



Carers Policy

The purpose of this policy is to clearly demonstrate how Amaze recognises and supports employees who have caring responsibilities. Amaze understands that some employees with caring responsibilities may experience additional challenges when combining work and caring and this policy sets out what support we provide to enable employees to do this.

Definition of carers

Amaze defines carers as employees with caring responsibilities that have a significant impact on their working lives. Employees who are responsible for the care and support of their CYP with SEND are our primary consideration with this policy, as Amaze is committed to maximising opportunities for parent carers to become part of the Amaze workforce. Carers of disabled, elderly or sick partners, relatives or friends who are unable to care for themselves are also covered by this policy. The activities that carers undertake are wide ranging, including help with personal care; help with mobility; managing medication; practical household tasks; emotional support; challenging behaviour; specific educational needs; help with financial matters or paperwork.

For the purpose of this policy the needs of parent carers are different to those employees with mainstream childcare issues. It is not like mainstream childcare as its circumstances and milestones are different and often more uncertain. With mainstream childcare, the child's journey can be more predictable as he or she grows older, goes through schooling and becomes more independent. For parent carers, the milestones can be different, eg a disabled child continuing to have high support needs as they become an adult.

Commitment to supporting carers

Amaze recognises that some people have caring responsibilities and that carers are an important part of its workforce. It also recognises that some employees may experience challenges in combining work and caring. Additional pressures facing parent carers can lead to stress and Amaze's management and support to staff needs to be flexible and adjusted to suit carers' challenging and changing contexts.

Amaze believes that carers should have the same opportunity to obtain a job within the organisation and keep their job as everyone else and is committed to providing as much support as is reasonably practicable to ensure this, and that we listen and respond to carers' needs when working for Amaze.

Identification and disclosure

Employees are not obliged to disclose to their line manager that they are caring for someone but are actively encouraged to do so. All line managers should ask whether staff they are supervising have caring responsibilities, and should have due regard to issues of confidentiality concerning this information.

Once the carer has been identified the line manager should ensure that they are aware of and feel able to access the range of support Amaze offers. The line manager should complete the Carers Passport (see appendix). The Passport documents the carer's needs in the workplace, identifies support/solutions to those needs, and enables this information to travel with the carer if their job or line manager changes. The contents of the Passport are strictly confidential and treated accordingly – a

copy is kept in the employee's personal folder and held by the line manager/accessed by SLT as necessary, but nobody else in the organisation has access unless with the employee's permission. The Passport should set out what the contact arrangements between an employee and his or her manager would be during emergencies.

It is essential that the Carer's Passport is revisited and kept alive, to avoid it becoming meaningless and tokenistic. Managers are responsible for this and for picking up on the signs when a parent carer is under growing pressure from their caring responsibilities. Parent carers are responsible for communicating and working with their manager to ensure the Passport works well for them.

Flexible Working

All employees with caring responsibilities are entitled to request to work flexibly in order to attend to the needs of the individual whom they care for. Amaze offers various types of flexible working – see Annual Leave Flexible Working and Special leave policy for full details. In addition to this we can offer home/mobile working, job-sharing, PT working, term-time working, flexible rostering, staggered hours, compressed hours and annualised hours. It is important to recognise and Amaze will be clear with staff when they are recruited/appointed that some roles are able to offer more flexible working opportunities than others, eg where certain hours of the day are required to be covered. Staff are usually expected to work ~ 50% of their hours from Amaze's office.

Employees can make a request for flexible working at any stage of their employment (they do not need to wait until they have worked for Amaze for at least 26 weeks, which is what the law states). If agreed it would result in a permanent change to their terms and conditions. Amaze can refuse a request, but will give the employee good business reasons from a specific list which is set out in the law. Employees can appeal against this decision. For further information, please refer to the Flexible Working Policy. Employees and line managers will agree a trial period for any such arrangement – this gives both parties an opportunity – without commitment – to test out the suggested flexible working pattern to see what impact it has both on the business and the employee.

Crisis situations

Amaze recognises that employees with caring responsibilities can't always plan ahead - accidents or illnesses can occur without warning and care arrangements can break down unexpectedly. Emergency leave is therefore important to carers, who can be called home at short notice on such occasions. All carers are entitled to take time off in order to attend to the sudden needs of the individual whom they care for. See the Dependants' Leave section of the Annual Leave Flexible Working and Special leave policy for more details.

Taking Leave

Amaze acknowledges that employees with caring commitments may need further time off to deal with medical appointments/discharge from hospital etc. Employees should discuss with line managers, in advance, any leave which they can reasonably expect to need for their caring commitments so that managers and other members of the team can plan work, meetings and other leave around those dates.

Some types of medical appointments can be booked in advance and carers are expected to book these at the start or end of the working day, to minimise disruption at work. With prior approval, time off for planned appointments can normally be made up later, taken as flexi or annual leave.

Amaze acknowledges that employees with caring responsibilities may need flexible leave arrangements as well as flexible working arrangements in order to manage all aspects of their caring role. The Annual

Leave Flexible Working and Special leave Policy therefore provides leave options which should be discussed with the line manager.

