

Employers for Carers Task and Finish Group: Employers 'Business Benefits' Survey December 2012 – January 2013

Employers are increasingly recognising caring as a key issue for workforce retention, recruitment and resilience. In the current economic climate understanding why this matters for business has never been so important. To help understand these issues, Employers for Carers conducted an online survey targeted at employers in the UK during the period December 2012 - January 2013. The survey aimed to gather more information on the business benefits of supporting carers in the workplace.

223 employers responded to the survey, however, the number of employers responding to each question differed. Organisations were categorised according to size as follows:

Micro: 1-10 employees

Small: 10-99 employees

Medium: 100-499 employees

Large: Over 500 employees

Summary of findings:

- 88% of organisations were aware of staff that are caring for/supporting older, sick or disabled family members or friends.
- Flexible working (94%), flexible/special leave (83%) and remote working (50%) were among the most popular ways employers used to support carers in their workforce, followed by in-house information/signposting (40%) and other workplace support/employee benefits (29%).
- 56% of employers said that they address carer support on a case-by-case basis and 44% through organisation wide policies, however, many of these suggested that most of the times they use a mix of these methods.
- The majority of employers considered that supporting carers in their workforce had either a major or some benefit in their ability to attract and retain staff, reducing recruitment and training costs, reducing sick leave and absenteeism, increasing productivity and improving service delivery, producing cost savings and increasing staff morale, improving staff engagement, people management and team working.

Findings

1. Awareness

Almost 9 out of 10 organisations were aware of staff that are caring for/supporting older, sick or disabled family members or friends. However, some respondents felt that not all carers within their organisation were identified and, therefore, supported.

Awareness by size of employer Among respondents, 66% of the micro organisations were aware of carers within their organisation, while the same was true for 86% of small, 84% of medium and 94% of large organisations.

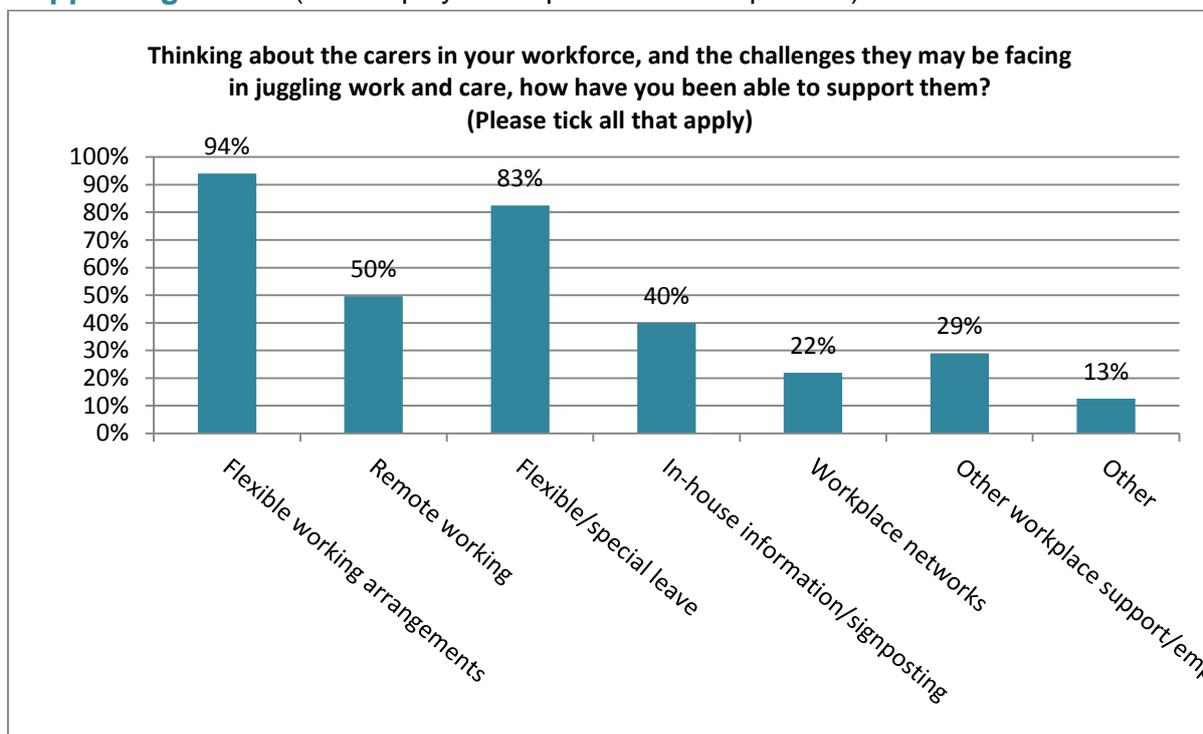
Awareness by sector From the survey data, public and third sector employers were slightly more likely to be aware of people with caring responsibilities within their organisations, with 96% of public and 97% of third sector employers responding positively in contrast to 84% of private sector organisations.

