



Civil Service HR

Championing the Carer Agenda

June 2022



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Foreword..... | 2 |
| 2. Support for Carers across the Civil Service..... | 3 |
| 3. The Charity for Civil Servants..... | 5 |
| 4. Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) achieves Level 3 Carer Confident Accreditation..... | 6 |
| 5. A message from the Civil Service Carers' Network..... | 8 |
| 6. Insights from the 2021 People Survey..... | 10 |
| 7. What we have delivered June 2021 – May 2022..... | 11 |
| 8. Our plans for June 2022 – May 2023..... | 13 |



Foreword

An inclusive and supportive workplace has been key to coping with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent events have highlighted the importance of our commitment to supporting carers in the valuable work they do across the Civil Service.

More than 66,000 civil servants have identified themselves as carers. Many have adopted new caring roles over the last two years or seen their caring roles change. We are grateful to them for adapting to these changes while continuing to deliver their work and support their colleagues and the public.

This report sets out what we have achieved over the last 12 months and our plans going forward. We have made significant progress in implementing our five-year **Carers' Strategy**. Fifteen Civil Service departments are now formally recognised under the Carer Confident accreditation scheme. This year we have introduced a Line Manager Toolkit and issued new advice on the types of special leave available to carers. During the pandemic, we offered flexibility on working hours, paid special leave where carers were unable to work due to their caring responsibilities and wellbeing measures. We are now supporting our carers to return to the workplace.

Our work with carers forms part of our wider implementation of the **Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: 2022-2025**. This champions the core Civil Service values of serving with integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality, driving our vision to be a skilled, innovative and ambitious Civil Service equipped for the future. To help achieve this, it commits us to implementing the Carers' Strategy and supporting departments to achieve Carer Confident accreditation.

We know there is more to do. As we move forward, we will continue to ensure our carers are supported to combine their working role and caring responsibilities. As Inclusion Champions for Carers, we are committed to working with departments, carer networks and carers themselves to implement the plans set out in this report.



Alex Chisholm and Rebecca Sudworth
Civil Service Inclusion Champions for Carers

Support for Carers across the Civil Service

The following initiatives help civil servants to combine work with caring responsibilities.

- Departmental **Carer Charters** signpost carers and their managers to information and policies on such topics as flexible working, special leave, career breaks and parental leave.
- The **Civil Service Carer's passport** is drawn up in discussion between a carer and their manager as a record of the support being provided to help the carer combine work and caring.
- **Line Manager Toolkit** - provides managers with the tools and guidance to help them support the carers in their teams.
- The **Carer's Passport video** helps people to fill in a carer's passport. It features a number of civil servants talking about how they have used a passport to make their lives easier.
- **Special Leave** guidance encourages managers to look sympathetically at requests to provide special leave to support carers.
- **The Civil Service Carers' Network** (CSCN) brings together representatives from over 40 carers' networks across the Civil Service to share experiences and help develop guidance and support.
- **Departmental Carer Networks** provide support for staff in their department who have caring responsibilities.
- **The Civil Service Inclusion Champions for Carers (Alex Chisholm and Rebecca Sudworth) and Departmental Carer Champions** provide leadership to create and embed a carer-inclusive culture within the Civil Service and individual departments.
- **The Charity for Civil Servants** offers support and has set up a dedicated site for civil servants. Individuals can log into the Charity for Civil Servants' website using their work email address.
- Many departments are members of **Employers for Carers (EfC)**. Their resources include learning materials for managers to help them understand the issues carers face. Look out for your departmental code enabling you to access their resources.

Support for Carers across the Civil Service

In addition, all civil servants, including carers, have access to the following wellbeing services.

- **Employee Assistance Programme (or equivalent):** Externally provided EAP services are available 24/7, 365 days a year. They can provide telephone access to trained counsellors and source information and support. Confidentiality is guaranteed. EAP services are also there to support managers. They can, for example, coach them on how best to approach sensitive situations, provide information on mental health conditions and advise if the situation is impacting their health.
- **Mental Health First Aiders (or equivalent):** These are colleagues who are trained to listen, reassure and respond in a crisis, and are able to signpost someone to the help they require.
- **Occupational Health:** They will provide medical advice and advise about assessments and workplace adjustment requirements.
- **Human Resources:** This could be the HR Casework team, HR Business Partner or HR team which can support with individual HR issues.
- **Departmental Workplace Adjustment Team or Civil Service Workplace Adjustment Service:** These teams have experience of providing adjustments and may be able to offer solutions or draw on experience.



The Charity for Civil Servants

The **Charity for Civil Servants** offers a range of support for **carers**.

- The **Carer's Passport and Carer's Statement Digital Tool** enables carers to consider how their caring impacts their working lives, before completing their Civil Service carer's passport, and provides them with a Carer's Statement for use outside the workplace
- The Charity also offers financial assistance, health and wellbeing support, a dementia support service and a Carer's Emergency Plan
- Civil servants can access the **Carer's Digital Resource** via the 'Our Carer's Digital Resource' site and register for an account; resources include:
 - information on all aspects of caring, such as benefits, assessments, technology and looking after yourself
 - e-learning on 'You and your wellbeing', 'Young adult carers' and 'Working and caring'
 - access to the Carers UK 24/7 Carers Forum
 - access to the Jointly app, for free (also available in Welsh)
- The Charity also offers carers:
 - **relationship** support
 - the **Grief Works** app
 - **webinars** for carers
 - **dementia support**, in partnership with Dementia UK

Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) achieves Level 3 Carer Confident Accreditation

In November 2021, DWP successfully achieved Ambassador Level 3 Accreditation in the Carer Confident benchmarking scheme, becoming the first UK Government Department to achieve this.

In the 2021 Civil Service People Survey:

- 26% of DWP colleagues identified as being a carer
- 14% of DWP carers said they had a carer's passport.
- 72% of DWP carers know where to access information and support in their organisation
- 75% of DWP carers feel supported by their manager in balancing work and caring

These are some of the carer initiatives that DWP have introduced which have contributed towards their Level 3 accreditation.

- Formal recording of carers on their HR systems which provides quantitative insight to shape their Workplace Transformation Programme.
- Monthly departmental wellbeing pulse surveys including specific questions about carers.
- An improved induction process to identify carers from day one and signpost them to the support available.
- Fortnightly carers working group meetings to discuss current priorities and gather feedback.
- Bringing together leads from each of their national staff networks to ensure that DWP takes a cohesive approach to any activities affecting colleagues, including carers, in their department.
- Sharing best practice with members of the Civil Service Carers' Network and promoting the benefits of Employers for Carers membership.
- Introducing Carer Advocates to provide a safe space for carers to share concerns and receive guidance, as well as providing a valuable source of information for line managers.
- An ongoing review of the package of support through regular dialogue with their carers.
- Introducing a specific section for carers in their special leave policies to ensure that managers are taking a consistent approach.
- Working collaboratively with wider staff networks to support the development of cross - Civil Service products for carers.
- A dedicated Carers Hub which acts as a central place for support, signposting and links to external stakeholders.
- Delivering line manager awareness sessions and promoting the Line Manager Toolkit. These sessions began as part of their Carers' Rights Day campaign and are being held monthly.

Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) achieves Level 3 Carer Confident Accreditation

Some feedback from the sessions:

Manager feedback

“ Wasn't clear about carer's passport. I am now though. ”

“ This gives me confidence to know how to better support my team. ”

“ Love the consistency and awareness this brings. ”

Carer feedback

“ I understand about the carer's passport now and how it can help. Will do one now. ”

“ So helpful to know what special leave is available, especially non-emergency appointments. ”

“ Flexibilities help you stay in work and make so much difference. ”

“ For me, having a Carer's Passport is invaluable. It provides me with piece of mind, knowing I have reasonable adjustments and a working pattern that allows me to meet my caring responsibilities, work commitments and look after my own wellbeing. ”

Dianne Thompson, Universal Credit
North East Inclusion and Engagement Lead



A message from the Civil Service Carers' Network

When the Civil Service Carers' Strategy was launched in February 2020, senior leaders committed to creating a carer-inclusive Civil Service and the Civil Service Carers' Network (CSCN) was delighted to offer its support to help realise that vision.

Being a carer can be difficult. As well as the emotional toll, there is a great deal of additional work needed. Carers procure and manage care contracts, build and manage multi-disciplinary teams of professionals and volunteers to ensure complex care needs are met, organise logistics with military precision, manage long-term financial plans, act as counsellors and physiotherapists, provide personal care and navigate complex family dynamics.

We gain patience and perseverance and learn to be assertive and challenging when needed. We also appreciate the power of supportive and helpful services and understand how to build them. Supporting carers can be seen as a 'cost' but the list above illustrates how many skills carers can bring to work if included.

