

APPENDIX 2

STAFF CARING SURVEY

JULY 2021

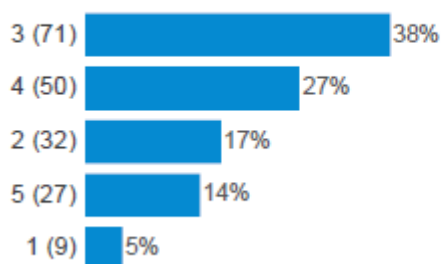
Findings

In total 272 respondents completed the survey, which was circulated by email only. We know that this only reaches about one third of the Council's workforce. Of the 272 respondents, 70% stated they were currently an unpaid carer, with 28% not currently caring and 2% unsure.

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
<i>Are you aware of the support you could access if you did have to care in the future?</i>	27%	47%	26%
<i>Are you aware of the Disability and Carers Network?</i>	33%	60%	7%
<i>Are you aware of the Carers Support Project?</i>	46%	50%	4%

How challenging do you find it to manage your RCT role and your caring responsibilities?

Scale answer (1 = not at all challenging - 5 = extremely challenging)



Have any of the following helped you manage your caring responsibilities alongside your RCT role?

Flexible working	78%
Annual leave	72%
TOIL	34%
Paid emergency leave	27%
Unpaid leave	8%
Unpaid parental leave	2%

Respondents were asked what other support they have received from their manager to help them manage their paid work and caring role. The answers, given in free text comments, have been categorised below with some examples given:

Flexibility; variation in workload; changing shifts	27
Understanding; empathy; emotional support	19
Take leave at short notice	10
Supervision; discussions; opportunities to talk	9
Reduction in hours (temporary or permanent)	2
Manager not aware of caring role; have not asked for support	13
No other support; little support	23

“Working from home means I am not restricted to “normal office hours” when there are times when I have to take a succession of breaks during the day or a longer break than is usual. In my case this is only occasional and not the norm but it reduces anxiety knowing that this is an option if need be so that I can still fulfil my work duties!”

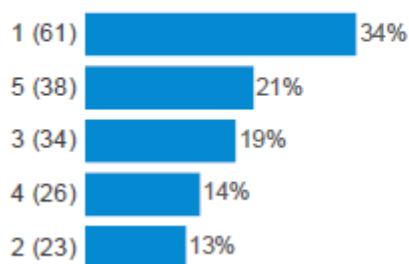
“I haven’t told my manager about my caring role. I have only become a carer due to a situation arising in lockdown.”

“My line manager is excellent and allows me a great deal of flexibility. Without this I couldn’t work and would have to claim benefits. My previous department was also very good, allowed me to reduce my hours and have parental leave to use for the summer holidays to care for my autistic son.”

“No other support. I have found it extremely difficult to access emergency leave when I have needed it and have been refused in the past. Purchase additional leave at extra cost to myself.”

How well do you believe your line manager understands the needs/ how to support / issues faced by unpaid carers?

Scale answer (1 = Very well - 5 = Not very well)



In your opinion, what more can we do as an employer to support unpaid carers within our workforce?

The responses to this free text question have been categorised below:

Reintroduce flexi time; increased flexibility; earlier start and later finish times	29
Carers leave; time off for hospital appointments	29
Take leave or time off at short notice; easier access to emergency leave	15
Clearer guidelines for managers; Carers Policy; specific procedures for supporting carers	15
Increase understanding among managers; awareness and training for managers	10
Working from home	8
Sufficient staffing to support absences in teams	5

“It would be easier if there was a set out procedure for unpaid carers to access support from RCT. I am not sure of what I am able to access and able to ask my managers for support in. Different departments seem to deal with scenarios differently. Emergency leave is not always forthcoming.”

“From a personal point of view, I feel that in specific diagnosed conditions there could be more leeway to allow for hospital appointments etc rather than using annual leave which is meant to be used for work - life balance. Also re-instate Flexi time and then I would not need to take leave.”

“More flexible. Apparently, there are just a number of emergency leave available. For the last almost 6 years I had to use my annual leave to look after my mother / father and this gives me very little time for myself, almost none. More flexible emergency / carer leave available.”

“I think if there could be some facility whereby carers could register their caring responsibility, they would feel more comfortable in asking for support when they needed it.”

“Continue with the ability for flexible working /agile working and home working opportunities to enable the hours lost through additional support can be recuperated - at present the process doesn't impact my work targets as I am able to work later or earlier to catch up on any time lost to provide support.”

Conclusions

- Most respondents were not aware or not clear on what support they could access as unpaid carers now or in the future.

- Most unpaid carers have used flexible working and annual leave to manage their caring role alongside their paid work.
- 65% of respondents rated the challenge of managing paid work and caring as 3 or 4 on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being not at all challenging and 5 being extremely challenging).
- There is evidence of differences in the way unpaid carers feel supported by their line managers. Rating the support provided, 34% said their manager understood their needs very well, whilst 21% said their manager did not understand their needs well at all.
- The biggest support managers could provide seems to be flexibility in work and showing understanding of the caring role.
- Specific carers leave, time off to attend hospital appointments and increased flexibility in work were highlighted as the most frequent suggestions for what RCT could introduce to further support carers, followed by clearer procedures and guidelines and increased understanding among managers.