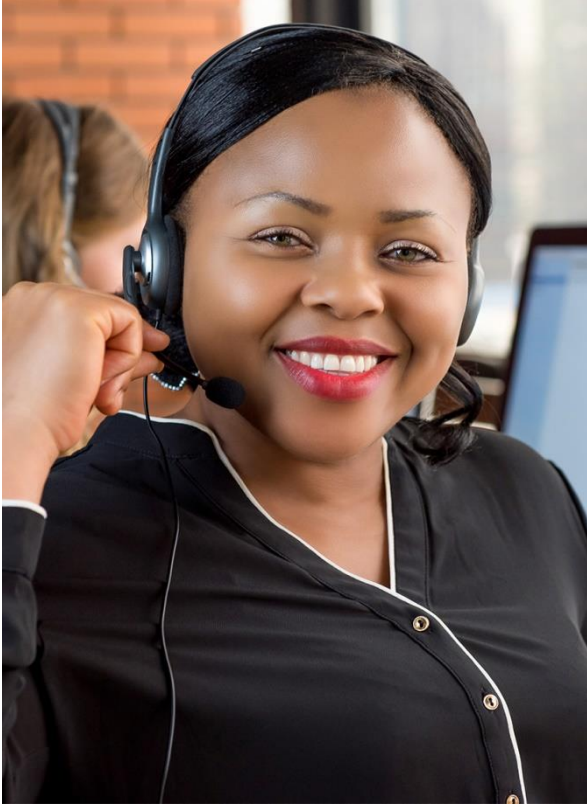


# Toolkit



# Umbrella Membership

## Engaging with small/medium employers

### About carers in the workplace

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Caring for an ill, older or disabled family member, partner or friend will have an impact on most of us at some point in our lives. Already 1 in 7 people in the UK workforce have caring responsibilities and this ratio is set to increase as people live longer and retire later. Recent Carers UK research identified that as many as 600 people a day in the UK give up work to care, often because they face a caring crisis without knowing where to go for information and support. And yet, caring is still an issue which people find hard to discuss and plan for in the workplace.

#### Who are carers in the workplace?

Employers for Carers uses the following definition to describe carers in the workplace:

*Carers are employees with caring responsibilities that have an impact on their working lives. These employees are responsible for the care and support of ill, older or disabled family members, partners or friends who are unable to care for themselves.*

### About this toolkit

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This Toolkit has been produced by Employers for Carers (EFC) to help Umbrella Membership organisations share the benefits of EFC with small/medium sized enterprises (SMEs). This toolkit will help you to:

- enable SMEs to retain key staff through identifying and supporting carers in their workforce
- raise the profile of working carers across your locality or within your membership
- raise awareness of EFC's resources and support among local SMEs

Organisations signed up to our Umbrella Membership scheme are usually:

- Local employer organisations/business organisations such as chambers of commerce or trade associations who wish to support SMEs in their membership.
- Local authorities and service providers who recognize the importance of reaching carers early with information and support.

## How to engage employers

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- **Write your own business case**, ideally using case studies to strengthen the local context. You can find a business case on our website:  
<https://www.employersforcarers.org/membership/business-case>.
- **Take part in relevant business events**, such as business breakfasts, 'meet the buyer' or job fairs. You could also hold your own networking event in partnership with a large local employer to raise awareness of the scheme.
- **Speak face to face** to explain the scheme, where possible. You can also use our flyers and materials to reach out more widely.
- **Identify key media channels** such as local radio stations, newspapers, websites to raise awareness of the issues locally.
- **Use business and social media networks** such as LinkedIn and Facebook to promote the scheme.
- **Make the most of awareness campaigns** such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.
- **Identify SME champions** to act as key advocates of the scheme to other employers. From our experience of developing the EfC forum, this will be a key factor in the success of the scheme as peer to peer recommendation of this kind is likely to resonate with employers more than anything else.
- **Be creative** – there will already be a number of business networks and information services within your area which you can use to promote membership. Listed below are some examples – but remember, you know your local area best!
  - Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's)
  - Wellbeing at work groups
  - Chambers of Commerce and Guilds
  - Local HR Networks
  - CCG's
  - GP Surgeries, hospitals, care homes
  - Business information and library services
  - Institute of directors
  - Social enterprise networks
  - Colleges and education providers
  - Economic growth and business start-up services
  - Supply chains

## Top ten tips

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1. Lead by example.
2. Be realistic about the time it will take to get organisations on board. You may have to provide information at regular intervals over a period of time.
3. Remember that it may be hard to identify carers in the workplace (and for carers to identify themselves); encourage your SMEs to run regular promotion campaigns.
4. Encourage SMEs to normalise caring: encourage them to talk about work-life balance, making specific reference to caring, at its inductions and reviews or appraisals.
5. Use your existing networks to promote the scheme.
6. Train managers to be carer aware and responsive and to promote the scheme externally.
7. Use a top-down and bottom-up approach, identifying senior champions and grass roots' involvement.
8. Circulate information about caring and carers regularly – people will often only digest information when it becomes relevant to them.
9. Think umbrella – have you signed up your supply chain? Your local corner shop? Your GP surgery?
10. Signpost SMEs to external organisations who can help such as EFC and Carers UK.

## Take a look at a case study

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Lincolnshire County Council in partnership with Every-One have provided a short case study, telling us how they engage with their SMEs and health partners, how they encourage sign up and some challenges they have faced and how they have overcome them.

[Read the case study here](#)

## Three next steps

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- Contact SMEs in your locality (or in your membership) and talk to them about caring and how it can affect their workforce.
- Promote EFC Umbrella Membership and the resources available.
- Circulate the monthly EFC e-bulletin to your contacts. Individuals can also sign up to receive the e bulletin on the EFC website.

## Contact Employers for Carers

**T:** 020 7378 4956 **E:** [client.services@carersuk.org](mailto:client.services@carersuk.org)

**W:** [employersforcarers.org](http://employersforcarers.org) | [efcdigital.org](http://efcdigital.org)