

**CARERS GUIDELINES**

BU is committed to ensuring that members of staff are able to balance their work and caring responsibilities.

The University recognises that many staff may have caring responsibilities at some stage in their lives.  Staying in work or returning to work while undertaking caring responsibilities may feel like a daunting prospect and staff may find it helpful to take some time off or to ask the University if they can work flexibly.

There are seven million carers in the UK - a number that continues to rise. More than four million carers provide up to 19 hours of unpaid care for a family member or friend each week and of these, more than three million are still in paid work.

Getting a balance between being a carer and working can be challenging but not impossible. BU aims to support a balance between work and caring responsibilities.

**Who is a carer?**

Carers are a diverse group and every caring situation is unique. Carers are people who care on an unpaid basis for a family member, a friend or another person in need of assistance or support with daily living.

**What is caring?**

Caring is defined as being responsible for the care and support of a disabled, elderly or sick partner, relative, child or friend who is unable to care for themselves. Caring may mean a range of things. Your role as a carer will depend on the person you care for, which could include:

* Caring for elderly or frail parents
* Looking after parents or relatives with dementia or mental health illness
* Looking after disabled children
* Looking after partners with temporary, chronic or terminal illnesses

Caring activities may include:

* Help with personal care, (for example getting a parent out of bed and dressed before work)
* Practical household tasks (cooking, cleaning, washing up, ironing, dealing with correspondence)
* Help with mobility
* Being called to school because their disabled child has had a fall or incurred an injury
* Managing medication
* Answering personal alarm calls at all hours
* Emotional support
* Help with financial matters or paperwork

**Statutory rights**

Supporting carers is fundamental to the BU values and ethos, and we are committed to meeting the legal requirements:

* The right to request flexible working
* The right to time off in emergencies (time off for dependents)
* The right to parental leave
* Protection from discrimination

The Care Act 2014gives local authorities a responsibility to assess a carer’s needs for support, where the carer appears to have such needs.

**How to support carers**

Employees are encouraged to advise their manager of their caring responsibilities so that the appropriate support can be offered if needed.

We understand that carers can’t always plan when they need time off or if they need flexibility in their work. They may be called away because of an emergency involving their dependent. This can be extremely stressful for the employee.

If someone you manage has caring responsibilities, it will be helpful to:

* Talk to them, and get a good understanding of what their specific needs are - you could make this a regular feature of 1:1 meetings
* Remember confidentiality
* Consider what adjustments may help to combine work with caring duties
* Managers should recognise that staff with caring responsibilities are not always able to plan ahead for time off for dependants
* Encourage staff to be open with their situation - it is difficult for you to offer support if you are not aware of what they are dealing with
* Ensure they use their annual leave entitlement. For carers a regular break can be necessary due to the extensive hours involved in the caring role, and because caring itself can be very stressful. Many carers often wait until 'crisis point' before accessing short breaks, however accessing short breaks earlier will hopefully prevent ever reaching crisis point at all
* Ensure staff are aware of their entitlement to special leave & support services available (see below)

**Other practical support**

Other ways in which we can support our staff include:

* Allowing them to be able to answer their personal phones during working hours
* Agreeing a contingency in case they get called away at short notice. e.g. if they are on reception duty – how will this be covered?
* Making a referral to Occupational Health if you have any concerns about their health or wellbeing
* Thinking creatively about how to solve their issues
* Seeking support from your Human Resources team if necessary

**Policies and Support Services**

The University operates a number of policies and support services to support carers in the workplace.

Information about the full range of support services for staff is available [here](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/occupationalhealthwellbeing/servicesandsupport/), however the University provides the following leave schemes to help provide a supportive working environment for carers:

[**Right to request flexible working**](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/flexible-working.docx)

This policy allows you to request a permanent change to your current working pattern.  Any employee may [make a request.](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/flexible-working.docx)

The ability to work flexibly is the most important work issue for parents and carers. As managers you are encouraged to support your staff who are parents and carers by giving serious consideration to whether they are able to:

* Change start and finish times
* Swap working days from time to time
* Work from home if possible

As a manager you are empowered to make these decisions.

**[Family and Domestic emergencies - Time off for Dependents](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/family-and-domestic-emergencies.doc)**

The University will provide reasonable unpaid leave in the event of an unforeseen family and domestic emergency which requires immediate attention.  Examples may include:

* A dependant becomes ill, is injured, gives birth or dies
* To arrange care for a dependent who becomes ill or injured
* An unexpected incident involving a child at school or on a school trip.

Further information is available [here.](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/family-and-domestic-emergencies.doc)

[**Career Break**](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/career-break-scheme.doc)

A career break is an extended period of unpaid leave from the workplace and can be used to provide a period of care for a dependant.

