

Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy

Introduction

Brunel University of London welcomes students from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and family situations, and aims to provide an enabling, supportive culture in which all students are able to reach their full potential.

This policy has been developed in response to Section 17 of the Equality Act 2010, which strengthens the protection for students and prospective students in higher education from discrimination during pregnancy and maternity. In addition, the University celebrates the breadth of diversity across its student population and is committed to supporting all students irrespective of their personal characteristics, including LGBT, same-sex couples and single students who become parents.

Scope

This policy offers advice and support to prospective and registered students who become pregnant and / or become parents (including via adoption) at any stage of their student experience. This includes from application stage throughout their studies. This policy also applies where a student's partner becomes pregnant, the student is intending to foster with a view to adoption, or where they are to become parents through a surrogacy agreement. Appendix A provides a flowchart which summarises the steps of this procedure and the information provided in this policy.'

In addition, the policy aims to provide advice and support to University employees about supporting students who become pregnant, or whose partners become pregnant during the student cycle, including in relation to study (learning, assessment and examinations), research, health and safety, accommodation and finance.

Policy Statement

Brunel University of London believes that becoming pregnant or becoming a parent should not prevent a student from succeeding in their studies or research. The University commits to:

- ensuring that students are not discriminated against or disadvantaged during pregnancy, maternity, paternity or the process of adoption
- ensuring that students covered by this policy are aware of the support available and that the most appropriate advice and support is provided
- ensuring that employees are aware of their responsibilities during a student's pregnancy, maternity, paternity and / or adoption and any implications are dealt with in a supportive, flexible, confidential and non-judgmental manner. Information concerning pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption should only be shared with written consent, unless there is a risk to life or health.

Becoming a Parent

If you or your partner become pregnant or are becoming parents, there are various issues that you may need to consider whilst at University, please see the relevant section below:

Notifying the University

You are not under any obligation to inform the University that you or your partner is pregnant or becoming a parent. However, you are encouraged to notify the University as soon as possible and in confidence to ensure that the most appropriate support and advice is made available to you. In the first instance, you can speak to your Tutor and / or the Student Support and Welfare Team. If you are a Doctoral Researcher, you can approach your Supervisory Team and / or the PGR Managers in your respective College Office and / or the Student Support and Welfare Team. For link to Student Support and Welfare, follow

<https://students.brunel.ac.uk/support/book-an-appointment-through-our-support-welfare-team>.

Making the University aware of your situation at an early stage will enable discussions, arrangements, support and adjustments to be made, particularly in relation to any impact on learning, including attending lectures, tutorials, placements, conducting research, and participating in assessments and examinations. There could be elements of your current or proposed programme of study or research that might present a potential health and safety risks or other consequences to you or your unborn child/ren such as any Tier 4 UKVI implications, accommodation issues, any financial implications, including maternity benefits, pay, if applicable and / or any leave to be taken during and after pregnancy or adoption.

Miscarriage

In the very sad event that your pregnancy ends in miscarriage in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, you will not be entitled to maternity related absence. However you could potentially take a period of abeyance if helpful.

In tragic circumstances where the baby is stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy or if the baby is born alive and sadly dies at, or shortly after birth, your entitlement to maternity related absence leave is unaffected.

The Student Support and Welfare Team can provide information, advice and guidance and signpost students to internal and external support services. You can also access free, confidential counselling services, as well as external specialist services listed in Appendix B.

Abortion or Termination

You are not under any obligation to inform the University if you choose not to continue the pregnancy.

The Student Support and Welfare Team can provide information, advice and guidance and signpost students to internal and external support services. You can also access free, confidential counselling services, as well as external specialist services listed in Appendix B.

Student Support Plan

You are encouraged to develop a Student Support Plan (Appendix C) with your Tutor / Supervisory Team and / or the Student Support and Welfare Team, who will liaise with other University staff as required with your written consent. The Student Support Plan is intended to help identify and coordinate support to ensure that (where possible) your needs are met during pregnancy, the adoption process, following birth, maternity, paternity and / or on return to study.

