

HR policy briefing

31 October 2023

Agenda

- Health Assured and wellbeing initiatives
- New Ways of Working survey
- Revised fertility leave policy and new pregnancy loss guidance
- Prevent Duty
- HR Policy: local initiatives and local discretion
- General Updates
- Communications Poll



THRIVING AT OXFORD

Resources



Health



Work



Values and principles



Social growth



Personal growth



Financial Wellbeing



Personal wellbeing for
managers



Resources for researchers



Services

Internal

1. Employee Assistance Programme – Health Assured
2. Togetherall
3. Work+ Family Space

External

1. Able Futures
2. Maximus
3. NHS Oxfordshire Talking Therapies



health assured

WORK+FAMILYspace

NHS



togetherall



The EAP: Health Assured

- The service provides:
 - Counselling: 6 sessions online, telephone or in person
 - Legal Information and guidance
 - Money guidance
 - Critical incident advice
 - Managerial support and consultancy
 - Online portal and My Healthy Advantage App
- Next [information session](#) available to book 21 Nov.



health  assured

Eligibility

Yes	No
University staff	College-only staff*
Staff working abroad*	International staff
Fixed-term contracts	Casual workers
Partners and dependants*	Contractors

How do I access this service?

We truly believe in **promoting equality and diversity**. Our internal culture is to **embrace diversity** and **protected characteristics**, and we ensure that our services are delivered in a **sensitive manner**



Freephone

A true 24/7/365 service, no answering machines, separate triage team



LiveAgent

Access through instant chat, via our online portal



Online Web Access

MHA app and Online Health & Wellbeing Portal allowing for increased



Email

If an employee prefer, we can offer initial access to the service via email before a telephone triage



Interpreters & Translation Services

High quality interpreters and translation services in over 240 languages

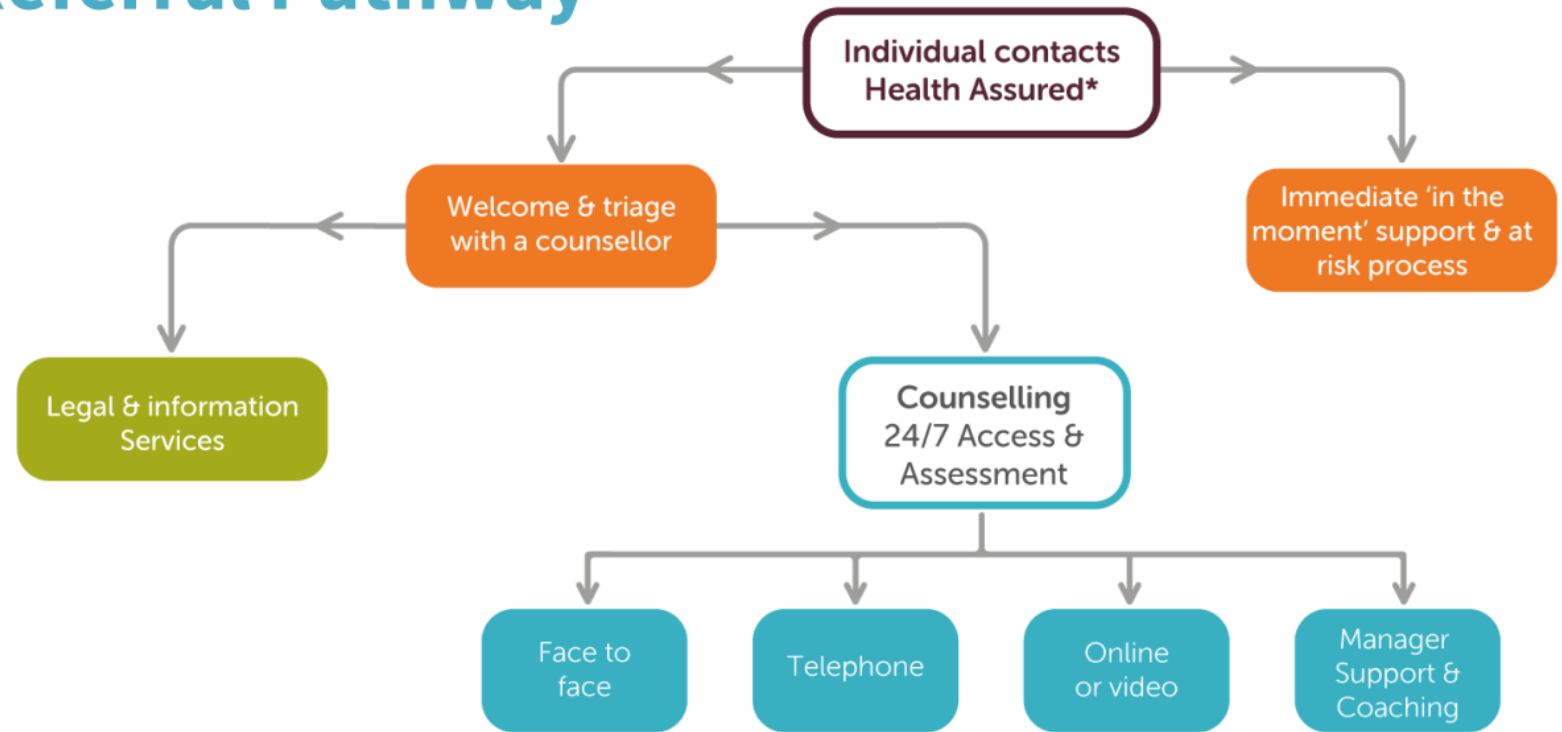


Relay

Supporting those who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired

health assured

Self Referral Pathway



**Via Freephone, Email, Health Portal, LiveAgent, Mobile App, Translation Line or Minicom*

health assured

Data and Health Assured

- Personal information gathered is **not** shared with the University
- Data shared with the University:
 - Number and types of calls via 24/7 helpline (e.g. legal or counselling)
 - Reason for counselling calls (e.g. life event, trauma, work)
 - Number accessing structured counselling including counselling type (e.g. telephone)
 - Categories of legal calls (e.g. Civil, Consumer)
 - Number of Online portal hits
 - Staff demographics (e.g. female, male, family member)
 - University data – division and staff type
- Data will be shared with the Wellbeing Programme Team via quarterly data reviews.



health  assured

How can you promote?

- Signpost to the [Health Assured information page](#)
- Signpost to the [Health Assured information sessions](#)
- Request a [Thriving at Oxford roadshow](#) for your area
- Comms material is available to print or include on your intranet
- Let us know what would help!
- This is a key resource for all staff and managers.
- It does not replace [Mental Health Crisis services](#).



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MHFA Guidance

- MHFA Support Trial run in Trinity Term 2023
 - MHFA Guidance has been submitted to the HR Advisory Group
 - MHFA Guidance is due to be published in November 2023
 - Alongside a system of support including masterclasses and reflective practice sessions via the Counselling Service
 - There is no requirement for departments to have departmental MHFAiders, but Mental Health Awareness Training for all staff is recommended.
- Contact Ruth.Collins@admin.ox.ac.uk to book



Get involved!

- [Become a Staff Wellbeing Champion](#)
- [Share best practice on the Wellbeing Teams Channel](#)
- [Staff Gateway Wellbeing Webpages](#)
- Connect with the Wellbeing Team:
wellbeing@admin.ox.ac.uk



New Ways of Working Survey (1)

- 2nd pulse survey – summer 2023
- 1470 responses (24% of PSS) slightly up on 2022 (but not clear who has responded)
- Results being analysed, some trends but no significant change in views
- Lots of qualitative/free comment sections
- Demographics stable (gender, disability, ethnicity, caring responsibility)
- No divisional/departmental indicators requested
- Questions same yr on yr = problematic!
 - may not have been understood as intending comparison with pre-pandemic as opposed to comparison with last year (ie 'better' than what?)
 - New joiners have only worked current pattern and have no comparator – therefore not 'New'
- Seems to suggest that hybrid working has become normalised (no longer New Way of Working?)
- Full summary will be added to feedback section of website shortly

The logo for 'New Ways of Working' is displayed within a white circle on a dark blue background. It features the words 'NEW WAYS' in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, with 'OF WORKING' in a smaller, white sans-serif font below it. A white curved arrow points from the end of 'WAYS' down to 'OF WORKING'.

[New Ways of Working | HR Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://hrsupport.ox.ac.uk)

NWW survey (2) - headlines



↑ % working fully on-site and occasional remote (very slight change)

↓ % working regular and primarily remote (very slight change)

- Over 80% satisfied with working pattern - agreed it meets operational needs, balances work and home life, and supports their health and wellbeing
- 1/3 - would leave job for more flexibility, 1/3 have all the flexibility they need

Slight decrease in perceived benefits – eg

- Over 62% of those with caring responsibilities 'better able to fulfil' them (65% 2022)
- 45% of those with disability 'better able to manage' their disability (56% 2022)
- 52% better work-life balance (60% 2022)

But also slight decrease in perception of many downsides eg

- 9% more isolated (14% 2022)
- 15% fewer networking opportunities (21% 2022)
- 6% harder to switch off (13% 2022)

NWW survey (3) – headlines



- Of managers – 80% consider they have tools, skills and support needed to manage hybrid/remote staff
- New questions added re: service user views.
 - 49% positive
 - 17% mixed
 - 2% negative
 - 32% no feedback
- Equality analysis underway
- Summary of free text fields will be included in published report
- Notable themes inc NWW enabling Oxford to be seen as a more inclusive and diverse employer.
- Preview...

