

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

24th October 2022

Head of People & Organisational Development – Sheenagh Rees

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Employers for Carers Wales Membership

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Member authority to commit to the Carers Wales, Employers for Carers Subscription Membership.

2. Executive Summary

Carers Wales are passionate about promoting the rights of carers in work and encouraging employers to develop and implement policies and practices that support carers to enter and remain in the workplace and to have the opportunity to thrive in their role.

Employers for Carers (EfC) is a subscription membership that offers guidance to employers to implement carer confident work practice. The objective is to provide a toolkit to support employees, who are carers, so that their skills and experience can be retained within the organisation. They provide employers with the tools they need to enable employees to manage their work commitments.

As a member we will have access to The Employers for Carers digital platform full of practical guides, e-learning and toolkits to support carers and line managers in the workforce along with expert consultancy and training services, all tailored to our organisation.

3. Background information

Carers Wales is part of Carers UK - the UK's only national membership charity for unpaid carers. Founded nearly 60 years ago, their mission is to make life better for carers, by giving expert information, advice and assistance and ensuring that employers have the support to retain and empower employees with caring responsibilities.

Every day, about 6,000 people become carers, looking after family or friends who are older, disabled or seriously ill. Furthermore, the outbreak of COVID-19 saw an additional 2.8 million workers taking on caring responsibilities overnight, with many employers estimating that 20-25% of their staff are looking after a loved one outside of work.

The Wales Hub of Employers for Carers has been established to support organisations based in Wales to be more carer confident. 1 in 7 of all employees in Wales juggle work and care for loved ones, who are older, seriously ill or have a disability. This equates to 223,000 workers with caring responsibilities. The most likely people to have caring responsibilities are aged between 45 and 64 - the prime working years when people are at their most skilled.

Without support, 22% of employees with care responsibilities will reduce their hours or give up work. Given the stresses and strains that can result from balancing multiple responsibilities inside and outside the workplace, it is unsurprising that 1 in 6 carers give up work or reduce their hours to care. Carers Wales help to retain them.

A key challenge for employers is that carers are often hidden in plain sight and not comfortable or confident talking about their caring responsibilities at work. For this to change organisations need a dedicated focus on working carers and creating an environment where carers are seen and valued is a key part of this journey.

A Carers UK study of over 200 British businesses highlighted some of the benefits experienced by employers who supported carers in the workplace:

- 92% saw better staff retention
- 88% experienced lower absence
- 69% observed higher productivity
- 61% witnessed improved recruitment.

The Council's Future of Work Strategic Workforce Plan includes priorities to develop actions to help us retain talent, develop an inclusive workplace, where employees feel valued and motivated, as well as supporting the health and well-being of our employees.

4. The Employers for Carers Membership

Membership of Employers for Carers will give us our own personalised digitalised online platform. It contains useful guides, e-Learning for managers, best practice examples, templates, sample policies and case studies; all designed to help build our strategy around supporting working carers. The platform is co-branded to reflect NPT's corporate identity and is available in English and Welsh.

As part of our membership, we will also receive training sessions to raise awareness to staff about carers in the workplace, training for HR and line managers on how to support carers, sessions for carers signposting them to information, advice and assistance and support to establish a Workplace Champions Network.

Along with a dedicated account manager, we will receive a range of promotional materials to help promote membership, available in English and Welsh. We will also have use of EfC logo on job adverts, website, intranets, email footers, etc.

An action plan for the Council will be developed which draws on the internal resources we already have in place as well as resources that will be made available by Employers for Carers Wales, including support to launch and promote benefits and train a pool of 'Employee Champions' who will be instrumental in disseminating messages and information about EfC membership.

5. Next steps

If Member approval is given to commit the Council to the Employers for Carers membership, we will receive an initial consultation/diagnostic session - to identify where we can best build upon our existing policies and practices and how best to implement the action plan.

6. Financial impact

The annual membership fee is £2500.00. This will be funded 50% from the Social Services training budget and 50% by the People & OD Service budget. Continued membership will be determined following evaluation of outcomes in year 1.

7. Integrated impact assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

“A full impact is not required as at this stage there is no identified impact on any protected group; there may of course be equality impacts through the consequential implementation of actions set out in the report. At this stage we do not know how many of our employees would describe themselves as a carer, and therefore we cannot evidence the impact of this initiative. As part of our subscription, Carers Wales will support the council to implement a survey of our employees, to identify carers within our workforce, and from this data we will be able to determine the profile of protected characteristics that applies to these employees and determine impacts of initiatives. Regular monitoring, including equality monitoring, will help the council to identify if any adverse equality risks do

occur in practice and take action to remedy this. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language”.

8. Workforce impacts

The intention behind the Employers for Carers is to have a positive impact on staff who are, or will become, carers and to build a supportive and inclusive workplace to make the most of the talents that carers can bring to the workplace. Trade unions are supporting the initiative and are key members of the project team established to deliver the action plan.

9. Legal impacts

No implications

10. Risk Management impacts

No impact.

11. Crime and Disorder Impacts

No impact.

12. Counter Terrorism Impacts

No impact.

13. Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

14. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the proposal to commit to the Employers for Carers membership.

15. Reasons for proposed decision

To support employees who are carers in the workplace.

16. Implementation of decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

17. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment.

18. Officer contacts

Sheenagh Rees, Head of People & OD, s.rees5@npt.gov.uk

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