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Cyngor Rhondda Cynon Taf, gweithio gyda chi, gweithio gyda'n gilydd

gweithio'nwell
workwell

Diversity and Inclusion Team
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, working with you, working together

Working Carers **Guidance**

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

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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 line 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.
- Wants all working carers to be 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.

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. Care Workers may have additional unpaid caring responsibilities, separate from their paid employment. In this case, they would also be considered a working carer.

It is the employee's responsibility to inform their line manager of any caring responsibilities, so that the appropriate support can be discussed and provided. All discussions regarding their 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 an RCT Working Carer's Support Plan.

DEFINITION OF A WORKING CARER

A working carer is an individual who has caring responsibilities that have an impact on their working lives. Working carers are responsible for the care and support of relatives or friends who are older, disabled, seriously ill (physically or mentally) and unable to care for themselves (CIPD, June 2020).

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.

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

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 changes, 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's Support Plan that can be put in place to support the employee to manage their caring responsibilities alongside their employment. 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 and to make a record of the flexibilities agreed.

LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

Existing leave arrangements

RCT Council have a number of existing policies and procedures which should be used to achieve a balance between employment and unpaid caring responsibilities.

The various options available are set out in the guide below.

Note: Relevant policies are available on RCT Source under 'A to Z Policies' (you do not need log-in details to look at policies on RCT Source, <https://rct.learningpool.com/>); or from your line manager, HR or trade union. A decision tree to help line managers and unpaid carers determine which type of support is best suited to their needs is included in Appendix 1.

New leave arrangements

Employees who have unpaid caring responsibilities may request up to 5 days (pro rata for part time employees) of paid leave per annum, to be used to make provision for the care of the cared for person they are responsible for.

Further details are available in the **Leave of Absence Policy**.

Summary of leave arrangements that may be relevant to working carers

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, or 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 offers employees with a caring responsibility the opportunity to take "reasonable time off" to deal with emergencies involving a dependant.
- 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 offers 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**.

Paid carers leave

- Employees who have unpaid caring responsibilities can take up to 5 days of paid leave per year (pro rata for part time employees) to be used to make provision for the care of the person they are responsible for looking after.
- This is not a statutory right but nevertheless offered by RCT Council to support employees who are unpaid carers.
- More information is available in the **Leave of Absence Policy**.

COMMUNICATION

Raising awareness via good communication will help ensure that working carers within the Council are aware of the Working Carers Guidance. This will help 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 3)

ABUSE OF PROVISIONS

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

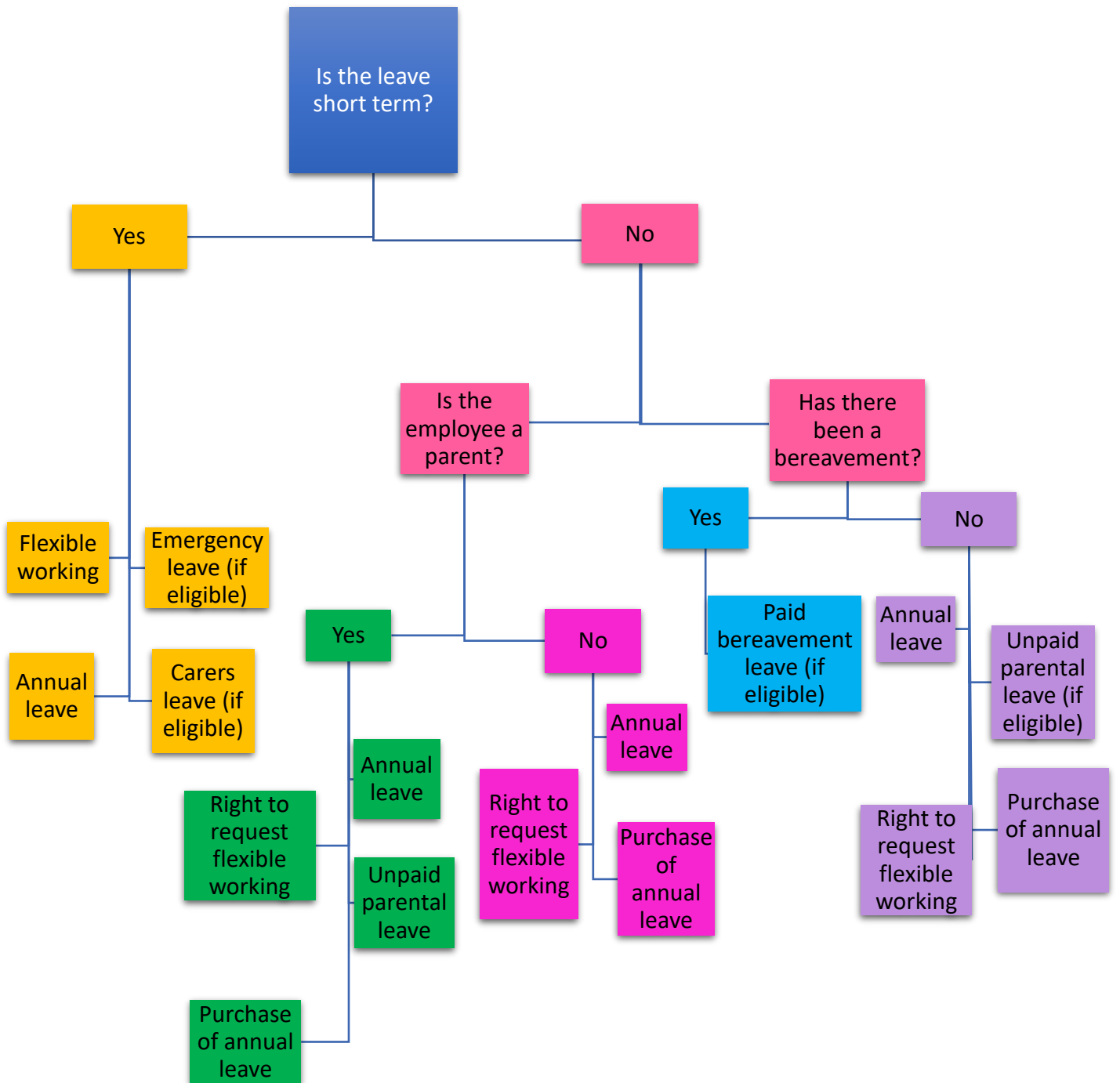
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Employees with caring responsibilities should have the same opportunities in career progression and to stay in work within the Council, regardless of their responsibilities outside work.

