

Procedure relating to the Student Pregnancy, Maternity & Paternity Policy

This procedure is designed to be read and used in conjunction with the University of Bradford Student Pregnancy, Maternity & Paternity Policy. It provides guidance to staff and students in the case of a student becoming pregnant / a parent.

Disclosure

Whilst it is not compulsory, it is recommended that students disclose the fact that they are pregnant to an appropriate person at the University. The most appropriate person may be the students Personal Academic Tutor (PAT), another member of staff from their School or a member of staff from the Students' Union Advice Centre.

In particular, if the student continues with her pregnancy the university should know of her circumstances to make sure she is aware of the support available and to co-ordinate arrangements. Students who need information about the implications of their pregnancy on their studies should speak to their Personal Academic Tutor who will provide information on:

- Arrangements that could be made for assessments.
- Catching up on missed seminars and lectures.
- Course placements.
- Time to attend appointments.
- Maternity related absence.
- Deferment, withdrawal and intercalation (suspension of study).

Informing staff and fellow students about the pregnancy

Information concerning pregnancy should be treated sensitively and should only be passed on with the student's consent. When and who informs staff and fellow students about the pregnancy should be agreed with the student.

Supporting Students

In order to ensure that all students who are pregnant / becoming a parent are supported effectively it is important that a support plan is formulated which covers the points listed in this procedure. The support plan should be co-ordinated by a **nominated staff member** in the School who will arrange a meeting with the student and key member(s) of staff as appropriate.

The nominated staff member will also take responsibility for documenting the support plan. A copy of the support plan will then be given to the student and the key member(s) of staff.

Each School **must** provide the details of the nominated staff member to the Student Safety & Welfare Co-ordinator at the beginning of each academic year.

Health & Safety

There are health and safety considerations that arise during pregnancy and breastfeeding, therefore, any risks that pregnant students could be exposed to during their studies will need to be assessed.

The highest risk to the baby is during the first 13 weeks of the pregnancy. Because of this, students should be encouraged to notify the University as early as possible so that a risk assessment can be carried out. Where a student is unsure as to whether they will continue with their pregnancy, it may still be appropriate to carry out a risk assessment.

Any risk assessment should be co-ordinated by a **nominated staff member** in the School who will arrange a meeting with the student and key member(s) of staff as appropriate. The nominated staff member will also take responsibility for documenting the risk assessment. A copy of the risk assessment will then be given to the student and the key member(s) of staff. A template risk assessment is available (see website) and the Student Safety & Welfare Co-ordinator can support the completion of risk assessments.

Each School **must** provide the details of the nominated staff member to the Student Safety & Welfare Co-ordinator at the beginning of each academic year.

The level of risk for a student will depend on the requirements and nature of their course. For many areas of study the risks will be low but others that involve the following will present greater risks:

- Physical activity, including lifting and carrying.
- Laboratory, field or other practical work particularly in relation to the use of chemicals, radiation or infectious disease.
- Placements (both in the UK and abroad).

If the student is required to undertake a placement, for example a nursing placement, as part of their course, the School / Department will need to liaise with the placement provider to ensure that a risk assessment is carried out. If practical work is a requirement of the course this will need to be considered through a risk assessment. Consideration should also be given to the risks that may arise during examinations.

International students and students on a placement or studying abroad

If a student becomes pregnant whilst on a placement / study year abroad she should inform her School / Department so the School / Department can liaise with the placement provider / hosting institution to make sure academic progress is properly managed and a risk assessment is carried out if appropriate.

Travel

Unless they are advised not to do so by their midwife or doctor, students should be able to travel during pregnancy.

- Pregnant students who are wishing to travel should check airline policies before travelling. Some airlines restrict women travelling in the late stages of pregnancy. Some airlines will ask pregnant women for a letter from their doctor stating that it is safe for them to travel.
- As pregnancy is considered a pre-existing condition by insurance companies, students who become pregnant before finishing their placement or study abroad will need to check that the university insurance covers them sufficiently.

Visas

- UK students who are on placement or studying abroad will need to check their visa terms and conditions as they may need to extend their stay or return to the country at a later date.
- International students who require a visa to study in the UK and become pregnant should seek advice immediately on the visa implications of:
 1. Staying longer in the UK.
 2. Returning home to have their baby.
 3. Having a dependent to support in the UK.

