

OU: Supporting Carers Carers Rights Day 26 November 2020

Pre session polls

What level of study are you?

- Access
- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Postgraduate

What would you consider is your main area of study?

- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

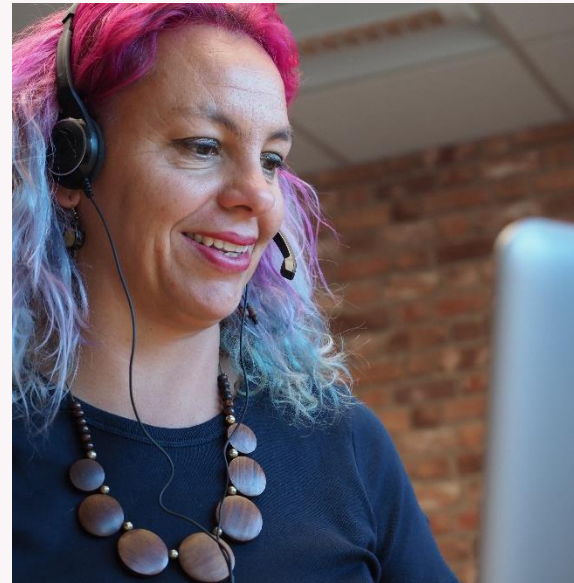
Would you describe yourself as a carer?

- Yes – I care for a family member or friend
- No – I don't have a caring role
- No – I have a caring role but I don't use the term 'carer'

student hub live is the OU's live online interactive platform to support academic community



Karen Foley is a lecturer at the OU, head of student hub live and chairs Y032. She also tutors in social sciences, psychology and science.



Isabella Henman is a tutor in science and health sciences at Access to level 2.

She normally talks at the online workshops but is supporting today

Initial poll

What is your main reason for coming along today?
(If you are on a mobile device remember you need to tap into the polling option)



To come back to these slides after completing a poll click on the share pod slides icon



Our main speakers



Dr Liz Marr is Pro-Vice Chancellor Students. Liz will be launching the OU's new Student Carer Policy.



Facilitator: Gill Ryan is Access, Participation and Success Officer with the OU in Scotland and a co-chair of the Care and Caring @OU Network.

What we're going to cover:

- Introductions
- Launch of OU Student Carer Policy
- Ask the panel
- Caring during Covid-19 – break out activity
- Panel responds to feedback from activity

Carers Rights Day

- ensure carers are aware of their rights
- let carers know where to get help and support
- raise awareness of the needs of carers



Poll time

- How do you feel about carers rights day? Please say a few words in the anonymous short answer poll

- Students with unpaid caring responsibilities face unique challenges in balancing these commitments with Open University study.
- The Open University is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students. This policy is intended to outline the support available to students with caring responsibilities and to provide guidance to staff supporting these students.
- We use the Carers Trust definition of a carer:
 - *anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.*

<https://help.open.ac.uk/documents/policies/student-carers>

Outlines support for students who are carers

- From your tutor
- From the student support team
- Alternative arrangements for exams
- Alternative learning experience for tutorials and residential schools
- Financial support
- Mental health, wellbeing and welfare
- Careers and employability

Poll time

- Have you told the OU that you have a caring role? Please select your answer from the anonymous answer poll
 - Yes it's in my student profile
 - Yes I've told my tutor
 - Not yet but I'm considering it
 - No (prefer not to)
 - Not a carer

5% of our students have told us they are carers, but we expect the actual number is much higher.

If we know you are a carer, we can be proactive about offering support.

- You can update your profile in StudentHome
- Student support staff can record this if you disclose to them

By 2025, we are aiming for all students to declare whether they are a carer or not (Access and Participation Plan)

Question time with the panel



Catherine Pestano is an AL, a social worker and a working carer



Ian Cheyne is Deputy President of the OU Students Association



Jitka Vseteckova is a Senior Lecturer and researcher in Health and Social Care



Kirstin Fairnie is a Senior Advisor with the Student Support Team, OUIS



Gemma Crowson is Policy and Controls Coordinator in Student Fees

- Which of the different things you have just heard about do you think you are going to find out more about? Please select from the options
 - Balancing caring whilst studying
 - OU students association
 - Caring and wellbeing
 - Support for student carers
 - Fees and funding

Useful points for breakouts

- We suggest you use the first couple of minutes to introduce yourselves and get used to the room. Choose a volunteer to keep the discussion on track and feed back to the main room
- If you want to speak you will need to activate your microphone *once in the room and you see the option available*
- Breakout groups work best if people engage and contribute and discuss
- There will be ~10 minutes for the breakouts overall – we'll send regular reminders to let you know how long you have got left

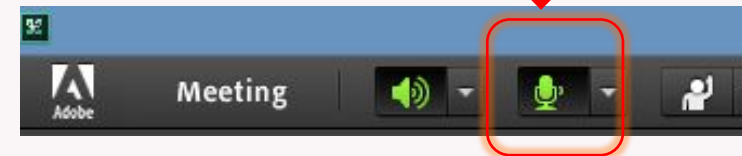


Remember to check the number of the room you are in (shows at top of chat pod as “chat x breakout y”) in case of connection issues and for bringing back information.



Breakout activity

- Discuss with your group In your groups, discuss your experiences and challenges of caring during Covid-19.
- How has the university supported you to manage caring while studying?
- What support would have been helpful?
- Do you have any addition questions that you would like to put to the panel?
- You do not have to speak on mic if you don't want to but please do interact with your group using the chat option



**This session is
currently in breakouts
(small groups).**

**If you are part of this group and have had
connection issues please let us know your room
number in the chat box**

Questions

- Any arising from breakout discussions

Take home message

- There is support available – talk to your tutor, student support team or students association.
- You are not alone. Make contact with other students who are caring.

Final poll

What do you feel is the main thing you will take away from this session?

I have studied and taught while a carer, including during the pandemic

- Talk to your tutor
- Be open to diverse sources of support
- Reach out locally and nationally
- Practice articulating needs
- Find allies
- Take 'me time' – singing!

The Association supports all students equally, identifies needs, and recognises the remarkable efforts and achievements of carers

Carers' Pain

- The health of the person they care for
- Coping with demands of the caring role
- Uncertainty about the future

Carers' Pride

- Taking on responsibility
- Doing a worthwhile job
- Coping

Carers' Potential

- Persevering with study
- Gaining skills and knowledge
- Sense of purpose through combined effort
- New objectives, new life, earned rewards

Support from the Students Association

- **Peer Support** programme – non judgemental study support for students by students

<https://www.oustudents.com/peer-support>

- **Togetherall** (was Big White Wall) 24/7 online support for mental health

<https://www.oustudents.com/togetherall>

- **Nightline** – confidential listening and information for students by students (IM, text or email)

<https://www.oustudents.com/nightline>

- Health and wellbeing **clubs**, including for Carers, Dyslexia, Parents and Mental Health

<https://www.oustudents.com/clubs-health-and-wellbeing>

- Wellbeing is immensely important for everyone and especially for carers.
- This may mean something slightly different for each one of us. '***The Five Pillars of Ageing/Keeping Well***' may work for many but not for everyone.
- We are the best people to find and understand what we need, all we need to do is to find out who can support us on the way.
- The OU is an amazing and supportive place, we are all here to support one another.

Student Support Team can advise about options available:

- Qualification and course choice
- Special examination arrangements
- Special circumstances
- Tutorials
- Residential schools
- Deferral
- Study breaks

Fees and funding

Student Fees can offer information and support about:

- Study Related Costs Funding
- Tuition Fee Loans & Maintenance Funding
- Bursary & Scholarships

<http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding>