

Part-time Works

**THE PODCAST.**

PART-TIME WORKS SPECIAL: HEALTH & CARING

Asking for what you need to thrive at work

**timewise**

**Standard Life Centre**  
for the Future of Retirement



It's only when you fall out of work that you realise what it does for you: social connection, the dynamics, the social space.

JULIE DENNING



Work is a key part of our lives and the benefits of working go beyond the obvious financial one – it's great for social contact and mental health. But juggling work with caring responsibilities or a long term health condition can be tricky to navigate. The aim of this guide is to help you identify the flexibility or adjustments that might support you, and give you the confidence to ask for what you need.





# Working part-time whilst living with a health condition

- **Firstly, it is helpful to be clear on your rights.**

Might your health condition mean you would be considered as having a disability under the law? Under the Equality Act 2010, you are classed as having a disability if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. For more information on determining whether you have a disability or not, please visit the government’s web page [here](#).

- If so, then you can **talk to your employer** – and any potential employers – about the reasonable adjustments you may need. Reasonable adjustments are designed to prevent you from being put at a disadvantage, compared to non-disabled colleagues.

- **Reasonable adjustments** can open the door to a discussion about informal flexible working arrangements, as well as more formal ones. For example: adjusting your start and finish times, or sometimes working from home.
- NB you are under no obligation to disclose your disability or condition, whether you are in a recruitment process or already employed. However, Julie Denning in our podcast recommends an ‘up front chat’ during recruitment: “Almost as a test to see how they respond, and to figure out whether they will be a good employer to work for, bearing in mind your needs.” [The Acas website also recommends an up front chat.](#)

## What are reasonable adjustments?

These are adjustments an employer must make, to safeguard you from being at a disadvantage, when compared to other colleagues. Reasonable adjustments may mean that your employer should provide you with equipment to help manage physical limitations when working. Or, it could be that your condition limits the amount of time you can work each week, as Shaline encountered in [Episode 1](#), after experiencing post cancer fatigue.

## How can I make a request for reasonable adjustments?

You can do this:



**In writing** – for example in a letter or email



**In a meeting with your manager** or potential employer – the [Acas website](#) has good advice on how to plan for a meeting about reasonable adjustments.



**Through a formal process**, if the organisation has a process set up for requesting reasonable adjustments.

The disability charity [Scope](#) recommends putting across a request in writing and keeping records of your requests and responses.

## Where can I get more help and support?

The government provides support for people to get into and stay in work through its **Access to Work programme** – you'll find more information and a helpline number [here](#) (as at June, 2025).

Some employers may have specialist health provision, such as the vocational rehabilitation service **[Working to Wellbeing](#)**, where Julie Denning in Episode 3 works. This is an organisation that gives individuals 1:1

support on returning to work after a health event. The interventions can be physical, psychological or both.

One exercise that may be useful, is to develop a **[‘Wellness Action Plan’](#)**. This is a document that showcases what you need in work to maintain your health. Ideally your healthcare practitioner would feed into this with advice on what to do, when you have flare ups. [Mind has some useful tools](#), to help you write a Wellbeing Action Plan.

Yes you can just about function in everyday life – but how will you function in work? What happens when you have a flare up? How do you alert your line manager?

JULIE DENNING



# Working part-time to fit with caring responsibilities

Many of the challenges around maintaining a job whilst caring, centre around needing ad hoc and often unpredictable periods of time off. It is good to know what your carers rights are (as at June 2025):

- Under the Carer's Leave Act 2023 (enacted April 2024), employees who provide care for someone with a long-term care need can take up to **5 days of unpaid leave, per year** for caring responsibilities. This will be pro-rated if you are part time.
- This entitlement can be taken as full or half days. This right is available from the very first day of employment.
- You also have the right to **reasonable unpaid time off** if a dependent is ill or injured, or if their care arrangements are disrupted.
- Many employers will also grant emergency leave or special leave. Emily Holzhausen, CBE, of Carers UK suggests checking your employer's policies. This could include paid leave classed under 'special leave'. Talk to your line manager and your HR function, if you have one, about how to access this.
- Everyone has the right to ask for flexible working from day one in a new job, for any reason. Take the time to really figure out what kind of flex would help – perhaps occasional homeworking or changing your start / finish time. Things like this, can be agreed informally.
- Do look and see if you are eligible for Carer's Allowance, if you are not already receiving it. In April 2025, the Government announced that carers would now be able to earn £196 per week whilst still receiving Carer's Allowance. This is equivalent to working 16 hours on National Living Wage (without overtime or bonuses).
- If you are caring for a child, parental leave is also available if you have been working somewhere for at least a year. This is available to any parent or guardian, who looks after a child under the age of 18. An employee can take **18 weeks' leave per child** in total, and a **maximum of four weeks** per year – though please note that this is unpaid.



# How can I raise my caring responsibilities with an employer or a prospective employer?

- While you are under no obligation to disclose your caring responsibilities to an employer, we would recommend that you do. The Equality Act is in place to protect individuals from discrimination and inequality. You can choose to do so at any point. And if you do choose to disclose, you do **not** need to disclose who you are caring for and why, should you prefer not to.
- Asking some questions during the recruitment process about an organisation's policy to support parents and carers could leave you in a better position to make a decision, about whether this is the right employer for you, or not.
- You might want to consider suggesting that you draw up a Carer's Passport with your manager.

Carer's Passports are intended to help you set out clearly how your organisation can support you with your caring needs, and are designed to be transferable so that if your manager changes, you have this agreement in writing. You can find template Carer's Passports, [here](#). While not all organisations have adopted this formally, and some won't have an awareness of the scheme at all, you may find yours is open to using one to support you.

We would also recommend visiting the following websites for more information on work and care:

[Carers UK](#)

[Carers Trust](#)

[Employers for Carers](#)

A Carer's Passport helps to create a sense of what is needed, which is especially useful when line managers change. It means that key informal flexibility has to really be considered. It helps managers and workers know where they are.

EMILY HOLZHAUSEN CBE

