**HR Policy changes that took effect on 6 April 2024**

HR Updates for staff

TT 2024

**Flexible working**

Most flexible working arrangements at Oxford continue to be agreed informally between an individual and their line manager. However, there is a statutory entitlement to make a *formal* application for flexible working.

From 6 April 2024 employees wishing to use this formal route can apply from their first day of employment, rather than only after 6 months service, as previously. They will also be able to make 2 formal applications in any 12 months period (instead of 1), and the information they need to provide in their application has been simplified.

The University’s [Flexible Working](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/flexible-working) guidance has been updated in line with these changes.

**Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy & Family Leave)**

From 6 April 2024 new legislation (the Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy & Family Leave) Act 2023gives additional protections to those who are at risk of redundancy and are pregnant, on maternity/adoption leave, or a block of shared parental leave of at least 6 weeks, or who have returned to work from one of these forms of leave and are still within 18 months of the birth/placement of child.

The University’s [redundancy scheme guidance](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/redundancy-and-end-of-fixed-term-contracts) has been updated to reflect these changes.

Please speak to your departmental HR contact if you think this might apply to you.

**Paternity leave**

For parents of babies born, or children placed for adoption, after 6 April this year the provisions for paternity leave have changed. NB although it is called ‘Paternity leave’ it applies to parents of any gender

Parents can choose to take their 2 weeks paternity leave entitlement as either 1 or 2 separate blocks and the period within which it can be taken is extended from 56 days to 52 weeks after the birth/placement.

See [Paternity leave](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/paternity-leave).

**Carer’s leave**

Carers, defined as those who are looking after a dependant for reasons of long-term illness, disability or old age, have a new *statutory* entitlement to 1 week per year carer’s leave.  The leave can be requested in blocks of a minimum of half a day and is unpaid.  The University already had a carer’s leave scheme offering up to 4 weeks leave per year, so our scheme guidance has been updated to reflect the new statutory provisions, such as making this available from the first day of employment. See [Carers Leave](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/carers-leave-unpaid-short-term).

As a reminder, all university employees are also entitled to up to 5 days paid leave per year to deal with ‘domestic emergencies and periods of acute caring needs’ (see [Section 4 of the staff handbook](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/section-4-support-staff-handbook)), and also have a statutory entitlement to unpaid emergency time off for dependants (see [Leave for other reasons | HR Support (ox.ac.uk)](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/leave-for-other-reasons#collapse1481231))

**New: carers peer support network**

A new Teams network has been set up to facilitate supportive conversations between working carers at Oxford, and to signpost to sources of support.

Find out more about the network and other support for carers at:

[Support for carers | HR Support (ox.ac.uk)](https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/support-for-carers#collapse4794871)

**HR Contacts**

As a reminder, if you have any questions about your employment, including queries about pay, sickness, family leave, holiday, etc your HR contacts are available to help you:

*[insert departmental details here]*

You can use the central HR website to find [contact details](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/find-your-hr-contact) for central teams such as Childcare services, and POD.

**Reminder to book your annual leave**

As we are over half way through the academic year please check that you know how much annual leave you have remaining.

Breaks away from the workplace are important for us all so ensure that you can book and take all your remaining leave before October.

Holiday can only be carried over in exceptional circumstances and cannot be paid in lieu.