Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Carer's Leave Policy

This procedural document supersedes:
CORP/EMP 47 - Special Leave (Incorporating Carer's and Emergency Leave)

Did you print this document yourself?
The Trust discourages the retention of hard copies of policies and can only guarantee that the policy on the Trust website is the most up-to-date version. **If, for exceptional reasons, you need to print a policy off, it is only valid for 24 hours.**

Executive Sponsor(s):	Zoe Lintin, Chief People Officer
Author/reviewer: (this version)	Caitlin Needham, People Business Advisor and Lili Grainger, People Business Advisor
Date written/revised:	August 2026
Approved by:	Policy Formulation Group and Staff side
Date of approval:	April 2023
Date issued:	October 2026
Next review date:	March 2029 (Policy Valid Until September 2029)
Target audience:	Trust-wide

Contents

1 INTRODUCTION 4
2 SCOPE 4
3 PURPOSE 4
4 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 4
4.1 Expectations 5
5 PROCEDURE 6
5.1 Overview 6
5.2 Changing roles of Carers 7
6 SIGNPOSTING TO SUPPORT 7
6.1 Trust-based support at DBTH 7
6.2 NHS-based support 8
6.3 Local and regional support 8
6.4 Government Support 8
7 MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT 9
8 DEFINITIONS 9
9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT 9
10 ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS 10
APPENDIX 1 – CARERS CONVERSATION (DRAFT TEMPLATE) 11
APPENDIX 2- TYPES OF SPECIAL LEAVE 12
APPENDIX 3 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING 13

Amendment Form

Please record brief details of the changes made alongside the next version number. If the procedural document has been reviewed **without change**, this information will still need to be recorded although the version number will remain the same.

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Changes	Author
Version 2	October 2026	Updates to legislation and support available	C Needham & L Grainger
Version 1	February 2023	This is a new procedural document, please read in full	Sophie Strong

1 INTRODUCTION

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust recognises the important role that carers play in society and acknowledges that many employees need to balance their work whilst carrying out their caring responsibilities.

2 SCOPE

This policy covers child and dependent care and young carers.

Childcare covers children from birth up to the age of 14 years and a child with a Disability up to the age of 25 years.

Dependent care covers a range of options to meet the needs of dependant adults including the needs of dependant young people over the age of 14, where an employee is involved in substantial and regular care sufficient for them to seek a change in their permanent contract of employment.

Dependent care should also cover (but not be restricted to) care of older relatives, a civil partner, spouse, or a partner, those with a disability who may require hospital or care appointments/assessments and such related matters.

Young Carers are under 18 years of age and help to look after a relative, a parent or sibling who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem.

3 PURPOSE

This Carers Leave policy has been designed to address the needs of people with caring responsibilities; and aims to meet and exceed the requirements of the 'right to request' flexible working legislation for carers of children and dependants.

This policy applies to all Trust employees, full or part-time. This Policy is not applicable to Bank workers, student nurses and doctors in training.

This policy incorporates the statutory rights introduced under the Carer's Leave Act 2023 and the Carer's Leave Regulations 2024, effective from April 2024. The Trust's provisions are intended to support colleagues with caring responsibilities and where applicable, enhance statutory entitlements.

4 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust recognises the importance that carers are protected against discrimination and harassment by the Equality Act 2010. It is against the act to discriminate against a Carer because of their association with a person who has a disability and the support they offer them.

It is, however, important to note that when referring to 'Reasonable Adjustments' these only apply directly to the person with the disability, condition or additional need and do not apply by association to the carer. As an employer, DBTH will try to accommodate flexibilities where possible, where requests are both reasonable and if the business can support them.

The Trust, as a whole, is committed to providing and maintaining:

- A fair approach to supporting employees in balancing their personal and work responsibilities regarding dependants.
- Awareness of statutory obligations under the relevant employment legislation.

