



South Derbyshire CVS

South Derbyshire CVS (SDCVS) is a voluntary sector organisation supporting communities, volunteers, and charities across South Derbyshire. The organisation employs staff and engages a wide volunteer network, recognising its responsibility to become a Carer Friendly Employer and provide meaningful support for colleagues with unpaid caring responsibilities.

In early 2025, SDCVS began working with the Derbyshire Carers Association (DCA) to explore what internal changes, training, and policy development were needed to progress toward the Carer Friendly Employer Quality Mark (QM). Initial discussions highlighted the need to improve identification of unpaid carers, strengthen internal policies, and develop a clearer communications approach.

The Challenge

With many staff and volunteers balancing work with caring responsibilities, SDCVS acknowledged the importance of ensuring that colleagues feel able to identify themselves as carers and access the support available.

- Some employees did not initially identify themselves as carers, even when they were providing regular support.
- Policies needed updating to explicitly reflect unpaid carers, parent carers, and dependents leave.
- Recruitment, induction, and training processes did not yet fully incorporate the carers agenda.
- Awareness across all teams varied, requiring improved communication and visibility.

The Solution

Working in partnership with DCA, SDCVS developed a Carers in Employment Action Plan built around processes, training, and policy development.

Carers Identification

- Carer identification was embedded into induction and 1:1 discussions.
- Regular information about carers and support services is shared to encourage colleagues to recognise their caring roles.

Recruitment

- Plans were agreed to add the Quality Mark logo and text with a statement of support for unpaid carers to recruitment pages.
- Pre-interview question ideas were developed to help explore candidates' caring responsibilities where appropriate.

Policies & Procedures

- The Family Friendly Policy was reviewed to ensure clarity on dependents leave and carers leave.
- Definitions of unpaid carer and parent carer were added.
- Flexible working options were reviewed, with consideration of broadening available arrangements.
- The EDI policy was confirmed to already include caring responsibilities.
- The Employee Handbook was confirmed to already acknowledge unpaid carers.

Support

- SDCVS offers flexible working for staff who identify as carers, including short-term carers (e.g., supporting a terminally ill relative).
- Optional workplace health checks were provided, recognising that carers may struggle to access GP appointments.
- SDCVS has Mental Health Champions and has developed a Mental Health Handbook to offer additional support.
- Two Carers Champions have been trained and are raising awareness in the workplace via a carers noticeboard and peer-to-peer support group meetings.

Communication

- Carer support information is shared regularly through newsletters and internal channels.
- All references to childcare now include "caring responsibilities" to ensure inclusive language.
- Carer Champions will receive guidance on raising awareness and marketing resources provided by DCA.
- SDCVS is exploring internal communications options similar to its menopause support system.
- The Carer Friendly Employer logo and text will be added to the external website upon achieving the Quality Mark.

Review and Impact

Quarterly reviews with DCA and Carer Champions.
Bi-annual reviews will assess positive outcomes and shape future improvements



Feedback

SDCVS colleagues have welcomed the focus on unpaid carers and the steps taken to embed support into everyday practice. The development of Carer Champion roles, increased visibility of carer support, and improvements to internal policies have been well-received.

The organisation recognises that becoming a Carer Friendly Employer strengthens staff wellbeing, retention, and morale, helping create a more supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

"Through our work, we see every day the incredible contribution carers make to our communities. We are therefore very proud to be recognised as a carer-friendly employer and to support those who balance work with caring responsibilities."
Hollie Benton, CEO