Other support for carers

- Amaze will tailor roles to suit carers' circumstances, eg we will advertise roles flexibly as much as possible, offering a range of hours which might take into consideration carers' responsibilities/ financial circumstances etc (eg carers' allowance thresholds)
- Amaze staff/volunteers can access an Employee Assistance Programme which offers information and advice on some of the practical issues employees may be facing including claiming benefits and allowances, organising respite care, fundraising and obtaining specialised equipment. Line managers will particularly encourage and support employees who are carers to access this support as needed. Amaze also offers access to group reflective practice sessions and/or 1:1 external coaching for staff requiring additional support when they are struggling with the more emotional aspects of their work/workload. Staff with caring responsibilities are prioritised for this support.
- Carers can access Carers UK Digital Resources – a website that contains information about working and caring, and resources to help them balance the two. They need to sign up at www.carersdigital.org using the Brighton and Hove access code: BHCC_JT75
- Amaze's general supervision framework ensures that all staff, especially those with caring responsibilities, are supported to manage their workload and priorities
- Managers play a key role in implementation of this policy and supporting carers. Amaze recognises that each carer's situation is different and may require a different response from their manager, taking into account the whole range of organisational support available. This support will be detailed and agreed in a Carer's Passport. Managers will be supported through their line management on good practice in employing/supporting carers and addressing any challenges they may face. Training and support of managers is vital to ensure they can hear and take on board what a parent carer is saying in an increasingly busy and stressful environment. AMT and SLT can access resources and materials via the Employers for Carers website (<https://efcdigital.org/my> login zoe@amazesussex.org.uk password: HotCro\$\$bunZ)
- When employees who are carers need to take leave, line managers will work closely with staff in the affected team/more widely to ensure work is covered as much as possible. This is important in order that staff who are carers feel able to prioritise their family/dependants and take leave as they need to, without worrying about the wider impact on colleagues in Amaze, our services and the families we support. Where capacity is an issue, SLT will seek to reallocate resources or pause services/projects if feasible. Amaze also recognises the potential for staff who are carers to be disproportionately impacted if/as/when they are asked to cover other staff absences, and we seek to minimise this as much as possible. More frequent checking in and supervision of staff at this point is vital, ensuring managers are listening and that staff feel heard and supported
- All employees with caring responsibilities are entitled to use Amaze resources as appropriate in connection with their role as a carer, eg make use of the telephone/printer at work and access Amaze's parent carer training/materials/advice and support services. Such arrangements will be discussed and detailed in the Carer's Passport
- Carers can identify and access further training and support they would find useful via their regular supervision sessions, eg managing stress
- Amaze understands the challenges that carers face and is committed to providing as much support as is reasonably practicable. Amaze's SLT and trustee board are committed to raising awareness of caring, maximising carer friendly policies, ensuring equal treatment of carers, taking proactive steps to maximise employment of carers and creating an open workplace culture supportive to carers. We are working towards the Carers' Confident Benchmark. We welcome suggestions from all staff

on how we may further improve the working environment to be better equipped to deal with the varying needs of carers in the workforce. Individual employees can contact the CEO or Chair of the Personnel Sub-Group if they have any issues they feel they can't discuss with their manager.

Appendix

Carer's Passport

The Carer's Passport is a 'live' document to be reviewed periodically and when circumstances change, whether the demands of the job, or the nature of the caring responsibilities. A Carer Passport can be used as a tool by carers to 'break the ice' with their line manager to communicate their caring responsibilities. The Passport enables controlled, structured conversation where relevant support can be recorded, provided and promoted. It should be used regularly to discuss issues – it is only useful if the Passport is actively kept alive by the employee and their manager.

- *Who owns the Passport?* The employee owns the Carer Passport, but it will be saved in the employee's personal folder and accessed by their line manager and SLT on a need to know basis.
- *What is its scope?* This Carer Passport assumes that you are working within parameters set by employment law along with any existing company policies. Therefore, any flexible working arrangements are subject to discussion within the business.
- *How much information?* Aspects of caring are highly personal, and an employee should not need to disclose detailed information about their caring role if they do not wish to. Any information held under the scheme will relate to the carer, and no identifying information about the cared for person will be stored.

This outline will help you as a carer to think through your current situation — both in your caring role and at work.

1. Discuss your caring role and how it affects your work, ensuring your manager understands:
 - What are your caring responsibilities?
 - How does this affect your work?
 - What impact does work have on your caring responsibilities?
 - How do you expect your caring role (and its impact) could change in future?
2. Your manager will ensure that you are fully aware of and understand relevant Amaze policies:
 - What support is currently offered in the organisation: spelling out the key features of the flexible working and leave policies which carers can find useful
 - Carers' rights to request flexible working: you may decide to make a request or keep the conversation to informally agreed arrangements. Your manager will help you navigate this.
3. Get support
 - Do you already receive any support in work to help combine caring with work?
 - What additional support would help you?
 - How can the needs of the team/ organisation continue to be met?
 - Is there (more) support you could get outside of work?
 - Would information and advice about support make a difference?
4. Note any other questions or issues

Use this template to keep a confidential record of the discussion.

1. Caring and work - describing the situation and its impacts:

2. Potential options:

3. Getting support:

4. Agreed actions:

5. Any other issues/support: