



# **Carer's Leave Bill**

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# Introduction

- Carers UK has campaigned for this for a very long time.
- 27 year journey.
- The Conservative party, now our Government, made a manifesto commitment in 2019 to make a new law to introduce one weeks' unpaid Carer's Leave for employees.
- But, no Employment Bill – so how would this become law?
- Wendy Chamberlain MP took this through as a Private Member's Bill. Lord Fox in the House of Lords, with Carers UK support.

# Need for Carer's Leave



- 1 in 7 juggle work and care.
- Estimated 600 people a day give up work to care.
- Carer's Leave means that workers take less sickness time off and are healthier.
- Carer's Leave helps keep workers in employment.
- Many other countries have Carer's Leave in Europe and globally.

# About the Bill

- *“A Bill to make provision about unpaid leave for employees with caring responsibilities.”*
- Would mean a new right to unpaid Carer’s Leave for employees "to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need".
- Applies to Great Britain only i.e.. England, Scotland and Wales. NI Assembly decides its own legislation
- Some of the conditions are set in the Bill, others come with secondary legislation (regulations) which will come later.
- Up to one week of unpaid leave per year.

# About the Bill

## Definitions:

- Wide coverage of carers – definition of carers is broad.
- Definition of long term care need is broad.
- Could be taken in one week block, or could be broken down into days. Might include half days.
- All employees will get the right to Carer's Leave. Part time or full time.
- \* The rights will start from the first day of work.

# About the Bill

- The type of care provided can be very broad.
- Employees will not have to give evidence for leave.
- The notice (i.e. the amount of time you have to give before you take leave) could be the same as employees have to give if they want to take holidays (annual leave).
- The Bill includes protections for workers if they take Carer's Leave.
- It will come into operation possibly next year – 2024.

# Supporters

The Bill has received widespread support from over 110 organisations, including:

- Large employers (e.g. Centrica, TSB, Longhurst Group, Phoenix Group)
- Small employers
- Trade unions (e.g. UNISON)
- Employer-representative groups (e.g. CIPD)
- Care and disability sector (e.g. the Care and Support Alliance, Age UK, MS Society, Carers Trust)
- Women and equalities sector (eg. Fawcett Society, Women's Budget Group, Working Families)

- *“I had to leave full-time paid employment as I had used up all my annual leave and 3 days unpaid carers leave within 3 months of a significant deterioration in my family situation. My GP signed me off sick however my manager challenged this and made it difficult to remain in work.”*
- *“I found it impossible to juggle working, even part-time, whilst trying to care for my severely disabled wife and two autistic sons (who are now in their 20's). I had no other option but to give up working to look after them full-time.”*
- *“What we are calling for is dedicated leave for carers where we have the time and space to focus our attentions on the people we care for. This is especially important since the COVID-19 pandemic where people like me are working from home and can find it hard to juggle work responsibilities and looking after the people we care for, especially if living in the same space.”*
- *“I currently work 2 days a week and find hospital appointments clashing with work days very stressful. I feel guilty about asking to swop days or take time off and guilty not being able to attend appointments. A policy that allowed me unpaid leave would be so good. I don't think my employer is aware or understands what a caring role is like.”*
- *“It's tough. I have asked for special leave in the past and been denied it. One year I had to take 3 weeks of my annual leave just for various appointments/issues it would be nice if some of this was covered to allow me to take time off for me!”*
- *“My employer encourages me to make use of annual leave and dependency leave where emergencies arise to manage my caring responsibilities, however specific carers leave would be invaluable. Being able to take specific carers leave for my role as a carer would enable me to distinguish between time for myself and my own personal wellbeing (i.e., annual leave) and time required as a carer.”*



# Next steps

