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| North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership |
| Carer Policy  (2023-2024) |

# Introduction

The North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership (NWCDTP) recognises that some doctoral researchers will have caring responsibilities and may face obstacles in terms of access, time, resources, and/or progressing their PhD studies. We understand that caring responsibilities are unique to each person(s) and that each researcher will have individual needs, circumstances, and requirements for support. This policy provides advice and guidance for:

* Doctoral researchers within the NWCDTP who, at any point during their PhD programme, are responsible for providing emotional or practical support to partners, children and other family members, friends, neighbours, or others who are unable to manage alone.
* Supervisory staff and/or those who have a role in advising and supporting doctoral researchers who already are or who anticipate having carer responsibilities, as well as researchers who may continue to be affected after caring responsibilities have ceased.

The policy covers any current or prospective doctoral researcher who has sole or shared responsibility for a partner, relative, friend, or neighbour due to illness, a disability or mental health condition(s), or addiction. We recognise that the need for care can often be short or long term, and that the responsibility for emotional or practical support may occur at any point and may not be predictable or have a set timescale.

# Policy Statement

The NWCDTP believes that caring should not prevent doctoral researchers from succeeding in their studies. Through our foundational values of respect, integrity, creativity, and collaboration, we enrich the many contributions made to our culture and society by doctoral researchers across our member Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). We are committed to providing support and flexibility to facilitate their success, ensuring that no one is disadvantaged whilst safeguarding academic standards.

# Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all doctoral researchers registered with the NWCDTP.

The scope of this policy does not include ongoing day-to-day parental responsibilities, unless for a disabled child, or any caring responsibilities as part of a voluntary placement or where payment is received. The policy focuses primarily on the responsibility of caregiving and the impact of this responsibility on academic study and success.

Out-of-pocket carer costs beyond those required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the PhD programme (for example, travel, cohort conferences, and training events) may be requested. Carer costs associated with flexible working patterns or for extended periods of fieldwork may not be sought. Childcare costs (over and above normal childcare costs i.e. for evening and/or weekend events) can be covered. As with other expenses, the researcher will need to show documentary evidence before expenses can be processed.

There is no qualifying period for carers support. We will ensure that our training provisions and opportunities continue to provide protection from discrimination for carers. The degree of flexibility that may be offered will be affected by each doctoral researcher’s individual HEI; however, all will follow the general approach set out in this document.

# Terminology

‘A carer is 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 Trust)](https://carers.org/about-caring/about-caring). As of 2023, there is estimated to be at least 376,000 young adult carers living in the UK [(Carers Trust)](https://carers.org/about-caring/about-young-adult-carers). The person who is cared for may have more than one condition. Some carers care for shorter periods or are life-long carers. Carers do not need to be living with the person who is cared for in order to be considered a ‘carer’. Anybody can become a carer at any time and sometimes for more than one person.

# Support for Carers

A range of University policies can be used to help students and staff who need support with caring responsibilities either on a short- or long-term basis. We would ask doctoral researchers to consult with their own HEI in the first instance about what support may be available. A list of further support and useful contacts can be found at the end of this document.

The NWCDTP can provide a small budget to fund out-of-pocket expenses incurred by attending programmes offered by the NWCDTP that impact usual caring responsibilities. The key aspect is that there is a payment to a registered third party. Please note that we will not be able to make the specific care arrangement for you. Applications will be accepted throughout the year. Payment will be made by way of an expense claim form with receipts attached.

For compulsory activities run by the NWCDTP, such as required employability placements or whole-cohort training events, full additional costs will be covered.

For optional activities run by the NWCDTP, where these are run and therefore fully funded by the NWCDTP, the contribution method is appropriate up to a defined limit (approximately £100).

For activities that are not organised by the NWCDTP, no contribution will be made.

# How to Apply

Please send an email request using your academic email address with ‘CARER APPLICATION’ in the subject header to [nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk) by the 1st of the month deadline (this is similar to fieldwork/conference monthly rolling deadlines) in order to receive feedback within the same month. If you submit your application after the 1st of the month, it may delay the decision.

In order to apply we will require the following information:

* Details of the event(s) you wish to attend: what, where, when, and why
* Details of the support you require, and your proposed provider of that support
* Details of additional carer costs associated with attending the event(s)

Costs will be reimbursed following the event.

Please note that for compulsory activities run by the NWCDTP such as the conference, residential, and NWCDTP-organised training, you can claim directly to the DTP by completing a [PR7](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=8287) form (please do not forget to attach receipts) without having to complete an application prior to the event. Please ensure you send the completed form to nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk

# Confidentiality

The NWCDTP will protect all personal information and treat it in the strictest confidence. Information will only be shared if a person consents to disclosure or there is a statutory or other legal requirement.

**Principles of Confidentiality**

* Justify the purpose(s) for asking for and using confidential information
* We will not use confidential information unless it is absolutely necessary
* We will use minimum necessary personal identifiable information
* Access to confidential information should be on a strict need-to-know basis to those with a legitimate interest
* Everyone with access to confidential information should be aware of their responsibilities
* We will comply with the law

# Further Support and Useful Information

**General**

* [Carers UK](https://www.carersuk.org/)
* [Carers](https://www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities/carers)
* [Carers Trust](https://carers.org/)
* [Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/looking-after-people/carers-help-and-support/)
* [The Carers Federation](https://www.carersfederation.co.uk/)
* [Manchester Carers Centre](https://www.manchestercarers.org.uk/)
* [The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) Student Voice Network](https://www.nnecl.org/pages/student-voice-network)

**Institutional Support**

* [University of Manchester](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/connect/teachers/students/widening-participation/care-background/" \l ":~:text=If%20you%20would%20like%20more,available%20for%20students%20while%20studying.)
* [Manchester Metropolitan University](https://www.mmu.ac.uk/study/support-for-specific-groups-of-students/students-caring-responsibilities-and-pregnant-students#:~:text=Our%20Inclusion%20service%20provide%20a,most%20of%20your%20university%20experience.)
* [Royal Northern College of Music](https://www.rncm.ac.uk/about/college-information/student-support-wellbeing/)
* [University of Salford](https://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/topics/diversity-and-inclusion/student-carers)
* [Lancaster University](https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/disability-and-inclusive-practice-service/transitions-team/student-carers/)
* [University of Liverpool](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/hr/whyworkhere/familyfriendly/Carers,guidance,for,staff.pdf)
* [Keele University](https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/lifeoutsideofstudy/supportingourdiversecommunity/studentswithcaringresponsibilities/)