4.1 Expectations

All Colleagues

- Colleagues should make their line managers aware of any caring responsibilities so that they can receive relevant support and/or guidance where necessary

Managers

- Are responsible for the dissemination and implementation of this policy within their teams and signposting to relevant sources of advice or support.
- Are responsible for liaising with the relevant People Business Partner team to seek professional advice and guidance on the implementation of the Policy.
- Are responsible for ensuring that employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the Policy and understand what is expected of them.
- Be supportive towards employees who are carers so they can continue to work alongside their caring responsibilities and consider the employee's health and wellbeing.
- Encourage the use of Trust Health and Wellbeing Passport or the Carers Conversation (see Appendix 1) to support colleagues who undertake a carers role and seek to understand their needs.

People Business Partner Team

- Are responsible for overseeing the introduction, operation and monitoring of this Policy and any reporting to the Trust Board or sub committees thereof.
- Are responsible for ensuring the provision of training, guidance and support to Line managers on the implementation of the Policy.
- Are responsible for promoting the adoption of consistent and fair application of the policy throughout the Trust.

Chief Executive Officer & the Trust Board

- Has responsibility to ensure that appropriate Policies and Procedures are in place to manage the provision of special and carer's leave for employees
- Ensure a consistent framework is in place for managers.
- Has principal responsibility for ensuring the content of this Policy is applied consistently and fairly across the Trust.

5 PROCEDURE

5.1 Overview

From the first day of employment, colleagues who are carers of a dependant, or a dependant who has a long-term care need, for example, a physical or mental health condition, disability, or issues related to old age, can request unpaid carer's leave of up to one working week (5 working days) per year, pro rata for part-time employees. A dependant is described as a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, someone who lives in the same household (excluding employee, tenant, lodger, boarder) or someone who reasonably relies on the employee for care.

Carer leave for domestic, personal and family reasons is intended to enable employees to cope with disruption of, or changes to, normal caring responsibilities.

Employees have a statutory right to take a reasonable amount (usually up to one day) of time off work to deal with emergencies involving dependants.

Carer's Leave may be granted to assist the employee in coping with urgent, immediate and unforeseen domestic situations. The aim of such leave is to provide a compassionate response to immediate needs.

This leave can be taken flexibly, either as individual or half days, up to a block of one week. This leave entitlement is available to all eligible colleagues regardless of length of employment.

Employees requesting Carer's Leave are not required to provide evidence, or documentation relating to a dependant's long term care need.

Examples of situations in which carer leave is appropriate include:

- To accompany a relative to a planned hospital appointment
- To deal with a situation the employee could be reasonably planned for in advance, for example, covering regular carers, relocation and transitions.

It is impossible to be completely prescriptive about all the circumstances in which carer leave may be granted, however, the below are examples of where carer leave may not be appropriate:

- To deal with the unexpected breakdown of arrangements for care of a dependant
- To provide assistance if a dependant unexpectedly falls ill, is injured or assaulted
- To provide assistance if a dependant gives birth

The granting of carer leave will be at management's discretion. Each request will be considered separately, taking into account the needs of the service. Alternatives to carer leave might include, asking the employee to take annual leave, or if the employee's annual leave entitlement has been exhausted, using flexitime or granting authorised unpaid leave.

If possible, you should give notice of your intention to take carer's leave, but as a minimum you must give notice that is twice the length of time being requested as leave, plus one day. A request for carer's leave cannot be completely refused; however, managers do have the discretion to postpone a request where the operation of the business will be unduly disrupted. Where there are unforeseen circumstances, refer to the Special Leave Policy.

Situations may occur where your normal caring arrangements fall through, or you need to undertake further caring duties that impact on your usual working hours. This might include covering school drop off/pick up, checking on an ill relative, attending hospital appointments that cannot be arranged outside of working hours. In these cases, you can request short term flexibility to deal with the situation. Agreement is subject to the manager's discretion and dependent on service requirements. If the agreed flexibility is for less than 1 month and the hours worked are staying the same, the arrangement will be classed as informal. For longer periods of time and where hours will change, please refer to the Flexible Working Policy and Procedure to apply for a change of hours.

If a longer period of carers leave is required options such as Parental Leave (see Parenting Leave Policy CORP/EMP 15), Flexible working including Flexitime, Career Breaks (see Flexible Working Policy CORP/EMP 48) and/or purchase of additional leave/authorised unpaid leave may be considered.

Carers may need to check on the person they care for on a regular basis, which may include during work hours. In these circumstances, carers may seek permission from their line manager to make a private call where necessary.

5.2 Changing roles of Carers

Support provided by carers can be regular, making it easy for planning to take place. There are times when supporting someone becomes less predictable and may require the Carer to give more time to this role, having an impact on both their employment and their health and wellbeing.

Examples of this could be transition of children to adult services, changes to care packages, moving to a residential service or the sudden breakdown of a care package. These may often involve statutory services and could include assessment and planning of care of the person they care for. During times such as these, an early conversation between the manager and employee should take place to agree short term flexible support which may include adjustments to working hours for example.

6 SIGNPOSTING TO SUPPORT

6.1 Trust-based support at DBTH

The Trust encourages carers, colleagues and managers to engage in open discussions to identify supportive solutions that help carers remain in work.

Trust based support may include:

- Flexible working arrangements (subject to service requirements)
- Temporary or informal flexibility
- Occupational Health Support
- Access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Wellbeing conversations
- Carer conversations

6.2 NHS-based support

The NHS website offers an overview of the support available for carers:
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/

6.3 Local and regional support

Doncaster City Council offers pastoral and wellbeing services and also financial support for eligible carers from the following links:

https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/adult-social-care/carersoffer
https://makingspace.co.uk/doncaster-carers-wellbeing-service
https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/council-tax-benefits/financial-assessments

Local services can also be found through the Carer's Trust Directory, which includes local support for young carers up to 25 years old:

Carer Services Near Me
Nottinghamshire County Council also offers similar forms of support for those in the Bassetlaw area:
https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adult-social-care/carers/support-for-carers

6.4 Government Support

The Government offers a range of financial support for carers, parents and guardians. Depending on individual circumstances, colleagues may be eligible for assistance through Universal Credit, including support with childcare costs, Carer's Allowance and other benefits.

Parents, carers and guardians may also be eligible for Child Benefit and Tax-Free Childcare to help with the cost of raising children. Information about childcare support, funded childcare entitlements and eligibility criteria can be found via the Government's Childcare Choices website.
Further information is available at:

- Child Benefit
- Tax-Free Childcare
- https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit
- https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs
- Caring for someone - GOV.UK

Since September 2025, eligible working parents of children aged 9 months and over have been able to access up to 30 hours of funded childcare a week, for 38 weeks a year until school age.

For further information, visit Free Childcare for Working Parents: Overview - GOV.UK

7 MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT

What is being Monitored	Who will carry out the Monitoring	How often	How Reviewed/ Where Reported to
Leave requests for Carer's	HRBP Team, Managers and relevant Directorate	Annually	Reviewed annually with any HRBP Team Members

8 DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Carer	An employee who is a carer that looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs care due to illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.
Dependant	A "dependant" is defined as a spouse, civil partner, a child or parent of the employee, a person who lives in the same household (except tenants, lodgers, boarders and employees), or those who solely rely on the employee in an emergency/to make arrangements for the provision of care. This definition does not extend to domestic animals.
Other carers / forms of care	Foster Carers, Adult Placement Carers, Kinship Carers and Stay Put Carers provide care to children and adults who have a disability with an agreement with the Local Authority or an agency with the authorisation to act for that Local Authority. The carer definition for this Policy will also apply when the care of the child is by private fostering arrangement or as the result of a Special Guardianship Order or when there is a Section 20 (Children Act 1989) agreement which is the voluntary placement of a child.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, population and workforce, ensuring that none are disadvantaged over others. Our objectives and responsibilities relating to equality and diversity are outlined within our equality schemes. When considering the needs and assessing the impact of a procedural document any discriminatory factors must be identified.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted on this procedural document in line with the principles of the Equality Analysis Policy (CORP/EMP 27), the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy (CORP/EMP 59) and the Civility, Respect and Resolution Policy (CORP/EMP 58).

