



THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
HUMAN RESOURCES
GUIDANCE FOR CARERS

1. Introduction

The University of Sussex is committed to providing equality of opportunity and developing work practices and policies that support work-life balance. This institutional statement signposts the support available to staff who are seeking to take some form of parental leave, be that Maternity Leave; Paternity Leave; Shared Parental Leave; Adoption Leave; Parental Leave; or may have a caring responsibility in order to manage their work- life balance.

2. Support for staff on Parental Leave

The University of Sussex is committed to, where practicably possible, always backfilling roles where members of staff are embarking on a period of parental leave, where the period of leave is longer than two weeks.

The following are a range of inclusive University policies which can be used to help support staff who require time off for parental leave:

1. **Maternity Leave:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=e48.pdf&site=302>.
2. **Paternity Leave:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=patguide.pdf&site=302>
3. **Shared Parental Leave:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/business-services/familyfriendlypolicies/sharedparentalleave>
4. **Adoption Leave:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=adoption-guide.pdf&site=302>.
5. **Parental Leave:** <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/documents/parleave.pdf>
6. **Purchasing Additional Annual Leave:** [Annual Leave Purchase Scheme \(ALPS\) : Reward and benefits : Human Resources : University of Sussex](#)

How to book leave:

The forms to book the appropriate leave can be found on My View:

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/payrollandpensions/myview>

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3. Support for Carers

3.1 Definition of a carer

A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because they are minors, or because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.

3.2 Support

Caring can sometimes place demands on staff and at times it may be challenging for them to combine work and caring responsibilities. Therefore, the University has adopted the following principles:

- To give sympathetic consideration to requests for support from those who have caring responsibilities, based on a shared understanding of the situation and its impact at work.
- To ensure that staff with caring responsibilities are treated fairly.
- To handle requests for support with discretion and tact.

3.3 Provision for support to carers

The following are a range of inclusive University policies which can be used to help support staff who require time off for a caring responsibility:

a) **Flexible Working:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/business-services/policies>

The policy has been developed to support flexible working arrangements to help employees achieve, if possible, more balance between their working and non-working lives. Flexible Working allows employees to vary their working arrangements to provide more flexibility. Employees may request a change in the hours they work, a change in the times they work, request temporarily to work from home, or work on a hybrid basis.

Flexible Working requests can be made at any time during the member of staff's employment; there is no qualifying period. If a request is refused, all staff have the right to make a further request after 12 months.

b) **Special Leave:**

In certain circumstances employees may apply for special leave to cope with difficult or unusual situations not covered by other policies. This might include:

Compassionate Leave

The University recognises that employees may be faced with difficult personal circumstances involving the serious illness or death of a dependent or close family member. The University understands that, during these situations, employees may need to take time away from work and may require additional support. Individual circumstances, the nature of relationships and the required observances of different religions may vary. Therefore, compassionate leave is granted at the discretion of the individual's line manager, when the member of staff is unable and would

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not be expected to, carry out normal work and where it would be unreasonable to expect the member of staff to bear the expense of leave without pay. Examples of such compelling reasons would be the death of a close relative, the serious illness of a member of the family, or the illness of a dependent which requires the presence at home of the member of staff.

It is not possible to itemise every example, or how much leave should be granted in each case, but it is normal to grant between three and five days. An HR Business Partner or HR Associate should be consulted before granting more than five days.

Hospital/Clinic Appointments

When it is not possible to make appointments with GPs (unrelated to pre-natal), Dentists and Opticians out of work time, then these appointments should be made at the start or end of the working day in order to minimise disruption.

Parental Leave Policy: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/documents/parleave.pdf>

Parental Leave gives parents the right to unpaid time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare.

- c) **Carer Fund:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=carer-fund-process-guide.pdf&site=302>

In order to support work-life balance and ongoing development of University staff, the University has developed a small fund to allow for employees with caring responsibilities to claim for additional costs incurred for caring-related services when attending pre-approved work events, such as conferences, training or career development events as part of the employee's role. The fund will also provide for the cost of learning & development for existing members of staff who are returning to the workplace following caring related absence.

- d) **University Chaplaincy:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/chaplaincy/>

The University Chaplains do not just provide a service for members of their faith group but are here for the whole campus community, whether this means having a chat about faith issues or matters unrelated to religion and faith.

- e) **University Wellbeing:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/business-services/staff-wellbeing>

This webpage provides and promotes a range of tools and resources for University of Sussex staff to look after mental, physical and financial wellbeing, as well as the University's policy on staff wellbeing.

- f) **Occupational Health:** <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/occupationalhealth>

Occupational Health is an advisory service providing a wide range of services to protect the health of staff at work. The role of Occupational Health is to provide impartial medical advice and suitable reasonable adjustments, where possible to the member of staff, via a referral from your line manager.

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g) Staff Carers Network: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/carers/carersnetwork>

The network is open to all staff:

- The network meets informally every term
- To join the network, working group or ask any questions you can email the chair Hannah Mason-Bish who can also add you to the mailing list. Email h.mason-bish@sussex.ac.uk

h) Online carer support weblinks:

- Childcare/Nurseries/Support Groups/School term dates [Children's Centre Nurseries \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#)
- UK Government Carers Allowance: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance>
- UK Government Carers Credit: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-credit>
- Carers Trust: <https://carers.org/>

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