

# **Caring for the Carers**

## **A UCU guide for members and reps**



### **3. Branch and Local Association Action**

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## How branches and local associations can assist working Carers

The needs of Carers and those they are responsible for are varied and can be extremely complex. Therefore, it is essential as outlined earlier that branches and local associations understand the needs of those Carers.

Branches should endeavour to ensure that employers are aware that the needs of those caring for adults are different from the needs of those with childcare responsibilities. One main difference between childcare is that while children usually grow up and leave the home, adult dependants may become frailer, requiring increased amounts of care.

Childcare can generally be planned in advance, but the need to care for a stroke victim may occur suddenly. Childcare needs are often foreseeable, but the demands of supporting an adult with a late-onset disorder (such as dementia) may not be as predictable. Such differences mean that any policy developed to assist Carers should be supportive and flexible.

Branches will also need to consider the needs of members from different backgrounds who may or may not have relatives living in this country. Also important is that when you are having discussions with members who have caring responsibilities, they are conducted sensitively and be treated in strict confidence. The member may be at the first stage (see above) of being a Carer and thus may just want someone to talk through their concerns – we have signposted organisations and groups in **briefing 6, Contacts and Resources** within this series.

The likelihood of becoming a Carer increases with age. Therefore Carers will be among the employer's most experienced and valued staff. Carers **should not be seen** as difficult or problematic, or no longer committed to their job. **They want to work** and are as capable as other employees given the right support. They are unlikely to make impossible requests but will require some flexibility from employers, such as time off at short notice.

## Carers Policies

The most valuable resource for any employers are its workforce. Retaining skilled workers will reduce the costs of recruiting as well as retaining its knowledge base. Good workplace policies and procedures go a long way to support the needs of the 1 in 9 people in the workplace who are Carers.

Having policies and procedures and good practice for supporting working Carers can help to reduce levels of stress and anxiety that overwhelmingly comes with working and having responsibilities outside of work.

As with all policies, it is equally important that existing policies that cover Carers are reviewed to ensure that if anything else, the correct legislation is being adhered to and that the branch is in agreement with the policy. See below for an example of a Carers' policy.

### Having a good workplace policy can have the following benefits for employers and employee

#### Benefits to the Employer

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Increase overall productivity

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Lowering staff turnover and reducing recruitment and training costs

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Promote a positive image of the institution

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Give competitive advantage in recruitment

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Decrease in absenteeism

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Maximising individual potential

## Benefits to the Employee

Lower stress

Ability to maintain a work life balance

Removes feelings of isolation

Please see **Appendix A** for an example of a Carers policy

## Workplace surveys

Using a workplace survey could also be used to assist branch representatives in negotiating policies with the employer and the findings will help to identify:

- The numbers of Carers in the workplace
- The numbers of prospective Carers
- The average hours spent caring and the numbers who care for more than five hours per week
- A list of changes sought by the staff who are Carers with the extent of support for each to help prioritise demands

It is important to remember that your survey will not obtain a good response unless members have thought about the issue for a while before they receive the survey. Therefore, it is good practice that prior to issuing a survey, caring issues should be raised through branch meetings or publicised in newsletters or on noticeboards. Members should know that their responses will be kept confidential – unless branches asks for their permission to raise their case with employers.

Outlined below are ways in which the branch can raise awareness of caring at your college or university. This includes conducting a survey and negotiating a policy.

## 6 examples of good practice in the workplace

1	Have <b>supportive policies</b> in place – very important that the policies negotiated support members and offer workplace solutions i.e. flexible working.
2	<b>Encourage</b> employers to provide practical support for managers and work colleagues – this could be in the form of training or staff awareness seminars.
3	Be <b>proactive</b> in promoting caring issues – branches and local associations can raise the issue of caring through branch meetings and jointly with employers at careers fairs.
4	<b>Form and support</b> a Carers group – an informal group could help Carers discuss the issues they are facing thus reducing the isolation often experienced by Carers at work.
5	<b>Negotiate</b> practical workplace support for Carers – this could be something as simple as Carers having a space allocated to make confidential telephone calls to those they are caring for.
6	<b>Signposting</b> – vital that Carers at work are signposted to external organisations / groups that are available to offer advice on caring matters. This should also include any organisation that your Human Resources Department offers for staff.

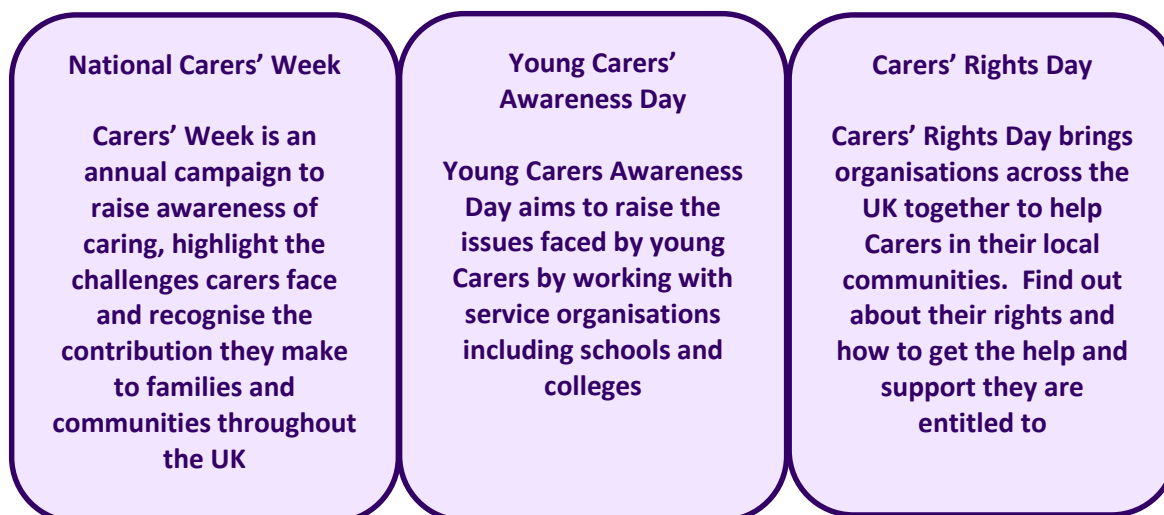
Maintain **CONFIDENTIALITY** at **ALL TIMES**

We have provided a sample survey in **Appendix B** that could be amended. Branches and local associations should remember to ensure that all part-timers are included and receive a copy of the survey.

### Activities for branches and local associations

To help raise awareness on issues facing working Carers and those being cared for could include:

1. Delivering a workshop with your college or university for staff and students
2. Raise awareness through this guidance and posters
3. Host an information stand with sister and student unions
4. Conduct a branch survey at your college or university on the impact of caring on working lives
5. Review or negotiate existing policies to ensure that they take account of Carers at work
6. Encourage your college or university to hold a workshop / seminar for staff and students to raise awareness of caring



### Personal well-being for reps and members

Good health and well-being is extremely important for your working life. However, when you have additional responsibilities such as childcare or you are the carer for a family member or friend, your own well-being tends to take a back seat! Here we set out a few tips to help you maintain your own well-being.

- **Inform your employer** – along with your UCU rep and dependant on the nature of your caring responsibilities, inform your employer to start the process for requesting flexible working.
- **Seek support** – many organisations and groups offer support for Carers. It is not advisable to contact your union representative on specific areas of your caring responsibilities.
- **Stay healthy** – as a Carer, it is important that you stay as healthy as is possible. It is easy for us to focus on the needs of others whilst neglecting our own.



## Education Support Partnership formerly known as Recourse

Working in education is not always that easy. Constant change, long hours and pressure to deliver can sap our energy and get in the way of doing what we staff in education care most about. They can all stop us feeling at our best.

At Education Support Partnership, we understand the unique pressures that working in FE and HE puts on people. That's why we provide independent, confidential 24/7 support, to help people deal with stress and anxiety, bullying, career and money worries, and a range of other issues.

It's why we provide training and professional services to help leaders engage, energise and look after their staff. And it's why we're positive advocates for the value of health, happiness and wellbeing in the sector. Through everything we do, we're dedicated to giving everyone in education the support they need to feel at their best.

**Contact Number: 08000 562 561 (helpline) / 07909 341229 (text)**

**Email: [support@edsupport.org.uk](mailto:support@edsupport.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk](http://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk)**

See **briefing 6, Contacts and Resources** within this series for further details of organisations and groups that offer support to Carers.

