

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
DIVERSITY DEFINITIONS AND STAFF SUPPORT**

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Introduction

This document provides definitions of protected characteristics and other groups, some of which are not explicitly referred to in the Equality Act 2010. University support available for staff is detailed.

AGE

The Equality Act 2010 includes provisions that ban age discrimination against adults in the provision of services and public functions. It is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of age unless:

- The practice is covered by an exception from the ban
- Good reason can be shown for the differential treatment ('objective justification').

Retirement

Members of staff who are planning to retire should notify their line manager in writing. Should additional information be required before submitting a formal notification, you should contact your [Human Resources Adviser](#). USS pension scheme members may have the option of flexible retirement. Further information regarding retirement in relation to pensions can be sought through contacting [The Pensions Office](#).

The University provides training for employees considering retirement, which aims to encourage a healthy and financially secure retirement. For further information and to book a course, visit the [Courses and Workshops page](#).

University Support for Age-Related Issues

- The [Counselling Service](#) offers online and face-to-face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
- The University offers staff an [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) which provides a free, confidential face-to-face and telephone counselling service as well as information services. The EAP is provided by Care First and staff can contact them about work related or personal issues as well as information, such as legal or financial advice.
- Your [Human Resources Partner](#) can support with complex casework such as grievances and dignity at work. Your [Human Resources Adviser](#) can provide advice on policies and procedures and is your first point of contact for casework.
- Your line manager
- The [Online Reporting Tool](#) can be used to report any incidents or acts of harassment, bullying, violence, targeted hate, or sexual misconduct. All staff,

students, and visitors to our campus can report something that has happened to them for recording anonymously or can use the Online Reporting Tool to get support from an adviser.

- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
- The [Workplace Dignity Network](#) provides support to staff who would like to talk through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues.

External Support for Age-Related Issues

- [Age Scotland](#)
- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL)

Within the United Kingdom the most common form of sign language is British Sign Language (BSL). BSL has its own grammatical structure and syntax, as a language it is not dependent, nor is it closely related to spoken English. The University of Aberdeen has its own [British Sign Language Plan](#) which seeks to improve access to information and services for BSL users.

University Support for BSL users

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- Your [Human Resources Adviser](#) is your first point of contact for discussing reasonable adjustments. Your Human Resources Adviser can also provide advice on policies and procedures.
- Your line manager.
- The [Multi-Faith Chaplaincy](#) is open to staff and students from all cultures, faiths and beliefs and is a place of pastoral care. Chaplains provide support and advice to members of the community in times of stress, crisis, bereavement, or illness. They are also available for those wishing to explore questions of a personal or confidential nature. The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy operates an open-door policy.
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- The [Staff Disability Network Group](#) is open to disabled staff or for staff with an interest in disability. It aims to provide support for disabled staff and those with an interest in disability in the workplace, share information and consider good practice, and provide recommendations to enhance University policy where appropriate.
- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
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External Support for BSL Users

- [Access to Work](#)
- [Deaf Action](#)
- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)
- [Grampian Regional Equality Council](#)
- [North East Sensory Services](#)

CARE EXPERIENCED (in accordance with our duties as a Corporate Parent)

“Care experienced” can be defined as anyone who has been in care at any stage of their life and for any length of time. This may have been provided in many different settings such as:

- Kinship care – living with a relative who is not your parent.
- Looked after at home with the help of social work.
- Residential care – living in a residential unit or school.
- Living with foster carers.
- Living in a secure unit.

University Support for Care Experienced Staff

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DISABILITY

Disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. There is a wide range of disabilities which can be hidden or visible. 80% of disabilities are invisible. Hidden disabilities may include dyslexia, depression, chronic pain, diabetes, or deafness. Visible disabilities can include cerebral palsy, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Tourette syndrome or amputations.

Reasonable Adjustments

The University has a legal obligation to make reasonable changes to the workplace, working patterns or learning environments to ensure that disabled staff can fulfil their employment duties and students can engage with their studies.

Employees are advised to inform their line manager of the need for a reasonable adjustment as soon as possible but may wish to contact their Human Resources Partner or Adviser initially. In some cases, the Human Resources Partner, line manager, and employee can discuss the most suitable options to implement. The member of staff is encouraged to provide suggestions about potential solutions.

In other cases, the employee will be referred to Occupational Health to pinpoint which reasonable adjustments will be most effective for them. An external assessor may also assess the individual and examine their workstation. Following this, the external assessor will recommend the best measures and equipment for the individual. In some cases, a risk assessment of an employee’s duties will be carried out.

A Human Resources Partner or Adviser may also encourage a disabled member of staff to apply to the [Access to Work Scheme](#) in the anticipation of costly adjustments being required. The Access to Work Scheme will contribute to the cost of the adjustment, but the University will be required to pay the first £1000. After an application is made, an adviser from the Scheme will contact the member of staff and their Human Resources Partner or Adviser to discuss what help might be

available. The employee may need an assessment of the workplace to assess their needs.

University Support for Staff with Disabilities

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- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
- The [Workplace Dignity Network](#) provides support to staff who would like to talk through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues.

External Support for People with Disabilities

- [Access to Work](#)

- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)
- [Grampian Regional Equality Council](#)
- [Victim Support Scotland](#)

GAELIC LANGUAGE

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed with a view to securing the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect to the English language. Under this Act, the University of Aberdeen has a statutory duty to play its part in supporting in ensuring that Gaelic remains alive as a language and recovers in the future. The University does this through our [Gaelic Language Plan](#) which is overseen by the Gaelic Language Plan Advisory Group and comprises of members across the University. The Group reports annually on the University's progress to [Bòrd na Gàidhlig](#), the public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. This includes non-binary and gender fluid individuals. Gender reassignment can include medical transitioning which can involve medical treatments, such as taking hormones or undergoing surgery. Transitioning isn't necessarily medical and can also involve changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender.

Transgender is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, genderqueer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

Non-binary is used to describe people who feel their gender cannot be defined within the margins of gender binary. Instead, they understand their gender in a way that goes beyond simply identifying as either a man or woman. Non-binary people may identify as both male and female or neither male nor female. They may feel their gender is fluid can change and fluctuate or perhaps they permanently don't identify with one particular gender.

University Support for Transgender Staff

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the

opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.

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- Your [Human Resources Advisor](#) or [Human Resources Partner](#) can advise and support. Your Human Resources Partner can support with complex casework such as grievances and dignity at work.
- The [LGBTQ+ Staff and Postgraduate Network](#) purpose is to provide support and networking opportunities as well as continuing to ensure the University is an LGBTQ+ friendly institution that embraces diversity and inclusivity.
- Your line manager
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More information on support available can be found in the [Transgender Equality Policy](#).

External Support for Transgender Staff

- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)
- [Four Pillars - LGBTQ+ Support](#)
- [Galop](#)
- [Switchboard](#)
- [Victim Support Scotland](#)

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Marriage and civil partnership are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, for the purposes of direct or indirect discrimination. The protected characteristic applies only to people who are married or in a civil partnership.

MENOPAUSE AND PERIMENOPAUSE

The menopause is when periods stop due to lower hormone levels. This typically happens between the ages of 45 and 55 with the average age being 51 in the UK. However, it can be earlier for natural reasons or be surgically or chemically induced. The symptoms typically last for 4 years but can last up to 12 years. [Perimenopause](#) is the time leading up to menopause when changes may be experienced.

Menopause and perimenopause can cause symptoms such as brain fog, sleep disturbances, mood swings, anxiety, hot flushes and heavy periods. Not every individual will have every symptom or need help or support. However, 75% of those affected do experience some symptoms, and 25% of those symptoms could be classed as severe.

It is important to recognise that menopause is experienced differently by individuals and therefore the impact of the menopause may differ greatly for each person. People who identify themselves as non-binary, transgender or intersex may experience menopausal symptoms.

The menopause is not a specific protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. However, the University of Aberdeen recognises the challenges its menopausal staff may experience and endeavours to support them.

University Support for Perimenopause and Menopause

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
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- Although menopause and perimenopause are not considered a disability, the University of Aberdeen understands that many of the symptoms can be debilitating, and staff may need an adjustment to their workplace. Your [Human Resources Adviser](#) is your first point of contact for discussing reasonable adjustments.

- Your line manager.
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- [The Menopause Network](#) aims to raise awareness of the potential impact of the menopause at work and provide a support mechanism for staff who are experiencing the menopause.
- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
- The [Workplace Dignity Network](#) provides support to staff who would like to talk through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues.

External Support for Perimenopause and Menopause

- [Daisy Network](#) for premature menopause
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [Menopause and Me](#)
- [Queermenopause](#) for people who identify as LGBT+
- [Women's Health Concern](#)

NEURODIVERGENCE

Neurodivergence refers to the variation in cognitive functioning that can lead to differences in thinking, attention, and memory. Most forms of neurodivergence are experienced along a spectrum with each having a range of associated characteristics that can vary from individual to individual. An estimated 1 in 7 people in the UK are neurodivergent. Neurodivergence includes (but is not limited to):

- ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders)
- Autism
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Tic disorders

Neurodivergence may be regarded as a disability under the Equality Act 2010. Disability is defined in the Act as a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. However, some neurodivergent individuals do not consider themselves to have a disability. Further guidance can be found within the [Neurodiversity Equality Policy](#)

University Support for Neurodivergent Staff

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
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External Support for Neurodivergence

- [Access to Work](#)
- [Autism Understanding Scotland](#)
- [Dyslexia Scotland](#)
- [Dyspraxia Foundation](#)
- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)
- [National Autistic Society](#)
- [Scottish ADHD Coalition](#)
- [Tourettes Action](#)

PERINATAL LOSS

Perinatal loss occurs when development stops and a foetus is unable to develop normally during pregnancy. Several factors may cause perinatal loss and, in some cases, the cause may be unknown. Examples of perinatal loss may include miscarriage or stillbirth. A miscarriage is the loss of a pregnancy during the first 23 weeks. A stillbirth occurs at or after 24 weeks of pregnancy, up until delivery. Perinatal loss can be emotionally traumatic for both parents.

[The Maternity and Birth Parent Procedure](#) provides information for staff on procedures in the event of a miscarriage or still birth.

University Support for Perinatal Loss

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
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- Your [Human Resources Partner or Adviser](#) can advise and support.
- The Parents and Carers Network offer a mentoring service to staff.

External Support for Perinatal Loss

[Sands](#)

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

The Equality Act 2010 protects people against direct discrimination and victimisation because of the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity. The protected period applies throughout pregnancy until the end of maternity leave period.

Policies on parental leave, maternity leave and flexible working can be accessed in the [Policy Zone](#).

University Support for Pregnancy and Maternity

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
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- Your [Human Resources Partner or Adviser](#) can discuss maternity/ birth parent entitlements.
- Your line manager.
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- The Parents and Carers Network offer a mentoring service to staff around maternity/paternity/parental leave, returning from leave, and general parenting and/or caring issues.
- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.

- The [Women's Development Network \(WDN\)](#) is designed to connect female staff at all grades, career paths and ethnic groups in both formal and informal settings. The purpose of the network is to:
 - Act as a forum for development debate and networking
 - Share ideas, experiences, knowledge and opportunities to support colleagues
 - Promote equality of opportunity for women across the University
 - Provide a source of information and support relating to development processes and mechanism
- The [Workplace Dignity Network](#) provides support to staff who would like to talk through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues.
- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)

RACE

The Equality Act 2010 defines race as including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

The University established a [Race Definitions Task and Finish Group](#) to establish a set of definitions related to our antiracism work and to progress discussions related to agreeing a definition of antisemitism. The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA) has been adopted by the University. The JDA helps to identify, address and raise awareness of antisemitism and how it can manifest and to create a safe environment for Jewish students and staff.