For further information please contact:

- Human Resources, via your respective HR support officer.
- The Diversity and Inclusion Team, equality@rctcbc.gov.uk, 01443 444531.
- The Carers Support Project, carerssupportproject@rctcbc.gov.uk, 01443 281463.

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 changes to the working environment. Building a carer friendly culture is invaluable to allow working carers to manage their responsibilities. This guide includes information on what support line 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.

Further flexibilities may include allowing the employee to use a private office at a convenient pre-arranged time to make and/or receive private telephone calls in relation to their caring responsibilities. The employee will normally be expected to make personal calls at their own expense, except in a genuine emergency.

Time out

At times of crisis, or when employees 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

Where reasonable, employees should have some flexibility where, when, and how they work, in line with the Council's **Hybrid Working Policy**. Working carers are encouraged to discuss their personal situation with their line manager to find a solution that works for both parties.

If you are looking to permanently change your work pattern or the hours you work, please refer to the Council's **Right to Request Flexible Working Policy**.

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 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 to make sure that if something happens to the carer, services are aware of the person relying on them for care.
- The Council's MoreCard giving you discounted access to 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 that helps to ensure people are fit to undertake the work that is asked of them and works 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. Employment decisions remain a management responsibility. The unit provides a range of support services such as:

- Health surveillance
- Physiotherapy including ultrasound 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 and Wellbeing Unit can provide support and advice to all staff and line 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 and health surveillance etc.
- Emergency response. For early interventions for staff/managers who have been involved in traumatic events.

Referrals to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit can be requested in the language of your choice (Welsh or English).

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 Helpline 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	socialservices@rctcbc.gov.uk
RCT Council Children's Social Services	01443 425 006	socialservices@rctcbc.gov.uk
Staff Wellbeing Line	01443 424 100	wellbeinghelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk
Carers Wales	029 2081 1370	https://www.carersuk.org/
Carers Trust	0300 772 9600	https://carers.org/
Citizen Advice Bureau	0800 702 2020	https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/

APPENDIX 3: JOINING FORM – WORKING CARERS MAILING LIST

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 at any time, with no consequences, by contacting the Working Carers Mailing List.

Your information will be processed under our public task and 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

Signed: _____

No

Date: _____

JOINING THE WORKING CARERS MAILING LIST

Name:

Department:

Job Title:

Primary work location:

Preferred e-mail address:

Preferred language for communication (Welsh or English):

Home Address:

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

Please send your completed form to the Working Carers Mailing List within the Carers Support Project at WorkingCarers@rctcbc.gov.uk or CynhalwyrSynGweithio@rctcbc.gov.uk

APPENDIX 4: RCT CARERS SUPPORT PROJECT REFERRAL FORM

Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project Identification & Referral Form

Your information will be processed under our public task and 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 at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice and our data protection pages at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection

Self-referral		Individual/Organisation referral	
Date:			
Name and organisation details:			

Your details, the Carer:

Title:	First Name:	Surname:	
Address:			
Postcode:		DOB:	
Telephone No.:		Mobile No.:	
Email:			
Sex (Female/Male)		Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender identity (Non-Binary/Trans etc)		Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	
Ethnicity		Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	
(Office Use Only) WCCIS No.:			

Details of the person you care for:

