



People Policies and Procedures

Supporting Carers Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure is in place to help establish a supportive and caring environment for colleagues who have caring responsibilities.

2. Scope

All BRC staff. This policy applies to all employees of the organisation. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.

3. Procedure Statement

This procedure sets out how staff with caring responsibilities can access time off from work in the event of an emergency or when carers are called on at short notice.

3.1. Informing us of your caring responsibilities

- 3.1.1 If you are caring for someone, you are encouraged to have an open and honest conversation with your line manager about your caring responsibilities. This will help in establishing a supportive and understanding work environment and enable your manager to discuss the best support options available with you.
- 3.1.2 You are encouraged to approach the Advice and Casework team if you do not wish to discuss your caring responsibilities with your line manager.
- 3.1.3 Your Line manager and the Advice and Casework team are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of your caregiving situation, and you will not suffer any disadvantage by informing us that you are a carer.

3.2. Carer's Leave

- 3.2.1 If you have caring responsibilities, you may be unable to always plan ahead for time off. The ability to take leave in an emergency is important for carers, who may be called on at short notice.
- 3.2.2 Employees have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to assist or make arrangements for the care of their dependants. Whilst it is not possible to set definitive limits on the amounts of leave which may be granted, the following guidelines may be used:

- 3.2.2.1 Eligible employees may take up to five days paid leave per rolling year (pro rata for part time employees).
- 3.2.2.2 Eligible employees can take carer's leave regardless of how long they have worked for their employer.
- 3.2.2.3 Eligible employees, in consultation with their line manager, can take leave flexibly to suit their caring responsibilities.
- 3.2.2.4 Eligible employees don't need to provide evidence of their caring responsibilities or on how their leave will be used or who it will be used for.

4. Other Types of Leave Arrangement

4.1 You should discuss with your line manager any known leave needs relating to your caring commitments. This will help your manager and the other members of the team to plan work and other leave arrangements.

4.2 Carers may benefit from flexible leave arrangements (in addition to flexible working arrangements) to manage all aspects of their caring role. We offer our employees the following special leave options:

4.2.1 Eligible full-time employees are entitled to 252 hours (36 days) of paid annual leave (1 January to 31 December), including public holidays (pro-rata for part-time employees. Line managers will, where possible, approve annual leave requests from employees who wish to take time off to meet their caring responsibilities. Please refer to our Annual leave Policy for more information.

4.2.2 In cases of bereavement, or where an employee is facing terminal illness of a close relative or other person with whom they have a close relationship, or an urgent and distressing problem, we allow employees to take paid compassionate leave. Please refer to our Compassionate Leave Procedure for more information.

4.2.3 Employees with a minimum of 24 months' continuous service are eligible to request sabbatical leave. Please refer to our Sabbatical Leave Procedure for more information.

4.2.4 Employees who have exhausted all of their leave options may be eligible to buy/borrow annual leave of up to one week per rolling year (pro-rated for part-time employees). Please refer to our Unpaid Leave Procedure for more information.

4.2.5 Eligible employees can take unpaid leave to care for their children who are under the age of 18. Please refer to our Ordinary Parental Leave Procedure for more information.

5. Flexible Working

5.1 In some cases, an informal request for flexible working arrangements may be suitable for employees that are experiencing difficulties in managing their work schedules with their caring responsibilities. This can include temporary arrangements such as flexitime, informal homeworking, staggered hours, condensed hours, this can be requested with your line manager where possible.

5.2 For longer term adjustments, a formal request could be considered to support employees with caring responsibilities. This should be dated and put in writing to your line manager using the Flexible Working request form and can be made every 6 months. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis considering business circumstances. Please refer our Flexible Working Policy and Procedure for more information.

6. Wellbeing Support

6.1 There are many support mechanisms and sources that are available to our people to access to support their wellbeing. Please visit our Wellbeing Support page on RedRoom for further information.

7. Lessons Learned from Procedure Evaluation

Based on feedback received from stakeholders and the carer's network, it was evident that the organisation needed to develop a policy that acknowledges and support our carers. The old policy only reflected the leave entitlement of the carer, while the new policy aims to support our carers to have a better experience in their role while continuing their caring responsibilities.

8. Governance

Associated policy document/s	HR Policy Framework, section 5.2.3	
Policy(ies) superseded	Carer's Leave Procedure	
Legislation/ regulatory requirements and standards	Equality Act 2010 Employment Act 2002 Employment Relations Act 1999 Employment Rights Act 1996	
Endorsing Authority; Endorsement date	Chief Operating Officer, August 2023	
Approval Authority; Approval date	Executive Leadership Team; August 2023	
Policy Owner	Chief Operating Officer	
Policy Lead	People Policy Advisor	
Date effective	September 2023	
Interim update date	N/A	
Review date	August 2026	
Version	1.6	
Keywords	Carers; Carer's Leave; Supporting Carers	
Revision history	Version	Summary of change (s)
	Interim Review	1 Next review date added
Interim Review	1.1	Leave should be pro-rata for part time staff. Leave is based on a rolling year. Leave should be requested and recorded in SAVI.
Interim Review	1.2	Updated to align with new HR Policy Framework and corporate procedure template
Minor Review	1.3	Pushed back review date until February 2020 to fit in with review work schedule.
Interim Review	1.4	Currently fit for purpose. Push review date back.
Minor Review	1.5	Reviewed as fit for purpose. Review date extended
Major Review	1.6	Updated as part of the family friendly working group tp make the policy more person centred and aligned with the new Carer's Bill.