

University of Oxford Department of Psychiatry Guide for Parents and Carers



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1 Introduction

Welcome to this Departmental guide for Academic and Professional Support Services staff who are parents and carers. The Department of Psychiatry strongly values the wellbeing of our staff and we recognise that this is influenced by many things, including life outside work!

This guide has been developed as a resource for those with caring responsibilities for children or other dependants, either now or in the future. Balancing caring responsibilities and work life can be challenging so we have written this guide to offer some clarity on a range of issues such as pay, leave, and the support you may be entitled to.

This guide is available in conjunction with other helpful publications including guidance for Principal Investigators (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/family-leave-guidance-for-pis>) and University-wide personnel guidance. It will link to Departmental and University Policy and signpost to external resources where relevant. The intention is for this guide to normalise and demystify processes while highlighting the ways in which carers are supported by the Department and University. We hope you find it helpful.

The guide refers to HR (Philly White, HR Manager philly.white@psych.ox.ac.uk) and Department Administrator (Moira Westwood moira.westwood@psych.ox.ac.uk)

2 What to do if I'm pregnant

2.1 When do I have to speak to my manager/HR?

We appreciate that you will want to share the news of your pregnancy in your own time, however we ask that you speak to HR (in confidence) as soon as you feel comfortable to do this as we will need to carry out relevant health risk assessments. If you work in a high-risk area (lab based work) you should notify us in the first trimester (weeks 1-12).

The latest date you can notify HR is the 15th week before your baby is due.

"I initially spoke to HR who were really helpful and made the whole process seem straightforward. This made it much easier to speak to my line manager as I had a clearer idea of my options both during my maternity leave and on my return to the department."

2.2 What do I need to read?

The University has information on maternity leave and pay (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/summary-of-maternity-leave-and-pay>), including a Maternity Leave Guidance document (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/files/maternityleaveguidancepdf>). This is a comprehensive guide for all staff considering starting a family, and covers leave and return to work. There is a timeline on the web pages that gives key dates for notifications and actions (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/files/timeline-keynotificationsandactionspdf>). If you have any questions that aren't covered by this please speak to HR.

You can also download and complete an excel maternity leave dates calculator (on the right hand side of the web pages). Once you have added in the date your baby is due, you can add in the date you plan to go on maternity leave and it will calculate dates on which paid leave ends.

With effect from 1 January 2020 there is no length of service eligibility criterion for maternity pay. All employees who have started work with the University by their Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) will qualify for the University's enhanced contractual benefits.

"I was initially daunted by the all the processes involved in disclosing to HR that I was pregnant and would be taking time off work – it seemed like a lot of bureaucracy on top of the life changing situation I was going through! But I needn't have worried. Everyone was very supportive and made the whole process very straight forward. It reminded me that I wasn't the first academic to have a child!"

2.3 When should I start thinking about childcare?

There is a high demand for nursery places in Oxford, so it is worth looking at the University Childcare Services webpages (<https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/home>) during your pregnancy. There is a wide range of information on nurseries, payment options, and information on eligibility, for example "Can I apply for a nursery place when I am pregnant?" (Answer – Yes, you can).

Childcare Services are friendly and approachable and are very happy to be contacted with any other questions. The University has a scheme that enables colleges and departments to nominate staff for a priority on the University nursery waiting list (called a "sponsored priority"). The Department has a number of sponsored priority places and details of the policy on allocating the priority and the application form are available on the department website <https://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/work-with-us/work-life-balance> (scroll down to childcare).

"I accepted the place offered by nursery even though it was for two days and I wanted three – once my child had settled in I asked about an extra day and this became available quite quickly."

3 What about adoption and surrogacy?

3.1 Adoption leave and pay

Adoption leave allows one member of a couple to take time off work when they first adopt a child or children.



The law requires that a minimum of two weeks leave is taken immediately following the placement of the child but eligible employees are entitled to take up to 52 weeks (26 weeks ordinary adoption leave and 26 weeks additional adoption leave).

Employees may also be entitled to statutory adoption pay or the University's contractual adoption pay scheme.

Further information about adoption is available here:

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/adoption/>

We encourage you to give early notification about your adoption as soon as possible so that we can prepare for your absence, although we understand that sometimes this may be difficult. Before you take adoption leave we will meet with you to discuss when you think this is likely to begin and when you might return to work. We will also discuss if and when you want to be contacted by us while you are on adoption leave.

3.2 Surrogacy

Where a surrogacy arrangement is planned, particular rules within the University apply. Please contact the HR for advice on a case-by-case basis

An outline of the current legal rights to time off and pay for parents in surrogacy arrangements is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/legal-rights-when-using-surrogates-and-donors>.

4 What support is available when I return to work?

4.1 HR process

Before you undertake maternity leave we will meet with you to discuss when you think you might like to start your leave period and return to work. We will also discuss if and when you want to be contacted by us while you are on leave.

4.2 KIT days (optional)

Keeping in touch (KIT) days are a way for you to continue interactions with your workplace during pregnancy leave, should you and your line manager wish this to happen. These can be used to attend meetings or training events or for other activities that may help you to ease back into work. You should have a discussion with your line manager about whether it is appropriate for you to use KIT days, and you should both be in agreement that they will be beneficial. You may work up to ten of these days if you wish to take up this opportunity but there is no obligation to do so. KIT days are unpaid within the first 26 weeks of leave. After this, you can be paid for your time.

“I used all of my KIT days. Some of these were for important or interesting training events that I didn’t want to miss and some were for catching up with colleagues and new protocols. It was a time of a lot of change in our team while I was on parental leave so it was really valuable to have some pressure-free time to really get to grips with the changes before properly coming back. It was also quite nice to have some time to get back in touch with me as a researcher, as well as me as a new parent.”

4.3 Pastoral space facilities

The department can provide a conveniently located and suitable room for milk expression. A fridge for milk storage can also be provided. There can also be provision for a private space for carers to use, for example to receive important private calls. Please speak to HR if this is required.

4.4 Flexible working

We understand that coming back to work with a new family life may be difficult and you may want to consider new patterns of working. The department supports flexible working. This may involve reducing your work hours or changing your working pattern. Everyone is entitled to request flexible working, though any agreement on this will be dependent upon your job requirements. Further information is provided in <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/flexible-working>. You can also get help and advice from HR or the Departmental Administrator

“Between my partner and I we can drop the children off at school and pick them up on most days, thanks to my work allowing me to work flexibly. My boss has also allowed me to work more flexibly when there is an event at school I want to attend (such as school play or sports day). I just make up the hours at a different time”.



4.5 Mental health support

At the Department of Psychiatry we prioritise staff wellbeing and strive to create an enjoyable, productive and friendly workplace. We also recognise that having a baby can take some adjustment and may place stress on you and your family. Some people may experience mental ill health for the first time in pregnancy or after birth.

If you are experiencing symptoms of mental ill health we suggest that you speak to a qualified and supervised professional in the first instance, accessed via your GP, midwife or local mental health service.

HR can arrange for a referral to Occupational Health if appropriate and helpful, or where this is necessary to implement any work-place adjustments suggested by your GP or healthcare professional. Normal sick leave procedures will apply in all instances (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/section-4-academic-related-staff-handbook>).

“When I first came back to work I found it really hard to balance my new role as a parent with my work. I felt anxious all the time and had a few panic attacks. I spoke to my manager, who was really understanding, and together we worked out the best way for me to settle back into work”.

See these pages for a local service helping with anxiety and depression (Talking Space Plus): <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus>. Some local counselling services are listed here: <https://www.bacp.co.uk/>



4.6 Returning Carers' Fund

The Returning Carers' Fund provides support for any researcher or academic regardless of gender following a break in their career or a period of leave for caring responsibilities. This can include pregnancy, adoption and shared parental leave, or leave to care for an ill, disabled or elderly family member.

Funding can be requested for any legitimate purpose identified by the applicant that addresses a clearly identified barrier to return to research and demonstrates a link to career development in research.

More information on how to apply for the fund is available on the Medical Sciences Division website (<https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/research/internal/funding-directory/returning-carers-fund>). There is also information on the Equality and Diversity web pages (<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/gender/carers-fund/>) including examples of applications and a blog of an applicant's experience

If you would like to be put in contact with someone who has previously successfully applied for the RCF, please contact the Departmental Administrator.



4.7 Emergency childcare

Emergency childcare may be required when your normal arrangements fall through or there is a disruption to your normal routine. In these circumstances, you may wish to use the My Family Care service which the University subscribes to. My Family Care is available for all employees. This service allows you to book an emergency nanny, nursery or childminder with as little as 2 hours' notice. All emergency care providers are vetted through My Family Care's strict quality standards. In order to book emergency care, a preferred emergency care provider(s) must be selected in advance and introductory visits must be made where appropriate. Once these have been agreed, you are free to book the emergency care within the limits of your arrangement.

The subscription to My Family Care covers the administration of this service, but it does not subsidise the cost of any care provided. All care costs will be charged directly to the employee via your My Family Care account. Other childcare providers are available.

Further information on My Family Care and the additional services available through this benefit can be accessed here:

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/>

"I tried to use My Family Care when my child had a gastro bug and couldn't attend nursery. There were providers in my area, but I wouldn't have been comfortable leaving our child with someone they didn't know. In hindsight, I should have set up My Family Care before the 'emergency' came about! I now have an emergency childminder in place and feel much more confident that we'll be prepared for the next emergency!"

4.8 Tips and advice

Although lots of support is in place to help people during pregnancy and following the birth of a child, parenting responsibilities can intersect with work throughout a child's life. Children may develop additional needs or their care may become more difficult to arrange once they leave nursery and start school. Family situations can also change meaning that

arrangements that have worked in the past are no longer viable. You are strongly encouraged to discuss any challenges you are facing in balancing work and parenting with your line manager or HR to see whether you might benefit from the schemes the university has to offer working parents. Additionally, the departmental annual PDR process provides a more formal opportunity to reflect on work life balance and discuss any support that you might need to manage work and family life.

Be sure to also look through Section 6 of this document to learn about the additional benefits and resources which are available to parents and long-term carers.

4.9 Unpaid Parental leave

Parental leave is a right to take unpaid time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare. Some parents also use this leave to spend more time with children and reach their preferred balance between work and family commitments.

Examples of the way that parental leave might be used are to spend more time with the child in the early years to:

- look at new schools;
- settle a child into new childcare arrangements;
- enable the family to spend more time together, for example taking the child to stay with grandparents.

Further information on unpaid parental leave is available here:

<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/unpaid-parental-leave>

5 What support is available for partners?

The Department fully supports the active engagement of partners in all stages of a pregnancy, parenting and caring journey. Many of the benefits available to pregnant people (for example the Returning Carer's Fund) are also available to their partners, with additional considerations as described below.

5.1 Antenatal Leave

From 1st October 2014, partners of pregnant people are entitled to take unpaid time off to accompany their partners to up to two antenatal appointments. Any additional time off that might be required to accompany pregnant people to appointments should be requested as annual leave in the normal way from the employing department (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/additional-annual-leave>). This provision also applies to parents whose child will be born through a surrogacy arrangement and where they meet the requirements for and intend to apply for a Parental Order for this child (<https://www.gov.uk/legal-rights-when-using-surrogates-and-donors/become-the-childs-legal-parent>). /

Further information on antenatal leave is available in the full maternity leave guidance document here: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/files/maternityleaveguidancepdf>



5.2 Fertility Treatment Leave

Investigations regarding infertility, consultations exploring treatment options and medical interventions aimed at assisting conception should be regarded as medical appointments and entitlement to time off to attend such appointments is covered by the University's usual procedures <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/section-4-support-staff-handbook> (Section 4.4 Leave for other Reasons).

In the case of IVF, once a fertilised egg has been implanted in the uterus, the person is deemed legally to be pregnant. Partners of expectant people are entitled to unpaid leave for up to two antenatal appointments, as per the University's guidance.

Further information on fertility leave treatment is available here:

<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/fertility-treatment-leave>

5.3 Paternity/partner leave and pay

Paternity/partner leave is an entitlement to time off that may be taken by the pregnant person's partner, regardless of gender, following the birth or adoption of their child. Paternity leave is intended to support parents in the early stages of a child's life/adoption (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/paternity-leave>).

All eligible employees may be able to take one or two weeks' Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL), which may be available at full pay (Ordinary Paternity Leave Pay – OPLP). Paternity/partner leave must be taken in the first 56 days following the birth or adoption of a

child. You should complete the Paternity/partner leave plan (on the right hand side of the webpage) and send this to HR

“I was overjoyed to be at home to support my partner when our child arrived. Everyone in my team was very supportive and we had scheduled my workload so projects were wrapped up as far as possible in the run up and the early months period after our due date, so I could concentrate on my new family.”

5.4 Entitlement to OPL if employee’s partner has a miscarriage or child is stillborn

In the sad event of a child being stillborn after the pregnant person has reached 24 weeks of pregnancy the employee is still entitled to paternity/partner leave provided they meet the eligibility criteria (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/paternity-leave>). If the still birth or miscarriage occurs before the 24th week, paternity/partner leave is not available, but departments should consider granting compassionate leave (<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/leave-for-other-reasons>).



5.5 Keeping in touch during paternity/partner leave

During any paternity/partner leave period, the department may make reasonable contact with the employee and, in the same way, the employee may make contact with their department. The frequency and nature of the contact will depend on a number of factors, such as the length of leave and the nature of the work. Departments and their employees will find it helpful, before paternity leave starts, to discuss arrangements for staying in touch. This might include agreements on the way in which contact will happen, how often and who will initiate the contact. It might also cover the reasons for making contact and the types of issues that might be discussed. Details are on the paternity leave pages <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/paternity-leave>.

5.6 Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)

The Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) statutory scheme enables eligible parents to share a period of leave and pay in the 52 weeks immediately following the birth or adoption of their child.

There are many different ways in which the available leave and pay periods can be split between carers. For example, you may choose for one partner to use the first 36 weeks of leave and pay, and the other partner to use the remaining 14 weeks of leave and pay. Another alternative is to split the SPL/ShPP such that partners take periods of leave at the same time. In essence, there is a fixed period of leave and pay available and it may be divided between two partners in whatever manner they feel would be beneficial to them.

There are some limitations on what arrangements can be made (for example, all leave periods must be a minimum of one week) and both partners must qualify for SPL based on their employer's requirements (for example a minimum period of continuous employment). The arrangements regarding receipt of statutory pay are all handled by the respective employers, so all the carers need to do is decide what format of leave would best suit their circumstances.

A number of resources are available to help you understand this statutory right and decide what arrangement may be most suited to your circumstances. My Family Care hosted a live webinar in March 2019 with a panel of parents talking about their varied experiences of taking shared parental leave – this is available on demand with supporting material here: <https://www.myfamilycare.co.uk/oxford/knowledge/news/spl-shared-experience-webinar-extra.html>. You should also discuss your options for SPL/ShPP with HR.

5.7 Keeping in touch during SPL

Shared Parental Leave In Touch (SPLIT) days allow work to be carried out under the employee's contract of employment, and the employee is entitled to be paid for that work. Both parents are entitled to 20 SPLIT days each, which can be worked without bringing their SPL or ShPP to an end. SPLIT days are available in addition to the pregnant person/adopter's KIT days.

“My partner and I took a straight forward split of SPL: I took leave and pay for the first 24 weeks (the period of full pay which was available to me), then my partner took 13 weeks of leave and received statutory pay from the government (SMP). My partner also used and received payment for all 20 of their SPLIT days during their leave period, which was a very welcome addition to their pay cheque. My partner really enjoyed their leave period – why should I have all the fun sitting in coffee shops and going to baby classes! – and we were both really pleased that this meant we could hold off nursery until our child was a little older. Once we'd communicated our plans to our respective employers, everything was taken care of and we could enjoy our time together as a family. We'll definitely look to take advantage of SPL/ShPP if we have another child and I encourage all prospective parents to consider how this could support their family dynamic.”

Further information on SPL is available here:

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/spl/>

5.8 Flexible Working after SPL

Full details on flexible working are available at <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/flexible-working>.

“After we returned to work, my partner and I both requested a flexible working pattern from our employers. We decided to both work condensed hours (working 35 hours over four days instead of five), and as my partner ordinarily worked weekends this meant we only had to use full time nursery care for two days a week. The long days are sometimes a struggle, but we both really enjoy having an extra day dedicated to our family.”

5.9 Other support and benefits

Returning to work after their partner has had a child can be challenging, as everyone in the family adjusts to new routines. Whether you have been on leave for a short period of time and have a small baby at home, or have taken a longer period of leave, and have been away from work for some time, it is likely to be helpful to meet your line manager to discuss your return to work and any challenges you are facing. Additionally, all staff members complete an annual Personal Development Review (PDR) including a section to reflect on work-life balance. This can be a useful opportunity to discuss any challenges you are facing in balancing your work and parenting role, and to consider whether you might benefit from any of the support offered by the University. Be sure to look through Section 6 of this document to learn about the additional benefits and resources which are available to parents and long-term carers. These include the following which partners are entitled to:

- Access to the University Childcare Services (see Section 1.4 of this document and <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/home>)
- My Family Care (see Sections 2.7 and 5.6 of this document and <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>)

6 What is expected from managers and colleagues?

Many parents in the department who have been on parental leave noted how much they appreciated having the support of their line manager and colleagues. But what does this mean exactly?

Here we have outlined some behaviours that are expected from managers and colleagues before, during and after periods of parental leave so that everyone understands their role and responsibilities, and feels supported through this transitional time.

6.1 What is expected from managers?

Formal guidance for managers on leave for parents and carers is available at <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/family-leave-guidance-for-pis>. The suggestions below provide additional guidance. It may be helpful to look at this list together with your employee.

As a manager you should:

1. Offer your congratulations on their pregnancy or plans for adoption or surrogacy.
2. Ask if there are any recommendations from a health professional (for example GP or midwife) regarding work.
3. Respect their desire for confidentiality and suggest working together to plan how to tell others at work.
4. Allow time for antenatal appointments.
5. Hold a meeting with a HR representative present before the leave starts.
6. Hold a meeting towards the end of the leave to make arrangements for their return to work.
7. Prepare for your employee's return to work. Be ready to support them through any periods of mental ill health.
8. Be sensitive to any complications that may have occurred during parental leave.
9. Be aware of unconscious bias and explore the employee's own views and values and how these may affect the way in which you interact.

6.2 What is expected from colleagues?

As a colleague you should:

1. Continue to support and engage with your colleague as you usually would.
2. Respect their desire for confidentiality and privacy.
3. Be supportive of time taken out for antenatal appointments.
4. Make them feel welcome if/when they return to work.
5. Be aware of unconscious bias and assess your own views and values and how these may affect the way in which you interact.

6.3 Terminology and unconscious bias

When discussing parental leave, it is important to be clear that it is inclusive of parents of all genders and relationship dynamics, and that it is a normal part of workplace leave, alongside annual leave or sick leave. The tendency to refer to it as "time off" can unintentionally devalue parenting work and imply that the person is not serious about their career.

All employees are reminded that under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 being a parent or undertaking parental leave is a "protected characteristic". This means that treating an individual less favourably because of their caring responsibilities (or a pregnancy-related illness) or because they are exercising their right to take parental leave is considered discrimination under the terms of the Act.

7 Caring for other dependents



Many people have caring responsibilities for family members, relatives, partners or friends, who have an illness, disability, frailty or addiction.

Carers are not paid for the help and support they provide and often do this alongside part-time or full-time employment. Juggling work and caring responsibilities can be challenging, particularly if caring responsibilities are unpredictable. Caring responsibilities still fall disproportionately on individuals who identify as female and support for carers in the workplace is therefore an important equality issue.

The HR team at the Department of Psychiatry aims to enable all staff members with caring responsibilities to take advantage of University-provided schemes, wherever this is possible within the demands of their job role. Carers are encouraged to disclose their caring responsibilities, in confidence, wherever they feel able to, so that they can best be supported.

“One of my family members suffers from a chronic mental health problem, which means that I am needed periodically to attend appointments with them. My line manager allows me to work flexibly and make up the time at a later date, rather than using my annual leave. I have also taken a couple of periods of emergency paid leave when they have been in crisis, which reduces one of the stresses in this very difficult situation”

7.1 Flexible working

Flexible Working, such as working part-time, compressed hours, or working from home, on a short or longer-term basis can help people to manage caring needs. More info can be found in Section 2.4 of this guide and here: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/flexible-working>.

7.2 Purchase of Additional Annual Leave through Salary Sacrifice

If you anticipate that you will need to take frequent days of leave to support the person you care for, you can speak to your line manager or HR about a new University scheme which allows you to purchase up to two weeks of additional annual leave through salary sacrifice. This scheme may be best suited to people who know at the beginning of the year that they will need additional leave (for example to support someone to attend routine hospital appointments), and whose work roles can accommodate their additional time away.

More information about the leave salary sacrifice scheme is available here: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/additional-annual-leave>.

7.3 Time off to deal with domestic emergencies

The University provides limited paid or unpaid leave to deal with unexpected domestic emergencies. Paid leave is capped at no more than five days in any 12 month period, and taken in blocks of no more than two days. Additional time off to cover domestic emergencies can be taken as annual leave or unpaid leave, at the discretion of the department of Psychiatry.

More information about entitlement to this type of leave can be found here: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/section-4-academic-related-staff-handbook> under section 4.3 Time off to care for dependents/carers' leave.

7.4 Short-term carer's leave scheme

This scheme allows employees with more than one year's service who are caring for a dependent who is ill, disabled, elderly or who has other long-term care needs, to take up to four weeks unpaid leave per year, in blocks of one week or more. Although requests for such leave cannot always be granted due to operational constraints, the Department of Psychiatry will carefully consider any requests they receive.

More information about the short-term carer's leave scheme can be found here: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/carers-leave-unpaid-short-term>.

7.5 Career Break

Where caring responsibilities are substantial and not possible to easily combine with work, employees may request a career break of between 1 and 12 months. More information about this scheme is provided here: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/career-break>.

7.6 My Family Care

The University subscribes to My Family Care, which is a national information and support service for those with caring and family responsibilities. This includes a telephone line where you can 'ask an expert' about a whole range of care-related issues, webinars and other resources.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/>.



7.7 Other support and benefits

Job roles and caring needs change over time. All staff members complete an annual Personal Development Review (PDR) including a section to reflect on work-life balance. Staff members are encouraged to disclose caring responsibilities to their line managers wherever they feel comfortable doing so, and the PDR process can provide a useful opportunity to consider whether staff members might benefit from any of the support offered by the University. The Department also aims to provide informal support wherever possible, for example through the provision of quiet space to make and receive phone calls about dependents during the working day, and through financial support for career development of those returning to work after a period of caring through the Returning Carers' Fund <https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/research/internal/funding-directory/returning-carers-fund>.

"The opportunity to take unpaid carers leave whilst I settled my mother into a care home was invaluable. My line manager really supported me in thinking about how to manage my workload and catch up after I had been away so I was not thinking about work whilst I was away and could really focus on my mum"



8 Other benefits available to parents or long-term carers

The University has a wide variety of staff benefits – listed in the staff benefits section of the website. These range from family friendly benefits including family leave schemes, and childcare to options for long-term carers: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>.

8.1 Childcare Assistance

8.1.1 Nursery places

The University provides its own childcare facilities as well as sponsoring places in other nurseries in the Oxford area. Places are limited so it is worth making early enquiries and joining the waiting list in advance.

More information on University nursery places is available here: <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/nurseries>.

8.1.2 Salary Sacrifice Scheme

Full details of this are on the childcare website. This can only be used with specific nurseries so it is worth checking whether the nursery you plan to use is listed. Your salary is reduced by the cost of the nursery fees, and these are paid by the University to the nursery.

More information on salary sacrifice for nursery funding is available here: <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/salary-sacrifice-scheme>.

8.1.3 Tax free childcare

Tax free childcare is government initiative which allows parents to claim up to £500 every 3 months towards the cost of approved childcare. This is available to parents and carers of nursery and school age children.

More information on tax free childcare is available here: <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/tax-free-childcare>; <https://www.gov.uk/get-tax-free-childcare>.

8.1.4 Additional Childcare

The University works in partnership with a playscheme to provide support for families during the school holiday periods. The University Childcare Services also work with an out of hours childcare provider, Oxford Sitters, to supply local, qualified childcare professionals with first aid training for evening and weekend babysitting roles. More information on both of these schemes is available here: <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/additional-childcare>.

8.2 Family Leave

There is a wide range of information available on the different types of family leave available here: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/family-leave>. HR would be happy to discuss these with you to help you decide what would suit your situation.

8.3 Information for carers

If you have caring responsibilities, we would encourage you to speak to your line manager, or HR in confidence. There are a wide range of support schemes available and we'd be happy to talk through the options: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/information-for-parents-and-carers>.

8.4 Online and in-person resources and support

8.4.1 Online support

My Family Care is an online resource which allows staff members to access advice and support on family matters. It also gathers interesting media and magazine articles for working parents.

Further information about My Family Care is available here: <https://www.myfamilycare.co.uk/oxford>.

ParentsNet is a forum for parents and carers in the Medical Sciences Division hosted by the Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics (DPAG).

Further information about ParentsNet is available here: <https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/support-services/teams/athena-swan/links/parentsnet>.

8.4.2 In-Person support

The University arranges several events a year to allow staff to network and meet with other parents. These events include talks and informative seminars.

Further information on University networking events is available at <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/information-for-parents-and-carers>.

8.5 Family-friendly events and information from the University

The Department of Psychiatry host an annual Summer Garden Party with a reduced price family ticket. The Summer Garden Party has previously seen face painting, a bouncy castle, colouring competitions and lots of outdoor space to explore. This is a great opportunity for parents and carers to socialise with colleagues while their dependants make friends. Please contact the Departmental Administrator if you would like to contribute ideas or to the organisation of this event.

The University Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) has a year-round schedule of family-friendly events and entertainment. Further information and scheduling is available here: <https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/families>.

The Oxford University Welcome Service has information for new members of the University and their families, including information on childcare and schooling options which are available in Oxford and the UK more generally. This includes links to the Oxford County Council catchments area descriptions and individual school Ofsted reports. This site also links to external web pages which list family friendly activities and where you can find parks, open spaces and playgrounds maintained by the County Council. Further information is available here: <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk>.

9 Closing remarks

We hope you have found the contents of this guide useful and informative. We do recognise that everyone's situation is unique. If you have caring responsibilities we would always encourage you to speak to your line manager, HR, or Departmental Administrator in complete confidence, as soon as you feel comfortable to do so, so we are best able to support you on your caring journey.

"We are a family-friendly Department, and we recognise the competing demands of work/life balance and are working hard to improve the support we provide."

– Professor John Geddes, Head of Department.

This guide was prepared by the Department of Psychiatry Athena Swan Family Friendly and Part-time Working Group