

CARER

POLICY

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1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to outline the support which the University offers to our staff who have a caring responsibility, in order to:

- help them balance their working and caring commitments, and continue to be resilient and effective in their work role; and
- help the University to recruit and retain staff with caring responsibilities.

2 DEFINITION OF CARER

For the purpose of this policy, a carer is a member of staff who provides or intends to provide either:

- a substantial amount of unpaid care on a regular basis for an individual who is ill, older and/or frail or disabled; or
- ad hoc care, where there is a change in circumstances or health of an individual who is ill, older and/or frail or disabled

The individual requiring care must be someone who reasonably relies on the staff member for their assistance in all of the circumstances.

3 KEY PRINCIPLES

The University recognises that some of its staff will have responsibility for the care of ill or disabled relatives, children, partners or close friends. Dealing with the demands of these caring responsibilities and work will often be challenging.

The University is committed to supporting Carers in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Identification as a carer: Members of staff are encouraged to identify themselves as a Carer, where appropriate, to their line manager and/or the Human Resources Directorate;
- Offers of and request for support: Where a member of staff has identified themselves as a Carer, guidance shall be provided on the support available to them. Carers are also encouraged to request specific support where required, in accordance with this policy;
- Reasonable consideration of support: Sympathetic consideration will be given where support is requested by Carers in accordance with this policy, based on a shared understanding of the situation, its impact on the Carer's work and the consistency of treatment with other staff in a similar position.
- No unfair treatment: Staff who have identified themselves as a Carer and/or requested support in accordance with this policy will not be treated unfairly as a result; and
- Confidentiality: A staff member's identification as a Carer and support requested will be disclosed no wider than is necessary to ensure the effective day-to-day running of University business.

4 SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR OUR CARERS

4.1 Applicable Policies and Support:

There are a range of potential support options for Carers contained within the University's policies, in particular:

- Flexible working: Carers employed by the University for 26 weeks or more can request temporary or permanent changes to their working patterns to suit their individual needs as a Carer. For example, the Carer could request:

- a change to their start or finish times, to allow them to visit a disabled relative at key times during the day and provide assistance;
 - an annualised hours contract, to allow them to work full time at certain points in the year and on a reduced basis at others, to allow them to accompany and support their ill partner or relative during intensive medical treatment; or
 - part time hours for a temporary period to allow for caring responsibilities until e.g. the person cared for has finished a course of treatment or other care arrangements are in place. This period may be reviewed, amended or extended with the agreement of the University.
- [Ordinary Parental Leave](#): Carers employed by the University for one year or more can request up to 18 weeks' unpaid Ordinary Parental Leave, to care for their child (up to the age of 18).
 - [Homeworking](#): In certain circumstances, Carers can apply to work from home or another remote location on a temporary basis. This could, for example, assist where the Carer's caring responsibilities involves providing lunch for an older parent near to the Carer's home address. Homeworking would allow the Carer to combine work on, for example, one day per week with caring over their lunch break. Whilst a homeworking is normally carried out an employee's private dwelling, consideration will also be given to applications to work from another location (e.g. the home of the individual requiring care, where they live a considerable distance from the employee's home).
 - [Special Leave \(Time Off For Dependants; Compassionate Leave\)](#): The University's Special Leave Policy provides further details of the types of time off that may be appropriate for Carers. This includes:
 - [Dependant's Leave](#): In the event of an emergency involving a dependant and to make necessary long-term arrangements for their care, Carers can take a reasonable amount of unpaid dependant's leave. This can assist e.g. where an older parent falls, is taken to hospital and requires follow-up care to be arranged.
 - [Time off for healthcare meetings with doctors or professional carers](#): Carers can request unpaid time off to attend healthcare meetings with doctors or professional carers, to support the person they care for. However, subject to agreement with the Head of Department/School or their designated nominee, it may be acceptable for staff to make up the time off rather than taking unpaid leave or using annual leave. Where unpaid leave is being taken this should be notified to Human Resources, who will in turn advise the Payroll/Pensions section of the Finance Office.
 - [Compassionate Leave](#): In the event of the death of the individual cared for by the Carer, compassionate leave may be sought in accordance with the policy.

Applications for leave and amended working patterns noted above will be considered in accordance with the terms of the relevant policies. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate Carers needs, this will be the subject of discussion and cannot be guaranteed.

4.2 Additional Support

In addition, Carers have access to other support, advice and assistance which includes:

- [Staff Counselling and Employee Assistance Programme \(PAM Assist\)](#): This programme is designed to help staff acquire the skills to deal with challenges to a balanced and productive life at work and home, which can be acute for our Carers. Benefits include:
 - A telephone helpline, which is available 24/7.
 - Up to 6 face-to-face counselling sessions, which are offered near the staff member's home or place of work.
 - Access to an online resource, providing information and advice on a range of topics including the wellbeing of Carers.
- [Chaplaincy](#): The Chaplaincy provides opportunities for Carers to spend time in worship, quiet thought, a community environment or meditation. The team of multi-faith Chaplains can provide assistance to Carers, which includes bereavement support.

- University Carers network: For information on the University's Carers network, please contact the [HR team](#).
- External support: The following external support and advice may be of assistance to Carers:
 - [Carers UK](#)
 - [Carers Scotland](#)
 - [Carers Trust](#)