The events of the last two years have been unprecedented but have only reinforced our belief in the benefits of a carer-inclusive Civil Service. In supporting carers to help their loved ones and maintain their roles, the Service gains from the additional knowledge and expertise we bring as carers.

What has been achieved this year.

- From the outset of the pandemic, the CSCN has been engaged in discussions on how carers could be supported through the rapidly evolving situation from the first lockdown to returning to the office. Our networks tell us that the resulting guidance made a real difference when implemented by their organisations and reduced the negative impact of the pandemic on carers.
- We created our first Civil Service Live event on carers matters in June and held a 'Celebrating our Carers' event in November to build awareness and understanding. Alongside other planned events, we directly engaged over 3,000 colleagues.
- We collaborated with Civil Service Human Resources in the design and delivery of the Line Manager toolkit which was launched in November to help managers understand how to engage and support carers.
- We helped in the design of the new HR data standards for carers which will allow the Civil Service to better understand its caring colleagues and tailor support effectively.
- We built our network to encompass and support 42 organisational carer networks covering an estimated 70% of colleagues in the UK Civil Service.

A message from the Civil Service Carers' Network

What do we want to achieve by 2025?

- A Civil Service that truly understands who and where its carers are.
- That carers feel as engaged, as included, as valued and as safe at work as non-carers.
- That every carer has access to the support of a carers' network.



Insights from the 2021 People Survey

Every year, civil servants fill out a questionnaire asking them about their work experiences.

This People Survey helps us to understand the characteristics of carers in our workforce. The results help us to develop our carer provision and priorities for the coming year.

In autumn 2021, 327,388 people, from 101 Civil Service organisations, completed the survey giving an overall response rate of 62%. The results for carers were as follows.

- **20%** of respondents said they were a **carer**.
- **62%** of carers identified as **females** compared to **38%** of carers identifying as **males**.
- The **age group** with the highest number of carers was **50-59 (42%)** year olds followed by those aged **40-49 (25%)**.
- **24%** of carers said that they had a **long-term condition, illness or disability** compared to **69%** of carers who do not.
- More carers work **full-time (77%)** than **part-time (23%)**.
- The **Employee Engagement Index** for carers was **62%**.
- **74%** of carers responded **positively** to the question - **I feel supported by my manager to balance my work and caring responsibilities**.
- **61%** of carers responded **positively** to the question - **As a carer, I know where to access information and support in my organisation**.
- **12%** of carers said they had a **carer's passport**, **68%** said they did not and **20%** said that they did not know what this was or how to get one.

We will undertake a further in-depth analysis of the Civil Service People Survey results to identify any issues affecting carers which need addressing. This will ensure we provide the most effective support for our carers.

What we have delivered

June 2021 – May 2022

In early 2020, we launched our Civil Service **Carers' Strategy** setting out our plans for improving Civil Service carer provision over the following 5 years.

As well as supporting our carers through the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made the following progress on the priorities we identified in last year's report.

- **Encourage a more consistent approach to the use of special leave to support carers.** In discussion with the Civil Service Carers' Network, we have issued revised special leave guidance. This gives more examples of when special leave may be given to carers, made other changes to help managers deal with these requests sympathetically and emphasised that annual leave does not need to be exhausted before special leave is granted.
- **Promote the use of the carer's passport and its speedy completion by managers.** We have continued to stress the value to managers and employees of completing a carer's passport in all our communications about carers.
- **Support the Civil Service inclusion Champion for Carers and departmental Carers' Champions to implement this Strategy including developing a hub to enable departments to collaborate and share resources. Appoint a Deputy Civil Service Inclusion Champion for Carers.** In summer 2021, Alex Chisholm appointed Rebecca Sudworth, Director of Policy at the Food Standards Agency, to be the Deputy Civil Service Inclusion Champion for Carers. To support all the Civil Service Carer Champions, HR and Diversity and Inclusion staff and Carer Network leads, we have launched an online hub to share resources and facilitate the sharing of best practice.
- **Recognise the potential benefits for carers of the new hybrid working arrangements being introduced in the Civil Service while ensuring their needs are considered during its detailed implementation.** The model hybrid working guidance developed by Civil Service HR for use by departments includes advice on supporting carers and was drawn up in discussion with the Civil Service Carers' Network.
- **Raise manager capability by producing a video showing the benefits for managers of the carer's passport, working with the Civil Service Carers' Network to develop a line manager toolkit and considering ways of improving the Civil Service Learning offer for carers and their managers.** In collaboration with the Civil Service Carers' Network, Civil Service HR has produced a model line manager toolkit for use by departments to raise manager capability. The new Civil Service Induction programme provides information on the support offered to carers and their managers. The raising manager capability video will be developed to build on lessons learned in the Year of Implementation 2022 – 2023.

