

Welcome to the second e-bulletin for working carers.

This month we will be looking at flexible working, the types available and links to newspaper articles which may be of interest. As well as an opportunity to create a professionally written Will in exchange for a donation to our charity.

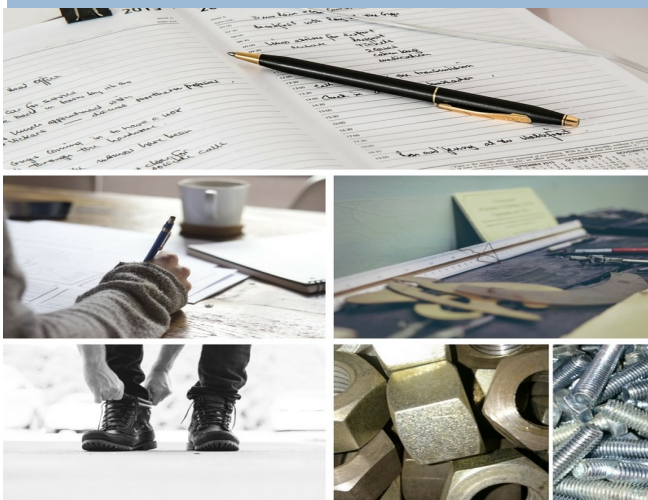
Flexible working

All employees who have worked for their employer for more than 26 weeks have the right to make one application per year for flexible working. Your employer has to give reasonable consideration to your request, although they will obviously need to take into account the needs of the business and possible impact on other colleagues.

Producing a well-thought out application to work flexibly will help you and your employer work together to reach an agreement which suits both of you.

The request must be made to your employer in writing and your employer must consider your request reasonably and have sound business reasons for turning down your request.

You don't have to tell your employer why you would like to work flexibly but you are more likely to identify a working arrangement that works for both you and your employer if your employer has this information.



Types of flexible working

Your request for flexible working could include:

- A different start or finish times to fit around your caring role
- Compressing your hours – for example, working 4 longer days instead of 5 days a week
- Job-sharing (you work 2 days and another person works 3 days a week)
- Term-time working (you don't work when the school are off for summer holidays, half-time etc)
- Reducing your hours (instead of working 37 hours a week, you ask to work 21 hours instead)
- Working some of the time from home (for example, it could be a request to work 50% of your hours 'working from home' or you are able to have a more informal agreement to work from home when you have a project that requires you to focus on that work).
- Flexitime- allows employees to choose, within certain set limits, when to begin and end work.
- Career breaks- or also known as sabbaticals, are extended periods of leave – normally unpaid – of up to five years or more.
- Shift Swapping – workers given freedom to swap shifts between themselves, ensuring the shifts are covered
- Zero-Hours Contracts – employers only provide employment when there is work to be done. The staff remain employees, but are contracted for no set out hours.

There are a wide range of options but it depends on the industry you work in, the individual employer and the position you hold in terms of what is possible in terms of flexible working.

If flexible work sounds like something you would like to do, I would recommend having a read of this article from Employers for Carers UK website. It covers 10 things you need to know about making your request for flexible working.

<http://www.employersforcarers.org/news/item/1220-flexible-working-requests-ten-things-you-need-to-know>

Make a Will month with West Cumbria Carers

During the month of October, West Cumbria Carers have an opportunity for people to make a Will and instead of paying a fee to the solicitors involved, it is a donation to ourselves. As some of you will be aware, drawing up professionally written paperwork can be expensive. There can also be a reluctance to putting your affairs in order because it means you have to process what could happen later in life, and a difficult time for your family. Emotionally it is hard but having a Will can make the logistics and the aftermath that little bit easier for everyone involved.

I am not a professional, solicitor or have legal expertise so please note this is just my opinion but you need to look at your current situation and think; do I have anyone that depends on me? What would happen to them if I wasn't here tomorrow? Do I have assets like a house, car, even jewellery of worth? Having a Will can also make sure that you don't pay more inheritance tax than you need to (you don't want your family to be faced with a surprise big tax bill). Also remember a Will isn't set in stone, with life, things change, if in a few years you want to make an official alteration, you can. Talking to a professional can be useful if you have a question about an asset you have or if you feel your situation is a complicated.

With this opportunity you will have a professionally written Will in exchange for a donation to West Cumbria Carers. So you can get peace of mind for your future and know that you are supporting young and adult carers in the local area. Sounds like a win-win to me.

Below is the information about our opportunity:

The amount you donation is at your discretion however the suggested donation is **£100** for one will or **£150** for a joint Will.

Please remember this is significantly lower than the amount you would normally be charged for this service.

Solicitors involved are:

Burnetts Solicitors, Cockermouth – Tel: 01900 510366

Milburn's Solicitors, Workington – Tel: 01900 67363

Milburn's Solicitors, Cockermouth – Tel: 01900 898010

There are a limited number of appointments available. I would recommend that you call the office you would like to go to and book an appointment. Please mention 'West Cumbria Carers' when booking your appointment.

If you have questions please call my colleague, **Michelle McGibbon** on our office number- Tel: 01900 821976

Articles of interest

In this section I have picked a couple of online news stories which may be of interest to you. Just click on the links and you will be taken to them. Let me know what your views are by dropping me an email: hannahblake@westcumbriacarers.co.uk

BBC business news article about flexible working and research that people lower on the pay scale are not getting the same opportunities as those earning more. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-37556704>

Guardian discusses if flexible working means that we never 'switch off' from work.

<https://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2016/oct/05/flexible-working-freedom-ever-switch-off>

A new wave of flexible working for parents.

<http://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/the-new-wave-of-flexible-working-good-news-for-working-parents-1-7629193>

We hope you find our new newsletter for working carers helpful and interesting.

If you have something you would like to be included in the next edition, please email hannahblake@westcumbriacarers.co.uk



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