

**Carers - FAQs**

**I have caring responsibilities, what should I do?**

To enable the University to provide you with the appropriate support, staff are encouraged to advise their manager, in confidence, of their caring responsibilities. If you do not wish to disclose your caring responsibilities to your line manager, you can approach your HR contact for support or the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team for advice and guidance.

**What are my rights as a carer?**

Supporting staff who are carers is fundamental to the BU values and ethos, and we are committed to ensuring that you can:

* Request flexible working
* Have the right to time off in emergencies (time off for dependents)

The Care Act 2014gives local authorities a responsibility to assess a carer’s needs for support, where the carer appears to have such needs. [Carers UK](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-resources/carers-rights-guide) has a downloadable guide on your rights as a carer. This includes information on benefits, getting support, making decisions and rights in the workplace.

**Do I have to receive Carers Allowance to be classed as a carer?**

No. Everyone’s caring situation is different. Carers can have different types of caring responsibilities and can care for different lengths of time. Some carers, but not all, receive or are entitled to claim Carers Allowance.

**As a manager, what should I do if someone discloses that they are a carer?**

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

When a staff member makes you aware that they have caring responsibilities, you should respect the staff member’s wishes in relation to the confidentiality of their caring responsibilities. Upon disclosure, you should:

* Discuss your staff’s needs with them - you could make this a regular feature of their appraisal
* Remember confidentiality
* 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 staff are aware of their entitlement to special leave & support services available
* Consider what adjustments may help to combine work with caring duties

You may seek advice from Human Resources and/or Health, Safety and Wellbeing as appropriate. Further information about policies which support flexible working or leave are available in the [Carers Guidelines**.**](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Carers%20Guidelines.docx)

**As a manager, what sort of adjustments could I make?**

There are many ways line managers can ensure a supportive working environment for carers. This does not necessarily require big changes within the workplace; it can be small adjustments which can make a big difference, such as:

* Allowing carers 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.
* Swap working days from time to time.
* Work from home on occasion if possible.
* Seeking support from your Human Resources teams if necessary

**I am a carer. What should I do if I feel like I can’t cope?**

Speak to your line manager or contact your HR representative. BU has a number of policies to support carers which can help.

We understand that carers can’t always plan when they need time off or if they need flexibility in their work - perhaps because of an emergency involving their dependent – and that this can be extremely stressful. Review the policies and support available to you at BU. It’s also important to recognise the symptoms of stress within yourself.

Remember to take your annual leave. Holidays rejuvenate us all - they give us a chance to recharge our batteries and have some well-deserved time to relax. 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. As such, it's very important you as a carer get a break if you need one. Many carers often wait until 'crisis point' before accessing short breaks, however accessing short breaks earlier will hopefully prevent you ever reaching crisis point at all.

**What policies are available at the University to support carers?**

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 [in](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/occupationalhealthwellbeing/servicesandsupport/) the [Carers Guidelines](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Carers%20Guidelines.docx), however the University provides the following leave schemes to help provide a supportive working environment for carers:

* Flexible Working
* Family & Domestic Emergencies Leave
* Career Break
* Compassionate leave
* Unpaid leave

**Where can I go to for emotional support?**

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

* your line manager
* the [Employee Assistance Programme.](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/wellbeing/eap/) For free and confidential help, advice and support (**including counselling**) 24/7 on any matter, work, home or personal 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)
* Healthcare benefits
* the [HR department](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/professionalservices/humanresources/)
* Occupational Health and Wellbeing Advisers
* Trade Union representatives
* the [University Chaplaincy](http://www.unichaplaincy.co.uk/)
* the Equality and Diversity Officer - provides support and advice on issues related to equality and diversity which includes parents and carers.
* [Dignity & Wellbeing Advisers](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/professionalservices/humanresources/dignityandrespectharassment/servicesandsupport/)
* Sport BU