The Student Support Plan will be drawn up in writing and you will sign it alongside a member of staff. A copy will be kept by the University. The signed document will not be shared without your written consent, unless there is significant risk to your health or safety. The Student Support Plan will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the member of staff who created it to identify any significant changes; considering any implications that may occur at different stages of the pregnancy and any impact on your learning.

Health and Safety

Whilst pregnancy is not an illness or a disability and the University commits as far as possible to providing pregnancy friendly practices across campus, there may be some health and safety considerations which arise during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Any significant hazards to which you could be exposed will be risk assessed.

You are encouraged to notify the University as soon as possible that you are pregnant in order that an assessment can be made about the implications for your learning or research during your pregnancy. Notification is particularly helpful within the first 13 weeks of pregnancy when health considerations are particularly acute, although the University recognises that this is a very sensitive stage when individuals often prefer to keep the matter private.

A risk assessment will be completed alongside the Student Support Plan. This should be carried out by the Department as soon as the University is notified that you are pregnant. The consideration of any risk will depend on the nature of your circumstances and the requirements of your programme. For example evacuation in case of fire would need to be considered particularly in the later stages of pregnancy. Programmes involving the following activity are potentially

more likely to present greater risks:

- physical activity, including carrying and lifting
- field work, laboratory work or practical work including healthcare settings, exposure to infectious diseases or use/exposure to chemicals or radiation.

For more guidance, see www.intra.brunel.ac.uk/safety/RiskAssessment.

Consideration should also be given to any implications that may arise during examinations and placements, including professional programmes where additional protocols may need to be followed or considered. For more information, you are encouraged to liaise with your Department.

The Risk Assessment should be monitored and reviewed regularly to identify significant changes, considering possible risks that may occur at different stages of your pregnancy.

Study Support, Assessments and Examinations

If you need support with your learning during pregnancy or are due to give birth, or become a parent near to, or during assessment deadlines, or an examination period, you are encouraged to speak to your Tutor or the Student Support and Welfare Team who can discuss arrangements or adjustments. You should also seek medical advice from your midwife or doctor. Appropriate arrangements will be agreed in the Student Support Plan and may include specific requirements and adjustments, such as rest breaks, adjusting lab work, extra toilet breaks, and supportive seating.

The University is mindful of the impact that pregnancy, the adoption process or a period of pregnancy, or maternity related leave can have on your attendance and attainment. If you encounter any difficulties, you are encouraged to seek support from your Department or the Student Support and Welfare Team as soon as possible. If your midwife or doctor advises against attempting to meet the assessment deadline or sitting an examination, an alternative timing and method of assessment may be explored where possible. You may be able to take an alternative method of assessment if all of the learning outcomes of the module are met. Other options, such as extensions to submission deadlines, deferrals of examinations, or abeyance may also be explored. It is recommended that as far as possible this is organised in advance.

If you experience unexpected and significant pregnancy or maternity related problems during an examination, or when undertaking assessed work, you can apply for extenuating circumstances. This will be considered under the University's Extenuating Circumstances Policy which will take account of current equality legislation when deciding what action should be taken. For more information see - www.brunel.ac.uk/about/quality-assurance/supporting-students.

Student Accommodation

If you or your partner becomes pregnant whilst living in University accommodation, you are encouraged to inform the Accommodation Office as soon as possible, so that a Health and Safety Risk Assessment and, if necessary, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) can be carried out. These assessments will be conducted in consultation with the Health and Safety, and Fire Safety Officers respectively. For more information see -

www.intra.brunel.ac.uk/safety/policiesandguidance/layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/safety/policiesandguidance/Documents/PEEP%20Procedure%20-%20reviewed%202017.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1

and www.intra.brunel.ac.uk/safety/accidents/Pages/Fire-Safety.aspx

It is advisable to consider accommodation requirements in the early stages of pregnancy. You will not be asked to leave your existing accommodation because you or your partner is pregnant. However, the University does not provide on-campus accommodation for student parents with an accompanying child/ren. You can approach the Accommodation Office which maintains a large database of available accommodation suitable for individual circumstances.