Students can get support and advice regarding visa implications and pregnancy from the Students' Union Advice Centre's Immigration Advisor or the International Student Welfare Adviser (based in the International Office).

Assessments and Examinations

If a student is due to give birth near to or during assessment deadlines or the examination period and wishes to complete their assessed work or sit their examinations, every effort should be made to support the student to do this.

In examinations, pregnant students may require rest breaks and they may visit the toilet more frequently than a student who is not pregnant. They may also require a more comfortable and supportive chair. Therefore, the student may need to sit the examination in a separate location to other students.

If a student is concerned about sitting examinations or meeting assessed work deadlines or if they have a pregnancy related health condition, they should be encouraged to seek advice from their midwife or doctor. If the midwife or doctor advises against the student sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, the student should contact their School / Department to explore options such as extensions, deferrals and alternative forms of assessment.

If a student is unable to undertake an alternative form of assessment, or if she is experiencing significant pregnancy-related problems during an examination, or when undertaking assessed work, the student should apply for extenuating circumstances following the procedure specified by her School / Department. Through this, arrangements can be made for her to resit the examination at the earliest opportunity or agree an extension for resubmitting coursework. Resits of examinations will be considered the student's first attempt.

Length of Maternity Related Absence

All students should be allowed to take maternity related absence after the birth of their child. How long the student will want to take and can take will depend on their personal circumstances and the structure and content of their course. The School / Department should not automatically require students to defer for a year but should work with the student to establish a suitable return to study date.

Where course structure or content prevent a student from returning to study sooner than they would like to, the reason given will need to be justified in writing to the student.

If the School / Department has concerns about the health of the student in relation to the student's proposed return date and course requirements, these concerns should be put in writing and then the student should be advised to return to their GP, health visitor or an occupational therapist for clearance before returning to their course.

As a minimum, students are required to take two weeks compulsory maternity related absence. The maximum period that students may take off at any one time for maternity related absence is normally 12 months, although this may be extended in very exceptional circumstances. If the length of maternity related absence exceeds 2 years the student may have to consider restarting her course.

Students should be enabled, as far as is possible, to complete the requirements of their course or module before they take maternity related absence. In some cases, the student may want to sit examinations or submit alternative forms of assessment during their maternity related absence. Where a student is unable to complete their course or module before taking maternity

related absence, they should, if possible, be allowed to complete the course or module on their return.

Starting maternity related absence

Students should decide when they start their maternity related absence in agreement with their School / Department. When a student is close to their due date and unable to study as planned, the University may, in consultation with the student, start their maternity related absence earlier or, if appropriate, explore alternative ways the student can meet the course requirements.

Returning from Maternity Related Absence

The date that a student intends on returning from maternity related absence should be agreed with the student before they start their maternity related absence. However, this date may change during the course of the student's maternity related absence. Students should notify their School / Department as soon as possible of any changes to their expected return date.

Before a student returns from a period of maternity related absence consideration should be given to their needs on their return. Options should be discussed with the student before and during their maternity related absence and these should be reviewed should the student's circumstances etc change.

Financial Considerations

Students who become pregnant during their studies need to consider any financial implications and the support they can access. Students can get information and advice regarding finances from the Hub: www.bradford.ac.uk/hub/MeettheHubTeams/bursaries-and-financial-support/

International students with financial sponsors must contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action (such as intercalation (suspension of study) / when to resume study etc). Those students who are not entitled to any maternity benefits in the UK may prefer to return home for their pregnancy. The benefit rules are also different for EU students. Students can access information and advice from the International Student Welfare Adviser (based in the International Office).

Accommodation

Students who become pregnant whilst living in Halls of Residence or shared accommodation may find this is no longer suitable for health and safety reasons. Students can get advice on their options from the Students' Union Advice Centre, Accommodation Office or Unipol.

Breastfeeding and Resting Facilities

The University provides rest and breastfeeding facilities for students' use. These can be used if they are not already engaged. Please see the map for further details: [\(get map link to from SU\)](#).

Some students may want to breastfeed in public places around the campus. The Equality Act 2010 gives explicit protection to women who breastfeed in public. It is also unlawful to ask students not to breastfeed under the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). Even if other people feel uncomfortable the needs of the woman who is breastfeeding should take precedence.

Access to University Facilities

Students who are breastfeeding will not be denied access to university facilities or services on the grounds they are breastfeeding. As long as babies are supervised at all times by the student parent and they are considerate of the needs of others, babies and children are allowed on university premises.

