

# EQUALITY FOR CARERS

BY BRIAN BARCLAY-SESSION SUPERVISOR

With Carers Week upon us, it's the perfect time to reflect on the incredible challenges faced by unpaid carers and explore ways to support them. Carers Week in Scotland is an annual campaign, held this year from June 9th to June 15th, and aims to raise awareness of these challenges and advocate for better support.



Brian Barclay. Session Supervisor,  
Hamilton Citizens Advice Bureau.

As a part-time doctoral student, full-time employee, and carer with a young family, I've experienced first-hand the struggles of balancing study, work, caring, and family responsibilities. Many unpaid carers face inequalities such as poor health and educational outcomes due to their caregiving roles. With so much to juggle, there's often little time for personal pursuits, career advancement, or social activities like sports events or catching up with friends.

I'd like to highlight two institutions that have supported me and share how other employers and educational institutions can make a difference for carers.

**An understanding employer and educational institution will reap the benefits.**

Throughout the year, I have classes and assignments to complete, along with caring and family-related issues that demand my attention. As a PhD student, these tasks often involve draft chapters, planning, and supervisor meetings, with peak activity around critical assessment moments.

Academics typically operate on a 9-5 schedule, just like I do. To attend essential progress reports and meetings, I need to request time off work. My employer has always supported me in this, and it's not just an act of selflessness on their part; it's a mutually beneficial relationship.

What I learn from my education often feeds back into my job, enhancing ways of working and providing insights that might not have emerged otherwise. The support and understanding of my employer and management have enabled me to achieve greater equality with other students and overcome potential obstacles.

Similarly, my university has been flexible and understanding, not only in its policies but also in the support and understanding from my supervisors and law school academics. They offer online meetings so that I can attend during work hours and I really value the feedback from these sessions.

The university itself benefits from research that reflects diverse perspectives and life experiences. Supporting students from various backgrounds allows a richer quality of research, which offers unique and varied insights.

In summary, unpaid carers often struggle to balance their caregiving roles with other responsibilities, like employment or education. With understanding and support, both the carers and the institutions that support them can benefit.

An employer who cares will undoubtedly reap the rewards.

You can find out more about Carers Week and help for carers [here](#).

If you need advice, information, or guidance on the help you may be entitled to when caring for someone, Hamilton Citizens Advice Bureau is here for you. Please do [get in touch](#).

