

## Flexible Working Policy: Guidelines for Supporting Carers in the Workplace

Brunel University London acknowledges that at times our employees will have to deal with the demands of caring for a loved one, which may require responding to an emergency situation. Employees with a primary caring responsibility may also be required to provide long term care. The University's aim is to encourage employees to have open and honest discussions about the challenges of their caring role so that the line manager can offer support.

### Who is a carer?

The University defines a carer as employees with significant caring responsibilities that have a substantial impact on their working life.

A carer is someone of any age who looks after and supports a relative or friend who, because of their disability, illness, frailty or addiction, would not otherwise be able to live independently at home. Many carers provide substantial amounts of regular care and are not paid for the help and support that they give. Caring for someone can be very stressful. Carers often have little help and regularly suffer financially, physically and emotionally themselves.

The University recognises that by making sure its employees have a good work and life balance, its staff will be more focussed on work, less stressed, and the University will retain their experience and expertise.

The flexible working policy is designed to provide our carers with the opportunity to discuss working options that may help or support them with their caring responsibilities.

### Identification and disclosure

The University encourages staff to talk to their line managers about their caring responsibilities, although they are not required to do so. However disclosure will enable the University to offer the appropriate support where required. Confidentiality will be respected.

### Time off for emergencies

Flexible working also includes being allowed time off to deal with an emergency situation which involves the person who is being cared for. It does not include taking

time off to take the person being cared for to appointments as these are usually known about in advance so should be planned for.

Under the University's Special Leave Policy, up to five days paid carers leave per annum may be taken to deal with unexpected or emergency situations, i.e. if someone falls seriously ill, is injured or care/school arrangements for someone suddenly break down. A copy of the Special Leave Policy is available on IntraBrunel <https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/s/hr/Documents/CASP/Special%20Leave%2003122014.pdf>

The employee should make a request for carers leave to their line manager and the manager will as far as possible deal sympathetically with any request.

### **Carers Network**

The Carer's Staff Network Group is a group which looks after the interests of Carers and considers how the University could support them including feeding back ideas and suggestions to support the development of the University's equality and diversity agenda. The group meets and holds events throughout the year including hearing from occasional guest speakers.

Further information on all our staff network groups is available on IntraBrunel: <https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/s/hr/Pages/Staff-Network-Groups.aspx>