

BRIEFING

WHO CARES?

TRANSFORMING HOW WE COMBINE WORK WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

A discussion guide to support networks and employees to consider Who Cares?

Business in the Community's (BITC) research has shown that while caring is a mainstream concern, many employees with caring responsibilities – particularly women and those from a Black, Asian, Mixed Race or other ethnically diverse background – find combining paid work with care is extremely difficult, while others – notably men – do not feel supported to try and combine the two.

The Who Cares? Campaign is calling on employers to transform the way we think about combining paid work and care, and so create more equitable and inclusive working cultures – where everyone can care. We are urging businesses and others to:

- **Consider caring the norm, not the exception:** at any one time around half the workforce are combining paid work with caring responsibilities – does your organisation's approach to this topic consider caring a mainstream concern, with a wide variety of people managing all different types of caring alongside their jobs?
- **Champion equal access to care for all genders:** our research found most people want to see people of all genders, men and women, supported to care – but many organisations policies offer much more support to women than men. This is known to undermine gender equality at work.

What could your organisation do to ensure men have more support to care – and so help drive greater gender equality more broadly?

- **Foster a culture that supports men to care:** our research found men were more likely to report that they feel unsupported by their employers in trying to combine paid work with caring responsibilities (specifically around children), than women; beyond policies, does your organisation's culture support men to care?
- **Take a targeted approach to promoting flexible working – reaching out directly to men:** when asked how to help more men to care, the most popular answer given was 'support men to work more flexibly' - but other data tells us women are much more likely to work flexibly than men. Could your organisation do more to support men to work flexibly – helping them to do more caring, and so driving greater gender equality?



HOW NETWORKS CAN HELP

Employee networks or similar 'employee resource groups' can play a powerful role in starting conversations and driving change; to support the above recommendations we recommend your networks consider the following topics for discussion, staff surveys or other 'listening circles' or similar. In this way you can start to consider Who Cares? and what you might like to see your organisation do in the future.

1. How familiar are your colleagues with the support available to parents and carers at your organisation?

Do different groups have the same level of knowledge and understanding about what's available and how to find out more? For example, do people with children have more knowledge than those looking after working age or older adults, are men as informed as women? Are policies clearly signposted, publicly accessible, and promoted to all the organisation? If not, what more could your organisation do to ensure more equitable access?

2. Are the specific support and benefits related to caring, e.g., the amount of paid or unpaid time off available, ability to work flexibly, etc. available to different groups on an equal footing?

Do some groups, e.g., women, or those working in office-based locations / office hours – have greater access to support to care than others? How might your organisation improve access to these benefits? BITC is urging organisations to especially consider how they might ensure their policies around parent carers enable men, as well as women, to care. What more could your organisation do around this?

3. Are there specific policies or activities colleagues would like to see amended or adopted to help improve people's ability to combine paid work and care?

Our research suggests that many people think there are several things organisations could do to better help people combine work and care. Depending on your industry, and the approach your organisation has at the moment, this might include: greater support for flexible working in different roles / functions, more promotion of senior male role models who combine paid work and care, more open conversation around issues related to individual caring journeys, e.g., around fertility and baby loss, to more awareness of how mainstream caring – of many different kinds - is, with greater spotlighting and promotion at senior levels. What would your colleagues like to see happen?

BITC's Who Cares? Campaign has a range of resources to support the above discussions, including a report exploring our research in more detail, case studies of how leading businesses are supporting people to combine paid work and care, and examples of individual experiences – considering what's helped and what's not.

These are all available from the [members only area](#) on our website. You can read the Who Cares? Report [here](#).

BITC is proud to take a trans inclusive approach to our work and seeks to champion equity and inclusion for people of all genders, including trans men and trans women, as well as those who do not identify as any gender, across our campaigns. Throughout this document, the term 'women' is used to include all people who self-identify and engage with current/prospective employers as such. The term gender equality is used to describe equality for individuals of all genders, as well as those who do not identify as any gender.