## Checklist, Ideas and Suggestions for including the needs of Carers at your College or University

ACTION FOR EMPLOYERS	ACTION FOR BRANCHES	A GOOD POLICY SHOULD
Understand the needs of Carers		
Monitor the policy, identifying the age and gender of those using this policy and (the reasons for leaving put forward at exit interviews)		
Establish an informal support group / network		When monitoring leavers, include Caring as a question
Undertake a survey of staff needs		
Evidence based on a survey of Carer's needs		
Organising educational fairs or seminars in the workplace on caring for staff and students including lunchtime talks on related issues		Provide a policy commitment to equal treatment of Carers
Ensure all managers are briefed and receive training about Carers' needs, and for each, take responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy	Branches will also need to consider the needs of members from different backgrounds who may or may not have relatives living in this country. Black Carers may be excluded from access to support, because of obstacles of language, culture or religion. For this reason, the involvement of black members in any working group is paramount. Where local authorities have developed specialised services aimed at black communities, that information should be properly publicised, likewise for same-sex relationships.	All employees to be made aware of their options in the workplace – including flexible working options
Ensure staff have a named manager to whom they may go with employment issues relating to caring	Caring to be raised in branch meetings, or publicised in newsletters or on noticeboards.	Ensure Carers know that they will be treated sympathetically and not suffer discrimination if they come forward. <b>Any discussion will be in strict confidence.</b>
Publicise the policy, including to new recruits and line managers		Policy is reviewed and adapted to take account of new legislation
Ensure college/university counsellors are able to deal with Carers' needs and know where to refer them for appropriate advice and information		
Providing retraining after career breaks		
Organise training on preparing for caring		
Providing an information leaflet for all staff		

## Carers Policy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 [Name of college / university] is committed to creating a culture in which diversity and equality of opportunity are promoted actively and in which discrimination is not tolerated. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all society and each person feels respected.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and not to discriminate on any protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. The protected are age, disability, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion and belief, civil or marriage partnership. We oppose all forms of unlawful and/or unfair discrimination, including but not limited to, on the basis of marital status, class, social background or political belief (see appendix).
- 1.3 Equality of opportunity means that diversity is viewed positively and, in recognising that everyone is different, valuing equally the unique contribution that individual experience, knowledge and skills can bring.
- 1.4 Everyone who works for [name of college or university] or applies to work for [name of college or university], will be treated fairly and valued equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of experience, skills, aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of [name of college or university].
- 1.5 This policy is to be read in conjunction with [enter names of other relevant policies such as Equality and Diversity, Work life Balance policies].

### 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employment practices including:
- Recruitment and selection;
  - Terms and conditions of service;
  - Pay and benefits; and
  - Training and development
- 2.2 This policy applies to all [name of college / university] employees.
- 2.3 [name of college / university] will be expected to abide by this policy.

### 3. AIMS

- 3.1 In order to ensure that equality underpins all aspects of our employment policies, procedures and practices, we aim to:



- Ensure that our employment, training and development policies, procedures and practices comply with this policy and does not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual
- To become an employer of choice by promoting and developing policies that support a work-life balance to our employees who have a caring responsibility, in order to help them balance their working and caring commitments, and continue to be effective in their role
- Help us to recruit and retain employees with caring responsibilities.
- Provide appropriate training and development opportunities to all employees
- Ensure employees are aware of their personal responsibility to apply this policy
- Monitor our employment processes by age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or belief and race, taking action to address any inequalities that are apparent
- Promote a culture of fairness and respect in all employment policies, procedures and practices
- Recognise that employees have the right to work in a supportive and safe environment free from harassment

#### 4. DEFINITION OF A CARER

4.1 Under the Care Act 2014, a carer is defined as:

*“Carer” means an adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult (an “adult needing care”).*

*Clause 10 (3)*

*However, an adult is not to be regarded as a Carer if the adult provides or intends to provide care –*

- a) Under or by virtue of a contract, or*
- b) As voluntary work*

*Clause 10 (9)*

*But in a case where the local authority considers that the relationship between the adult needing care and the adult providing or intending to provide care is such that it would be appropriate for the latter to be regarded as a Carer, that adult is to be regarded as such (and subsection (9) is therefore to be ignored in that case).*

*Clause 10 (10)*

4.2 Employers cannot treat carers less favourably than other people who do not have caring responsibilities. The Equality Act 2010 protects a person who experiences discrimination because they are associated with someone who has a disability.

4.3 For example, it would be unlawful if the partner of someone who has cancer was refused promotion because of concerns that they would be unable to give sufficient attention to the job. The Act also allows reasonable adjustments to be requested for caring responsibilities, and other legislation provides the right to a ‘reasonable’ amount of unpaid time off work for unplanned caring responsibilities.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 We recognise that some of our employees will have caring responsibilities for children or seriously ill or disabled dependent relatives, partners or close friends. We appreciate the demands this may place on them, and that at times it may be difficult for them to combine their work and caring responsibilities.
- 5.2 It is the duty of all employees to accept their personal responsibility for the practical application of the policy
- 5.3 Employees should treat others with dignity and respect and without discrimination in all matters associated with their employment.

