



Civil Service HR

#yearofinclusion

# Building a Carer-Inclusive Civil Service

## Our Story

June 2020

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# 1. Foreword

## Dear Colleague

2020 is the Civil Service Year of Inclusion - an opportunity for us to celebrate our achievements to date and to think about how to continue making the Civil Service a great place to work.

Every day, civil servants do brilliant work to develop and deliver policies and services that affect the lives of people across the country and beyond. Evidence shows that diversity – of background, of life experience – brings different insights, creates challenge and encourages change and innovation. For the benefits of diversity to be felt, we must create an inclusive workplace where individuals have a sense of belonging, can be their authentic selves and have a voice in their team and organisation.

We recognise that inclusion is especially important to civil servants who balance their career with caring responsibilities. In February 2020, we published our strategy to 'build a carer-inclusive Civil Service'. We want to mark Carers Week 2020 by sharing our plans to embed carers inclusion across the Civil Service.

Supporting carers has never been more important as we all feel the impact of the coronavirus. Many carers have seen their caring responsibilities change or increase and some civil servants now have new caring responsibilities. Everyone's circumstances will be unique, so please continue to talk to your manager about the flexibilities you need, including paid special leave, and record these in your carer's passport. Your manager also has access to some great tools and techniques to support your personal wellbeing, so do remember they are there to help.

Finally, I would like to thank Brian Day, Qayum Mannan, Sue Thorpe and Andrew Stonham whose inspirational personal stories feature below.



**Rupert McNeil**  
Chief People Officer

## 2. Why is supporting Carers important?

### How do we define a Carer?

A carer is anyone who cares for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem, or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. It includes parents of disabled children.

For carers, work often represents a lifeline, not only financially, but in providing a life outside caring. Working, whether paid or unpaid, is good for health and wellbeing. We want carers in the Civil Service to have the same opportunities as non-carers to develop, progress and fulfil their career aspirations. Carer Inclusion is the right thing to do. There are also compelling business drivers for taking action.

- The UK has an ageing society. Over the next decade, the number of people in the labour market aged 16-49 is forecast to drop while the number of people aged 50-65 will rise sharply.
- The number of carers in the UK is set to increase by 50% to 9.1m by 2037. People are most likely to be caring aged 45-64, when many will have gained valuable skills and experience in the workplace<sup>1</sup>. As a result, more people will be combining work and caring, and doing this for longer.
- Almost two-thirds of civil servants who reported their age in 2019 were aged over 40 and 40% of civil servants were aged over 50.
- In the 2019 Civil Service People Survey, 85,074 Civil Servants reported that they had caring responsibilities and this number is likely to rise.

With an ageing workforce, it is vitally important that the Civil Service attracts and retains the skills, expertise and insight of employees who are carers.

Carers bring different life experiences and perspectives to the workplace. This can lead to greater diversity of thought which fosters innovation, creativity and better decision-making.

Carers also bring valuable customer insight which can be used to develop policies and public services that work for everyone e.g. by ensuring that education policy considers the needs of young carers.

### What is the legal position?

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against a carer either because of their own protected characteristic, or because of a protected characteristic of the individual(s) they care for. For example if a carer is looking after somebody who is elderly or disabled, it would be unlawful to discriminate against the carer because of their responsibilities associated with the age or disability of the person who they care for. This law applies to discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the work place.

<sup>1</sup> Employers\_for\_Carers\_Guide\_2019.pdf

### 3. What do we know about carers in the Civil Service?

308,556 civil servants, across 106 Civil Service organisations, responded to the 2019 Civil Service People Survey (an overall response rate of 67%).

From this we know that:

- **85,074 civil service respondents** said they are **a carer**.
- **Women respondents are more likely than men** to have caring responsibilities at **33%** compared with **26%**.
- **42% of disabled respondents** identified as carers compared with **27% of non-disabled respondents**.
- **34% of ethnic minority respondents** identified as a carer compared with **30% of white respondents**.
- **30% of heterosexual respondents** have **caring responsibilities** compared with **28%** of those **identifying as LGBO**.
- **40% of respondents aged 55 plus** are carers. However **17% Civil Servants aged 16-34** also identified as carers.
- **41% of respondents working part-time** report having caring responsibilities compared with **28% of full-time workers**.
- The **Employee Engagement Index** for carers was **59% in 2019**, up two percentage points since 2018, but still lower than non-carers (62%).

