognised that carers may find themselves in very difficult, challenging situations and their requests should be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

Carers rights at work

Employees who are carers have the following rights, subject to certain conditions and qualifying periods:

- The right to request flexible working.
- The right to time off in emergencies.
- The right to unpaid parental leave if you have a child.
- The right not to be discriminated against or harassed under the Equality Act 2010, if they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic, for example a disability.

In the appendices of this guidance you will find additional suggestions for supporting carers at work. This includes:

- A guide to support arrangements that line managers and teams might implement for unpaid carers. Although many seem like small adjustments they can make a huge difference (Appendix 2).
- Organisations and projects that might offer additional support for unpaid carers (Appendix 2).
- A form to complete to join the RCT Working Carers Mailing List to receive relevant information and updates that could help you in your caring role (Appendix 3).
- A form to complete to register with the RCT Carers Support Project if you are an unpaid carer who lives in RCT (Appendix 4).
- A suggested format to use for discussions between employees and line managers about caring responsibilities (Appendix 5), including a template for a Working Carer Support Plan that can be put in place. Although these discussions may also happen more informally, employees and line managers are encouraged to explore how the employee can be supported to balance their caring role and paid work.

Existing leave arrangements

In order to support unpaid carers, RCT Council have a number of existing policies and procedures which should be used to achieve a balance between paid work and the unpaid caring role.

The various options available are set out in the handy guide below. All RCT policies are available on RCT Source under 'A to Z Policies' (you do not need logon details to look at policies on RCT Source, <https://rct.learningpool.com/>); or from your manager, HR or trade union. A decision tree to help managers and unpaid carers determine which type of support is best suited to their needs is included in Appendix 1.

Flexible working

- The Work and Families Act 2006 gives unpaid carers as well as parents, the right to request flexible working.
- Flexible working could include flexi-time; compressed hours; shift swapping; staggered hours; job sharing; part-time working; term-time working.
- More information on how to request flexible working, eligibility criteria and the impact on employment terms and conditions can be found in the *Right to Request Flexible Working Policy*.

Emergency paid leave

- RCT Council offer employees with a caring responsibility the opportunity to take "reasonable time off" to deal with emergencies involving a dependant.
- Examples could include: the dependent is ill or involved in an accident; to make longer term care arrangements; unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements; sudden onset of caring role.
- Carers can apply for up to 5 days over a rolling 12-month period, but only one day can be taken at a time.
- Full details are available in the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

Emergency unpaid leave

- Unpaid carers can request emergency unpaid leave in writing to their line manager. This is not a statutory right but nevertheless offered by RCT Council to people with dependants.
- More information can be found in the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

Unpaid parental leave

- Parents are entitled by law to take time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare.
- Parents who have worked for the Council for at least one year can take up to 18 weeks parental leave per child, and it must be taken in a block of one week or more, up to a maximum of 4 weeks in a year.
- More information is available in the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

Paid bereavement leave

- RCT Council offer paid bereavement leave from the date of death of certain close relatives to the day after the funeral.
- In some cases it can also be used for other relations if the employee is responsible for the funeral arrangements.
- Full details are available in the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

Purchase of annual leave

- It is possible to purchase additional annual leave, up to a maximum of 10 days per year (pro rata for part time employees).
- More information is available in the *Purchase of Additional Leave Scheme*.

Communication

Raising awareness via good communication will help ensure that the working Carers within the Council are aware of the Working Carers Guidance, helping to build a supportive culture, encouraging and enabling a two-way dialogue between line managers and working Carers.

We will communicate new developments around support for Carers, signposting information and information regarding any new initiatives to staff via:

- The Disability and Carers Network
- Staff Briefings
- Intranet and Internet
- Carers Support Project
- Working Carers Mailing List (joining form in Appendix 2).

Information for new employees is included in the documentation issued as part of their induction process. This information will be subject to review and updated where appropriate by the Service Manager for Carers.

Abuse of Provisions

Any abuse of the provision of the carers support arrangements will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure.

