

STUDENT WELLBEING & MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

December 2020

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Summary

What is this document about?

This policy provides information to students of this University regarding the University's approach to supporting every student's wellbeing and mental health, including availability and access to services and additional support where needed.

Who is this for?

The Policy is aimed at students of this University.

How does the University check this is followed?

This Policy is reviewed in a three-year cycle which includes consultation with stakeholders. The Policy should be reviewed following a serious incident or near miss to ensure it is current, accessible and reflects changes in structure of services or legislation

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

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Executive summary

The University of Portsmouth's whole-institution approach to mental health is articulated in a Wellbeing Charter recognising that the wellbeing of students, staff and the University community lies at the foundation of the University's Strategy and Vision, and in particular its aim to engage every student in a life-changing experience allowing them to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to society. To enhance every student's experience and outcomes the University strives to provide an inclusive and accessible learning environment, engaging students as partners in designing and delivering excellent learning and teaching and in planning and making use of personalised academic and pastoral support with a focus on wellbeing and resilience. This Student Wellbeing & Mental Health policy sets out in more detail:

- how these principles and values are applied in the University's innovative Learning Well approach to teaching and support for learning, which promotes psychological literacy and compassionate community-building as essential foundations for successful learning for all;
- what services and additional support options are available to provide each student with appropriately personalised academic and pastoral support, and how students are encouraged to map and develop their own support networks;
- how information may be shared to support this personalised approach to wellbeing and safeguarding, with the student at the centre;
- and what other policies and procedures can be called upon in specific circumstances to support students' wellbeing, safety, and mental health, including the Fitness to Study policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Portsmouth is a values-based organisation, and its whole-institution approach to mental health is articulated in a Wellbeing Charter linked to its stated values (Annex 1). The Wellbeing Charter states that the wellbeing of students, staff and the University community lies at the foundation of the University's Strategy and Vision, fuelling the fulfilment of its mission to create, share and apply knowledge to make a difference to individuals and society.
- 1.2 Adopting the UK University Mental Health Charter definition, the University's Wellbeing Charter defines optimum wellbeing as "the ability of an individual to fully exercise their cognitive, emotional, physical, and social powers, leading to flourishing." For students this includes "engagement with academic learning [which] makes a significant contribution to their wellbeing". (See Annex 5 for full definition of terms.)
- 1.3 In line with this definition, the University of Portsmouth's Strategy and Vision sets out its aim to engage every student in a life-changing experience allowing them to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to society. To enhance every student's experience and outcomes the University strives to provide an inclusive and accessible learning environment, engaging students as partners in designing and delivering excellent learning and teaching and in planning and making use of personalised academic and pastoral support with a focus on wellbeing and resilience.
- 1.4 Developed in a partnership of students, staff and the Students' Union, the University of Portsmouth Student Charter (Annex 2) expresses the values which support this life-changing student experience: Students are encouraged and empowered to play their part in welcoming others into an inclusive **community**, valuing and showing **respect** and compassion for themselves and each other, in order to form and benefit from the strong **support** networks which provide the foundation for a life-changing, whole-hearted commitment to their ongoing **education**, embracing challenges and making the most of every **opportunity** to develop, learn and fulfil their potential.
- 1.5 The Charter supports students to become knowledgeable, informed, intellectually curious, responsible, self-aware, self-motivated and independent graduates set on the path for success in their future careers, and demonstrating the Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate (Annex 3).
- 1.6 This Student Wellbeing & Mental Health policy sets out in more detail how these principles and values are applied in the University's approach to teaching and support for learning; what services and additional support options are available to provide each student with personalised academic and pastoral support; how information may be shared to support this personalised approach; and what other policies and procedures can be called upon in specific circumstances to support students' wellbeing, safety and mental health.