While the Civil Service People Survey is not a workforce statistic and therefore only representative of those who completed it, this data is still an important part of understanding the characteristics and needs of carers in our workforce.

### 3. What do we know about carers in the Civil Service?

Recently we also gathered insight from carers networks to help us to understand the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic on our carers.

- The Cross-Government Carers' Network has reported an upsurge in anxiety and stress amongst civil servants who are carers.
- Carers may be concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the existing health conditions of the person they are caring for and feel uncertainty about how the lockdown will be lifted. They may also be juggling caring responsibilities alongside parenting children who are at home due to school closures. All this can impact health and wellbeing.
- Carers have welcomed the additional flexibility on work location and hours and the provision of additional paid special leave introduced as part of the response to COVID-19.

We have a strong partnership with our carers networks and are taking these concerns on board as we develop further guidance. We recognise that carers bring unique talent and insight to the Civil Service and we are passionate about providing the right support so that carers feel valued, supported and able to fulfill their potential.

## 3. What do we know about carers in the Civil Service?

### Civil Service Carers' Network

The Civil Service Carers' Network (CSCN), established in 2018, brings together representatives from over 30 carers' networks across the Civil Service and their membership continues to grow. Being a carer can often mean people do not have time to find support for themselves. With that in mind, the CSCN has three areas of focus:

#### Knowledge & Experience

- To create a forum for the networks to work together to share knowledge, experience, and resources.
- To collectively share practical tips and experience.

#### Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

- To promote a positive workplace culture for carers across the Civil Service.
- To raise awareness of the business benefits of supporting carers in the workplace.

#### Influence & Collaboration

- To act as a critical friend to help the Civil Service develop and improve the support it provides to civil servants who are carers.

The CSCN exists to support those networks that provide direct support to carers in Civil Service departments and other public bodies. This has involved leading cross-Civil Service events for carers, being a point of contact for external bodies supporting carers in general, and working directly with Civil Service HR to support policy development and implementation.

In November 2019, the CSCH organised a cross-Civil Service event to celebrate the role of our caring colleagues which brought carers and senior leaders together.

## 4. How does the Civil Service support carers?

### Here are some of the steps we have taken to support carers across the Civil Service.

- To **increase awareness of the support available** in their department, we have introduced the **carers' charter** to signpost carers and their managers to policies and information that can help. **All 17 main departments have adopted this**, along with a range of other Civil Service organisations. It links staff to **helpful policies** such as flexible working, special leave, career breaks and parental leave.
- We have introduced the **Civil Service-wide carer's passport**. This is drawn up in discussion between a carer and their manager as a **formal record of the support needed** to combine work and caring. This might include flexible working to attend appointments, access to a quiet room at work to take personal phone calls, or a plan of action should you have to leave work in an emergency.
- To help people fill in a **carer's passport**, we have produced a **video** with a number of civil servants talking about how they have used it to make their lives easier.
- We have issued **new guidance** on how **special leave** can be used to help support carers.
- We have promoted the digital resources produced by the **Charity for Civil Servants** and **Employers for Carers**. The Charity for Civil Servants offers support and has set up a dedicated site for civil servants, you can **log into this site** using your work email address. Many departments are now members of Employers for Carers. Look out for your departmental code enabling you to access their resources. These include learning materials for managers to help you understand the issues carers face.
- We have included carers in our **Diversity and Inclusion Practice Expectations** which sets out common Civil Service standards for all aspects of diversity and inclusion.



## 4. How does the Civil Service support carers?

### There are also things we do on an ongoing basis:

- We **publish** annually the responses which **carers and non-carers** give to the questions in the **People Survey** enabling us to understand the issues concerning carers and to consider how to address these.
- We **bring together HR, Diversity and Inclusion and Carers' Network leads** in departments. They have helped to develop the strategy and will continue to share best practice and support implementation. They are all represented on our Cross-Government Carers Group which meets quarterly.

What we have done centrally across the Civil Service is just part of the story. Departments have their own initiatives to support carers including events held during Carers' Week and on Carers' Rights Day and the advice and support offered by carers' networks.

This departmental support is being recognised through the **Carer Confident benchmarking scheme**. The table below sets out some of the initiatives being taken by those departments which have achieved this accreditation.

<b>Cabinet Office</b>	<p>To mark Carers Week 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joined up with carers networks across Whitehall for <b>'Walk Whitehall'</b>.</li><li>• <b>Carers UK</b> joined Cabinet Office to discuss the support available to carers outside the workplace.</li><li>• Civil Service &amp; Royal Mail Pensions held three <b>'Know Your Pension'</b> sessions.</li></ul>
<b>DFT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing and offering practical support like a <b>Carer's Passport workshop</b> and <b>line manager case studies workshops</b>.</li><li>• The Carers' Network offers <b>"roadshows"</b> at any time of the year on request to raise the profile of the support on offer.</li></ul>

## 4. How does the Civil Service support carers?

<b>DWP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ran a cross-DWP <b>Wellness Survey</b> in 2018 and have used the results to identify areas for improvement, including those for our carers.</li><li>• A <b>Carers Toolkit</b> providing awareness of the policies that support colleagues with caring responsibilities.</li></ul>
<b>FCO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Network chairs</b> see members on a <b>1:1 basis</b>, at quarterly chats, on Carers' Rights Day, during Carers' Week and a <b>newsletter</b> is sent out every 2 months.</li><li>• <b>Flexible working and caring</b> have been added to their <b>diversity data</b> recording to help better design future interventions.</li></ul>
<b>HMRC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A <b>Carers Helpline</b> signposting support available.</li><li>• <b>Local groups of staff</b> with caring responsibilities organising get-togethers to talk about their experiences and listen to external speakers (eg local caring charities).</li></ul>
<b>Ministry of Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information and guidance for carers and their managers is provided on the <b>intranet Parent and Carer Support page</b>. This signposts to resources available to help carers in MoJ and beyond, including links to the Carers Information Pack, policies and external organisations.</li><li>• The <b>Carers Network</b> holds regular activities, a stand providing information, a <b>lunch and learn</b> on various topics including caring for a disabled child and caring for someone with dementia.</li></ul>
<b>Public Health England</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Workshops and information events</b> - including training sessions across the organisation.</li></ul>

## 5. What is the experience of Civil Servants who are carers?

### Brian Day's Story - Caring for a partner

Brian works for HMRC as an attendance and wellbeing champion. He has recently returned from a stretching but successful 9-month secondment on temporary promotion with the Department for International Trade. He is a carer for his wife (pictured) who suffers from a genetic disease called Usher Syndrome which has left her deafblind. This care has increased over the years as her disease has progressed. Brian is proud of being able to combine his caring role with a successful career in the Civil Service. He is a strong advocate of the Carer's Passport and has worked in partnership with his manager to agree steps including having his mobile phone on at all times, being able to leave at short notice and remote working as necessary. Brian's view is that caring should never be a barrier to a great career. In fact, it should be viewed as a positive factor which makes you unique, determined and special.



### Qayum Mannan's Story - Being a young carer

Qayum joined the Cabinet Office in December 2019 as the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Policy Lead for Faith and Belief and has been a carer since the age of 9 or 10. This initially involved accompanying his parents to appointments, translating anything official and always being aware of his availability to take over caring responsibilities at short notice. On joining the Civil Service, Qayum felt comfortable in having a conversation with his line manager about the support he needed as a carer. He keeps his personal phone with him at all times, even during meetings and is glad to work in an environment where this is possible, as it alleviates some of the anxiety he once had. During the Coronavirus Pandemic, Qayum has worked with his manager to address the additional challenges of being a carer whilst working from home. Qayum values being able to have an open and honest conversation about his caring responsibilities without being judged and to be given the empathy, space and flexibility needed to grow and develop.



## 5. What is the experience of Civil Servants who are carers?

### Sue Thorpe's story - a 'sandwich' carer

Sue has been employed by the Department for Education (DfE) for eleven years as a Senior Project Lead and chairs the DfE Carers' Support Network. Seven years ago she became a carer overnight to care for her daughter who suffered from severe mental health and psychotic behaviours after the birth of her granddaughter. The Department was very supportive. However, initially she did not know where to turn and felt there was a gap in the formal policy for carers. Since then, Sue has cared for her daughter when she had two relapses and also helped care for her Mum and her 81 year old Dad. Sue's Mum went into residential care in February 2015 and sadly passed away in December 2015. Through these terrible experiences, Sue wanted to do something positive and help others faced with similar situations in the future and founded the DfE Carers' Support Network. Sue received excellent support from her managers and colleagues, including access to flexible and home working. She was also allocated time to lead the Carer's Support Network which was embedded into her performance objectives. The flexibility in working hours and changes to policies such as special leave were a huge plus. In return, Sue gave 100% back to the business when in work. She felt valued, less stressed and more able to focus whilst in work. Work was an escape!