The [Career Break Scheme](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/career-break-scheme.doc) confirms our commitment to arrangements to enable you to balance work with other commitments and responsibilities outside of work. A career break can allow you to undertake other activities and return to work without a break in service.

The University’s [Career Break Scheme](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/career-break-scheme.doc) outlines the application process and the criteria you need to meet to apply.

**[Compassionate Leave](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/special-leave.doc)**

Up to 3 days’ paid leave may be granted in the event of a serious illness, accident or death of a close relative or a dependent living as part of your family. This may be extended up to a maximum of 5 days in exceptional circumstances, for example if an incident occurred abroad.

**Unpaid Leave**

You may exceptionally wish to request unpaid leave from work for personal reasons, for example to support a partner or family member. Requests can be made to Line Managers.

**Other Support Services**

In any workplace around the UK, about 1 in 9 people are working while being a carer. Carrying on working can benefit a carer, their employer and the person they care for.

If you are a carer, it is important to [look after yourself](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/your-emotions/looking-after-someone-with-cancer/emotional-support.html#313287). It helps in your caring role, in your relationship with the person you care for and in your work life.

The University provides the following services to help provide a supportive working environment for carers:

**Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

The [EAP](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/occupationalhealthwellbeing/eap/) (provided by Workplace Wellness) is staffed by specially trained advisers, who provide unlimited support, advice and information to staff members to help deal with their concerns. The helpline service can also be used by staff dependents living within the same household.

This service can be used for a wide range of issues, including caring advice related to childcare/eldercare/disability care, health problems and illness of a family member.

The service is available 24 hours, 365 days a year Tel: 0800 1116 387.

Alternatively you can access resources online at '[Workplace Wellness](http://my-eap.com/login)' [http://my-eap.com/login] (entering the username '**BUwell**'). For further information, please refer to the [Employee Assistance Programme](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/occupationalhealthwellbeing/eap/) section. They also provide a monthly [wellbeing focus.](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Your%20Wellbeing%20-%20World%20Health%20Day.pdf)

**Human Resources**

The HR team are aligned to Faculties and Professional Services and provide professional HR support, guidance and advice to managers and staff across the University. They provide dedicated support on issues such as discipline, grievance, performance, attendance, change management and employment legislation. The [Human Resources and Organisational Development Structure chart](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/HR-OD_OrgChart.pdf) provides an overview of the Faculties/Professional Services each HR Manager and Adviser supports.

**Occupational Health & Wellbeing**

Members of staff can seek support from Health and Safety, including the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Adviser: [Occupational Health and Wellbeing Adviser](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/)

**Trade Union representatives**

The two recognised staff trade unions at Bournemouth University, UNISON and UCU, represent members both locally and nationally, on matters from working conditions to the national pay agreement. Unions also provide support and advice to their members and offer a range of additional services and benefits.

**University Chaplaincy**

The University Chaplains are available to discuss life concerns and conversation is not restricted to “religious” issues. Many staff and students consult chaplains for counselling and all discussions are kept in the strictest of confidence. The Chaplaincy is located in the Student Centre.

Contact:

24 HOUR EMERGENCY NUMBER (Bill Merrington) 07894 598915

**Equality & Diversity Adviser**

The equality and diversity adviser provides support and advice on issues related to equality and diversity which includes parents and carers.

To find out more about the work at BU please access the [Diversity and Equality page](https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/about/professional-services/equality-diversity) on the main website for more details.

**Dignity & Wellbeing Advisers**

The role of a Dignity and Wellbeing Adviser is to act as a sounding board by giving individuals an opportunity to talk through their concerns with a trained member of staff who will respect their privacy, discuss options and implications, and generally provide confidential and informal support.  The Dignity and Wellbeing Advisers are also expected to champion equality and diversity and wellbeing within the University and to be a positive role model.

[Click here for a list of Dignity and Wellbeing Advisers](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Guide%20Dignity%20and%20Wellbeing%20May%202015.docx).

**Sport BU**

[SportBU](https://microsites.bournemouth.ac.uk/sportbu/) have a fantastic range of activities open to staff, students and the public and are constantly adding new ones to meet members' interests.

**FAQs**

FAQs for carers and for line managers are available [here.](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Carers%20FAQs.docx)

**Useful Websites (external)**

[Carers UK](http://www.carersuk.org/)

[NHS Carers Direct](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/what-is-social-care.aspx)

[NHS Caring & Working](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/employment-rights-for-carers-flexible-working-unpaid-leave.aspx)

[Carers Trust](http://www.carers.org/getting-help)

[Macmillan - working while caring for someone with cancer](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Cancerinformation/Ifsomeoneelsehascancer/Workingwhilecaringforsomeone/Workingwhilecaringforsomeone.aspx)

[Mind website](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/carers-friends-family-coping-support/#.WeYOBU0UmUk)