2. Learning Well

- 2.1 The University's distinctive Learning Well model is an innovative conceptual framework which emphasises a learning and education-focused approach to the issue of mental health in the HE context. The key feature of this approach is the promotion of psychological literacy centring on better understanding of the role of emotions and emotion regulation in successful learning.
- 2.2 Uncomfortable emotions like stress and anxiety are an inevitable and normal part of the human response to challenges, including the challenges integral to the student experience. The process of higher education learning requires students to set out into the unknown, encountering uncertainty and risking failure in order to reach the shores of new knowledge and mastery of new skills. Student life also involves many transitions, with new challenges at every new level of learning. Recognising that uncomfortable emotions are an inherent part of the student experience is the starting point for helping students to manage these challenges constructively.
- 2.3 The University's approach to learning and teaching promotes a compassionate mindset towards self and others which recognises this emotional impact of learning challenges. A compassionate mindset fosters associated learning mindsets - a growth mindset to help students persevere in the face of difficulty and embrace challenges as opportunities to grow; recognition of personal values and a wider sense of purpose to set students' direction and provide their motivation; and the self-belief and courage to seek out the positive relationships and connections which provide a sense of belonging.
- 2.4 The approach promotes the evidence-based 5 Ways to Wellbeing as the guiding principles for developing habits of self-care. These widely-recognised principles are given a University of Portsmouth twist through alignment with the principles of the Student Charter (see Annex 2). These principles and their context within a compassionate mindset are introduced within resources to support students' transition into higher education learning. They are also increasingly embedded as learning within the curriculum, alongside the opportunity to develop the practical and social skills supporting emotion regulation for successful learning. This includes equality, diversity and inclusion competence, and encouragement to actively contribute to supportive learning communities (see also section 6).
- 2.5 Crucially, the approach emphasises the role and responsibilities of staff and the institution in fostering the conditions for student wellbeing, resilience and inclusion. Staff are similarly encouraged to develop compassionate mindsets, supporting each other and being supported to deliver emotionally literate and inclusive teaching and support for learning. (See also section 5)
- 2.6 The University also holds a strong co-creation ethos, aiming to work in partnership with students to develop a meaningful, student-centred curriculum and student experience. A student leadership learning framework extends and reinforces the Learning Well approach, consolidating students' skills as role models in their adherence to the values of the Student Charter and in the inspiration and supportive connection they offer to other students.
- 2.7 With a particular focus on the role of connection and a sense of belonging as the foundation for psychological security, the Learning Well approach promotes supportive connections as essential resources for both successful study and a flourishing life. Every student is encouraged to map out their personalised academic and pastoral support network, including study support options, personal and social support and connections, additional support services, and their own personal wellbeing activities and strategies. They are encouraged to keep expanding and strengthening these supportive connections throughout their time as students and beyond.

3. Mapping support

- 3.1 The first principle of the Student Charter encourages every student to seek out and nurture strong support networks and partnerships to help meet their academic, career and personal needs (see Annex 2). A wide range of staff and services (Annex 4) are provided to work in partnership with students as part of their personalised academic and pastoral support networks.
- 3.2 Every student is encouraged to keep and continuously update their personalised support and resource map, itemising specific strategies and named contacts covering all the following categories, as relevant:
- 3.2.1 **Self-care**
Self-care strategies, habits and mindsets including: regular reviewing of values and goals; regular sport, exercise or physical activity; healthy eating and sufficient sleep; mindfulness, relaxation and/or faith or religious practice; hobbies and outside interests including volunteering.
 - 3.2.2 **Personal and social support**
Giving and receiving personal and social support from close family and loved ones; wider family and community networks; friendship networks; housemates; Students' Union groups or other special interest groups; work colleagues; informal mentors and peer supporters.
 - 3.2.3 **Study support**
Study support from a personal tutor or research supervisor, course leaders and lecturers; faculty learning support tutors and engagement officers; tutor or seminar group peers; informal study groups; faculty and MyPort hub staff; library resources and staff; Moodle resources; Maths Cafe or Global Cafe; additional learning support services, ASK and ASDAC (see Annex 4).
 - 3.2.4 **Other support services**
Further health, wellbeing and general support services including registration with a local doctor (GP) and other medical or third sector services, as well as a range of University services offering support with finances, accommodation, employment, visas and international connections, faith/religious practice, advice and advocacy, conflict resolution, wellbeing and mental health (see Annex 4).
- 3.3 The personalised support map provides each student an opportunity to identify and record their own strengths, challenges and personal development needs and to keep these under review. This personal record can in turn be used to communicate learning needs with relevant members of their identified support network in a consistent and efficient manner, avoiding the need to repeatedly recount background and details to different people. The support map is owned by the student, who decides how and when to share aspects of the map with relevant staff or others.

4. Services and additional support

- 4.1 A wide range of staff and services (Annex 4) stand ready to work in partnership with students as part of their personalised academic and pastoral support networks. All students experiencing significant emotional distress or potential mental health difficulty are encouraged to seek support at the earliest opportunity, using their identified networks of support.
- 4.2 Many problems can be dealt with on a relatively informal basis, such as talking to family and friends, or by seeking assistance from tutors and other advisers. All university staff should be willing to make time to listen and offer initial support and signposting.
- 4.3 Some students may experience emotional or psychological distress that compromises their ability to engage fully with higher education without some form of professional support or adjustment to processes, and some of these problems may be described as mental health problems (Annex 4). These difficulties may take the form of a long-term or pre-existing mental illness or a temporary but nonetheless debilitating condition or reaction.
- 4.4 Students with a long-term mental illness that has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities are defined as disabled under the Equality Act 2010. While the University owes a duty of care to all students, this legislation places a special duty on the University not to discriminate against students with mental health difficulties, in terms of admission, choice of course and in the operation of education and support services. The University is committed to providing a non-discriminatory and inclusive environment for all students (described in the Dignity and Respect Policy). Wherever necessary and possible, the University will make reasonable adjustments to processes and procedures to help students with mental health difficulties engage fully in University activities and meet academic and course requirements.
- 4.5 Students with mental health or other conditions which may be defined as disabilities are able to access additional support for their studies via the Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC). Students are encouraged to declare any disabilities at the point of application for admission so that ASDAC can make proactive contact in order to arrange for appropriate support during the transition to university. ASDAC is able to communicate with academic departments about reasonable adjustments and can also advise about a range of other forms of additional support for students' learning (see Annex 4 for further details).
- 4.6 The Student Wellbeing Service is the hub for learning, advice and support for students' emotional wellbeing and mental health. Students can access various forms of support from a multidisciplinary team of wellbeing advisers, counsellors and mental health advisers. The team works in collaboration with students to agree a personalised support pathway within the Service, and also helps each student develop their personal academic and pastoral support map in order to identify strengths, needs and challenges (as outlined in 3.3) and engage with other relevant support. The Student Wellbeing Service also provides expert support for other staff members supporting students, so that students can receive appropriate support from a variety of sources and from staff members who they know and trust. (see Annex 4 for further details of support from the Student Wellbeing Service and other internal and external services)
- 4.7 Students may experience personal or mental health crises when they contemplate suicide or other deliberate self-harm, or demonstrate behaviour causing acute distress to themselves or others. For immediate crises, staff or fellow students should use 24-hour emergency services (by phoning 999). See Annex 6 for more details about crisis support options and separate guidance for staff regarding students causing concern.

- 4.8 To help with managing thoughts about self harm or suicide, Student Wellbeing Service staff will often help students create a personal 'safety plan'. This can be recorded as an extension of the personal support map, and will draw on the supportive connections and self-care strategies that the student has already recorded. Students are able to share this with other support staff where relevant, so that a consistent approach to support can be maintained.

5. Community and inclusion

- 5.1 The Student Charter (see Annex 2) emphasises the values of Respect and Community, which make an essential contribution to the availability of supportive connections and networks for students. Students are encouraged to value the people they meet, and the places they work, study and live, and to be role models in the way they treat people with respect, equity and dignity. They are encouraged to play their part in welcoming others into diverse, inclusive, global and local communities where ideas are shared, opinions are sought and views are valued.
- 5.2 In its Wellbeing Charter the University recognises the importance of strong, trusting relationships and a truly inclusive community as the underpinning of its vision and strategy for flourishing staff and students who fulfil their potential. The Charter commits the University to a culture of active inclusion, addressing any barriers to belonging so that every member of its community feels actively welcomed, respected and valued.
- 5.3 Via the Learning Well approach, students are introduced to the mindsets and skills which help them fulfil the requirements of the Student Charter. Through the student co-creation and leadership framework they are encouraged to become partners with staff working together to build the inclusive learning community in which all students can learn and thrive. This means actively promoting a culture of mutual respect and compassion, where every student feels empowered to both seek out and offer appropriate support when needed. It also means learning equality, diversity and inclusion competence and the ability to recognise and address any barriers to belonging, so that every student feels actively welcomed, respected, and valued.
- 5.4 In particular, the University aims to promote a restorative culture, where every student knows what role they can play in preventing and healing conflict. This includes developing appropriate communication skills, such as listening and assertiveness, and applying them within consideration of key topics such as consent. It also includes practising the use of collaborative agreements in situations where conflicts commonly arise, such as 'housemate' agreements and group-work agreements. It may also include consideration of online behaviour and communication.
- 5.5 In order to uphold these inclusive values, the University provides clear guidance for the behaviour and conduct expected of students and staff. These can be found in the Dignity and Respect Policy and Code of Student Behaviour (see Annex 8 for the location of these and other relevant policies). These documents also outline how students can address any breaches of the policies and codes.
- 5.6 The University actively encourages students and staff to report any incident or situation which falls short of its commitment to an inclusive culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The Report and Support tool can be used to make an anonymous report of any incident of bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence, or any form of unacceptable behaviour. The tool can also be used to provide contact details in order to be offered support and guidance.
- 5.7 Where students provide their contact details in a Report & Support entry, the University offers guidance about the various options for addressing the situation so that students can make informed, supported choices for their next steps. The University aims to take a restorative approach where at all possible, and can agree a range of precautionary measures to ensure that students involved in disciplinary processes are supported and their studies protected as much as possible.

