

Carer Positive



Case study Nine: **Carer Positive**

NES recognises that for carers, balancing work and caring responsibilities can be challenging and stressful at times. NES identified the Carer Positive initiative as an opportunity to seek accreditation for the existing support provided to carers within our workforce, and also as a means of focusing what we could do to improve, and to raise awareness of this important issue. Carer Positive is a Scottish Government funded initiative which recognises employers who are aware and supportive of unpaid carers in the workplace. The award is given out based on five main criteria, which cover everything from how carers are enabled to identify themselves, what policies, employee assistance and peer support mechanisms are in place, as well as the way this information is communicated to the workforce.

Carers can experience high levels of stress when balancing work with caring responsibilities and this can result in feeling unable to sustain employment or progress in their career. By promoting the support available to carers and raising awareness among line managers, NES' commitment to Carer Positive seeks to support the wellbeing and mental health of the NES workforce, to enable carers to continue in employment and to access training and development opportunities. Research suggests that caring responsibilities are disproportionately taken on by women, and our work in this area is likely to have a positive impact on gender equality. We actively seek to support both female and male carers.

The work undertaken to date has involved the following:

- Project team was established between Human Resources (knowledge of practical/policy support) and NMAHP (leading the programme Equal Partners in Care, an educational and workforce development programme supporting staff in health and social services)

- Identified what we were already doing well:
 - policy support such as flexible working, special leave for carers, home working
 - practical support; an organisation commitment to agile working practices such as access to BT Meet Me, video conferencing in all offices and desktop and email access from home, which make flexible working feasible
- Through commitment to the project, NES also improved in the following areas:
 - data captured at recruitment and workforce record asking whether or not a staff member is a carer; we are currently working to ensure this functionality transfers to our new HR management database, eESS
 - new section on the NES intranet created pulling together details of practical/policy support and also contact details of local support services in each region
 - raised awareness through articles in the staff newsletter NES Express, emails, Staff Conference and Carer Positive Award Presentation event
 - utilising the work carried out by Equal Partners in Care (EPiC), training is now available for line managers to understand importance of supporting carers and how to recognise transferrable skills during recruitment

We achieved the Engaged level of the Carer Positive award in 2015 and have maintained this.

[Continued >](#)

Case study Nine: **Carer Positive** (Continued)

Next Steps:

- Carer Support strategy team are keen to gauge interest in establishing a formal peer support network among staff who are carers

The work that we have carried out to achieve this award helped us to improve our understanding as an organisation of the needs of carers and the complexities they face. It has also encouraged carers within the organisation to identify themselves as a carer and to access support they need.

As a holder of the Carer Positive kitemark we are able to use the logo, which acts as a symbol that NES supports carers at work, builds reputation as an 'employer of choice', and encourages potential applicants who are carers to seek employment with NES. This will be on our recruitment pages and has also been added to all our stationery templates.



You can read more about our work on equality on our website at:
www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity



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