

# Welfare

## Introduction

One of the most important tasks for any manager is to support your team, particularly if they are going through a difficult time. 'Welfare' can feel like a broad topic and there is

a lot to think about, but the University has a wide range of resources available to support you and your team.

## What to do

### 1. Make sure your staff know about support that's available within the University if they are experiencing difficulties

#### a. University support services

The University's [Occupational Health Service](#) promotes and supports health and wellbeing in the workplace, providing advice for managers and staff on a range of issues. If your team member has a health or disability related issue which is impacting on their work the University's [Occupational Health](#) team or [Staff Disability advisor](#) may be able to help.

#### b. University support networks

The University also has a number of staff networks which can provide support on specific issues and concerns that staff may have. The [Equality and Diversity Unit website](#) has information about networks such as for [disabled staff](#), [BME](#) staff, and [LGBT+](#) staff.

#### c. External advice and support

The University also subscribes to some external support services including:

- The [Work+Family space](#) is a University benefit for all employees offering access to a 'speak to an expert' phone line, and a range of guides and webinars on family issues from thinking about starting a family through to eldercare. Emergency back-up care is also available.
- [Togetherall](#) is an online peer-to-peer support community, free to University staff and available 24/7, offering online discussions moderated by mental health professionals, as well as self-learning courses and resources. It is a safe space for staff, and students, to help manage mental health and wellbeing issues such as struggling to sleep, feeling low, stressed or unable to cope.
- [Carefirst](#) is a confidential telephone counselling service, available to staff and adult family members who live with them.

#### d. Financial hardship

You may identify that a team member is experiencing personal financial difficulties, which may affect their performance and wellbeing whilst at work. Financial support may be available through the University '[Staff Top-Up Fund](#)'.

### 2. Ensure that staff are aware of the available facilities and services to promote wellbeing

#### a. Leave

The University offers generous holiday entitlement and, as a manager, you should ensure your staff take it. The University also offers other types of leave, both paid and unpaid, to help staff balancing work and life at certain times, for example family leave, carers leave, or leave for fertility treatment, or after suffering the loss of a child. You can find out all about these on the [HR support website](#).

#### b. Flexible working

If personal difficulties are impacting your team member's ability to maintain a good work-life balance you might also be able to offer [flexible working](#), whether temporary or permanent.

#### c. Sports facilities and the University Club

It can be difficult for staff to find time to keep fit. [Oxford University Sport](#) offers various memberships allowing staff to access online fitness classes or physical spaces at the University

Sports Ground (Iffley Road), including the racquet courts, swimming pool, running track, and gym. Staff can also join the [University Club](#) (Mansfield Road), where there is a gym with regular exercise classes and a sports pitch.

### 3. Familiarise yourself with relevant University policies and processes

#### a. Bullying and harassment

The University does not tolerate any form of bullying and harassment. It is essential that you respond swiftly and appropriately to any allegations or suspicions of bullying or harassment. The University's policy on harassment can be found [here](#). [Training](#) is available to help you know how to respond to bullying or harassment and the Harassment Advisory Service may also be contacted with any questions you may have ([harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk)).

#### b. Conflicts of interest

It is important to recognise when there is either a [conflict of interest](#) or the possibility of a perception of one. This often applies when considering financial interests, but personal relationships within the workplace also give rise to conflicts of interest and usually need to be declared to the Head of Department so that special arrangements can be made, such as transferring any management responsibility etc. Relationships between staff and students are particularly problematic and the [staff-students relationship policy applies](#).

#### c. Suspected domestic abuse/violence

If someone is suffering domestic abuse, colleagues and managers may be the only people outside the home that they talk to each day. They are therefore uniquely placed to help spot signs of abuse and signpost people to sources of support: the [HR Support website](#) offers guidance.

#### d. Safeguarding

The University has arrangements for safeguarding 'at risk' adults and children. If you believe a member of your staff may be an 'at risk' adult, please consult the University's [Safeguarding Code of Practice](#) which includes details of who to contact if you have any concerns.

#### e. Concerns about radicalisation

The University has a statutory duty to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. If you have any welfare concerns about a member of your team in relation to this, the University's [Prevent](#) website includes contact details of people with whom you can discuss appropriate next steps.

## Further resources

University pages – [Help and support with home working and staff wellbeing](#)

### Related guides from this series

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Flexible and Home Working
- Getting to know your team
- Listening
- Managing unhappy staff
- Managing leave

## About this guide

This guide has been developed for staff who have recently taken on the responsibility of managing other staff members. Guides were produced to cover key topics to induct, guide and support managers through key areas of responsibility. These guides are intended to be 'living documents' and will be re-released over time. Please get in touch with feedback and suggestions: [pod@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:pod@admin.ox.ac.uk)

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