The purpose of the EIA is to minimise and if possible, remove any disproportionate impact on employees on the grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or religious belief. No detriment was identified. (See Appendix 3)

10 ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

CORP/EMP 02 Disciplinary Procedure
CORP/EMP 03 Grievance and Resolution Procedure
CORP/EMP 15 Parenting Leave Policy
CORP/EMP 27 Equality Analysis Policy
CORP/EMP 47 Special Leave Policy (Incorporating Carer's & Emergency Leave)
CORP/EMP 48 Flexible Working Policy Incorporating
CORP/EMP 49 Annual Leave Policy
CORP/FIN 1 (D) Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy and Response Plan

APPENDIX 1 – CARERS CONVERSATION (DRAFT TEMPLATE)

What is a Carers Conversation?

The Carers Conversation is taken from the idea of an NHS Working Carers Passport and is designed to support discussions between carers and line managers/HR on the support needed to balance work with caring. It aims to maximise the potential of each employee and remove any barriers to inclusion and progression at work.

Carers record who was involved in the conversation, when it happened and the agreed outcomes. A review would normally take place every six months, but it can be more frequent if the carer's circumstances change. The document should be kept confidential once completed and can be stored by the carer themselves. More Carers Passport resources can be found on the Government sponsored Carers Passports website

CARERS CONVERSATION TEMPLATE

This passport can be completed by any employee who has caring responsibilities which may impact their work at present, or in the future. To get started, have a meeting with your line manager and/or People Business Partner Record the conversation, the date and agreed outcomes in this document.

Who owns this document: _____

Who was involved in the conversation: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Notes / outcomes:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Review date: _____

APPENDIX 2- TYPES OF SPECIAL LEAVE

Carer/Dependant's Leave – See CORP/EMP 47
Parental Leave – See CORP/EMP 15
Compassionate / Bereavement Leave – See CORP/EMP 47
Child Bereavement – See CORP/EMP 47
Emergency Leave – See CORP/EMP 47

APPENDIX 3 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING

Service/Function/Policy/Project/Strategy	Division	Assessor (s)	New or Existing Service or policy?	Date of Assessment
CORP/EMP 62.V2	People & Organisational Development	Lili Grainger	Existing	30 September 2026

1) Who is responsible for this policy? People and Organisational Development

2) Describe the purpose of the service / function / policy / project/ strategy? Intended to be used to benefit colleagues across the Trust with caring responsibilities and provide guidance for managers

3) Are there any associated objectives? Carers Leave guidance from NHSE, Carer's Leave Act 2023 and Carer's Leave Regulations 2024

4) What factors contribute or detract from achieving intended outcomes? – None

5) Does the policy have an impact in terms of age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy and religion/belief? No

- If yes, please describe current or planned activities to address the impact [e.g. Monitoring, consultation] – NA

6) Is there any scope for new measures which would promote equality? NA

7) Are any of the following groups adversely affected by the policy?

Protected Characteristics	Affected?	Impact
a) Age	No	
b) Disability	No	
c) Gender	No	
d) Gender Reassignment	No	
e) Marriage/Civil Partnership	No	
f) Maternity/Pregnancy	No	
g) Race	No	
h) Religion/Belief	No	
i) Sexual Orientation	No	

8) Provide the Equality Rating of the service / function /policy / project / strategy – tick (✓) outcome box

Outcome 1 ✓	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4

If you have rated the policy as having an outcome of 2, 3 or 4, it is necessary to carry out a detailed assessment and complete a* **Detailed Equality Analysis form – see CORP/EMP 27.

Date for next review:	March 2029 (Policy Valid Until September 2029)
Checked by:	Caitlin Needham
Date:	30/09/26