Equal Opportunities

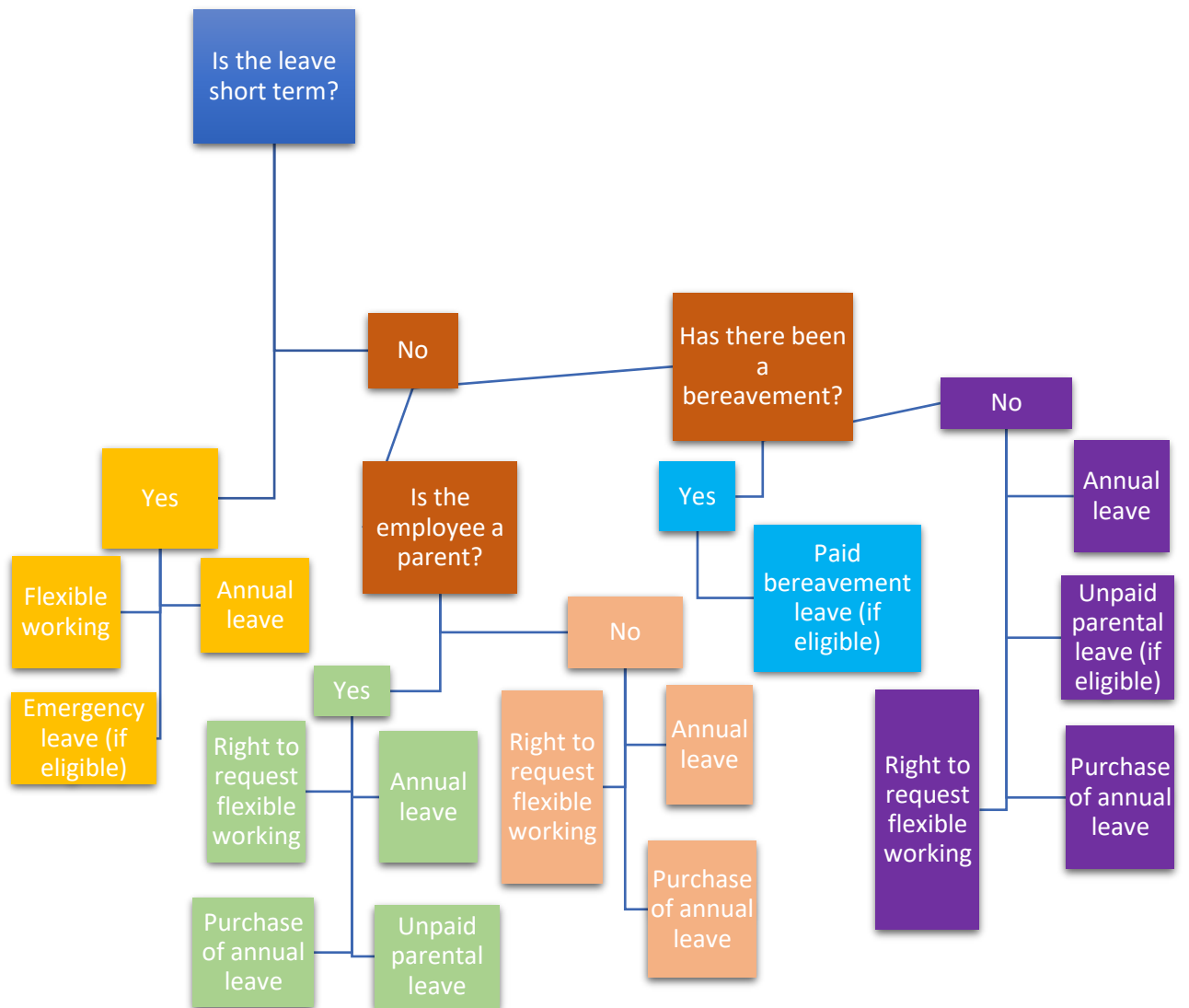
All carers in the workforce should be treated fairly and offered the level of support dependent on their caring situation and work commitments. They should be well informed of the policies in operation for supporting carers. These policies should be accessible to all carers regardless of the post held or their age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief.

Employees with caring responsibilities will have the same opportunities in career progression or to stay in work with the Council regardless of their responsibilities outside work.