For a list of family friendly areas around the university please see the map for further details: [\(get link to map from SU\)](#).

For health and safety reasons, and to avoid disruption to study, babies and children must not be brought into teaching areas. Students must make sure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place.

Paternity

The student partner of a pregnant person should not be treated less favourably. The University will allow partners of expectant mothers to take paternity leave (this also applies to same sex relationships). If a student wishes to take paternity leave they should inform their School / Department of their partner's pregnancy at least 15 weeks before the baby is due. Students can take up to two consecutive weeks of paternity leave.

Flexibility should be shown to students who wish to attend their partner's antenatal appointments. In addition, students may need to take time off if their partner has complications with their pregnancy or a serious pregnancy-related illness.

If a student chooses to sit an exam whilst their partner is in labour or during their paternity related absence, they should be made aware of the University Extenuating Circumstances guidelines. If a student is unable to sit an exam or submit coursework on time because of their partner's pregnancy or labour, the student should contact their School / Department to explore options such as extensions to submission deadlines, deferrals and resits. Such arrangements may also be appropriate if the student's partner has a serious pregnancy related illness.

In other compulsory elements of courses such as field trips or work placements, the University will consider the feasibility of students undertaking them at an alternative time.

Adoption

Students who have been matched for adoption should inform an appropriate person at the University. The most appropriate person may be the students Personal Academic Tutor (PAT),

another member of staff from their School or a member of staff from the Students' Union Advice Centre.

If the student is the primary adopter the student should be treated in line with the guidance provided relating to when a student informs the University that they are pregnant. If the student's partner is the primary adopter the student should be treated in line with the guidance provided relating to paternity leave and flexibility upon formal adoption of the child.

Support for students who chose not to continue with their pregnancy

Students who chose not to continue with their pregnancy may benefit from accessing support from university services such as the Counselling Service or Faith Advisors or may require some information on support available externally. The student may also need some time off from their studies; the student should discuss this with their School / Department.

Miscarriage, Still births and Neo-natal death

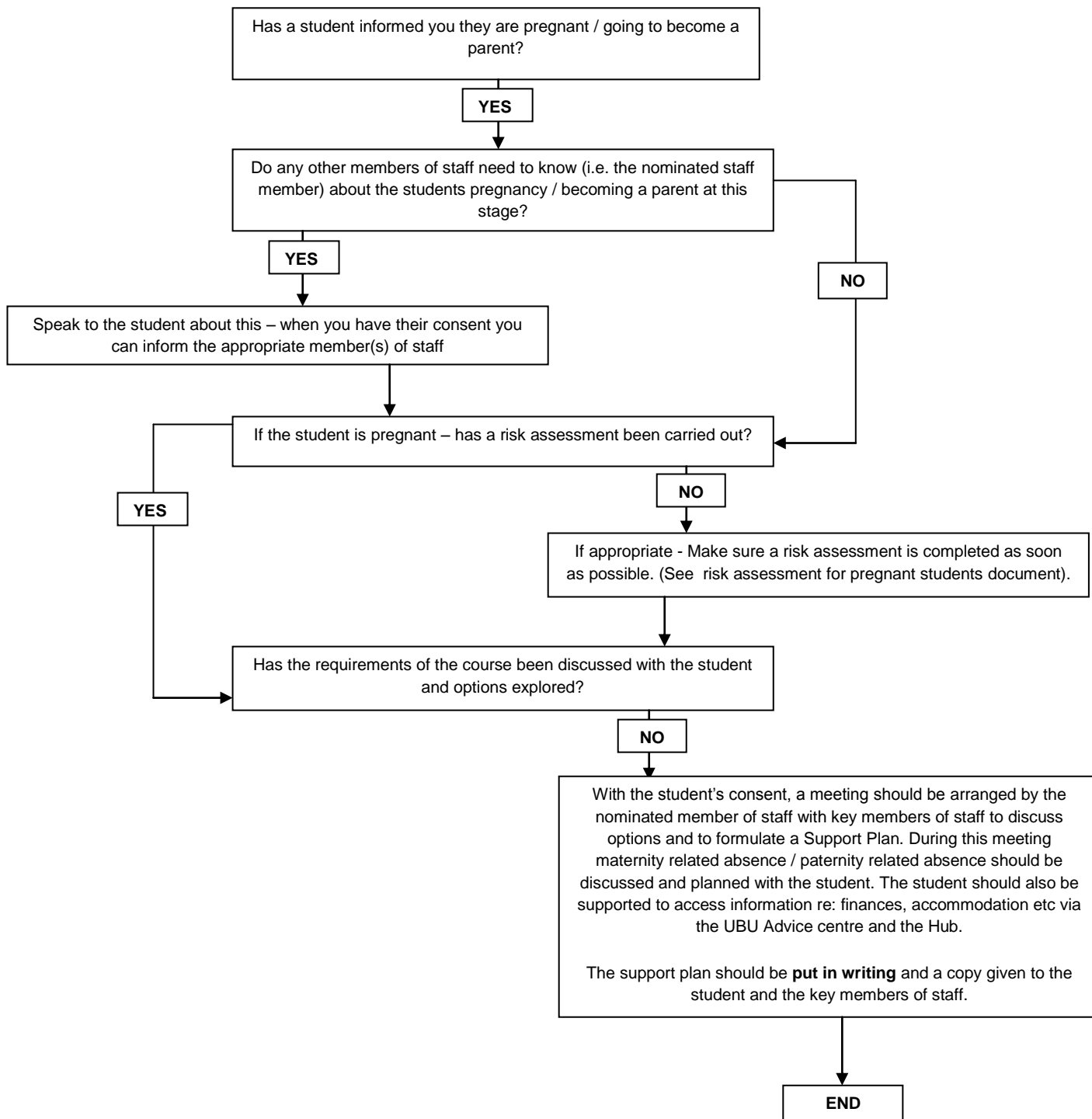
If a student miscarries, has a still birth or their baby dies shortly after he or she is born, an appropriate person at the University should meet with the student to check what support they are receiving and to identify what further support the University can provide.