- 5.8 Any student involved in a disciplinary process can access confidential emotional and wellbeing support from the Student Wellbeing Service. They can also be supported with regard to processes and procedures by the independent Students' Union Advice Centre. Where there has been a serious incident, such as sexual violence or a hate incident/crime, a 'serious incident liaison officer' (SILO) will be assigned to each party to ensure there is additional liaison and support from the start.

6. Confidentiality, information sharing and consultation

- 6.1 The University of Portsmouth Student Charter encourages students to make use of strong partnerships and support networks to achieve their personal, academic and career goals. As a central principle within our distinctive Learning Well philosophy we actively encourage students to map their support networks and to strengthen all their supportive connections.
- 6.2 When students are receiving support at the Student Wellbeing Service, staff in the Service work collaboratively with them to consider and make additional use of all relevant sources of support. This includes active encouragement to tell key members of their support network when they are experiencing difficulties, and to involve parents and/or other family members whenever relevant. The Service also proactively asks them for their consent to share concerns with others who can contribute to keeping them safe.
- 6.3 All University of Portsmouth staff are encouraged to adopt a similar approach when supporting students, encouraging them to strengthen their supportive connections and make use of the full range of support resources available to them. Staff can play a helpful role in signposting appropriate sources of support and, where relevant, helping students to make initial connections.
- 6.4 Staff should ensure that relevant colleagues (e.g. the course team) are appropriately informed about students' learning and support needs so that a collaborative approach can be taken to inclusive teaching and support. Staff should be transparent with students about how and with whom any sensitive information is shared. Students have the right to request confidentiality about particular aspects of their sensitive information. Staff should respect these requests to maintain confidentiality, except when issues of safety may override this. (See also Annex 7 regarding confidentiality and data protection).
- 6.5 The Student Wellbeing Service provides a same-day consultation service for anyone who has concerns about the wellbeing, mental health or safety of a student. This includes members of staff, parents and other family members, or fellow students. The consultation service has the following functions:
- 6.5.1 **Recording third party concerns**
The Service welcomes third party information raising any concerns about a student and will make a note of the information on its confidential record system. The collated information may contribute to decisions about how best to support a student. If the Service contacts a student proactively to follow up on third party concerns the student will usually be told who has contacted the Service and what they have said. The exception to this is if the person raising a concern is a fellow student whose confidentiality the

Service has agreed to maintain.

6.5.2 Explaining what the Service can offer

It is important that students using the Student Wellbeing Service can be confident that their information is kept confidential. In a consultation call with a third party, the practitioner can explain how the Service works in general terms, but will not share information about any particular student without their explicit consent to do so. The exception to this is if there are serious concerns about the safety of a student and there is a need to share information with others who can contribute to keeping the student (or other students) safe.

6.5.3 Providing advice about how best to support the student

The consultation will provide expert advice and support to consider what the concerned person can do in whatever supportive role they play with the student. As someone who knows the student, they could play an important role in helping the student understand and engage with any additional support they may benefit from.

6.5.4 Offering reassurance, debrief and support

It can be very stressful and worrying to support someone who is experiencing a crisis or mental health difficulties. It is often a relief for third parties to talk things through, to be reassured about the limits of their responsibility, and to consider any impact on their own wellbeing. Students who are supporting other students are encouraged to receive further support from the Service.