Benefits for Parents and Carers – example comments

'I have **caring** responsibilities for an elderly parent and NWW has enable me to **continue in my role** at the University which **would not have been possible if NWW had not be introduced**

I am currently **pregnant** and have really appreciated flexible working approaches during **morning sickness** periods

I'm **working more hours** than I would be if I wasn't able to work flexibly. Dropping my child at nursery and getting to Oxford is a long commute and I have to leave early to pick her up on time. Being able to work some days from home means I get the **opportunity to work longer days** to balance the shorter ones. If this wasn't an option I would need to reduce my working hours.

I couldn't have maintained my job without the shift to hybrid working. I **returned from maternity leave** in April 2020 and was expecting to last less than a year having to commute a long way each day I didn't think I would cope. Remote working came at just the right time for me and now with hybrid working I am able to just about **balance work with caring responsibilities and keep my job.**

Benefits for those with disabilities/health conditions

example comments

Being able to work remotely means I'm **better able to manage my chronic health** condition and be off **sick less**

Neurodiversity - busy offices can be overwhelming and I can be so much more productive on "head-down" tasks working from home'

The biggest benefit is that I am **able to work** at all, **following serious illness.**

I can control my environment and stay cool, whereas office environment not suitable for women with **menopause symptoms**

'I am **ill less** than before NWW and take **far fewer absences** due to illness. In addition, I have been able to **reduce medication** for depression and anxiety, due to having a better work-life balance.

Fertility treatment leave - update

Reminder:

- Many elements of fertility treatment are covered by other provisions (eg medical treatment, sick leave, etc). 2 days per year available eg to allow time to deal with "physical or emotional effects of investigations/interventions".
- Guidance recognises the issue and 'creates space' for employees to discuss with manager.
- (With thanks to our volunteer reviewer) we have now undertaken a thorough review of our existing fertility treatment leave policy and made 3 key changes:
 1. De-gendering the language
 2. Now a Day 1 right
 3. Fathers/other parent now also included explicitly (also impacted by emotional effects, etc)
- On the horizon- Fertility Treatment Bill currently at early stages may formalise the right to time off for appointments

Further information:

[Fertility treatment leave | HR Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

Pregnancy loss

- New guidance for supporting employees going through pregnancy loss, which is now separate to the maternity guidance.
- NHS Definitions:
 - *miscarriage/foetal loss* = Pregnancy loss **before 24** completed weeks
 - *Still birth* = pregnancy loss **after 24** completed weeks
- Gov.uk - Maternity leave SMP or MA
 - Still birth – individual who has experienced the pregnancy loss and the father/partner qualify for both statutory and contractual scheme
 - Miscarriage – no qualification for maternity/paternity schemes but compassionate/special paid leave can be offered.
- New guidance includes advice for managers on how to manage and support an employee who has experienced pregnancy loss and where to signpost employees for internal and external support.
- On the horizon - Miscarriage Leave Bill at early stage of consideration would give specific right to 3 days paid bereavement leave.

Further information

<https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/pregnancy-loss>

Prevent Duty



A strand of Gov counter-terrorism strategy (Contest – Prevent, Pursue, Protect, Prepare)



Prevent duty – Specified authorities inc education to "help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism"



Important – within HE context compliance needs to respect academic freedom, freedom of speech and other rights – covered in training



Quick poll – MT2022 link to Prevent training was circulated – did you attend?



New online training available (director of SWSS) on CoSy soon – look out for Cascade message during November



Numbers being tracked for OfS, please sign up – aimed at those with ‘welfare’ angle to role inc HR staff



More information: [Prevent | Compliance \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/prevent-compliance)

HR Policies (1): Local initiatives

- Local initiatives such as running menopause or wellbeing events very much encouraged
- But where we already have central HR policies and guidance please use them and don't create local versions:
 - May affect contracts and terms and conditions
 - May cause confusion
 - May be divisive across the University
 - We don't have time to review local rewrites of existing policies
- If a central HR policy isn't working well at departmental level please come and talk to us so that we can review it

HR Policies (2): Local discretion

- We understand it can be frustrating when local discretion is built into policies (although we do get asked to bend firm rules as well!)
- Policies have to work across all our very varied departments and staff groups
- Aim for consistent overarching framework to ensure fairness for all staff, but with some space for local HR teams to respond to local or individual circumstances
- Where there is discretion it's there for a reason and responsibility sits with the department, not central HR

