

## Supporting a carer to recognise themselves

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Carers UK research has found that it can take an average of 2 years for someone to recognise themselves as an unpaid carer. This can result in carers missing out on vital support and information to not only help them manage their caring role, but to juggle this responsibility alongside work.

It is important that line managers or anyone with an employee wellbeing responsibility are equipped with the knowledge and awareness to notice when an employee may be a carer but has not yet recognised themselves as such.

Here are a few signs that your employee may be a carer:

- They may be taking annual leave but returning more exhausted than when they left
- They might be taking private phone calls more often
- They may show up late or record more absences
- They could be showing signs of tiredness and stress
- They may be struggling to keep up with their workload

One of our EfC members, Newcastle University, has created a carer checklist to help employees recognise themselves as carers. This carer checklist consists of a list of different responsibilities that a carer may have to manage whilst caring for a loved one. Next to this list is the option to tick 'yes', 'maybe' or 'no' as to whether they are performing any of these tasks and responsibilities.

The idea is that if an employee ticks 'yes' or 'maybe' to at least one of the tasks, they are likely to be, and therefore deemed to be, a carer. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and that everyone's experience of caring is unique.

As a line manager, if you spot any signs that your employee might be a carer, you can provide this carer checklist to help them self-identify.

This carer checklist can be downloaded [here](#).

Now that your employee has filled out this checklist, what are the next steps that you as a line manager or as someone with an employee wellbeing responsibility should undertake to ensure that they are supported in the workplace as a carer?

If someone has answered 'yes' or 'maybe' to the carer checklist, it is considered that they are a carer and therefore it is important that relevant support is signposted to them.

Here are some key next steps to think about once an employee has completed the checklist and has identified as a carer:

- Does your HR system have the ability to register as a carer? If so, point your employee towards this so that they can formally register with HR and receive support.
- If your organisation has a carer support network, this could be a great place for a carer to start to meet other carers and benefit from peer support.
- Point your employee towards any policies that may be in place that are relevant such as a Flexible Working policy, a Special Leave policy or a specific Carer's Leave policy.
- Do you have a Carer Passport available at your organisation? This document provides a straightforward way to monitor flexibility and support so that it can be carried into an employee's future roles, without having to repeat the same conversations.

This list, like the carer checklist, is not exhaustive as your organisation may have specific support for carers available. However, it is important that as someone signposting support, you are aware of all that carers can access so that they can remain in employment.

It is important to note that if someone has answered 'no' to all of the points on the checklist and therefore is not currently an unpaid carer, this could change in the next week, month or year. It is therefore important to keep vigilant and be aware of whether circumstances change for your employees.