If a student miscarries they are likely to need time off study for tests and to recover. If they become pregnant again they are likely to require more tests and monitoring than women who have not previously miscarried.

A student who has a still birth or whose baby dies shortly after birth should be entitled to the same length of maternity related absence and support as a student whose baby does not die.

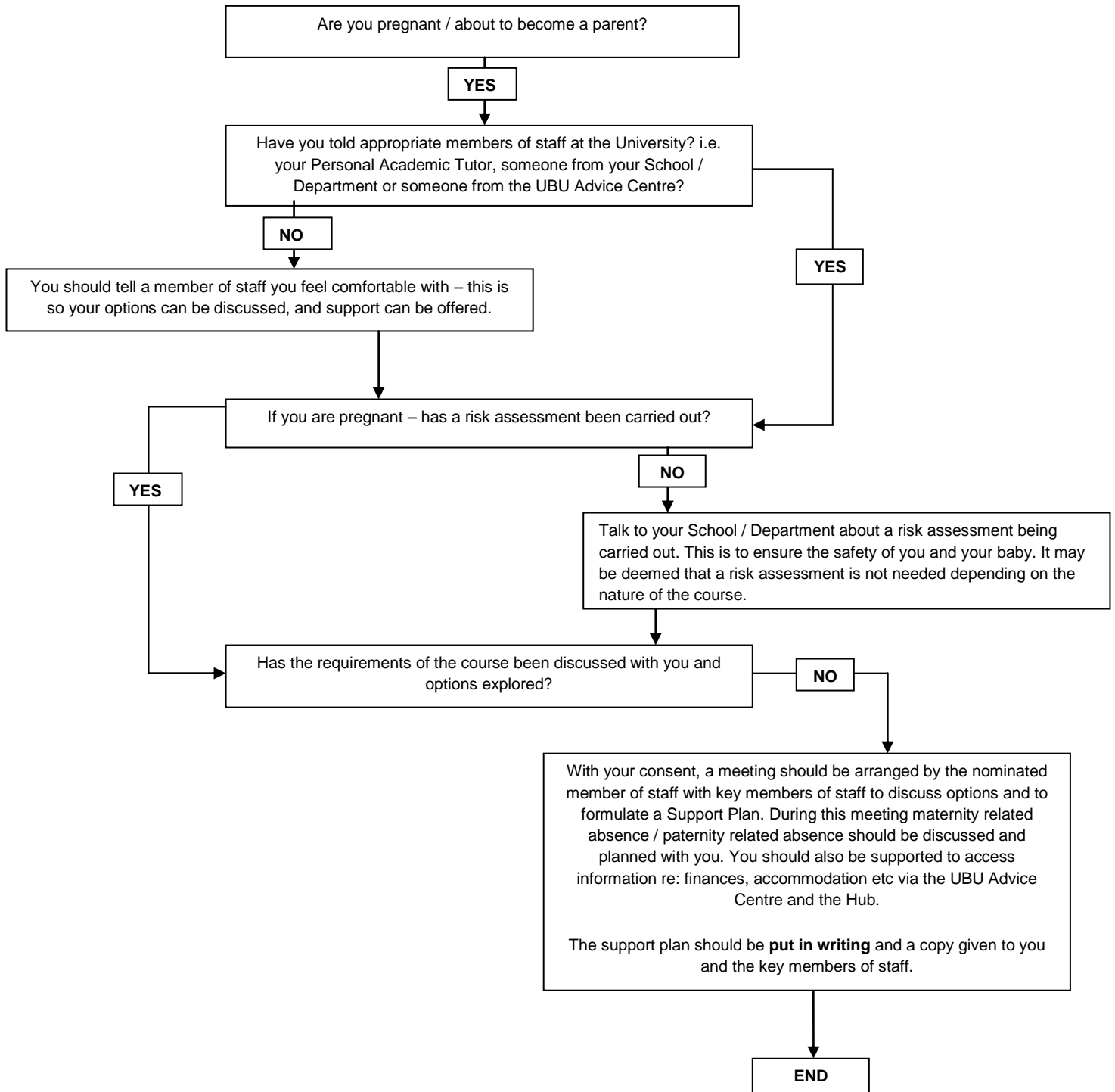
Flowchart for Staff

The flowchart below is a visual interpretation of the information provided in this procedure document. If this flowchart is not accessible to you and you would like additional information please contact s.blagbrough@bradford.ac.uk.



Flowchart for Students

The flowchart below is a visual interpretation of the information provided in this procedure document. If this flowchart is not accessible to you and you would like additional information please contact s.blagbrough@bradford.ac.uk.



Support and Pastoral Care

The University strives to offer the best possible support and pastoral care to all of their students. Both students and staff may find the details below useful:

University Support

- Counselling Service: www.bradford.ac.uk/counselling/. Or contact the Service on (01274) 235750.
- Student's Union: www.ubuonline.co.uk/. Or contact UBU on (01274) 233300.
- Student's Union Advice Centre – Welfare Advisor / Immigration Advisor: (01274) 232500.
- The Hub: www.bradford.ac.uk/thehub/. Money Advisor: (01274) 236504, International Student Welfare Adviser: (01274) 233080, Accommodation: (01274) 234963.
- Chaplains and Faith Advisors: www.bradford.ac.uk/hub/faith-matters/.
- Bradford Student Health Service: www.bradfordstudenthealth.co.uk/. Or contact the Health Centre on (01274) 234979.
- Nursery at the University of Bradford: www.brad.ac.uk/nursery/. Or contact the nursery on (01274) 234866.

External Support

