

Severn Group

Carers Leave Policy



APRIL 2024

Introduction

Severn Group recognises that many people at some point in their working lives will take on the responsibilities of caring for others, whether children, elderly relatives, partners or other dependents. These responsibilities can demand a significant time commitment, and employees may find it difficult to balance their work and caring responsibilities. We recognise the important role that carers play in society and are committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where individuals feel empowered to discuss their needs and access necessary accommodations and adjustments without fear of stigma or discrimination. This Policy outlines our commitment to supporting employees with caring responsibilities and is part of Severn Group's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive atmosphere for all employees.

Policy Statement

- We recognise that many employees will have caring responsibilities for a dependant at some point in their working careers.
- We believe in providing reasonable adjustments and accommodations to ensure employees with caring responsibilities can perform their roles effectively and maintain a positive work-life balance.
- We are committed to building awareness and understanding of caring through education and training initiatives.
- We maintain a strict policy of confidentiality regarding employee personal information, including information about family members and dependents and related accommodations.

Policy Aims

This Policy aims to educate and inform employees at Severn Group about the additional challenges faced by working carers and how they can support carers in the workplace.

All employees should endeavour to understand these challenges and related issues, and how they can affect colleagues. This Policy and associated training and procedures will seek to raise a wider awareness and understanding among the workforce and outline support and reasonable adjustments that are available.

The purpose of this Policy is to create an environment where carers feel confident enough to raise issues about their challenges due to caring responsibilities and ask for reasonable adjustments and additional support at work.

The Approach

Definition of a Carer

Severn Group defines a carer as anyone who cares for a dependant with an illness or injury that is likely to need care for at least three months, a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010 or a care need related to old age.

We recognise that caring responsibilities might be long term or short term (for example, after an accident) and might include the following:

- physical care
- personal care
- communication care
- emotional support
- collecting and administering medications
- providing emergency care
- practical household tasks
- budgeting
- looking after younger siblings
- taking a disabled child to a hospital appointment
- moving a parent who has dementia into a care home
- accompanying a housebound dependant on a day trip
- providing meals and company for an elderly neighbour while their main carer is away with work for the day

We recognise that caring responsibilities might happen suddenly, for example with someone who has taken ill or has been in an accident or may develop gradually over time such as in the case of an elderly or disabled dependant.

Definition of a Dependand

Dependants can include:

- husband, wife, civil partner or partner
- child
- parent
- a person who lives in their household (not tenants, lodgers or employees)
- a person who relies on them for care, such as an elderly neighbour

Eligible Employees

This Policy applies to all employees who have caring responsibilities.

Key Provisions

1. Reasonable Adjustments

Employees can request temporary or permanent adjustments to their work schedule, schedule, or duties to manage caring responsibilities, such as:

- Flexible work arrangements (for example remote or hybrid work, flexible hours, compressed hours, job sharing, etc).
- Flexible practices: relevant for on site jobs and includes such adjustments as on site parking, shift pattern adjustments, etc.
- Reduced workload or deadline extension options.
- Refer to the Flexible Working Policy.

2. Employee Resources

We provide access to internal and external resources for information, support, and guidance for carers, such as:

- Educational materials and online resources
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) counsellors
- Mental health first aiders
- Your local HR Representative

3. Confidentiality and Non-Discrimination

- Ensure all discussions and information related to caring responsibilities and accommodation requests are treated with confidentiality and sensitivity.
- Prohibit discrimination or harassment against employees with caring responsibilities.

4. Carers Leave Requests

- Employees can request up to one week of unpaid carers leave per year, in consultation with the organisation, in order to carry out their caring responsibilities.
- Carers leave may be taken as a week's block or as single or half day.
- Employees should contact their Line Manager as early as possible to inform them of their particular caring commitment and to request leave.
- An employee might need to care for more than one dependant. In these circumstances, they can still only take one week of carer's leave. But they can use the week of leave for more than one dependant.
- All requests will be treated in full confidence.
- The Carers Leave Request Form is available on the HR System (Cezanne).

- An employee is entitled to a period of leave that is equal to their usual working week. For example, if someone works three days a week, they can take three days of carer's leave.
- If the employee needs to cancel the request for carer's leave, this should be done as soon as possible, the Line Manager will consider the request.
- Requests will not be refused, however the request maybe required to be taken at a different time, should the original request cause serious disruption to the Company.
- If the request is delayed, the Line Manager will agree another date within one month of the date the employee originally requested leave for.
- Within seven days of the request or before the leave starts, whichever is earlier, an explanation will be provided in writing as to why the request has been delayed.

5. Policy Review and Continuous Improvement

- Regularly review and update this Policy based on employee feedback and emerging best practices.
- Foster open communication and encourage employees to provide feedback on the Policy's effectiveness.
- There may be instances where national and local governing laws supersede this Policy.

6. Alternative Types of Leave

There are other types of leave that employees could use instead of carer's leave.

For example:

- compassionate leave
- holiday entitlement
- ordinary parental leave
- time off for dependants

The Approach

Data Protection

When managing your carers leave request, we process personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Data collected from the point at which we receive a carers leave request is held securely, accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their request for carers leave.

Agreement to follow this Policy

This Policy is fully supported by The Executive Committee.

This Policy is non-contractual and may be amended at any time.

If applicable, this Policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Policy, Emergency Time off for Dependants Policy, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Harassment Policy, Holiday Entitlement, Hybrid Working Framework, and Ordinary Parental Leave Policy.

All Severn Group Policies can be accessed on the Group Policy Hub.

At Severn Group, our business success flows from expertise – from technical knowledge and experience that position us as a leader in our field. Not everything, however, can be engineered. The Values which underpin that success stem instinctively from the culture we seek to sustain. Everything we do is tested against our Values, and our people are encouraged to apply them every day: they are the stewards of our brand, our reputation, our heritage, our ambitions.



Customer



Integrity



Excellence



Accountability



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Superior Valve Engineering