

Support for staff carers at UAL

August 2014

Many staff at UAL provide care to older or disabled family members or friends. We may be providing care on a short term or fluctuating basis, or our role as carer may form part of our every-day lives.

The caring responsibilities initiative is part of the University's overall commitment to promoting well-being for all colleagues. This guidance is a first step in setting out all the relevant policy and support available to carers at UAL, it covers the following areas:

- Flexible working
- Time off for carers
- Support from your manager
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Counselling and independent advice
- Quiet Spaces
- UAL Chaplaincy
- External Agencies

Keep in touch

We are keen to speak to staff who are carers to find out what other kind of initiatives we could put in place to support you. If you want to find out more, or would like to be part of a network of staff with caring responsibilities, please get in touch.

Please get in touch with us by emailing diversity@arts.ac.uk.

Who are carers?

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

At the time of the last census, 6.5 million people in the UK provided care for a family member or friend. This figure is rising, with an estimated 6,000 people taking on new caring responsibilities every day.

Around 11% (3 million) of the UK workforce are carers, based on this; we estimate that carers account for around 530 staff at UAL. Many provide care to both older or disabled family members as well as younger children; this is known as 'sandwich caring'.

What do carers do?

People's caring responsibilities differ significantly and no two carers' experiences are the same. As a carer, you may be providing support with practical household tasks or personal care, paying bills and providing financial support, administering medication, advocating on behalf of the person, liaising with health and social care services. Carers may need to attend routine hospital or other appointments as well as being called out for urgent matters at any time of day.



Image courtesy of Carers Week: www.carersweek.org

Experiences of Carers

People may develop caring responsibilities gradually over a period of time, or they may arise suddenly as a result of a family member or friend's changing needs. Being a carer can be both fulfilling and extremely challenging.

Combining caring responsibilities with work can feel like a difficult balancing act. Research into the experiences of carers¹ has shown that:

- 63% of carers were not prepared for the impact caring would have on their career
- 42% of carers have reduced working hours because of their caring role.
- 34% of carers have missed out on the chance of a promotion.



Image courtesy of Carers Week: www.carersweek.org

Three in five of us will be carers at some point in our lives. We may take on short term caring responsibilities, for example, if a partner or relative is recovering from an illness, we may have fluctuating responsibilities, in response to the fluctuating health of the person we care for, or we may develop longer term, ongoing responsibilities.

¹ 'Prepared to Care: Exploring the Impact of Caring on People's Lives' Carers Week, 2013.
http://www.carersweek.org/media/k2/attachments/Prepared_to_Care_FINAL.pdf

Support for Carers at UAL

Our aim is to create working environments which are supportive of the needs of carers. All staff are entitled to access support, advice and to request flexibility in order to enable them to balance caring responsibilities with their work.

There are a number of support mechanisms available for carers at UAL, including:

- The right to request flexible working
- Leave arrangements for when urgent issues arise.
- Counselling and independent advice through the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Quiet Spaces for when you need time for reflection, or rest during the day.
- UAL Chaplaincy

Flexible Working

All staff can make a request for flexible working; you do not need to give a reason for your request but it can help to discuss your particular needs with your manager. Examples of flexible working arrangements include:

- **Adjusting working hours:** Coming in to work earlier so you can leave earlier, or if the adjustment is for a short period, making up the hours at another time.
- **Part-time working**, working fewer hours than a full time contract, working alternate weeks, term time only working.
- **Working staggered hours or compressed hours.**
- **Job Sharing:** This is an arrangement where two people carry out the duties of a job that would normally be done by one person.
- **Flexible Shift Working** This is where different groups of staff do the same job over different shift patterns and can ask for particular shifts that suit their needs or, with management agreement, swap shifts with co-workers.
- **Home Working:** Working from home all or part of the time on a formally agreed basis. Occasional home working should be agreed with your manager but doesn't need to be formalised through a flexible working request.
- **Reduced Hours or periods of unpaid Leave.**



[Click here](#) or search online for UAL Flexible Working Policy

Time off for carers

There will be times when you need to be away from work to attend to the person you care for. These may be planned absences agreed with your manager in advance, or urgent absences which require you to be called away at short notice.

There are a range of different options available. Arrangements will be made depending on the reason for being away and the length of absence:

- **Paid leave** if the person you care for is admitted to hospital or is taken seriously ill.
- **Taking Time off in Lieu or adjusting your working hours** so that you can accompany a child or the person you care for to hospital or other appointments.
- Taking **annual leave, unpaid leave** or **parental leave** in order to support your child or the person you care for, for longer periods of time.