2. Type of support available

The vast majority of employers offered flexible working (94%), while among other popular ways employers used to support carers in their workforce was flexible/special leave (83%) and remote working (50%), followed by in-house information/signposting (40%) and other workplace support/employee benefits (29%).

Other support being offered by respondents included; a specific carers policy, confidential 24-hour help line and counselling, childcare vouchers through Salary Sacrifice Schemes and temporary changes to duties and responsibilities, personal support and manager support.

Supporting carers (183 employers responded to this question)



Support by size of employer Medium and large size employers were considerably more likely to offer flexible working (92% and 91% respectively) compared to 61% of micro and 74% of small employers.

Micro, small and medium size employers were almost equally likely to offer remote working with 28%, 25% and 28% respectively offering this type of support as opposed to 68% of large employers offering the same support.

Smaller employers explained that with fewer members of staff flexible and remote working policies were more difficult to implement in practice.

The larger the employer the more likely it was to offer support in terms of flexible/special leave arrangements, in-house information/signposting and workplace networks.

Support by sector In terms of data by sector of employers, public and third sector organisations were more likely to offer flexible working with 94% and 93% respectively compared with 76% of private sector employers offering this type of support.

Just under 1 in 3 private sector employers in our sample indicated that they offered remote working opportunities, compared to almost 1 in 2 third sector employers and 2 in 3 public sector organisations.

Public sector and third sector organisations were equally likely to offer flexible/special leave arrangements (78% and 80% respectively) compared to 65% of private sector employers.

Public sector organisations were much more likely to offer in-house information and signposting with almost 9 in 10 offering this type of support. Only 1 in 2 third sector employers offered the same kind of support and an even lower number of private sector companies - 1 in 5.

Fewer employers offered workplace networks as a way to support carers with public sector organisations using this method most (25%).

3. Addressing support

Just over half of employers said that they usually addressed carer support on a case-by-case basis and 44% indicated that support is offered through organisation wide policies. Many respondents suggested that most of the times they use a mix of these methods.

As expected, and as also indicated from the survey data, large employers were significantly more likely to have in place organisation wide policies to support carers with just under 2 out of 3 large employers suggesting addressing carer support in such way.

Although it was anticipated that micro and small employers would be more likely to address this issue on a case-by-case basis, it interesting to note that among medium size employers with staff numbers of 100-499, less than 1 in 5 had in place organisation wide policies to address support for carers.

4. Supporting carers: benefits and challenges

The majority of employers considered that supporting carers in their workforce had either a major or some benefit for any of the identified areas. Employers indicated highest benefits for increasing staff morale and loyalty (93%), staff retention (92%) and reducing sick leave and absenteeism (88%).

These were followed by improving staff engagement (85%), improving people management (80%), making team working more effective (75%), improving service delivery (72%), increasing productivity (69%), reducing recruitment and training costs (65%), improving their ability to attract (61%) and producing cost savings (55%).

5. Profile of employers

About one third of employers (33%) employed less than 100 members of staff, just over one in five (21%) employed between 100-499 members of staff and a similar number (22%) employed between 500-4,999 members of staff. Just under one in four (24%) had more than 5,000 on their payroll.

Excluding responses in the “Other” category, the most represented sectors were care services and social work activities, health services, public administration and defence and banking, financial and insurance services.

Most respondents in the survey (46%) represented employers from the private sector, while 38% came from the public and 17% from the third sector.

Number of employees (187 employers responded to this question)

