



UNPAID CARER'S LEAVE POLICY

SNAPS YORKSHIRE CIO

July 2026

It is recommended that this policy be adopted and included in the 'policy pack' on the SNAPS website, as well as being communicated to all employees.

Introduction

From 6 April 2024, employees will be entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
- a disability (as [defined in the Equality Act 2010](#))
- care needs because of their old age

The dependant does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care.

Employees are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of work for their employer. Their [employment rights](#) (like holidays and returning to their job) are protected during carer's leave.

How Long Employees Can Take

Employees can take up to one week of leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 3 days a week, they can take 3 days of carer's leave. They can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days 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. They can use the week of leave on more than one dependant. If an employee is a parent, they can take up to 18 weeks' [leave to look after their child](#). This is separate to carer's leave.

Employees with Irregular Working Patterns

Work out how much carer's leave the employee can take if their working hours change each week.

- Add up the total number of hours worked in the previous 12 months.
- Divide that total by 52 (or however many weeks since they started the job, if they've been in the job less than a year).



This is the amount of leave they can take as carer's leave.

If an employee wants to take carer's leave in their first week, use the amount they're expected to work in a week as the amount of leave they can take.

How to Take Carer's Leave

Employees need to give their employer 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 2 days, the notice period must be at least 4 days.

The notice period needs to be in full days, even if the request includes half day amounts.

The request does not have to be in writing.

Employees do not need to give evidence of their dependant's care needs.

If you need to [look after someone in an emergency](#), you can take time off for this without giving a notice period.

When Employers Can Delay Carer's Leave

Employers cannot refuse a carer's leave request but can ask the employee to take it at a different time. They can only do this if the employee's absence would cause serious disruption to the organisation.

If they delay it, the employer must:

- 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

Drafted: 5 th May 2025 Approved By Board: 15 th July 2026 Next Review Date: July 2027