The University's [Antiracism Strategy](#) details the commitments made to create an antiracist culture and ethos at the University of Aberdeen.

University Support for Race Issues

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- [Race Equality Champions](#) are a point of contact for staff and students for advice, guidance, to share ideas or for just a listening ear.
- The [Race Equality Network \(REN\)](#) is open to all staff and Postgraduate Research Students. The Network provides an informal social space for discussion of shared experiences related to race at the University of Aberdeen and explores best practices in advancing race equality in the classroom, workspaces and everyday life on campus.
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External Support for Race Issues

- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)
- [Grampian Regional Equality Council](#)

REFUGEES AND PEOPLES SEEKING ASYLUM

The definition of a refugee according to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is:

“A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

In the United Kingdom, an individual becomes a refugee when the government agrees that an individual who has applied for asylum meets the definition in the

Refugee Convention they will “recognise” that person as a refugee and issue them with refugee status documentation. A refugee will have the right to work and claim benefits, or in the case of students, apply for student support, in the same way as UK citizens.

A person seeking asylum is someone who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been concluded. This means they are not allowed to work in the UK, but they may do voluntary work. Some people seeking asylum who are students may be entitled to assistance with tuition fees but are not entitled to student loans for living costs.

Neither peoples seeking asylum or refugee status is included as a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010. However, the University of Aberdeen recognises the challenges these groups face and will endeavour to support those with asylum seeker or refugee status within the University community. The University also recognises that reasons for seeking asylum may include reasons relating to one or more of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

University Support for Refugees and Peoples Seeking Asylum

- If you are a refugee or asylum seeker and are looking for more information on professional pathways, please contact sanctuary@abdn.ac.uk
- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
- The University offers staff an [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) which provides a free, confidential face to face and telephone counselling service as well as information services. The EAP is provided by Care First and staff can contact them about work related or personal issues as well as information, such as legal or financial advice.
- The [Multi-Faith Chaplaincy](#) is open to staff and students from all cultures, faiths and beliefs and is a place of pastoral care. Chaplains provide support and advice to members of the community in times of stress, crisis, bereavement, or illness. They are also available for those wishing to explore questions of a personal or confidential nature. The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy operates an open-door policy.
- The [Online Reporting Tool](#) can be used to report any incidents or acts of harassment, bullying, violence, targeted hate, or sexual misconduct. All staff, students, and visitors to our campus can report something that has happened to them for recording anonymously or can use the Online Reporting Tool to get support from an adviser.

- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
- The [Workplace Dignity Network](#) provides support to staff who would like to talk through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues.

External Support for Refugees and Peoples Seeking Asylum

- [Cara \(the Council for at Risk Academics\)](#)
- [Grampian Regional Equality Council](#)
- [Universities of Sanctuary](#)

RELIGION AND BELIEF

Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief.

The University has adopted the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA). The JDA helps to identify, address and raise awareness of antisemitism and how it can manifest.

The [Diversity Calendar](#) contains major religious holidays. More information on issues from religious observance to faith and observance facilities can be found within the [Religion and Belief Policy](#).

University Support for Religion and Belief Issues

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
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students, and visitors to our campus can report something that has happened to them for recording anonymously or can use the Reporting Tool to get support from an adviser.

- [Personal Tutors](#) can signpost students to specialist support.
- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
- The [Workplace Dignity Network](#) provides support to staff who would like to talk through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues.

External Sources of Support for Religion and Belief Issues

- [AMINA – Muslim Women’s Resource Centre](#)
- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)
- [Interfaith Scotland](#)
- [Muslim Community Helpline](#)

SEX

Within the Equality Act 2010, sex can mean either male or female or a group of people like men or women. This means that a person cannot be discriminated against because:

- They are or are not a particular sex
- It is believed that they are the opposite sex. This is known as discrimination by perception
- They are connected to someone of a particular sex. This is known as discrimination by association.