6.6 As part of the registration process at the start of each academic year, students are asked to provide or update a name and contact details for a family member or other suitable person that the University can contact if there are significant concerns about their welfare. The designated contact is chosen by the student and should be someone who can provide appropriate support and guidance. They do not have to be a parent, guardian or next of kin as this is not always appropriate to the student's circumstances.

6.7 A decision for the University to contact a student's designated contact is always considered carefully and should be taken after consultations with professional staff from the Student Wellbeing Service and other relevant senior staff.

6.7.1 In the first instance any concerns from staff, students or other third parties should be raised with the Student Wellbeing Services through their consultation service. Advice and guidance will be given on the best course of action and what to do next.

6.7.2 The Student Wellbeing Service will gather all relevant information and make contact with the student, when necessary, to identify individuals in their life who could provide helpful support, such as family members, partners, and/or friends (see 6.2).

6.7.3 When necessary, staff would support those students to make contact with families or others to explain the problem they are having. This may involve planning out conversations or, for example, a practitioner joining a student on a phone call or in a meeting with a family member to support disclosure. This leaves control of sharing with the student but also mobilises their external resources. This practice is consistent with the University Mental Health Charter, which encourages practitioners to work with families and the individual when the individual wishes it and it is in their interests to do so.

- 6.7.4 The University would always aim to contact others with the student's explicit consent, but would do so without consent if it was thought this was in their interests or would help to keep them safe. (See Annex 7 for further details on the University's data protection policies and other legislative duties). The decision to do so follows the recommendations of the University Mental Health Charter. Whether or not to share information is based on assessment by a suitably qualified and trained practitioner of: the level of risk, balancing the factors of the whole situation such as what else can be done to reduce risk, whether the student has mental capacity and whether sharing information without consent will reduce or has the potential to increase risk. Where and to whom information is shared should be part of this risk assessment and should consider emergency services, statutory services, GPs, families and others.
- 6.8 A weekly Safeguarding Cases panel consisting of senior members of staff, including the University Information Disclosure Manager, meets to consider confidentially any complex cases relating to student safety. This panel may help to consider situations where information needs to be shared without a student's consent.

7. Staff training and support

- 7.1 Teaching and support staff are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Learning Well model via the staff development programme offered by the Department for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement. Digital learning resources and activities for inclusion within the course curriculum are provided. Course teams can be supported through regular reflective practice sessions with expert input from DCQE staff (including Student Wellbeing Service, ASDAC and ASK), as well as seeking direct consultation about specific issues or cases.
- 7.2 General mental health and disability awareness training is available via the University's staff development programme. The University aims to ensure that staff are able to recognise personal and professional limitations when offering support, know the appropriate procedures for referral to support services, recognise when it is necessary to refer, maintain confidentiality and generally contribute towards the maintenance of a supportive and non-stigmatising environment. (See Annex 8 for further staff training recommendations).
- 7.3 The University recognises that it has a duty of care towards all students and that those with mental health difficulties are potentially at particular risk. Staff awareness training aims to ensure that staff are aware of a range of behaviours that might indicate the potential for such risk and the appropriate procedures to follow in such cases.
- 7.4 Staff are also required to familiarise themselves with additional relevant policy and procedures as outlined in sections 7 and 8. If in any doubt, staff can make use of the Student Wellbeing Service consultation service.

8. Particular issues

8.1 Reasonable adjustments

When a mental health difficulty falls within the scope of the Equality Act 2010, students are entitled to the full range of support available under the Act and provided by the University, primarily through ASDAC (see Annex 4).

- 8.1.1 Reasonable adjustments to processes and procedures will be determined on a case-by-case basis by staff in ASDAC and the student's Head of Department, taking into account an assessment of the particular needs of the individual concerned.
- 8.1.2 Medical evidence from the student's GP or other mental health professional will be required, and a second opinion may be sought before such adjustments can be made.
- 8.1.3 Students are encouraged to make use of their personalised support maps (see 3.3) to review their learning and support needs and to communicate about these learning needs with relevant members of their identified support network, particularly academic staff.
- 8.1.4 Adjustments such as the provision of additional time and special facilities in examinations can be provided as appropriate, and students seeking such adjustments should contact ASDAC either directly or through their School/Department. More generous deadlines for coursework submissions are not normally provided, although a structural rearrangement of the usual progress of the programme of studies can be established from the outset in some circumstances.
- 8.1.5 Students undertaking field trips and/or placements either in the UK or abroad are particularly encouraged to discuss their support needs with academic staff and ASDAC, in consultation with the Student Wellbeing Service where appropriate.