I confirm that the person being cared for is aware and understands that their personal information will only be used for this Carers Support Project referral.		Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Title:	First Name:	Surname:	
Relationship:	<i>(e.g., your wife, son etc.)</i>		
Address:	<i>(If different from above)</i>		
Postcode:		DOB:	
Brief details of your caring role			
Sex (Female/Male)		Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender identity (Non-Binary/Trans etc)		Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	
Ethnicity		Prefer not to say <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 affects you and 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 via 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 Y.A.C. (Young Adult Carers) application? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Has the YAC Assessment Worker been notified? 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: RCT WORKING CARER'S SUPPORT PLAN GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATE

Your information will be processed under our public task and 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 at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice and our data protection pages at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection

RCT WORKING CARER'S SUPPORT PLAN GUIDANCE

This is a suggested format to use for discussions between employees and line managers about caring responsibilities. A Working Carer's 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. This document belongs to the employee, and with their consent, their line manager should have a copy.

The purpose of this Working Carer's Support Plan is to:

- ensure that both the employee and the employer have an accurate record of what has been agreed;
- minimise the need to renegotiate workplace flexibilities every time the employee changes job, is relocated, or is assigned a new line manager within the organisation; and
- provide the employee and their line manager with the basis for discussions at future meetings about support to manage their employment alongside their unpaid caring.

The Working Carer's Support Plan may be reviewed and amended as necessary:

- 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
- before or after any change in circumstances for either party
- due to service redesign

This is a live document and should be reviewed regularly by both the employee and line manager and 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 service.

Complete your personal details and in sections 1- 5 include as much detail as you feel is appropriate, and which you wish your line manager to know about. This will help direct the discussion and will form the basis of any agreed support going forward. Give a copy to your line manager and arrange to meet to discuss the details.

The meeting will give you and your line manager the opportunity to discuss the issues you have identified. A suggested structure for the discussion is set out below.

- What are your caring responsibilities?
- How do they affect your work?
- What impact does work have on your caring responsibilities?
- Is the care you provide for this person a temporary or a long-term arrangement?
- 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?
- Do you already receive any support in work to help combine caring with work?
- What further support would help you?
- Do you need to apply for flexible working to continue your caring responsibilities?
- What would help ensure that the needs of the team/service continue to be met?
- Do you need any support from Occupational Health, the Carer's Support Project, HR or external organisations?
- How do you expect your caring responsibilities to change in the future?

While it is up to you to decide how much detail to share, it is important that you give your line manager enough information for them to understand your issues and challenges.

Any actions agreed and a review date should then be entered on the Working Carer's Support Plan and a copy given to your line manager. Remember that you will need to follow the relevant policies if, for example, you want to apply for flexible working.

It is important to remember that the Working Carer's Support Plan belongs to the employee involved and is **confidential**.

Should the line manager or employee move to another post, the line manager should not pass the form to the next manager without permission of the employee concerned. **Only with the employee's approval should a copy be saved by the line manager.**

Line managers need to respect the employee's language choice during this process. This includes any written correspondence. It also includes any meetings arranged to discuss the employee's well-being. In such instances, they must make a proactive offer to the employee to have the meeting conducted in Welsh, and if that is their choice, they must arrange simultaneous translation for the meeting, if necessary. To arrange simultaneous translation, contact the Council's Translation team – cyfieithu-translation@rctcbc.gov.uk.

RCT WORKING CARER'S SUPPORT PLAN TEMPLATE

Section 1:	
Name:	Job Title:
Department:	Line Manager:
Contact Details (Work):	Contact Details:
Section 2: Overview of your caring responsibilities: This section should include: A summary of your caring responsibilities The impact this has on your working life Any further information that may help your line manager understand the impact your caring responsibilities have on you and your work	
Section 3: Overview of your role and team:	
Section 4: Flexibilities which would be helpful: This section deals with flexibilities specific to your current job which would help you combine caring and work. These are intended to inform your discussion with your line manager.	

Section 5: Flexibilities agreed between you and your line manager:

This section deals with flexibilities specific to your current job which would help you combine your caring responsibilities and work commitments. Set out agreed actions with dates for implementation.

Action Agreed	Date of Implementation	Date to Review Action

Section 6: Any other actions agreed at the meeting:

This section might include for example, contacting Occupational Health, HR, the Carers Support Project for information about their Counselling Service, the Single Point of Access Team about a Carers Assessment, or signposting via other services.

Section 7: If any requests for support cannot be made, please specify why:

- I approve to my line manager keeping a copy of the support plan.
- I will let you know if there are changes to my situation that have an effect on my work and/or if the agreed flexibilities are not working. We will then meet privately to discuss any further changes that should be made.
- If you notice a change in my performance at work or feel that these flexibilities are not working, I would be happy to meet you privately to discuss what needs to be done.

Employee signature:

Date:

Line manager signature:

Date:

Date of Next Review Meeting:

The template above is available in Welsh, please see: Canllawiau i Gynhalwyr sy'n Gweithio.