University Support for Issues Related to Sex

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
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- The [Online Reporting Tool](#) can be used to report any incidents or acts of harassment, bullying, violence, targeted hate, or sexual misconduct. All staff, students, and visitors to our campus can report something that has happened to them for recording anonymously or can use the Online Reporting Tool to get support from an adviser.
- The [Women's Development Network \(WDN\)](#) is designed to connect female staff at all grades, career paths and ethnic groups in both formal and informal settings. The purpose of the network is to:
 - Act as a forum for development debate and networking
 - Share ideas, experiences, knowledge and opportunities to support colleagues
 - Promote equality of opportunity for women across the University
 - Provide a source of information and support relating to development processes and mechanism
- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
- The [Workplace Dignity Network](#) provides support to staff who would like to talk through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues.
- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation means a person's sexual orientation towards:

- Persons of the same sex,
- Persons of the opposite sex, or
- Persons of either sex

University Support for Issues Relating to Sexual Orientation

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.
- The University offers staff an [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) which provides a free, confidential face to face and telephone counselling service as well as information services. The EAP is provided by Care First and staff can contact them about work related or personal issues as well as information, such as legal or financial advice.
- [LGBTQ+ Staff and Postgraduate Network](#) whose purpose is to provide support and networking opportunities as well as continuing to ensure the University is an LGBTQ+ friendly institution that embraces diversity and inclusivity.

- Your line manager.
- The [Multi-Faith Chaplaincy](#) is open to staff and students from all cultures, faiths and beliefs and is a place of pastoral care. Chaplains provide support and advice to members of the community in times of stress, crisis, bereavement, or illness. They are also available for those wishing to explore questions of a personal or confidential nature. The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy operates an open-door policy.
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- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
- The [Workplace Dignity Network](#) provides support to staff who would like to talk through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues.

External Support for Issues Relating to Sexual Orientation

- [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)
- [Four Pillars - LGBT+ Support](#)
- [Galop](#)
- [Switchboard](#)
- [Victim Support Scotland](#)

UNPAID CARERS

The University of Aberdeen adopts the definition of an unpaid carer as 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.

Carers are not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 but are protected against discrimination by association with the protected characteristic of disability. The University will strive to implement policies and procedures to support staff and students who are carers.

The University recognises that staff, students and prospective students and staff and University Court members may also be or have been protected under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Carers Charter 2018.

University Support for Unpaid Carers

- The [Counselling Service](#) offer online and face to face counselling appointments for both staff and students. Counselling is a talking therapy which gives you the opportunity to explore issues which are causing you concern or distress. The Counselling Service can give you the space to find a new perspective on a

problem or think about options for change. They won't tell you what to do but will listen to you and help you find a way forward.

- The University offers staff an [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) which provides a free, confidential face to face and telephone counselling service as well as information services. The EAP is provided by Care First and staff can contact them about work related or personal issues as well as information, such as legal advice.
- Your line manager.
- Your [Human Resources Advisor](#) or [Human Resources Partner](#) can advise and support.
- The [Multi-Faith Chaplaincy](#) is open to staff and students from all cultures, faiths and beliefs and is a place of pastoral care. Chaplains provide support and advice to members of the community in times of stress, crisis, bereavement, or illness. They are also available for those wishing to explore questions of a personal or confidential nature. The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy operates an open-door policy.
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- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.
- The [Staff Disability Network Group](#) is open to disabled staff or for staff with an interest in disability. It aims to provide support for disabled staff and those with an interest in disability in the workplace, share information and consider good practice, and provide recommendations to enhance University policy where appropriate.
- [School EDI Leads](#) can be contacted regarding matters in their School. They can also signpost to appropriate internal or external information and support.