

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife become a 'Carer Positive' employer

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife (CARF) became a [Carer Positive](#) Employer in October 2016 having achieved the Engaged level. The award acknowledges CARFs commitment to help and support employees who have an unpaid caring role to a dependant who is affected by age, long-term illness, disability or addiction who could not manage without this help. There are three levels of a Carer Positive Employer: Engaged; Established; Exemplary.

As we were already working towards our Gold Award in Healthy Working Lives, applying to become a Carer Positive employer seemed a very natural step to take as it fitted well with our ethos of encouraging staff to maintain a healthy work/life balance - both mentally and physically.

To achieve this award CARF provided evidence that we met the 5 criteria required: identification of carers, providing practical support, policies, awareness raising/training and peer support.

During the application process CARF developed a Carers Policy to sit alongside other HR Policies. This policy allows for employees to identify themselves as a carer and to be entered onto the Carers Register. As each employee will have differing caring responsibilities, they are given a Carers Passport to complete in which they outline the level of their caring responsibilities. A Carers Pack providing useful information has also been developed and is also given to the employee upon joining the Carers Register. To date a number of staff have come forward and asked to be placed on this Register.

It has now become a fact of life that due to an ageing population and people working later in life that some employees will find themselves with a caring responsibility at one point or another. Our aim is to work closely with staff to ensure their needs are identified so we can provide the right level of support; our staff are one of our biggest assets with many years' experience, knowledge and skills so it is vital that we recognise their needs to allow them to carry out their dual role. We encourage peer support to all staff and have observed a natural, informal support between colleagues which has emerged without any intentional or formal intervention.

So what is our next step? To become a Carer Positive 'Established' Employer of course so watch this space!