- **Family Planning Association** – The Family Planning Association's mission is to establish a society in which everyone can make informed choices about sex, relationships and reproduction. It's website contains impartial advice on pregnancy, abortion, adoption and also contains a list of useful organisations: www.fpa.org.uk. Helpline: 0845 122 8690.
- **Family and Parenting Institute** – The Family and Parenting Institution provides support to parents in bringing up their children and has a range of resources for parents: www.familyandparenting.org.
- **Adoption UK** – Adoption UK is a national charity run by and for adopters, providing self-help information, advice, support and training on all aspects of adoption and adoptive parenting: www.adoptionuk.org.uk.
- **Marie Stopes** – Marie Stopes is the UK's leading provider of sexual and reproductive healthcare services. The services include unplanned pregnancy counselling, termination information and advice etc: www.mariestopes.org.uk/.
- **Miscarriage Association** – The Miscarriage Association offers support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby during pregnancy: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk.

- **SANDS** – The Still Birth and Neonatal Death charity provides support to anyone affected by the loss of a baby and conducts research into the causes of still and neo-natal death: www.uk-sands.org.
- **Direct Gov** – Direct Gov is the UK government’s website. It provides information on health, care and benefits during pregnancy, benefits for parents etc: www.direct.gov.uk. The Direct Gov website also provides information on finding and choosing a childcare provider in your local area: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Childcare.
- **Unipol** – Unipol is a charity working to improve training, standards and professionalism in student housing: www.unipol.leeds.ac.uk/bradford/.