What we have delivered

June 2021 – May 2022

- **Promote the recording of diversity data by carers and continue to analyse the data from the annual Civil Service People Survey. Pursue a uniform approach to collecting carer data on HR systems to understand the demographics of our carers and address any barriers to inclusion.** The HR systems covering 40% of civil servants will shortly ask staff to indicate whether they are a carer and whether they have a carer's passport. We will then work to extend this coverage.
- **Highlight the challenges faced by Young Carers and the practical support available.** We have been encouraging young carers to join the new Civil Service Young Carers Network. Rebecca Sudworth highlighted their contribution in a blog on Young Carers Action Day 2022.
- **Celebrate the special skills, life experience and insight that carers contribute to the work of the Civil Service.** Alex, Rebecca and departmental champions have used blogs and their attendance at various carer events to emphasise the value they place on the contribution made by carers to the work of the Civil Service.
- **Continue to communicate regularly with employees about available carer support, using case studies, senior leader, carer and champion messaging and highlighting key events.** Carers Week, Carers' Rights Day and Young Carers Action Day have provided a focus to enable the Civil Service centrally and individual departments to draw attention to the support available to carers through messaging and events.
- **Maintain strong working relationships with the Civil Service Carers' Network to ensure the progress on the HR policies review reflects the needs of carers in the workplace.** In collaboration with the Civil Service Carers' Network, we have held focus groups with carers on a number of policy areas. The concerns raised have been reflected in our changes to the special leave guidance and in the line manager toolkit.
- **Encourage and support departments to apply for Carer Confident accreditation and help departments progress to Level 3, the highest level in the scheme.** We are delighted that the Department of Work and Pensions has become the first department to achieve Level 3 accreditation, the highest level in the scheme. In addition, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Government Legal Department have achieved Level 2, and Crown Commercial Level 1.

Our plans for June 2022 – May 2023

We have made significant progress over the first two years of the strategy.

We have created a number of core products for use across the Civil Service. These include the Carers' Charter, the passport, the line manager toolkit and guidance on the use of special leave. Now is the time to ensure that every carer is aware of the support available to them and every manager is encouraged to listen empathetically to the carers who work for them with an eye to finding solutions which work for the individual and the team.

We have therefore designated this a 'Year of Implementation'. Over the next 12 months, we will take the following actions.

- Ensure that the **carer's passport** and supporting video are readily accessible on intranets across the Civil Service, run a publicity campaign to promote their use and hold focus groups to understand what more can be done to encourage take up.
- Ensure managers across the Civil Service have access to the **line manager toolkit** and take steps within departments and agencies to actively promote its use.
- Encourage the use of **special leave** to support carers across the Civil Service, promoting the revised guidance to ensure a consistent approach within departments and agencies.
- Undertake a monitoring exercise to ensure all employees in departments and agencies have access to **the full suite** of centrally-produced carer support products.
- Ensure that the needs of carers are taken into account in developing arrangements for **hybrid working** with agreed flexibilities reflected in carers' passports.
- Promote the new arrangements for **recording** employees' carer status on departmental HR systems.
- Continue the work on **HR policies** to ensure these reflect the needs of carers in the workplace.
- Support the work of **carer networks** and encourage the formation of new networks.
- Encourage the development of local initiatives to support carers, and share departmental and external **best practice**.
- Encourage coverage of carer provision in **induction** materials.
- Support departments to apply for **Carer Confident accreditation** and to progress to level 3, implementing the commitment in the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: 2022 to 2025.

Our plans for June 2022 – May 2023

- Encourage larger departments to **buddy up** with smaller organisations to help them develop and promote their carer provision.
- Carry out a deep dive analysis of Civil Service **People Survey** results to identify any issues affecting carers which need addressing.
- Encourage departments to provide opportunities for carers under the **Going Forward into Employment** scheme.
- Support the Civil Service Inclusion Champion for Carers, the Deputy Inclusion Champion and departmental Carer Champions to **implement** this Strategy.

We will continue to engage with departmental Carers' Champions, the Civil Service Carers' Network and with the members of our Cross-Government Group on Carers so that carer concerns and issues are taken on board in our evolving agenda. We will publish another progress report in Carers' Week 2023.

