



# CARERS LEAVE POLICY

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# US Carers Policy

## Introduction

United Synagogue recognises that our employees are the organisation's most valuable asset and understands that employees have a life outside of work, possibly including responsibility for looking after children and/or other caring responsibilities, and that they may need support to combine work with care.

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The Talmud teaches us that "all Jews are responsible for one another" (Shavuot 39a).

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There are times when we have to step up and do what we can, for those who need our support.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline the support United Synagogue will offer to our employees that have caring responsibilities.
- Offer guidance in order for them to balance their working and caring commitments effectively.
- Aid recruitment and retention of employees with caring responsibilities.
- Provide support to managers so that in turn, they can effectively support their people.

**Please note:** This policy does not apply to employees, who are parents needing to take time off to look after their child. A separate 'Dependants Leave Policy,' exists for this purpose.

## Scope

This policy applies equally to all employees across the organisation, regardless of role, location, department, position, length of service, or seniority.

## Definition of Carers

For the purposes of this policy, a carer is defined as:

*'Someone who is responsible for the care and support of disabled, elderly or sick partners, relatives, children or friends, who are unable to care for themselves.'*

The organisation recognises that carers undertake a wide range of duties, including but not limited to:

- Help with personal care.
- Help with mobility.
- Managing medication
- Practical household tasks
- Emotional support
- Attending hospital appointments

- Liaising with Social Care Teams
- Help with financial matters or paperwork.

Employees to whom the organisation offers support in line with this policy, may not recognise themselves as carers, for example, employees who support a dependant who does not live with them.

The organisation recognises its duty not to treat those with caring responsibilities less favourably than other staff. **The Disability Discrimination Act 1995** protects a person who experiences discrimination, on the grounds of their association with someone who has a disability. For example, it would be unlawful to refuse someone a career development opportunity, due to concerns that they would give insufficient attention to work because of their caring responsibilities. This Act, together with other related legislation, and best practice, also allow for reasonable adjustments for carers, and reasonable paid and unpaid time off work, for unplanned caring duties.

## Identification and Disclosure

Employees are not required to disclose to their line manager that they are caring for someone but are encouraged to do so. This will help the organisation to provide appropriate support to the employee in this regard.

Line managers should encourage employees to discuss their caring responsibilities with them and should assure employees that their need for support and confidentiality will be respected.

Employees who do not wish to disclose their caring responsibilities to their line manager, are encouraged to approach their HR Business Partner or the HR team instead.

Where a line manager knows that an employee in their team has caring responsibilities, they should inform the employee about the support that the organisation offers to carers and encourage them to access the support offered.

## Time off to Care for Dependants

The organisation recognises that employees with caring responsibilities, cannot always plan ahead for time off. Accidents, and some illnesses, occur without warning, and care arrangements can break down unexpectedly. The ability to take leave in an emergency is important for carers, who may be called on at short notice.

All employees are entitled to take carer's leave from day one of employment, and employment rights are protected during this period of leave.

Employees can take up to one week of leave in a 12-month rolling period. A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 2.5 days a week, they can take up to 2.5 days of carer's leave.

Carer's leave can be taken as a whole week off, or as individual day or half days as needed, throughout the year.

If an employee needs to care for more than one person, they cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependant. They can only take one week every 12 months. However, they can use the week of leave on more than one dependant.

Carer's leave is unpaid for the first twelve months of employment, however after the employee has completed one year of service, they will be entitled to take the leave as paid, on the condition that they have registered on the United Synagogue Carers Register (Appendix 1), which is held by the Human Resources department.

*For the avoidance of doubt; at the point of this policy being introduced, if an employee has already received one week of paid leave in the previous 12 month period, as a result of caring for somebody under the definition of this policy, they will not be entitled to receive a further paid period of leave until they reach the qualifying period.*

## Taking Carer's Leave

Employees must give their line manager reasonable notice before they want their leave to start. If the request is for half a day, or a day, the notice period must be at least 3 days. If the request is for more than one day, the notice period must be at least twice as long as the requested leave. For example, if the request is for 4 days leave, the notice period must be at least 8 days.

Whilst requests for leave can be made verbally, it is preferable for them to be submitted in writing, to ensure accurate record keeping.

If you need to look after someone in an emergency, you can take time off for this without giving advance notice, as this would be classed as emergency leave, and as such, requisite notice periods do not apply.

## Refusal of Leave

Line managers will not refuse a carer's leave request, but may ask the employee to take it at a different time. They will only do this if the employee's absence would cause serious disruption to the organisation.

If they delay a leave request, your line manager will:

- agree another date within one month of the requested date for the leave.
- put the reason for the delay and new date in writing to the employee within 7 days of the original request, and before the requested start date of the leave.

## Line Managers Responsibilities

Line managers play a key role in supporting employees. Each carer's situation requires a different response; therefore, line managers should consider the full range of organisational support and existing policies, when putting support in place for carers.

Employees need to be confident and understand that they will not be treated less favourably if they take up the organisation's support. Line managers should create a workplace culture that is supportive of carers, by encouraging employees to make use of the support and existing provisions offered to carers, and encouraging discussion around carers' issues and needs.

## United Synagogue Carers Register

Whilst employees are not required to provide evidence of being a Carer, to receive paid carer's leave, employees are required to register this responsibility with the Human Resources Department in advance, by completing the Carers Register Form (Appendix 1).

These details will be treated as confidential, and will provide flexibility and reassurance to the employee, should they change job roles, line managers etc.

## Other Support Available

If you wish to discuss the policy or require some additional support, please be in touch with your designated HR Business Partner, or [HRadmin@theus.org.uk](mailto:HRadmin@theus.org.uk)

The organisation also offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all employees. This service offers advice & counselling.

*Health Assured EAP phone number 0800 030 5182 [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com)*

## Appendix 1 - US Carers Registration Form



Employee Number	
First Name	
Last Name	
Job Title	
Are you a Carer?	
Who do you care for? (e.g. partner, child, parent)	
How long do you foresee this care provision lasting?	

Name: .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Please complete this form and send it to [hadmin@theus.org.uk](mailto:hadmin@theus.org.uk)