

GOOD PRACTICE: CAREGIVERS¹

Staff members and students with caregiving responsibilities—whether parental or other care obligations—face constraints on their time that others often do not. Such constraints often impose significant difficulties on the caregiver and requests for accommodation should be taken seriously. There are simple measures that departments can take to minimize the extent to which caregivers are disadvantaged.

GENERAL POLICIES

Departments should adopt an explicit policy concerning caregivers, which covers as many of the following points as is practically possible:

1. Schedule important events, as far as possible, between 9 and 5 (the hours when childcare is more available). When an event must be scheduled outside of these hours, give plenty of advance notice so that caregivers can make the necessary arrangements. Consider using online scheduling polls to find times that work for as many of those with caregiving obligations as possible and providing the option of virtual attendance.
2. Consider requests from staff of any background for part-time and flexible working. (This is largely, but not exclusively, an issue for caregivers—requests from non-caregivers should also be considered.) Also be receptive, as far as possible, to requests for leave.
3. As far as possible, account for caregiving commitments when scheduling teaching responsibilities.
4. Be aware that students, not just staff, may have caregiving responsibilities. Have a staff contact person for students who are caregivers.
5. Ensure that students and staff are made fully aware of any university services for caregivers.
6. Ensure that staff have an adequate understanding of what caregiving involves (e.g., do not expect a PhD student to make progress on dissertating while on parental leave).
7. Ensure that parental leave funds provided by the university are actually used to cover for parental leave, rather than being absorbed into department or faculty budgets.
8. Those involved in performance evaluations should be fully informed about current policies regarding reduced teaching, research, and service expectations for

¹ See section on Caregivers of the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme at <https://bpa.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Caregivers.pdf>

caregivers, and take caregiving responsibilities into account where possible.