



Employers need to be aware that since 6 April 2024, employees are entitled to take a week's unpaid leave each year if they need to fulfil caring responsibilities for a dependent. An important consideration is when an employer is entitled to postpone a request for carer's leave.

## The basics

Employees are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of employment. The provision means:

- A dependent can be anyone who relies on the employee for care, not just family members. Dependency could be because of old age, a disability, illness or injury.
- One week of unpaid leave can be taken every 12 months, with a week being the length of time normally worked over seven days.
- An employee can take a whole week or take the leave in individual days or half days.
- The minimum notice period to be given to the employer depends on the number of days leave to be taken.

Apart from more obvious examples, carer's leave could be used to care for an elderly neighbour when their main carer is unavailable, or to accompany a housebound relative on a day trip.

As an alternative to carer's leave, an employee might be able to instead take time off for dependents, parental leave or holiday entitlement.

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## Postponement

A request for carer's leave cannot be refused, but an employer can ask for it to be taken at a different time if the employee's absence would cause serious disruption. The request can be postponed for up to one month. Options to consider include:

- Could an employee from another team or branch be temporarily reallocated to cover for the employee taking carer's leave?
- Is the employee open to taking a shorter period of carer's leave, such as a half day rather than a full day, if this overcomes the serious disruption issue?

The Acas guide to carer's leave can be found [here](#)

## We can help

Please call us on **01753 888 211** or email [info@nhllp.com](mailto:info@nhllp.com) if you need guidance with any of the issues raised in this Broadcast. We would be happy to help.