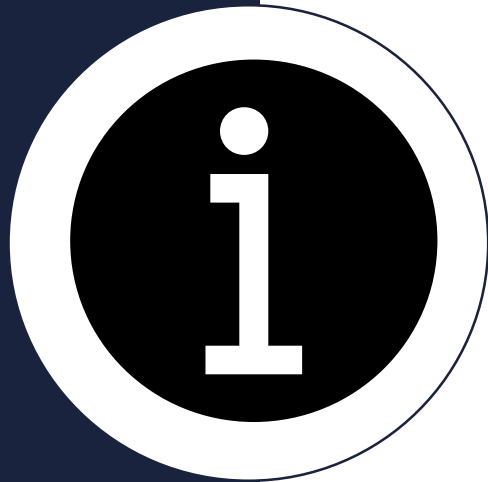
General updates

Annual leave and sickness

- Employees who are sick during a period of booked holiday can ask for this to be recorded as sickness (and holiday reccredited)
- Reminder - recently extended to include fixed closure days (but not bank holidays)
- A reminder also - reccrediting of holiday, whether personal leave or fixed closures, is not automatic and should only be actioned at the request of the employee.

Priority Candidate Support Scheme

- The PCSS which provided some additional support to professional services staff seeking redeployment has been discontinued.



General updates

OA1 Guidance and UDF

- Reminder: the OA1 Form was updated in July 2023 to include country information on the appointment and to include additional guidance for applicants.
- A new UDF for recording outside appointments in PeopleXD has also now launched.
- New guidance for Heads of Department on reviewing OA1s and addressing potential conflicts of interest. See [Compliance webpages](#).

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

- Reminder: DBS checks now carried out via Horus.
- Recent audit identified issue with inconsistent record keeping - reminder that there is a pro-forma for recording DBS checks on the website [DBS checks | HR Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)



General updates

Onboarding in PeopleXD

- A new Onboarding process will be live in PXD and will apply to new appointments with start dates from **1 November**.
- A briefing session was held in September and the [recording is available online](#). The HR Systems team will continue to run drop-in sessions throughout November and December to answer any questions you may have adopting to the new process.
- [Guidance](#) for HR staff has been updated to reflect the introduction of this new feature.

Academic Further Particulars and Standard Job Description- clarification

- Mis-communication in our recent Newsletter – apologies!
- To clarify:
 - **Academic FPs** have been updated with regards to the **EJRA dates**
 - **Standard JD template** has been updated to include links to the **Oxford Research Staff Society**



General updates



Equipment Loan Form

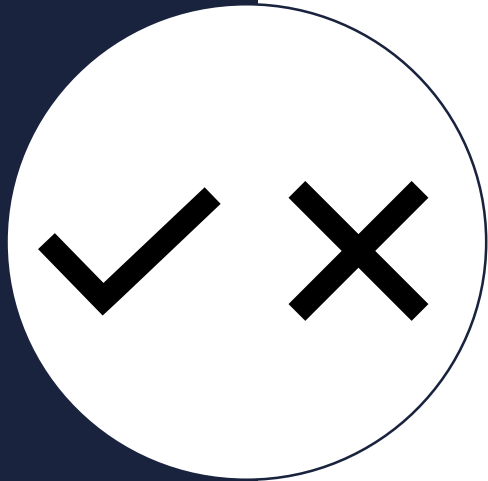
- A new Equipment Loan Form will be added to the [New Starter Arrangements Day 1 checklist](#) in early November.
- From 1st November all new starters/movers will be prompted by PeopleXD as part of the Onboarding Module to discuss and complete the form with their line manager.
- The form will capture details of all the equipment on loan to the employee and include a signed declaration that they accept the conditions of the loan and that they will familiarise themselves with the relevant University-wide IT policies:
 - The [University's IT Regulations 1 of 2002](#)
 - The [Information Security Policy](#), including the [Information Security and Data Privacy Awareness Training](#)

Policy team communications



- Briefings and Newsletter continue to now just be HR **policy** issues
- Broader HR issues coming in new HR-wide newsletter
 - Twice per term
 - To: administrators-personnel mailing list. To join list - [HR communications | HR Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](#))
 - Using click-through email format, like Bulletin
 - Covering news from all central HR teams

Polls



1. HR Policy Briefings

- Do you continue to find these briefings useful, with the operational focus?

2. Policy team Newsletter for HR colleagues

- Do you still prefer to have the Policy news separately from the wider HR-news newsletter?