### Andrew Stonham's story - Caring for his family

Andrew works in Personal Tax Operations in HMRC and cares for his wife who has Fibromyalgia and two teenage children who both live with Asperger's. All three also have asthma. Andrew has worked with his manager to complete a Civil Service carer's passport outlining his caring responsibilities and steps to enable him to care for his wife and children whilst successfully delivering at work. He is able to phone home in the morning to check everything is okay and his manager is supportive if he needs to leave work at short notice. If an emergency at home causes him to be late or prevents him from going in to work, he is able to phone his manager and make the necessary arrangements. Andrew's view is that an understanding manager and a carer's passport has meant that he can be fully effective at work knowing that the support mechanisms are in place.



## 6. What are our priorities for carers?

The Civil Service Carers' Strategy, endorsed by People Board, comprises an overall vision and four priority areas covering a five-year period.

### **Vision:**

In the Civil Service, we want to build an inclusive culture where carers not only have the right support available but also have a sense of belonging, are able to be their authentic selves and feel that they have a voice. 85,000 civil servants have identified themselves as carers. Our aim is to be a best practice employer by providing the right culture and support to enable carers to combine a successful working life with their caring role.

- **Priority 1 is to create a culture where people feel supported in combining work and caring.** We are looking at how best to capture data on HR systems, so that we can monitor the impact of policies on carers. We will also be encouraging departments to have a carers' champion to lead their carers' agenda.
- **Priority 2 is to engage with carers to improve how HR policy takes account of their needs.** Carer networks do a fantastic job across the Civil Service bringing carers together to discuss issues of common concern and helping them to support each other. We want to tap into this knowledge and engage with these networks to see where policies can be improved.
- **Priority 3 is to promote the take-up of new and existing carer provision.** Caring can be hard to plan for, and what is required can vary. We want to make sure the passport and the charter are available across all departments and agencies. We will also promote manager training materials to increase understanding of the issues carers face.
- **Priority 4 is to develop and recognise departmental provision.** It is really encouraging that ten organisations have achieved accreditation under the Carer Confident scheme, with more looking to apply. We will continue to support departments to obtain Carer Confident recognition and to develop their carer provision. In addition, we will work closely with Carers UK, the Charity for Civil Servants and others to ensure we learn from wider best practice.

**A full table of the actions against each priority is in [Annex A](#).**

## 7. What have we achieved so far?

Since the Strategy was **launched** in February, we have already made progress in implementing some of its actions.

- **22 departments and agencies now have a carers' champion.** We are bringing them together in quarterly meetings so that they can help us to develop the strategic agenda and drive implementation both in their departments and across the Civil Service. The first meeting was held in April.
- **We have produced and launched a Champions Information Pack** to support Champions in their role and we have circulated this to HR and D&I colleagues and carers' networks.
- **We have produced an age and carers statistical dashboard.** Departmental carers champions will be using this to monitor progress and consider where further initiatives are needed.
- **We continue to support departments to achieve recognition for their carer provision** through the **Carer Confident benchmarking scheme** run by Carers UK. Since February, the **Charity Commission, Department for Education** and the **Crown Prosecution Service** have achieved accreditation. They join the **Cabinet Office, the Department for Transport, Department for Work & Pensions, the Foreign Office, HM Revenue & Customs, Ministry of Justice** and **Public Health England** which are already accredited under the scheme. 58% of civil servants now work for a Carer Confident organisation.

We have also done a great deal to ensure that carers are supported through the challenges posed by the current coronavirus pandemic.

- We have **worked with the Civil Service Carers' Network** to **understand the impact of the lockdown** on our carers and to reflect this in the support we are offering.
- We have **issued advice** on the steps to be taken **where a civil servant is living with and caring for someone in a vulnerable group** including working from home and, where that is not possible, taking paid special leave.
- We have **advised carers** with new or changed caring responsibilities to **talk to their manager about the flexibilities they need** and to record these in a **carer's passport**. These might include adjusted working hours and paid special leave.
- We have **made it clear** that managers **should be sympathetic and supportive** in assessing performance and take a proactive approach to ensure that in the longer term the individual has access to appropriate developmental opportunities.