Work Placements / Study Abroad

During a placement, you will be required to follow the employer's regulations and policies in addition to the University's requirements. If a pregnant student is taking part in a work placement, you are encouraged to liaise with the University at the earliest opportunity. If a pregnant student is studying abroad, you should liaise with your Department or the Student Support and Welfare Team who will need to conduct a risk assessment as early as possible.

Pregnancy and Maternity Related Absence

You are entitled to request reasonable time off to attend / accompany your partner to pregnancy and pre adoption related appointments. Wherever possible, you are encouraged to arrange appointments outside of scheduled teaching/placement hours. However if you have any attendance requirements as part of your course you should liaise with your Department about when best to schedule appointments.

You are encouraged to notify the University at least 15 weeks before the birth of your child if you intend to take maternity related absence following the birth of your child. By notifying the University, appropriate support can be provided and necessary arrangements can be considered, as required. Students are entitled to take up to 52 weeks Statutory Maternity Leave. The leave will be unpaid unless a student has a job and may be entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay. The length of maternity related absence will be determined by your personal circumstances, the structure and content of your programme, and, for international students, the requirements of your visa. If you do take maternity related absence you will be put into abeyance so your studies will not be impacted. For details regarding paternity

leave, see the next section below.

As a minimum, and to ensure the health and safety of the mother following the birth, you must take 2 weeks maternity related absence, or 4 weeks if you are on placement in a laboratory or a healthcare setting.

Professional programmes may also have specific requirements, such as minimum attendance or a work placement; therefore, students enrolled on such programmes are advised to consult with your Department and placement provider at the earliest opportunity.

There are University procedures for pregnancy related absence and you will need to follow University regulations regarding abeyance.

- Your Tutor / Department can provide academic advice about the implications of taking extended leave. You will be advised on the consequences that a period of leave may have in terms of returning to study in the future. Your Department must formally approve the request.
- Permission must be sought from the University's Education Committee in the event of periods of abeyance exceeding one calendar year.

For more information on abeyance see -

www.intra.brunel.ac.uk/s/studentcentre/study/Pages/Abeyance.aspx

Where reasonably possible, the University will provide as much flexibility as possible to facilitate a student's learning and attainment and seeks to ensure that no student is disadvantaged due to pregnancy, maternity or paternity, or adoption whilst ensuring academic standards are maintained.

Paternity / Partner Rights

The term 'partner' is used by the University in addition to 'paternity' to recognise that a student who is the partner of:

- an expectant mother, or
- a child's primary adopter, or
- someone who has obtained a Parental Order, or
- someone who is having a baby through surrogacy

may be entitled to leave under this policy. You will need to have, or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing.

The University acknowledges that if your partner is pregnant or you are becoming parents, you may wish to take time off to attend ante-natal and childcare clinics, or in the case of adoption, to attend pre-adoption interviews, visits, court appearances and childcare clinics. In these circumstances, you will be able to take up to 2 days paternity related absence. In addition you are entitled to take up to 3 weeks paternity / partner related absence once the child has arrived. You should produce evidence of any appointments, such as a medical certificate or appointment card if requested to do so.

You are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from your Tutor and / or the Student Support and Welfare Team about your paternity and partner rights.

International Students

In accordance with UKVI regulations, international students who require a visa to study in the UK cannot extend their visa for reasons relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, the adoption process, or for any other childcare reasons. All visas allow for a stipulated period of stay in the UK in addition to the time spent on a programme.

International Students who become pregnant should seek immigration and visa advice as soon as possible by contacting the Immigration Team at Student Centre via <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/life/supporting-you>.

Doctoral Researchers

Doctoral Researchers are entitled to up to 52 weeks of maternity or shared parental leave. Paternity leave can be for up to 3 weeks. Adoption leave is granted on the same basis as maternity leave. None of these periods will be included in the maximum permitted period of abeyance as defined in Senate Regulation 5 see - <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/documents/pdf/Senate-Regulation-5> and the Code of Practice for Research Degrees see - www.brunel.ac.uk/about/quality-assurance/research You are advised to contact the PGR Managers at your College Office for more information regarding the current procedure for requesting maternity / paternity related absence.

