

**Welcome** to the late summer edition of Personnel Updates from central HR. Below you will find key updates on HR issues, including more information on the USS employee consultation, a reminder about the My Family Care benefit for staff, and the announcement of a new visa loan scheme for international staff. To find out more information about HR issues, please visit [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/).

## New: Visa loan scheme for international staff

The University is introducing a visa loan scheme for international staff as we seek to assist those dealing with increasing costs for visa and Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) applications to the Home Office.

Employees requiring a visa can now apply for a loan to cover the costs of the visa and the Health Immigration Surcharge. The loan can be used to cover these costs for both the staff member and their dependents. The scheme can also be used for an employee's ILR application.

Please note that the loan should not be used to cover costs that will already be reimbursed by a department or faculty, eg the cost of a first application for some visas.

Employees can apply for a loan of up to £7,500 to cover allowable costs. This limit has been set so that the loan, if combined with other University loan schemes such as season train tickets, does not exceed £10,000 and become a taxable benefit. The loan can be repaid over a maximum of 24 months.

Approval of any loan is at the discretion of your Department or Faculty. **Anyone making a visa application after 1 August 2018 is eligible to apply.**

Find out more online at: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/).

### USS & Oxford

The University has a dedicated website for USS [here](#).

### USS Open Meetings

The University is holding **open meetings for all USS members** at Oxford as part of the employee consultation. Staff can book a place [here](#).



## USS pension employee consultations

In late July, the USS pension scheme trustees announced their proposal to make phased contribution increases for both employees and employers. The proposed changes are subject to consultation with scheme members. **The employee consultation will run from 3 September – 2 November 2018.**

All eligible employees at Oxford have been mailed a letter and leaflet providing further details of the proposals and how they can take part in the consultation. Open forums are being held for members in September; register [here](#). Members have also been advised of these developments via emails in July and August and on the University [website](#) dedicated to the issue.

The proposed increases are due to be implemented in three phases from April 2019. More information, including worked examples of increases, is on the website [here](#).

Universities UK and the University and College Union are separately discussing the valuation of the USS scheme, which may lead to alternative proposals later in the year. For the time being, however, the USS trustees are legally obliged to put forward proposals based on the current valuation, which they believe will maintain current pension benefits and meet the requirements set by the Pensions Regulator. For more information from USS, please see [here](#).

# Termly Personnel Updates

## Speak to an Expert

*Are you looking for advice about caring responsibilities?*

My Family Care offers a free advice phone line to all University employees. The team of experts at the **Speak to an Expert** service can provide advice and support on a whole host of caring related questions, whether it's for children, elderly relatives or dependent adults.

It's easy to book a call via their website, and you can arrange a time that suits your schedule. Topics include:

- **Where to start looking for childcare**
- **Parenting disabled children**
- **Information on care homes for the elderly**
- **Paying for care and claiming benefits and support**
- **Different types of flexible working**

Just because you're at work, doesn't mean you're not thinking about...

Your dad who won't take his pills

Your mum struggling with the stairs



Finding a carer you can truly trust

Your elderly in-laws 200 miles away

**Why not speak to an expert?**

- Caring for an ageing parent or elderly relative can be stressful.
- Book a free, confidential call via 'Speak to an Expert' on your Work+Family space.

[myfamilycare.co.uk/oxford](http://myfamilycare.co.uk/oxford)

Registering for My Family Care is free to all University employees. You simply need to provide your SSO and personnel number (found on your payslip or on [HR Self-Service](#)).

**Register**

## Online Personal Tax Accounts

Personal Tax Accounts (PTAs) have been available for all Pay As You Earn (PAYE) employees since December 2015.

15 million people are already using theirs. The account is a secure and simple way for you to manage your tax affairs online.

**News from Payroll**

### What can it do?

HMRC can only work from the information that it has, so if you have a change in your financial circumstances or address, please let HMRC know through your PTA. You can also:

- *Print proof of your National Insurance number (handy for new employees completing new starter checklists).*
- *View and print a copy of your pay and tax details for the last 4 tax years.*
- *Update the information HMRC holds on the benefits you may receive.*
- *Check your state pension situation: explore when you can start to receive it and how much you are likely to get.*
- *For tax credits, check your payments, make changes to your circumstances and complete your renewals.*
- *Claim a tax repayment; if you have received a letter from HMRC advising that you've paid too much tax over the course of the year you can claim your rebate online. HMRC state that the full refund will be paid into your bank account within five working days.*

### How can you learn more?

The Personal Tax Account is intuitive and straightforward to set up. To get started, please go to [www.gov.uk/personal-tax-account](http://www.gov.uk/personal-tax-account). To learn more about the full range of products and services on offer in your account, please explore HMRC's [Guide to your Personal Tax Account](#).

*The next edition of Personnel Updates will be available in Michaelmas term 2018.*