



NEWSLETTER



Our Mission, Vision and Statement of Purpose

The Parents, Carers & Guardians Network at the University of Manchester is committed to fostering an inclusive, supportive and connected environment for staff and students who balance caring responsibilities alongside their academic and professional lives. Our work aligns closely with the University's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, wellbeing, and the We Belong agenda, ensuring that parents and carers feel visible, valued and supported across the institution.

This newsletter shares highlights from recent activities and events, celebrating the connections, conversations and collaborations that have taken place over the past 12 months. These moments reflect our collective commitment to creating a University culture where inclusive ways of working and studying are embedded, community is strengthened, and diverse life experiences are recognised as integral to the University of Manchester's mission and values.

The session also inspired rich discussion around myths, barriers, and practical solutions for creating more supportive environments for parents and carers in STEM careers. Attendees particularly appreciated the opportunity to engage directly with Dr Torres during an insightful Q&A.

Parenthood Talk – 24th Jan 2025

The year began with an inspiring Parenthood Talk, jointly hosted with Women@Manchester and the Future Families Project.

The session led by Dr Isabel Torres, cofounder and CEO of Mothers in Science, explored how parenthood influences career progression in STEM. The conversation also highlighted the challenges faced by caregivers, the gendered impact of parenting, and evidence-based strategies for promoting equity and inclusion in the workplace.





Lunch 'n' Connect

On the 18th of February, the Network hosted its first in-person gathering of 2025, bringing together staff and students from across the University for an informal lunchtime networking session. The drop-in session provided a relaxed space for parents, carers, and guardians to share experiences, discuss the challenges of balancing work, study, and family life, and enjoy light activities over lunch. Discussions highlighted the need for flexibility, affordable childcare, and stronger institutional support, while also celebrating resilience and a shared understanding within the community.

The session concluded with a “One Thing” activity, inviting participants to share practical ideas for making life easier for families at UoM.



February Lunch 'n' Connect

Easter 2025 Holiday Activity: Basketball for Fun!

In order to give tangible support to carers during Easter holiday, the Network brought energy and joy in April, to the Easter break with Basketball for Fun! - A family wellbeing event focused on movement and connection.

Held in partnership with Champions Basketball Club and PowerHouse Moss-Side, the sessions saw children aged 8-12 take to the court for high-energy games, while parents and carers joined in the fun with their own friendly match, all cheered on by their little supporters.

The event was filled with laughter, teamwork, and community spirit, reminding everyone that wellbeing truly is for the whole family.

Eid-ul-Fitr Celebrations - 4th April, 2025



Following Ramadan, the Network hosted a joyful Eid al-Fitr celebration, bringing together staff, students and families from across the University. The event was held to recognise and celebrate an important moment in the lives of many members of our community, while creating an inclusive space for learning, connection and belonging.

The celebration featured colourful, family-friendly activities including henna, cupcake decorating, crafts and Eid storytelling, offering opportunities for learning, engagement and cultural appreciation. Families also enjoyed halal food and warm conversation in a welcoming, communal setting.

The event reflected the Network's ongoing commitment to inclusion, cultural appreciation and building a supportive, family-friendly University community.



Lunch 'n' Connect: May and June 2025 Sessions



The May session followed an informal drop-in format, where attendees brought their lunch and engaged in relaxed conversations about the everyday challenges and successes of balancing work, study, and family life. This friendly atmosphere encouraged the exchange of practical tips, celebration of small wins, and further strengthened the University's supportive community.

The June session marked a milestone as the first dedicated Lunch 'n' Connect for those supporting neurodiverse children. Held on 9th June, it provided an opportunity for members to share experiences, hopes, and ideas, with thanks to Martin Simmons and Matt Foulkes for leading the session and to Ozioma Paul for facilitating an engaging discussion on Home-to-School Travel for Pupils Living with SEND. The session generated valuable feedback and ideas for future topics, highlighting both practical strategies and broader support needs, and left attendees feeling reassured, inspired, and connected.

The spring term featured two inspiring Lunch 'n' Connect sessions, offering parents, carers, and guardians across the University a welcoming space to connect, share experiences, and support one another.

UOM Staff Network Day



We are proud to represent the Parents, Carers & Guardians Network at the University of Manchester's Staff Network Day 2025, raising our banner and connecting with colleagues from across the University. It was inspiring to see strong interest in our work, explore opportunities for collaboration, and discuss how our network supports an inclusive, family-friendly campus culture. We left the day energised, visible, and committed to continuing to drive positive change together.

Community Festival – 14th June 2025

The Network was proud to be represented at the University of Manchester Community Festival 2025, engaging with families, staff, students and the wider community from our base at Alliance Manchester Business School.