[Click here](#) or search online for UAL Special Leave Policy

Support from Managers

Managers can support staff with caring responsibilities in the following ways:

- Allowing space in 1:1s to discuss flexible working arrangements and special leave arrangements where necessary.
- Agreeing for the member of staff to have some space and time to take calls during the day.
- Agreeing a means of contacting the member of staff in an emergency (e.g. if an urgent call comes through while you're in a meeting).
- Arranging cover if staff are called away urgently.
- Discussing how best to make other team members aware of your caring responsibilities, where necessary.

Employee Assistance Programme

The University provides an Employee Assistance Programme, an advisory and counselling service that is free to all UAL employees. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week online and on the phone. The EAP will aim to answer your questions immediately, or will refer you to the most appropriate advisor, counsellor, or source of information, including legal, financial, consumer and personal – all completely confidentially

The EAP offers face to face and structured telephone counselling. Appointments can be arranged, where appropriate, offering short-term solution-focused therapy to assist you to manage the challenges that you are facing in your life.

You can also access guidance and clarity on points of law, process, rights, the consequences of a particular course of action and signposting to further sources of support and information.

The Employee Assistance Programme website Livewell also has a wealth of information on beginning a family, parenting and care giving.



[Click here](#) or search online for the Employee Assistance Programme

Quiet Spaces

Each University site has a space for students and staff to rest, use for health reasons (such as expressing milk or taking medication) as well as undertaking prayer or personal reflection. Taking some time out in the day to clear your mind or get some rest can make a big difference. To find out about Quiet Spaces on your site, visit: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/diversity/quiet-spaces/>

UAL Chaplaincy

The UAL Chaplains offer pastoral and spiritual care to students and staff. If you would like to have a private talk with one of UAL's Chaplains, or to be put in touch with one of UAL's other faith advisors, please contact William Whitcombe w.whitcombe@arts.ac.uk or Mark Dean m.w.dean@arts.ac.uk. Visit the [chaplaincy website](#) for more information.

Support and Advice Agencies for Carers



Carers UK is a charity set up to help the millions of people who care for family or friends; providing information and advice about caring alongside practical and emotional support for carers. Carers UK's Advice line: 0808 808 7777

www.carersuk.org



Carers Trust is a major new charity for, with and about carers who work to improve services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems. To find your nearest Network Partner, call 0844 800 4361 or visit

www.carers.org.



Carers Week is a UK-wide annual awareness campaign which takes place in June. Its aim is to improve the lives of carers and people the care for. The Carers Week website contains information about the experiences of carers, as well as where to get further advice and guidance.

<http://www.carersweek.org/>



Many people need both emotional and practical support to help with caring for someone with cancer. We have trained specialists who provide this support in the community, including social workers, counsellors, and children and family workers. To find out about the support available in your area, call our Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00.



If you are caring for someone living with a terminal illness who has been told that they may not get better – Marie Curie Cancer Care can help you. Whether you want to find out about our services for carers and families or take a look at our short film guides, this website can help you find the information you need.



The MS Society has publications specifically for the families and carers of people with MS, including a carers handbook, Man's guide to caring, and a guide for young carers. Call our confidential MS Society helpline on 0808 800 8000

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.
JOIN US.

The Parkinson's support and research charity work to find a cure and improve life for everyone affected by Parkinson's. Thousands of wives, husbands, children, friends and family all over the UK support people with Parkinson's and we are here for everyone affected by the condition. Call our helpline on 0808 800 0303 for more information or visit our [website](#).

Stroke
association

The Stroke Association provides support to carers and stroke survivors to support them in making everyday living that bit easier. Whether it's someone to talk to, information on stroke and its impact or the support available in your local area. We're here for you. Call us: Helpline: 0303 3033 100 or visit our [website](#) For more information, please see our free factsheet [Stroke: a carer's guide](#)

**Rethink
Mental
Illness.**

Rethink Mental Illness was established by carers and our aim is to give them, and those they care for, a voice in every aspect of mental health provision. We believe that carers play an invaluable role in helping people recover from severe mental illness and that they should be acknowledged, valued and supported. We have developed a range of services to meet the complex needs of carers for people with severe mental illness, and are ideally placed to work in partnership with commissioners to deliver. [Find more information about our Carer Support services.](#)

**Alzheimer's
Society** | Leading the
fight against
dementia

Alzheimer's Society is a [membership organisation](#), which works to improve the quality of life of people affected by [dementia](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Their [website](#) has information about many aspects of caring for a person with dementia. A useful starting point may be our factsheet, [Understanding and respecting the person with dementia.](#)