You should take account of the terms and conditions within any stipend, bursary or other funding arrangements that you may have. You are encouraged to contact **your Supervisory Team and / or the PGR Manager at your College Office** in the first instance, as well as the Student Support and Welfare Team for further advice, as other considerations, or employment rights may be applicable.

Breastfeeding, Changing and Rest Facilities

The University is supportive of students who choose to breastfeed or need to express breast milk whilst on campus. In addition the University will take a flexible approach as far as possible to students who may need longer or more flexible break times to do so. You are welcome to use the Meeting House if you require breastfeeding or rest facilities. In addition you can also speak to your Department or College to request space to breastfeed or express breast milk or seek advice regarding breastfeeding, rest facilities and / or make arrangements for storing expressed breast milk in a secure refrigerator. Expressed breast milk should be clearly labelled and dated and should not be stored for longer than 5 days. It is the responsibility of the mother to store the expressed breast milk appropriately and to dispose of accordingly thereof. There are several accessible changing facilities on campus including in the Eastern Gateway Building and Wilfred Brown Building. For

directions see –

<https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/timetabling/pdf/Campus-Map>.

Adoption

If you / your partner are going through the adoption or foster to adoption process, or surrogacy process, you will be offered support equivalent to students who become pregnant. If you are taking adoption related leave, you will have the equivalent entitlements as those taking pregnancy, maternity and paternity related absence.

Children on Campus

It is a specific requirement that a student who is accompanying a child on campus must remain with and supervise the child for the whole time that they are on University premises. You should be close enough to the child to react immediately to prevent accidents or inappropriate behaviour. Care must also be taken that toys, pushchairs or other articles, or equipment, do not cause obstructions, or compromise fire escape routes. These responsibilities cannot be delegated to anyone else. Students should refer to the University's Children on Campus policy - <https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/safety/policiesandguidance/childrenoncampus>.

The University is currently unable to provide childcare arrangements on campus. So you will need to make alternative suitable childcare arrangements to suit you, therefore enabling you to meet your academic responsibilities as a student of the University. If you work at the University, then there are some arrangements with local nurseries in place who provide discounted places. For more information see - www.intra.brunel.ac.uk/s/hr/working-at-brunel.

Bullying and Harassment

The University takes a zero-tolerance approach to any harassment or bullying. Bullying and harassment on the basis of pregnancy, maternity, paternity and / or adoption could be regarded as grounds for a complaint under the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Complaints

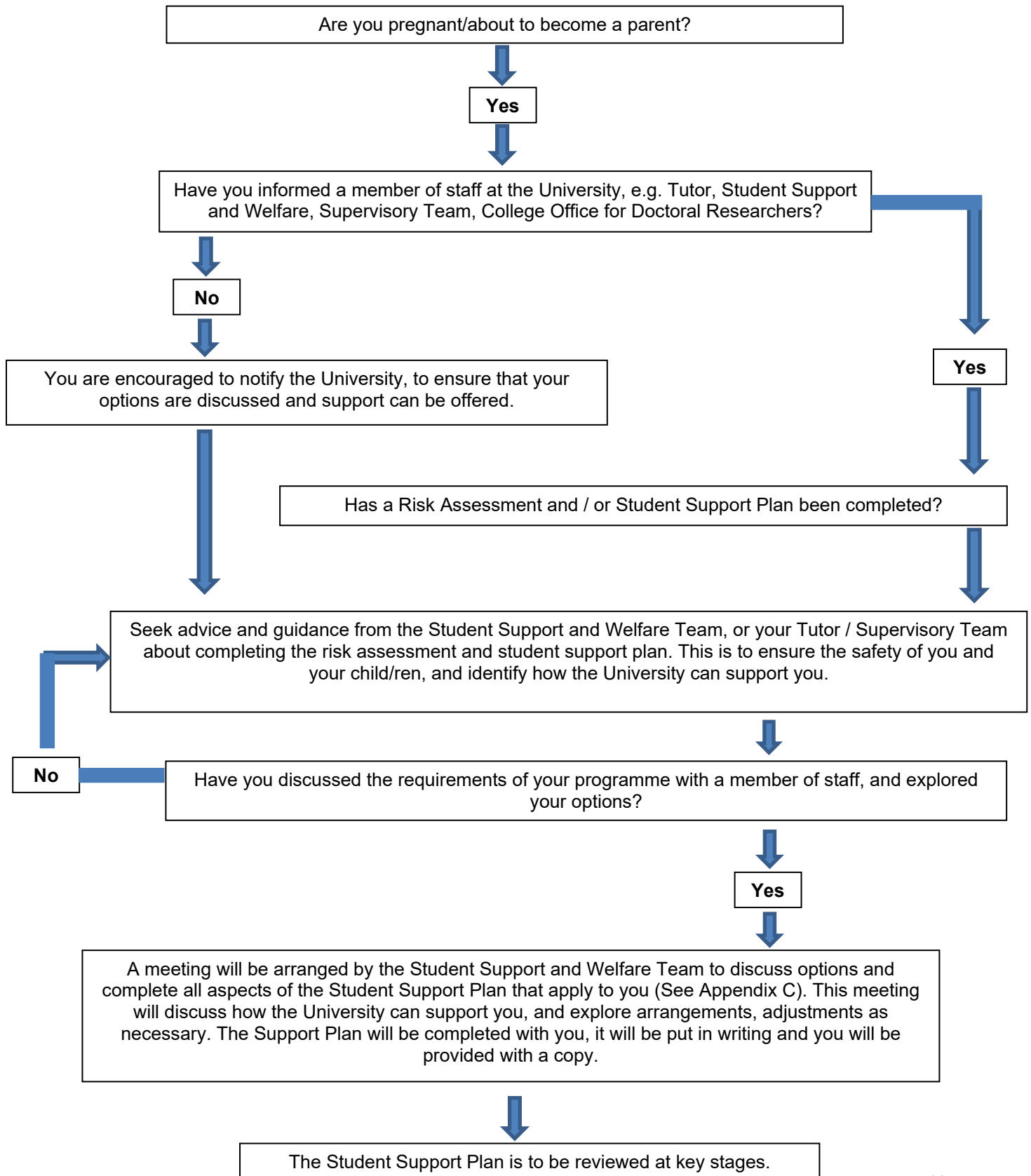
If you feel that the University has failed to comply with this policy, you may raise your concerns using the University's Complaints Procedure. For more information see - www.brunel.ac.uk/life/supporting-you/student-complaints-conduct-and-appeals/complaints The Complaints Procedure cannot be used to appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners for which you should instead refer to Senate Regulation 12 and accompanying guidance.

For more information about this policy, please contact the Student Support and Welfare Team either by phone on 01895 267045 or email

studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk or <https://students.brunel.ac.uk/support/book-an-appointment-through-our-support-welfare-team>

Appendix A

The flowchart below summarises the steps of the procedure and information provided in this policy.



Appendix B

External support agencies who provide help and support

The lists of useful contacts given below is correct at the time of writing (September 2019). Please check the internet for up-to-date contact information. Please note that Brunel University of London does not endorse or take responsibility for the information provided by external organisations.

Direct Gov is the UK government's website which provides information on health, care and benefits during pregnancy, benefits for parents - www.direct.gov.uk

Family Planning Association aims to establish a society in which everyone can make informed choices about sex, relationships and reproduction. Its website contains impartial advice on pregnancy, abortion and adoption, and also contains a list of useful organisations - www.fpa.org.uk Helpline: 0845 122 8690.

National Health Service provides information relating to pregnancy, abortion, health in pregnancy and maternity, and services provided by the NHS - www.nhs.uk. For specific information for LGBT individuals see - www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/gay-health-having-children/

National Union of Students provides information and advice to students and students' unions about student finance, rights and welfare. Information for student parents is available on its website, along with research and publications about students with dependent children - www.nus.org.uk

Specialist Services

Adoption UK is a national charity run by and for adopters, providing self-help information, advice, support and training on all aspects of adoption and adoptive parenting - www.adoption.uk.org.uk

Antenatal Results and Choice is a charity which provides non-directive support and information to expectant and bereaved parents throughout and after the antenatal screening and testing process - www.arc-uk.org

British Pregnancy Advisory Service supports reproductive choice and health by advocating and providing high-quality, affordable services to prevent or end unwanted pregnancies with contraception or by abortion. Also offers a range of other reproductive health services - www.bpas.org/

Family and Parenting Institute provides support to parents in bringing up their children, and has a range of resources for parents - www.familyandparenting.org/

Health and Safety Executive provides useful information for employers and employees to help them understand what their responsibilities are, and what they need to do to comply with the law - www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/index.htm

The Miscarriage Association offers support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby in pregnancy - www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

New Family Social, LGBT Consortium promotes the care and upbringing of children by LGBT+ adopters and foster carers - www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk/directory/new-family-social.

SANDS is a still birth and neonatal death charity which provides support to anyone affected by the loss of a baby and conducts research into the causes of still and neonatal death - <https://www.sands.org.uk/>

Surrogacy UK provides information, community and support to anyone undertaking a surrogacy journey - <https://surrogacyuk.org/>

Appendix C

Student Support Plan

This form aims to guide discussions during pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption. It should be completed and agreed with a Tutor or the Student Support and Welfare Team.

The form should be reviewed at key stages; or at key points of the academic year. If circumstances change, the plan will also need to be reviewed.

Contact details		
1	Student's details	
	Name	
	Student ID	
	Year of study	
	Visa details (International Students)	
	Visa type/expiry date	
2	Programme details	
	Programme title	
	Department / College	
	Departmental contact	
Key dates		
3	What date are you / your partner due to give birth / become parents / adopt?	
	How many weeks pregnant are you / is she now? (please note the date)	
	What are the known key dates for the adoption process?	
Communication		
4	What is your preferred method of communication:	

	During pregnancy or the adoption process?	
	During maternity/paternity related absence?	
	On return to study / research?	
Informing other staff and students		
5	Who will need to be informed about you / your partner's pregnancy / adoption and when would you like them to be informed?	
	Name and title	Date
Health and safety assessment (attach copy to this form)		
6	Has an assessment been conducted that covers (where relevant):	
	Your programme of study / research?	
	Programme placements or study abroad?	
	Examinations or other assessments?	
	Return from maternity/paternity/adoption related absence?	
	Breastfeeding?	
	Have you been informed about rest, feeding and changing facilities on campus for use by students with a young child?	
7	Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, identify a person(s) responsible for ensuring they are implemented?	
Absence		
8	Will the dates or times of antenatal/adoption appointments affect your study?	
	Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that may affect your ability to undertake your programme?	

	If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable you to catch up?	
	How much maternity/paternity or adoption leave do you intend to take?	
	If you are a research student, do you know you are entitled to up to 52 weeks of maternity or shared parental leave, and your partner is entitled to up to 3 weeks paternity leave?	
	When do you intend to start your leave of absence?	
	When do you intend to return from your leave of absence?	
	Will these dates of absence affect your ability to complete any programme module requirements?	
Assessments		
9	Are you unable to complete any assessments / examinations due to pregnancy/maternity/adoption?	
	If so, provide details:	
	What alternative arrangements are possible for outstanding or incomplete assessments?	
Financial support		
10	If you are a UK student, are you aware of how any benefits you receive will affect your student support entitlements, and vice versa?	
	If you are a research student, are you aware of any terms and conditions within any stipend, bursary or other funding arrangements you may have?	
	Have you considered how your mode of study / research will affect your childcare funding entitlements?	
International students/those on placement abroad		

11	If you are an international student or on placement abroad, have you been informed about:	
	The need to check visa implications of returning home or extending your stay due to pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption?	
	Will you be able to complete your placement / study abroad?	
	Has the placement provider conducted a health and safety risk assessment?	
Accommodation		
12	Do you need to move to alternative accommodation?	
	Have you received advice on alternative accommodation and terminating existing accommodation contracts?	
Return to study		
13	What support will be provided on your return to study / research? (eg meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc) Any other information or comments	
Further information		
14		
Signatures		
Plan to be reviewed on		
Agreed by staff member		
Name		
Title		
Signature		
Date		

Agreed by student	
Name	
Signature	
Date	