## 6. EMPLOYEES

- 6.1 Employees are actively encouraged to inform their manager if they are caring for someone and need any support. In this way we can work together to ensure that, wherever possible, they can continue in their job and effectively balance their work and care commitments.
- 6.2 If you have caring responsibilities and need support, you should speak to your line manager or HR contact and explain your situation and what assistance you think would help.
- 6.3 If you wish to apply for flexible working, the details are given within our flexible working policy [*delete if not applicable/insert where to find information on flexible working*]. If you are the parent of a child under 18 who is critically ill and therefore defined as 'disabled', you may wish to apply for Parental Leave. Your line manager and HR will then discuss the support options available with you. Together you should explore and agree what is possible and suitable.

## 7. MANAGERS

- 7.1 Managers have the responsibility to familiarise themselves with this Policy and to work within its parameters. They also have a responsibility to ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and understand their own and the organisation's responsibilities in respect of it. [*Name of college/university*] reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.
- 7.2 Managers will give sympathetic consideration to requests for support from those who have caring responsibilities, based on a shared understanding of the situation and its impact.
- 7.3 It should be viewed by all as acceptable to request support and to be confident that no one will be unfairly discriminated against because they have caring responsibilities.
- 7.4 All such requests will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
- 7.5 Employees who require support will be provided with guidance on the options available to them.
- 7.6 We will treat all employees fairly and consistently, while taking into account the individual needs of a particular case.
- 7.7 The specific options that we will consider and management practices that we will put in place in support of carers will include:
- Flexible working [*link to separate policy if applicable*]

- If you are the parent of a child under 18 who is critically ill and therefore defined as 'disabled', you will be entitled to take parental leave [*add link separate parental leave policy if applicable*]
  - Special leave options [*link to separate policies if applicable*] such as compassionate leave , Carers leave, unpaid extended leave
  - Support from the line manager in informing team members about the situation if appropriate and about staying in touch during absence and handling return to work
  - Access to relevant information and advice
  - Confidential support from our Employee Assistance Programme (which may include counselling as well as practical information and advice) [*Delete if not offered*]
  - Information about external self help and support groups Work buddies – colleagues who have been or are going through a similar caring experience
- 7.8 To the extent that our resources allow, provision of temporary staff cover where there is a lengthy absence due to caring responsibilities.

## **8. HUMAN RESOURCES**

- 8.1 Human Resources has a responsibility to provide advice about Carers' Leave to line managers and employees as necessary. They also have a responsibility to record Carers leave and inform payroll of any required adjustments to pay and benefits contributions.
- 8.2 Further information concerning any aspect of this policy should be directed to Human Resources.

## **9. COMPLAINTS**

- 9.1 Any member of staff who feels that this policy is not being applied to them may use [name of college/university] Grievance Policy and Procedure to make a complaint. If the complaint involves bullying, harassment or victimisation, the [name of relevant policy] may also be used.

## **10. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 10.1 The Personnel Department will monitor the operation of this policy for both employees and job applications and undertake periodical audits. Monitoring involves the collection and analysis of information on:
- Staff ethnic origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender identity, civil and marriage partnerships and religion or belief;
  - The distribution of employees and the success rate of applicants according to their ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and job category / grade;
  - Recruitment, training and promotional decisions;
  - Reports of victimisation, intimidation, harassment, bullying or breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy;

- Other information relevant to the application of the policy.
- 10.2 The information collected will be used for the following reasons:
- To understand areas of significant, unexpected over and under representation;
  - To analyse changes over time;
  - To highlight trends in the organisation with an equality implication
- 10.3 Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 10.4 [Name of college/university] will investigate and take appropriate action where it is found that individuals from particular groups:
- Do not apply for employment or promotion, or that fewer than expected apply;
  - Are not recruited or promoted, or are appointed in a significantly lower proportion than their rate of applicants;
  - Are underrepresented in certain job, grades or locations;
  - Are concentrated in certain jobs / grades / localities and there appears to be a point beyond which they are not promoted;
  - Experience harassment in particular work areas.
- 10.5 Examples of this “appropriate action” could be targeted advertising, mentoring and secondment opportunities.
- 10.6 This policy will be jointly reviewed with the staff trade union(s) every [enter frequency] or at any time where a statutory duty requires [name of college /university] to make amendments.