For further information please contact:

- Human Resources, via your respective HR support officer.
- The Equality and Diversity Team, equality@rctcbc.gov.uk, 01443 444531.
- The Carers Support Project, carerssupportproject@rctcbc.gov.uk, 01443 281 463.

Appendix 1: Decision tree



Appendix 2: Guide to support options for unpaid carers

GUIDE TO SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR UNPAID CARERS

Working carers are not always aware of the support available to them. Many working Carers will benefit hugely from relatively small adjustments to the working environment and building a Carer Friendly culture is invaluable to allow Working Carers to manage their responsibilities. This guide includes information on what support managers and teams can offer unpaid carers in the workplace, as well as suggestions for other places unpaid carers can access support.

Use of Telephone/e-mail

Subject to discussion with their line manager, carers should be allowed reasonable use of personal telephone/e-mail to keep in regular contact with the person they provide care for, without permission from their line manager *on each occasion*.

If necessary, the employee and manager are encouraged to agree on a system for recording how often this provision is used.

Time out

At times of crisis, when carers are experiencing heightened levels of stress and anxiety, the opportunity to take '*time out*' away from their desk or workstation is sometimes valuable. Discussions should take place between the employee and their line manager to ensure support and provisions are made available for this.

Home and agile working

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, many people transitioned to home working either full time or with some office days throughout the week. This can provide greater flexibility for working carers and allow for a better balance between work and home life. Agile working might also allow work to be undertaken in an office which is more convenient for the working carer than the actual base. Although no firm decisions have been made regarding a future model of work, it is likely home working will remain available for at least some of the working week for employees whose roles allow it. Working carers are encouraged to discuss their personal situation with their line manager to find a solution that works for both parties.

RCT Carers Support Project

The Carers Support Project based within RCT Council can offer information, guidance and support to carers living in the Borough. Some of the services the Project can provide are:

- Regular newsletters designed to keep you up to date about issues, services and new developments that may affect Carers, or the person being cared for.

- The Carers A-Z – an annually printed guide to services in within Cwm Taf Morgannwg.
- Training and information sessions designed to help Carers in their caring role, varying from learning how to lift safely and stress management techniques to providing updates on Carers Rights.
- Carers groups and forums.
- Counselling service.
- Carers Emergency Card.
- The Council's MoreCard giving you discounted access to the council-run leisure services.
- Support, advice, and guidance.

To register with the Project please contact the Carers Support Project on 01443 281 463 or email carerssupportproject@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit

The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit is a support service and helps to ensure people are fit to undertake the work that is asked of them, and to protect and promote the health of our employees.

The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit is a confidential service assessing fitness for work, offering the medical opinion and advice on how to manage medical conditions in the workplace, but the employment decisions are a management responsibility. The unit provides a range of support services such as:

- Health surveillance
- Physiotherapy including ultra sound scanning and injection therapy.
- Wellbeing assessment and support.
- Counselling Service.
- Management of new and existing health problems.
- Health promotion such as influenza vaccinations.
- Lifestyle Screening.
- Sickness absence referrals.
- Pension fund referrals.

The Occupational Health unit can provide support and advice to all staff and managers. Services can be accessed by the following routes:

- Self-Referral- All staff and Elected Members can self-refer for physiotherapy and mental health support.
- Management referrals-for sickness absence referrals, support in work, guidance/advice on managing illnesses including reasonable adjustments etc and health surveillance etc.

- Emergency response-for early interventions for staff/managers who have been involved in traumatic events.

The wellbeing line is the gateway to several support services including self-referrals for wellbeing assessments, physiotherapy, as well as being somewhere to chat if you need to. You can contact the wellbeing line on 01443 424100 or wellbeinghelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Confidentiality is a fundamental part of the relationship between the Health Professional and the employee. Medical information is not shared with any other person/organisation without your written consent, except in extreme circumstances.

