

Title of meeting:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	27 September 2022
Subject:	The Carers Leave Bill
Report by:	Clare Rachwal, Deputy Head of Market Development & Community Engagement, Adult Social Care
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet of the Carers Leave Bill currently in the parliamentary process.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet support and formally endorse the Bill.

3. Background

Carers UK are a UK charity providing a community for carers and a movement for change. They undertake research on a regular basis and the following information is summarised from their website [For Professionals - Carers UK](#)

Millions of people in the UK juggle their unpaid caring responsibilities with paid employment. Balancing work and care can be a real struggle – with many carers saying they are tired, stressed and struggling to manage their own physical and mental health.

The [latest Carers UK research](#) shows that the number of unpaid carers remains higher than before the pandemic with one in five of the UK's adults (approximately 10.58 million people) now supporting a relative, close friend or neighbour because of chronic illness, including mental ill-health, dementia, disability, or older age.

In 2020, the number of people in paid work who were also providing unpaid care increased to over 7 million. The stresses and strain of having to juggle paid work alongside unpaid care has led to hundreds of thousands of people having to leave the labour market entirely. On average, 600 people a day leave work to care – with over 500,000 people leaving work to provide unpaid care in the two years before the COVID-19 pandemic.

A right to Carer's Leave is an issue that Carers UK has campaigned on for a long time. This has recently taken a firm step forward with the introduction of a Private Members' Bill on Carer's Leave, by Wendy Chamberlain MP, the Liberal Democrat MP for North East Fife.

The Bill's long title is: 'Bill to make provision about unpaid leave for employees with caring responsibilities.' Second Reading of the Bill will take place in the House of Commons on 9 September 2022.

The Bill is not yet published. However, as a principle, it would help support unpaid carers to remain in work alongside their unpaid caring responsibilities – and, given the current cost of living crisis, there has never been a more important time to do so.

Passing this Bill could:

- Give rights to at least 2.34 million employees who are carers, possibly more
- Mean that around 1.4 million employers to whom this applied would have to think about their employees with caring responsibilities, and for many, create carer-related policies for the first time.
- Mean that more forward-looking employers would go further than the legislation required and introduce paid Carer's Leave, to help them stay ahead with recruitment.

Carers UK research shows that giving carers the right to take Carer's Leave would:

- Improve finances for carers in the short and longer term as they are more able to juggle work and care.
- 37% of working carers said they needed unpaid Carer's Leave, and a further 1 in 7 said if they didn't get it, they would have to reduce working hours or give up work altogether.
- Particularly support women, who are more likely to be juggling work and care, and who are much more likely to be in part-time work rather than full-time.
- Bring increased productivity for employers, improving their employee retention rates and reducing their recruitment costs. One employer estimated that a combination of their policies to support carers in their workforce saved them £3.1 million per year.
- Bring economic gains for the Treasury, through increased productivity, due to more carers being able to continue juggling work alongside their unpaid caring responsibilities, rather than having to leave the labour market. Our research in 2019 showed as many as 600 people a day were having to quit work because they were not getting the support they needed.

4. Reasons for recommendations

The value of the care provided during the pandemic was equivalent of £193 billion a year despite the huge value to the economy. Nearly 7 out of 10 (69%) of the general public feel that the role of unpaid carers is not well valued by the general public. This feeling has increased since early in the pandemic. Three quarters of carers (75%) caring before the pandemic think that the role they do is not valued.

The peak age of caring is 55-64 with 29% of adults providing care often at the peak of their working lives, losing working carers to early retirement means losing highly skilled staff earlier than is necessary.

PCC have a range of policies that enable special leave for a variety of circumstances and now that we are working in a more flexible way have even greater ability to support staff with caring responsibilities. PCC has also signed up to the Employer for Carers charter

and we have a good proportion of staff who are themselves carers and our action in supporting this campaign will demonstrate our commitment to our working carers

We also have an aging workforce and therefore an increasing likelihood of staff with caring responsibilities. We have a huge amount of organisational knowledge, skill and capability vested in the workforce which we are loath to lose for lack of support. Whilst we can't compete on pay to attract and retain high calibre staff, we can compete on working conditions, and having an overt approach to supporting staff with things like caring puts us ahead of the game compared to many other employers.

We know that we are experiencing a labour market crisis and are struggling to recruit with pay being a major factor. Our Director for Corporate Services is doing some work across corporate services and with HR specifically to develop our approach at a strategic level to attract and retain good people. Much of this will be pay related but there are many other intrinsic factors that attract people and make them want to stay in a place, the culture and values being primary amongst them - so a culture that values staff, that values and supports their role as carers; values that align with people's personal belief systems; frameworks to support progression and development; investment in our managers and their confidence and capability; a safe and pleasant working environment are all things that enhance our reputation as an employer, attract good people and make them want to stay.

5. Integrated impact assessment



Integrated Impact
Assessment ASC Care

6. Legal implications

The purpose of this report is to inform cabinet of pending legislation and therefore there are no legal implications to consider at this stage.

7. Director of Finance's comments

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation within this report.

The City Council will need to develop appropriate policies and implement any changes to its current arrangements, should the proposed bill become legislation. Any policy changes will require detailed financial appraisals to be undertaken, together with an identification of funding proposals should additional costs to the City Council arise.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: