

Dear <Firstname>

We are writing to you about a growing issue facing UK employers – the increasing number of workers who are becoming informal carers, meaning they provide unpaid care for a friend or family member. Supporting carers has long been an issue we are passionate about and Centrica and Carers UK recently announced a three-year partnership to bring a greater focus to this concern.

Carers UK data shows that there are now nearly 5 million people in the UK juggling work with their caring commitments, up from the 3 million previously identified in 2011. Employers are doing more than ever before to support these individuals, but an increasing number – around 2.6 million - are still having to stop work to meet their caring responsibilities.

We believe this is too many and that there are substantial benefits to businesses, society, the carers and those they care for to help as many carers to remain in work as possible. Our experience shows that there is a clear business case for supporting carers with savings from increased retention and ensuring carers don't have to take unplanned absences.

Government estimates suggest that the direct cost to an employer of losing a working carer is between 100%–150% of their annual salary. On a national scale this is a cost of around £1.3bn a year to the economy, and when lost tax revenue and additional benefits payments are considered, this rises to £5.3bn a year. 90% of working carers are over 30 and therefore have lots of experience that employers can't afford to lose.

We are working hard to retain a diverse and skilled workforce through our carers policies which includes flexible working and a carers network. Today, we have announced a change to our carers leave policy to give our carers 10 days paid carers leave followed by two weeks that can be taken with matched annual leave. We will be applying these principles across Centrica globally. It's the right thing to do and we want to support our employees and share best practices with others. We are also working with Carers UK to urge the Government to introduce more support for carers such as mandatory paid carers leave.

We know that many businesses support carers and there are many examples of great practices that have helped carers stay in work. We would encourage anyone interested in this issue to sign up to the Employers for Carers Forum - [www.employersforcarers.org](http://www.employersforcarers.org).

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with your organisation – to share our experience and learn from yours – so that, together, we can help ensure the upward trend of carers giving up work does not continue.

Sincerely,

Iain Conn, CEO, Centrica



Helen Walker, Chief Executive, Carers UK