## 8. What will we do over the next 12 months?

### We will:

- continue to work with the Civil Service Carers' Network to see where **changes might be needed to HR policies** to improve the support offered to carers
- consult with departments and other stakeholders, including Employers for Carers, to identify best practice in **capturing carer data in HR systems** and then to consider how best to use this data to understand their issues
- launch a **communications campaign** to show that anyone might become a carer at any point in their working life
- **issue guidance to help HR teams** and managers make effective use of the resources provided through membership of **Employers for Carers** including a variety of learning materials
- **meet with a range of external organisations to share learning, including Centrica**, the first organisation to achieve the highest level of Carer Confident accreditation to see **what we can learn from their best practice**
- **support those departments** which have achieved **Level 2 Carer Confident accreditation** to progress to Level 3, the highest level in the scheme
- consider how a **future Civil Service Carers' Champion's** role aligns with other Civil Service champions and **aim to appoint one** in 2020/21.
- introduce a new **'Age and Carers' category at the Civil Service Diversity Awards** to celebrate the many initiatives introduced across the Civil Service to support our carers.

**Departmental Carers Champions** and the **Cross-Government Carers Group** will help us to **monitor implementation of the Strategy** using data on the dashboard and feedback from carers and carers' networks to measure impact. **We will issue another progress report in Carers' Week 2021.**

# Annex A Civil Service Carers Strategy

## Making the Civil Service a great place to work

### Vision:

In the Civil Service, we want to build an inclusive culture where carers not only have the right support available but also have a sense of belonging, are able to be their authentic selves and feel that they have a voice. 85,000 civil servants have identified themselves as carers. Our aim is to be a best practice employer by providing the right culture and support to enable carers to combine a successful working life with their caring role.

### Culture:

The Civil Service recognises the importance of providing a supportive workplace. People should be able to feel engaged and supported in their work whilst undertaking their caring responsibilities.

### Priority 1. Create a culture where people feel supported in combining work and caring:

leaders at all levels will be visible in raising awareness of carers' issues and the practical support offered to them; steps will be taken to raise employee and manager awareness of carers' issues; messaging will include recognition that employees at all grades may be carers.

### Actions

- Departments to appoint a departmental Carers' Champion and support staff who wish to set up and run a carers' network.
- Civil Service HR (CSHR) to support those involved in promoting the carers' agenda in departments and to engage them in the development of the strategic agenda.
- Consider how a future Civil Service Carers' Champion's role aligns with other Civil Service champions and aim to appoint one in 2020/21.
- All to take responsibility, including Champions and leaders, to message on the importance of supporting carers and practical ways to achieve this including in Carers' Week and on Carers' Rights Day.
- Departments and CSHR to consider how best to capture data on carers in HR systems and then to consider how best to use this data to understand their issues.
- CSHR to integrate carers more fully into the Civil Service approach to diversity and inclusion.
- Departments to create a working environment that promotes learning and development opportunities to enable those with caring responsibilities to progress.
- Departmental champions and CSHR to monitor implementation of this strategy and report progress.



# Annex A Civil Service Carers Strategy

**Priority 2. Engage with carers to improve how HR policy takes account of their needs:** the Civil Service will involve carers in considering how relevant HR policies address carer issues.

## Actions

- Departments and CSHR to engage with carers, including through the Civil Service Carers' Network, to improve how HR policy takes account of their needs.
- Departments and CSHR to encourage other network groups to identify issues of concern to carers and to propose actions to address these.
- Departments and CSHR to analyse relevant People Survey data and consider the implications for policy development in collaboration with their Carers Network.

## Support:

To become the most inclusive employer, the Civil Service will promote take up of the practical support available to help carers and develop this further to reflect best practice.

**Priority 3. Promote the take up of new and existing carer provision:** the Civil Service will continue to encourage departments, managers and employees to make use of new and existing caring provision.

## Actions

- CSHR to encourage further take-up by departments and agencies of the carers' charter.
- Departments and CSHR to promote take up of the carer's passport including through the use of the video developed by CSHR.
- Departments, supported by CSHR, to ensure managers and employees are clear how special leave and other forms of statutory leave can be used to support carers.
- Departments to promote the wider use of supportive manager materials including those provided by Employers for Carers and the Charity for Civil Servants.
- Departments to provide information on their provision for carers in their induction and manager training.

**Priority 4. Develop and recognise departmental provision:** departments will be supported to develop their provision and achieve accreditation.

### Actions

- CSHR to support departments to achieve Carer Confident accreditation.
- CSHR to support departments to move to a higher level of accreditation where they wish to do so.
- Departments to support their agencies to achieve accreditation.
- CSHR to work with Employers for Carers, the Charity for Civil Servants and other organisations to identify and communicate best practice in supporting carers.
- Departments to consider participating in other accreditation schemes which recognise carer provision.