

Accounting for caregiving employees

“Caregivers are more likely to face workplace discrimination, such as loss of responsibilities, denial of promotions or pay rises. A gendered perspective is also necessary to understand the challenges of inclusion: more than half of caregivers are women, rising to 60% in cases of intensive dependency.”

Introduction

In 2021, France had more than 9 million people providing care to a loved one experiencing a loss of autonomy. Given the ageing population, an increasingly large share of the public is affected by this status.

While the widespread adoption of hybrid and remote working (HRW) is often seen as an opportunity by employees to better balance work and personal life, the experience of working caregivers deserves closer attention.

The key issues of caregiving and HRW

Among the millions of informal caregivers, 61% are in employment. On average, working caregivers are 42.2 years old and spend 9.8 hours per week caring for their relative(s). Caregivers represent a growing segment of the workforce: by 2030, one in four employees will be a caregiver. Caring for one's relatives is no longer just a private matter but a real issue for employers.

What are the challenges of supporting caregivers HRW?

Impact on caregivers

Whether they work mostly on-site or remotely, caregiving employees have to juggle personal and professional obligations within the same day, or even the same hour. Remote working is sometimes viewed as a way to better manage these demands and create a healthier work-life balance: by working from home, caregivers may be able to take breaks to care for their loved ones, accompany them to medical appointments, and so on.

However, it is important to note that remote working, if not properly managed and supported, may fail to deliver the expected benefits for employees: there is a risk of physical and mental exhaustion, especially if no breaks are taken throughout the day. Similarly, working caregivers may become isolated from the team because they are less physically present and may be perceived as less available.

Employers must therefore support these employees, taking into account **health considerations, quality of working life, and the dynamics of team management in an HRW environment.**

Impact on the team

Maintaining team cohesion in hybrid and remote settings is a major challenge of this new way of working. This is especially true when addressing the needs of caregiving employees, who may be working remotely more often and may feel disconnected from the rest of the team.

Employers need to be transparent about remote working arrangements and any additional days that may be granted to support caregivers. If caregivers are allowed more remote working days than their colleagues, clear communication and transparency are essential to avoid feelings of unfairness. **This open approach also helps to highlight employees' needs and encourages mutual support and empathy within teams.**

Ideally, a balance should be struck between the flexibility required by working caregivers and organisational needs (e.g. in-person meetings, project tracking, etc.).

Impact on working conditions and career development

Caregivers are more likely to face workplace discrimination, such as loss of responsibilities, denial of promotions or pay rises. **More than 15% of caregivers fear their career development will be hindered, and 13% have already experienced some form of stigmatisation.** A gendered perspective is also necessary to understand the challenges of inclusion: more than half of caregivers are women, rising to 60% in cases of intensive dependency.

Recognising the role of caregivers

Fostering a culture of compassion

The first step in offering support is to create a climate of trust and to encourage open dialogue. Caregivers are sometimes subject to negative or stereotypical perceptions from colleagues. A sense of trust is essential, so caregivers feel comfortable discussing their role and needs — if they wish to do so. Creating a compassionate culture can also involve designating "caregivers point of contact": employees who serve as key points of contact for information and referrals to appropriate support mechanisms.

Developing an HRW policy tailored to caregivers

As a matter of fact, caregiving responsibilities are as diverse as caregivers themselves. The goal is to help these employees manage both their work and personal lives, and to prevent burnout and depression. A tailored policy could include collective agreements establishing caregivers' leave, psychological support, or partnerships with specialist organisations, particularly for legal or administrative help.

The role of HR and management

Managers



- Monitor signs of fatigue or burnout among working caregivers
- Contribute to a supportive atmosphere and communicate sensitively with the team

Human resources



- Provide support and training to managers on recognising and managing the risks faced by working caregivers
- Integrate the specific needs of caregivers into corporate HRW policies
- Ensure equal opportunities in career development



Further Reading

- [California Employers Association, “The Remote Work and Caregiving Dilemma”](#)
- <https://www.employers.org/blog/2023/10/26/default/the-remote-work-caregiving-dilemma/>
- [Forbes, “New Research Shows Remote Work Essential For Caregivers”](#)
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/glebtsipursky/2023/01/27/new-research-shows-remote-work-essential-for-caregivers/>