Useful contact details

Organisation	Telephone	Email/website
RCT Carers Support Project	01443 281 463	carerssupportproject@rctcbc.gov.uk
RCT Council Adult Social Services	01443 425 003	
Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit	01443 424 100	wellbeinghelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk
Carers Wales	029 2081 1370	https://www.carersuk.org/
Carers Trust		https://carers.org/
Citizen Advice Bureau	0800 702 2020	https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/

Appendix 3: Joining form – Working Carers Mailing List

JOINING THE WORKING CARERS MAILING LIST

Name:

Department:

Job Title:

Primary work location:

Preferred e-mail address:

Home Address:

Briefly tell us the nature of your caring role (please **do not** include any identifiable data, such as names etc.):

Privacy Statement

Any information provided within this form is done so on a voluntary basis. If you no longer wish to participate in the Working Carers Mailing List you may withdraw your consent at any time, with no consequences, by contacting the Working Carers Mailing List.

Your information will be treated as confidential but may be shared with relevant Council departments, partner organisations and when required by law. For further information on how we use your personal information, please visit our service privacy notice here www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice and our data protection pages here www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection

By joining RCT Council's Working Carers Mailing List I agree to be kept up to date with carer information and developments that may be of interest to me in my caring and working role. I understand that my details will not be passed on to any third parties and I can opt out at any time by contacting the Working Carers Mailing List.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Signed:
Date:

Please send your completed form to the Working Carers Mailing List within the Carers Support Project at [new email to be set up]

Appendix 4: RCT Carers Support Project Referral Form



Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project Identification & Referral Form



Self-Referral <input type="checkbox"/>	Individual/Organisation Referral <input type="checkbox"/>	Date:
Name and organisation details:		

Your details, the Carer:

Title:	First Name:	Surname:
Address:		
Postcode:	DOB:	
Telephone No.:	Mobile No.:	
Email:		
Ethnicity:	Male: <input type="checkbox"/>	Female: <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>
(Office Use Only) WCCIS No.:		

Details of the person you care for:

*Please ensure that the cared for person has given consent for their details to be provided

Title:	First Name:	Surname:
Relationship:	(e.g. your wife, son etc.)	
Address: (If different from above)		
Postcode:	DOB:	
Telephone No.:	Mobile No.:	
Email:		
Details of your caring role		
Ethnicity:	Male: <input type="checkbox"/>	Female: <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>
(Office Use Only) WCCIS No.:		

Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project Statement:

The Carers Support Project provides information and support to Carers living in RCT. By registering with the Project you will receive regular newsletters, a Carer A-Z Directory, access to training & information sessions, the Carers Counselling service, discounted access to the council run leisure services, and support, advice and guidance from the Project.

I would like information about a Carers Assessment ☐

Carers' assessments are a way of identifying your needs as a carer, looking at your role as a carer, how being a carer affects you & any help you may need.

I would like to be referred to the Carers Counselling Service ☐

This service is provided by RCT Carers Project and is a free telephone or face to face counselling service provided by qualified counsellors and available to local Carers in RCT.

I would like my "Welcome Pack" sent through: Post ☐ Email ☐ (Please indicate)

Your "Welcome Pack" will contain our newsletter, an A-Z guide, information about our service and information about local services to you.

Office Use Only:

Is this a <u>Y.A.C.</u> (Young Adult Carers) application?	Has the YAC Assessment Worker been notified?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Date referral processed:	CSP Officer Initials:



Please return this form to: CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk or
Freepost RTZL-AGUH-JHUU 10-12 Gelliwastad Road,
Pontypridd, CF37 2BW or contact 01443 281463



Appendix 5: Working Carers Support Plan

WORKING CARER SUPPORT PLAN

This is a suggested format to use for discussions between employees and line managers about caring responsibilities. A Working Carer Support Plan template is provided at the end. Although these discussions may also happen more informally, employees and line managers are encouraged to explore how the employee can be supported to balance their caring role and paid work.

Before meeting with the line manager, the working carer should complete the first part of the form below. This will help direct the discussion and will form the basis of any agreed support going forward.

A suggested structure for the discussion is set out below.

We appreciate that some people may decide that they do not wish to share some details of their caring roles. However, the more your manager can understand about your caring responsibilities the better placed they will be to offer support. These are some areas that your manager should cover at the interview.

Background questions

Who is being cared for (relative/partner) and why do you need to provide support e.g. because of age, illness or disability (please do not provide any identifiable data, such as names etc.)?

Are you the only carer or do you share responsibility with others?

Where does the caring take place, e.g. in your home or at the home of the person being cared for or elsewhere?

If it is away from home, how much travelling is involved?

What is the nature and extent of your caring responsibilities?

How much time is involved?

How long have you been caring for this person and is it a temporary or a long-term arrangement?

How do your caring responsibilities affect your work? Both on good days and also on not so good days where support is breaking down.

Areas where support at work may be available

Is it appropriate to consider any changes to working patterns, hours of work or place of work on either a short or longer-term basis?

Taking leave at short notice

Do you sometimes need to take leave at very short notice?

What is the likely frequency?

What is the likely purpose of the leave?

Do you sometimes need to take small amounts of leave, e.g. to accompany the person you care for to medical appointments?

What is the likely frequency of the time off you require?

Will this be planned or at short notice?

Do you need to make and/or receive private telephone calls in relation to your caring responsibilities?

This may be accommodated in a number of ways, depending on the work location. Examples are: allowing the employee to make reasonable use of personal mobile phones away from the immediate office or work area; enabling the employee to use a manager's office at a convenient pre-arranged time.

The employee will normally be expected to make personal calls at their own expense, except in a genuine emergency.

OTHER:

Are there any other ways in which RCT Council can offer support?

TEMPLATE WORKING CARER SUPPORT PLAN

Name	Job Title
Department	Line manager
Contact Details (Work)	Contact Details

<p>This is a record of the reasonable adjustments agreed between the employee and their line manager with regards to the employees responsibilities as a carer as defined within the Working Carers Guidance.</p> <p>The purpose of this agreement is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that both the employee and the employer have an accurate record of what has been agreed; • minimise the need to renegotiate reasonable adjustments every time the employee changes job, is relocated or is assigned a new manager within the organisation; and • provide the employee and their line manager with the basis for discussions about reasonable adjustments at future meetings. <p>This agreement may be reviewed and amended as necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at any regular one-to-one meeting; • at six-monthly and/or annual appraisals; • before a change of job or duties, or the introduction of new technology or ways of working; or • before or after any change in circumstances for either party • Service redesign <p>This is a live document and should be reviewed regularly by both the employee and line manager and be amended as appropriate. Line managers and employees are encouraged to reach agreement on any changes and thoroughly balance the needs of the employee with the needs of the business. Expert advice from third parties, such as occupational health advisers may be needed before changes can be agreed and implemented.</p> <p>It is important to remember that treating everyone the same does not mean that everyone is treated fairly. The Equality Act 2010 requires people to be treated differently according to their needs by making reasonable adjustments for them.</p>	
<p>Who is being cared for? And is this a temporary or long term arrangement?</p>	<p>Are you the only carer? Or do you share this responsibility?</p>

Where does the caring take place? Do you have to travel to undertake your caring responsibilities?	On average how much of time per week do your caring responsibilities take.
My responsibilities as a carer impact on my work in the following ways.	
I am requesting the following support to allow me to continue to fulfil my role within RCT Council while undertaking my responsibilities as a carer.	
When things are breaking down this impacts on my working day as follows:	
Emergency contacts	
Relative	Social Worker
Friend / Neighbour	
<p>I will let you know if there are changes to my situation that have an effect on my work and/or if the agreed adjustments are not working. We will then meet privately to discuss any further reasonable adjustments or changes that should be made.</p> <p>If you notice a change in my performance at work or feel that these reasonable adjustments are not working, I would be happy to meet you privately to discuss what needs to be done.</p>	

To be completed by line manager	
Advice sought from Occupational Health or HR	
Which flexible arrangements are already being utilised	
If all requests for support cannot be made please specify why	
Support Plan Agreed	
<p>An up-to-date copy of this form will be retained by the employee, line manager and HR department.</p> <p>A copy of this form may also be given to a new or prospective line manager with the prior consent of the employee. If the employee changes job, is relocated or is assigned a new manager, the new manager should review and discuss the adjustments outlined in this agreement.</p>	
Employee's signature	
Date	
Manager's signature	
Date	