



# Parent and carer supports for SMEs

Lack of support for parents and carers is worse for women as they are more likely to be the main carer for children. Most carers of people with disabilities and older family members are also women. However, male employees are just as likely to benefit from carer supports, as a large number (44%) of carers are male, and men are increasingly sharing in the care of children

## The benefits for your business

Parents and carers make up a large proportion of the Australian workforce. Making sure your workplace supports them can benefit your business through:

- Increased employee wellbeing and productivity.
- Lower rates of stress, sick days and lateness.
- Improved ability to attract and keep employees.
- Better community reputation of your business.

Losing experienced employees due to lack of parental and carer supports can be a big problem for small businesses.

## Who is a carer?

It is easy for you to identify your employees who are parents, but do you know how many of your staff have other caring roles? Carers are people who provide unpaid support to family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, drug or alcohol dependency, chronic condition or terminal illness or who are frail and aged.

There are more than 2.7 million unpaid carers across Australia. But, since many people who have caring roles do not even see themselves as carers, you may need to educate your workforce, to understand exactly how many carers work for you and how best to support them.

## Entitlements for parents & carers

Under the National Employment Standards, your employees who are parents or carers are entitled to:

- Parental leave
- Carer's leave
- Right to request flexible working arrangements
- Rights for parents returning to work

The [Fair Work Information Statement](#) clearly sets out the different entitlements for permanent and casual employees.

For more information, see [A Quick Employer Guide to Supporting Working Parents](#), the [National Employment Standards](#), and your relevant [Award](#).

### Case study: Common Code

Tech company Common Code has just over 30 employees, and offer 8 weeks of paid parental leave to either primary or secondary carers.

The logo for Common Code features a dark grey rectangular background. At the top left, there is a small pink square. Below it, the words "Common Code" are written in a white, sans-serif font. At the bottom left, there is a white horizontal bar, and at the bottom right, there is a small pink square.

Common Code

## Best practice parental & carer supports

Things you can do to support parents and carers in your business:

- Give them access to flexible working and leave arrangements.
- Think about giving them paid and/or unpaid parental leave above the National Employment Standards.
- Keep in touch with employees on extended leave and include them in opportunities for training and promotion.
- Talk to them about their return to work after leave.
- Set up a Carers' Network so employees can connect with and support each other, and provide information and resources for carers.
- Depending on job requirements, where possible provide carers access to their phones during shifts and a room to make care-related calls, access to parking or public transport to help employees who might need to come and go during shifts.
- Educate all staff about carers, and encourage all employees (women and men) to use parental and carer supports.

## Becoming carer-friendly

Carers SA can help businesses become carer-friendly. They provide advice and accredited training for workplaces through the Carers & Employers program. The program provides:

- Educational resources
- Ongoing support
- Staff training

Visit the [Carers & Employers website](#) or [contact Carers SA](#) for more information.



## Links

Australian Human Rights Commission – A Quick Employer Guide to Supporting Working Parents  
[supportingworkingparents.humanrights.gov.au/employers/quick-employer-guide-supporting-working-parents](https://supportingworkingparents.humanrights.gov.au/employers/quick-employer-guide-supporting-working-parents)

Carers NSW – Carers & Employers  
[carersandemployers.org.au](https://carersandemployers.org.au)

Carers SA  
[www.carerssa.com.au](https://www.carerssa.com.au)

Fair Work Australia – Fair Work Information Statement  
[www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/724/Fair-Work-Information-Statement.pdf.aspx](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/724/Fair-Work-Information-Statement.pdf.aspx)

Fair Work Australia – National Employment Standards  
[www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/national-employment-standards](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/national-employment-standards)

Fair Work Australia – Awards  
[www.fairwork.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/awards](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/awards)