## **11. APPENDIX**

### **11.1 Relevant Legislation**

[Name of College/University] will implement its Carers Policy in accordance with current legislation including:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- The Children and Families Act 2014

### **11.2 Unlawful Discrimination**

11.3 It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is in a civil or married partnership. These are known as “protected characteristics”.

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

- 11.4 Staff should not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to consider reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services.

In addition, service providers have an obligation to anticipate and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

#### 11.5 **Types of unlawful discrimination**

- 11.6 **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct sex discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she was pregnant. In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means for achieving a legitimate aim.

- 11.7 **Discrimination by association** is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, a female employee gives birth to a disabled child. On her return to work after maternity leave she applies for an acting up position. She is turned down and a less qualified colleague (also a mother, but whose child is not disabled) is appointed to the role because the employer thinks that the other employee will need more time off and be less reliable because her child is disabled. She has therefore been discriminated against because of this association.

- 11.8 **Perception discrimination** is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. For example, a member of staff is 41 but is much younger of appearance. Most people believe that he is in his late-20s. He is not allowed to represent his company at an important national meeting because his line manager thinks that he lacks the appearance of more



## Caring at Work Survey

Sometimes looking after a person who is young, elderly, suffering from a long-term illness, or has a disability can often interfere with your responsibilities at work. Please complete irrespective if you receive additional support from organisations such as local authority and/or charity.

By completing this survey, you will help [name of branch] in establishing the impact of caring responsibilities for our members and how best we can offer assistance and support in negotiating changes to your work to enable you to do both.

Answers to **ALL** questions are strictly confidential.

**Instructions:** Please ✓ or state where requested

*A Carer is defined as anyone who cares unpaid for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or addiction cannot cope without their support.*

### Question 1

Are you a Carer to any of the following?	Yes	No
A child under the age of 18 years		
An elderly person (including parents)		
A person who is disabled		
A person who is ill long-term		

If yes, please indicate the number(s) of people you care for? Please ✓

1	2	3	4	5

Do you have a Carer?

Do you have a Carer under the age of 18 years?

Yes	No

### Question 2

People who are Carers may do lots of different things to help. Please tick from the following options	✓
Help with personal care (dressing, bathing, washing, feeding, shaving)	
Physical help (with walking, stairs, getting in and out of bed)	
Help with paperwork or financial matters (letters, cards, forms, bills)	
Other practical help (meals, shopping, housework, decorating, repairs)	
Giving medicines (pills, injections, changing dressings)	
Taking to and from medical appointments	
Keeping company (visiting, sitting with, reading to, playing games)	
Taking out (taking out for a walk or a drive, to see friends or relatives)	
Keeping an eye out, seeing that they are right	

### Question 3

<b>How long do you spend on average each week looking after someone in one of the above ways? Include the time when you just need to be there (apart from when you are asleep) and include time travelling to and from their home – if they do not live with you.</b>	✓
0-9 hours per week	
10-29 hours per week	
30-49 hours per week	
More than 50 hours per week	

### Question 4

<b>How long have you been a carer?</b>	✓
Less than a year	
Between 1 and 5 years	
Between 5 and 15 years	
15 years or more	

### Question 5

	Yes	No
<b>Do you sometimes have to make telephone calls from work to make arrangements for someone you help or care for</b>		

### Question 6

	Yes	No
<b>Have you ever been late at work because of problems with someone you help or care for?</b>		

### Question 7

	Yes	No
<b>Have you sometimes had to leave work early because of problems with someone you help or care for?</b>		

### Question 8

<b>Have you ever had to take time off work to help look after someone? Please tick that options that best fits your experience.</b>	✓
I received paid leave	
I received unpaid leave	
I took holiday leave	
I did work in lieu	
I just rang in sick	
I just took the time off	
Other: please specify	

### Question 9

<b>Have you had to change your work to help or look after someone? Please tick the options that best fit your experience.</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Went part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changed to other duties	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moved section / department	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changed to fewer duties	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Question 10

	Yes	No
<b>Have you had to refuse (or not apply for) training or promotion because you help to care for someone?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Question 11

	Yes	No
<b>Have you considered resigning because of difficulties combining your work and caring responsibilities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Question 12

<b>Would any of the following changes help you personally?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Term-time only working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compressed hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexi-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temporary break from work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phased retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combination of any of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Question 13

	Yes	No
<b>Do you anticipate taking on the caring responsibilities outlined in question 2 at any time in the next one to five years?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Question 14

<b>Can you suggest any other changes that might help? Please write down any that occur. You may attach a separate sheet if necessary.</b>

Please return to [name of branch rep]

Thank you!



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