The event provided an important platform to showcase the Network's role in advancing a more inclusive, family-friendly University.

Through community engagement and dialogue, we highlighted our work in supporting parents, carers and guardians, strengthening peer connections, and informing institutional approaches to inclusive ways of working and studying.





DECEMBER 2025

Summer Family Fun Event – 7th August 2025

Building on the success of last year, the Parents, Carers & Guardians Network hosted its Family Fun Event 2025 on 7 August at the Roscoe Building.

The event welcomed over 100 staff, students and family members, offering a vibrant space for connection, creativity and shared experience across the University community.

Alongside fun activities for children, the day provided valuable opportunities for parents, carers and guardians to network, share experiences and engage in conversations about how the University can continue to better support those with caring responsibilities.



Building a More Inclusive Environment



The Day was filled with laughter, joy, and community.



DECEMBER 2025

Supporting Neurodiverse Family Members: - Dr Gemma Goodliffe (September 2025)

In September, the Parents, Carers & Guardians Network hosted a talk on supporting neurodiverse family members, delivered by Dr Gemma Goodliffe, paediatrician and Health, Wellbeing & Neurodiversity Coach focusing on understanding navigating support systems.

Held on September 11th, the session provided practical insights on supporting neurodiverse individuals across the family, including guidance on sleep, diet, emotions, routines, independence, and self-advocacy. She highlighted the importance of carers' wellbeing and shared strategies for supporting older children and university students with study and exam challenges.



Attendees benefited from an engaging mix of talks, discussions, and networking, leaving with actionable strategies, useful resources, and a deeper understanding of how to nurture resilience and wellbeing for both caregivers and those they support.

October Lunch 'n' Connect: Event Marking the Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Baby Loss Awareness Week

In October, the Parents, Carers & Guardians Network marked Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Baby Loss Awareness Week with a special Lunch 'n' Connect session on 15th October.

The session provided a safe, inclusive, and supportive space for individuals affected by baby loss, whether directly or indirectly, to come together, share their experiences, and connect with others who understand the emotional challenges involved. Attendees were welcomed with light refreshments and encouraged to bring their lunch, creating a relaxed environment for open conversation.



MISCARRIAGE, STILLBIRTH AND BABY LOSS LUNCH AND CONNECT

Wednesday 15th October 2025
12:00-14:00

Nancy Rothwell Building
Core 3, Floor 3
Room 3A.083

A supportive space for people affected by any kind of baby loss to meet, talk and connect during 'Baby loss Awareness Week 2025'.

This is an inclusive and informal event, and all are welcome to attend whether directly or indirectly affected by such loss.

Light snacks will be available but feel free to bring your lunch if you wish.

PARENTS, CARERS & GUARDIANS NETWORK

LUNCH AND CONNECT

FBMH PGR Open Day 2025



The Network was represented at the FBMH PGR Open Day in November, held at University Place. The event welcomed prospective PhD and postgraduate research applicants from the UK and overseas, providing valuable opportunities for engagement with current researchers, Professional Services teams and PGR societies. With over 180 registrations, the Open Day offered a comprehensive overview of doctoral study at Manchester, the Network's presence contributed to conversations around the postgraduate researcher experience and the support available across the University.

Participation in events such as this supports the University's commitment to enhancing the postgraduate researcher journey and strengthening engagement with prospective researchers at a global level.



Christmas Extravaganza 2025

The Network's Christmas Extravaganza brought families together for a festive lunch and inclusive, family-friendly activities. Drawing on traditional celebrations from home, the event created a welcoming space for families to connect, celebrate the season and strengthen community bonds.

Highlights included table-by-table carol singing, festive games and creative activities for all ages, with enthusiastic participation from both adults and children. The event concluded with Santa awarding prizes for the best-designed festive craft bags, celebrating creativity across the community.



The Extravaganza reflected the PCG Network's commitment to fostering inclusion, belonging and support for parents, carers and guardians across the University.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who took part in our events, contributed ideas, and shared in the spirit of community. Special thanks to Dr Perpetual Eze-Idehen for her exemplary and passionate leadership, as well as to the members of the committee, each of whom gives so generously of their time to ensure the Network's activities run smoothly throughout the year. We are also delighted to recently welcome *Melanie Braun* and *Bolaji Thanni* to the committee and to recognise their active and valued contribution.

We further extend our sincere thanks to the University's Leadership Teams, Faculties and EDI directorate who sponsored these events, enabling the Network to deliver inclusive, community-building activities throughout the year.

Thank You for an Amazing 2025!

UoM Parents, Carers & Guardians Network Committee



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PGR - Material Sciences, Faculty of Natural Science



We wish you a restful and joyful remainder of the year, and we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events as we close out the year and into next year!



Parents, Carers, and Guardians Network

Join us!

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