University for the Common Good

Staff Carers Policy

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the Staff with caring responsibilities guidance.

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GCU Staff Carers Policy

1. Purpose

The University is committed to creating an inclusive working environment where staff with caring responsibilities are supported and valued. The aim of this Policy is to ensure that the University adopts a fair, consistent and transparent approach to supporting staff carers to balancing their work commitments with their caring responsibilities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to any member of GCU staff who has caring responsibilities. A carer is defined as anyone who has unpaid caring responsibilities for a partner, friend or relative who, due to illness or disability would be unable to cope without this support. The reasons someone might require a care include: physical and mental illness, disability, dementia, dependency on drugs or alcohol, or frailty in old age.

The policy also includes staff who have unpaid caring responsibilities but have not self-defined as a carer.

It is also recognised that carers are diverse – no two carers will have the same needs and circumstances, and these will also differ from staff with regular childcare responsibilities.

3. Eligibility

This policy applies to all staff of Glasgow Caledonian University, whether in full-time or part-time employment, and whether on permanent or fixed-term contracts.

Note: this Policy does not apply to agency staff as it is the agency that employs the individual and therefore the policies in place at the agency will apply.

4. Policy Statement

GCU is committed to supporting staff carers and ensuring that they are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect. We recognise that staff may have wide and varied caring responsibilities outside of the university and may have to balance these with the demands of their work role. This policy aims to ensure that staff carers are fully supported in balancing these duties.

5. Carer Positive

This policy supports and aligns with GCU's Carer Positive 'Engaged' employer status, awarded by Carers Scotland in June 2020. The Carer Positive award is presented to employers across Scotland who have created a working environment in which carers are valued and supported. The award also aims to raise awareness of the growing numbers of carers who caring

responsibilities with work and promotes the business case for supporting carers in the workplace.

6. Disclosure

There is no compulsory requirement for staff to formally disclosure their carer status. However, in order for the University to provide the appropriate guidance and support, staff carers are encouraged to identify themselves as a carer to their line manager and/or People Services.

7. Support

Staff carers seeking support from the University will be treated with empathy, in confidence, underpinned by the principles of dignity and respect. The University recognises that no two staff carers will have the same needs and circumstances, and therefore a tailored approach is essential for each staff carer. Options that could be explored include:

- Flexible Working – a range of flexible working options can be requested to help staff carers balance their work and caring responsibilities, including part time working, compressed hours, flexi working, and home working

- Dependants Leave – Staff carers who care for dependants have rights to take paid leave in particular circumstances, and apply for further leave. A dependant is a member of staff's spouse, partner, child or parent. It also includes a person living in the same household as the member of staff as part of their family or someone, who reasonably relies on the staff member for assistance

- Parental Leave – Staff carers who meet the criteria can apply for unpaid Parental Leave

- Hybrid Working - opportunities for the work-life balance of staff carers, specific to role requirements

8. Entitlement

Staff with caring responsibilities can request to take up to one week's unpaid leave each year to care for a dependant with a long-term care need. This entitlement is available from your first day of employment (a day one employment right).

- This entitlement to unpaid leave is in addition and separate to the paid provision under Dependants Leave.

- The leave requests can be in consecutive or non-consecutive half-days or full days, up to one week in total per year.

How to Request:
Staff must give notice in writing (e.g. email, letter) of their intention to take carer's leave and confirm their entitlement to take it.

Notice Period:
Staff should give at least twice the amount of notice than the period of leave requested or three days' notice, whichever is the longer.

Please note that occasionally the University may need to postpone a leave request, if the operation of the business would be unduly disrupted. In these circumstances, notice of the postponement will be given before the leave was due to begin and provide an explanation. The staff member will be consulted with about rescheduling the leave within one month of the start date of the leave originally requested.

9. Responsibilities

A University-wide awareness and understanding of this policy is vital to the implementation of the University's commitment to supporting staff carers. Staff with caring responsibilities must not be treated unfairly either as a result of their caring responsibilities or for requesting support in line with this policy.

- **Staff carers** are encouraged to disclose their carer status so that they can access the right support – this should be to their line manager, however, if they prefer not to, then they should contact People Services
- **All staff** have a responsibility to recognise and understand the circumstances facing staff carers
- **Line managers** have a responsibility to consider support for staff carers in a fair and consistent manner and maintain the appropriate level of sensitivity, tact and confidentiality

10. Links to Further Information

Carers Scotland Carers UK
Carers Trust