

CARING WHILE WORKING OR STUDYING

If you have significant caring responsibilities, you will need support at work or study.

THE RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE HOURS

The Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 gives carers the right to ask for changes to their working arrangements.

Examples of “flexible work” include part-time work, compressed hours, shift work, working from home, more time off in school holidays and adjusted starting and finishing times for the work day.

Make a time to talk to your employer to work through your request for flexible work and any questions or concerns your employer may have. You need to make your request in writing. Employers are required to consider and respond to requests within three months. They can say no to your request, but only on the grounds provided by the Act.

Learn more at the Department of Labour's website www.dol.govt.nz/worklife

WHO QUALIFIES?

You need to have been with the employer for at least six months before making the request. You can only make one formal request in any 12 month period, but you can talk to your employer informally at any time about varying your working arrangements.

NEGOTIATING EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS

Every employee must have a written employment agreement. This can be a collective agreement or an individual agreement. You can negotiate a variation to your terms and conditions of employment in this agreement.

The Department of Labour's website has an online tool called the Employment Agreement Builder. It includes draft clauses about hours and days of work etc, which can be modified to reflect your caring situation and the individual flexibility you negotiate with your employer.

WHO TO CONTACT

Make a time to talk to your employer about your caring situation (or your manager or human resources manager if you work for a larger organisation). They should be aware that you may sometimes need time out to attend medical appointments or cope with unexpected situations or need their understanding if the person you support is unwell or in hospital. It might also be helpful for colleagues to know that you have a caring role, so they can help at difficult times.

IF YOU GET STUCK

If you have no luck talking with your manager, then talk to their manager, the person who leads the organisation or someone from Human Resources. If you are a member of a union, seek its advice.

EMPLOYMENT AND STUDY

Balancing your carer role with work or study can be challenging. Here are some sources of help available to you:

CAREER SERVICES

Career Services is a government organisation that provides independent career information, advice and guidance. They help anyone at any stage of their career. This includes free information and advice for:

- young people (and their parents, families, whanau and mentors) who may be at school, about to leave school, in tertiary training, having a gap year or who have left school early and are unsure about their career plans
- job seekers, including people who are currently out of work, in between work, actively looking for a job or returning to work, for example, after raising a family or returning from overseas
- people looking to improve their skills or change their career path.

Career Services employs Maori and Pasifika consultants who regularly run hui and fono (meetings) designed to provide customised career planning assistance to Maori and Pasifika peoples.

WHO TO CONTACT

Free information and assistance is available online at www.careers.govt.nz or by talking in confidence to a careers advisor.

Phone 0800 222 733

WORK AND INCOME

Work and Income can help you plan for and move into training or paid work.

Phone 0800 559 009

STUDYLINK

StudyLink is a service of the Ministry of Social Development. StudyLink helps make sure students get the finance and support they are entitled to so they can complete their study.

Phone 0800 88 99 00



EPDA AND PAI LAUNCH PARKINSON'S DECISION AID

UP TO DATE INFORMATION ABOUT PARKINSON'S, ASSEMBLED BY EUROPEAN PARKINSON'S EXPERTS, IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR EVERYONE.

The European Parkinson's Disease Association (EPDA) and the Parkinson's Association of Ireland (PAI) have worked together to launch Parkinson's Decision Aid (PDA), an online educational toolkit that seeks to put people with Parkinson's in the best possible position to make the right choices so they themselves can actively work with their healthcare professional to improve their quality of life and make informed choices together.

Una Anderson-Ryan, PAI Chair commented:

"On behalf of the Parkinson's Association, I would like to endorse and support this wonderful project. We are very concerned that people with Parkinson's often do not get the right information to help deal with their condition, and I feel this new life-line will help them. We encourage all people with Parkinson's, their families members and healthcare professionals to use this aid."

Knut-Johan Onarheim, EPDA President, welcomed the launch, stating "the EPDA is delighted to be working in partnership with the PAI in making this significant resource available to the country. The PDA is an

invaluable tool for people with Parkinson's and the families and will aid them in asking the right questions at the time so that they can take part in managing their condition, which will ultimately improve their quality of life."

With so much variable and confusing information currently available via the internet, the PDA is both timely and essential. It provides a wealth of up to date information about Parkinson's that has been researched and reviewed by European Parkinson's experts, and has been written in an easy-to-understand style for everyone.

Launched in Ireland during Brain Awareness Week (8-14 March) PAI galvanised its members, branches and support groups to disseminate the PDA leaflet to the general public and healthcare professionals via hospital clinics, doctors surgeries and pharmacies. The leaflet serves as a gateway to the PDA website, www.parkinsonsdecisionaid.eu.com and the much-needed validated information gathered. Freely available to everyone, it has been designed to suit all needs, and offers information for the different stages of Parkinson's as well as treatment options, diet and exercise advice.