8.2 **Extenuating circumstances**

The University wants all students to undertake and pass their assessments at the first attempt and make normal progression through their course, but makes provision for alternative arrangements where there are extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances are circumstances relating to the student's health or personal life which are of a sufficiently serious nature to result in them being unable to attend, complete, or submit an assessment on time:

- 8.2.1 Students are encouraged to develop supportive connections and partnerships to help them address and manage difficulties affecting their learning and assessments. The extenuating circumstances policy should be seen as part of the wider network of support available to students to help them manage difficulties and succeed in their studies.
- 8.2.2 Only serious problems that can reasonably be expected to have had a significant effect on the student's performance are considered valid extenuating circumstances. Common and expected challenges and worries, such as mild illness, a few sleepless nights, financial worries, technical difficulties, or the pressure of sitting exams or meeting deadlines, are not considered valid extenuating circumstances - students are encouraged to seek proactive support for such difficulties.
- 8.2.3 The extenuating circumstances policy operates on a 'fit to sit' basis. This means that sitting an examination or submitting an assignment on time is counted as a declaration that the student is fit to sit and no extenuating circumstances will be accepted. Extenuating circumstances can only be submitted where a student has failed to submit coursework on time, missed an examination or has been taken ill during an examination.
- 8.2.4 Students with a disability or learning difficulty should have declared these and secured an agreement regarding reasonable adjustments - a disability or learning difficulty cannot in itself be regarded as an extenuating circumstance.

- 8.2.5 Generally speaking, serious long-term circumstances that have a significant effect on the student's ability to study will be expected to result in the student requesting a suspension of studies or withdrawing from the course rather than claiming extenuating circumstances.
- 8.2.6 Valid criteria for extenuating circumstances relating to wellbeing and mental health include an acute illness or incident, or exacerbation of a long term or chronic condition, incapacitating the student on the date the assessment was due to be taken or submitted; or an extended illness or exacerbation of a long term or chronic condition incapacitating the student to a greater degree than they would normally be accustomed during the period they might reasonably have been expected to undertake the work for the assessment. Other valid criteria relevant to wellbeing include bereavement, unexpected/acute caring responsibilities and/or other domestic or personal problems.
- 8.2.7 If in doubt, students are encouraged to seek advice from academic and/or professional services staff before the assessment date about their own circumstances and whether they would be considered 'fit to sit'. They could also seek independent support and advice from the Students Union Advice Centre, which specialises in supporting students with University policies and procedures.
- 8.2.8 If a student has particularly distressing extenuating circumstances which they wish to be dealt with as confidentially as possible there is provision in the policy for them to contact their Head of Department directly, who will follow a special procedure for Serious and Confidential Circumstances.
- 8.2.9 See Section 9 for links to full details regarding relevant policies, documents and processes.

8.3 **Interruption of studies**

As outlined above, there is a separate regulatory framework governing applications for consideration of extenuating circumstances affecting assessments. These can exceptionally apply within the context of a recognised long-term condition or illness if an unforeseen worsening of the condition or symptoms leads to an interruption of the planned progression of the task or tasks relevant to the assessment. However, repeated application for such deferral of assessment for a recognised long-term condition is not permitted. In such cases, the adjustment is more likely to involve an indefinite suspension of studies until the student is able to proceed, or until a mutually satisfactory structural rearrangement of the programme can be arranged. In such cases the University would seek evidence from the student's GP or other mental health professional regarding fitness to proceed and, if there is a degree of uncertainty, may seek a second opinion. If a student refuses to accept a recommendation to suspend their studies or refuses offers of support, there may be implications for that student's progress, with the Fitness to Study policy needing to be invoked (see below).

8.4 **Disciplinary processes**

All students are subject to the University's disciplinary procedures relating to misconduct (see the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) which can be found in the University's Document Warehouse), and this includes students with mental health difficulties. However, there is provision for student wellbeing and mental health concerns to be considered within these procedures:

- 8.4.1 When dealing with any potential disciplinary issue, staff should ensure that all students concerned are encouraged to make use of any relevant support and where necessary to seek additional support e.g. from the Student Wellbeing Service.
- 8.4.2 When dealing with any potential disciplinary issue where the student is known to have, or discloses, a mental health difficulty, staff should seek advice from appropriate professionals in DCQE so that any necessary support and adjustments can be put in place in agreement with the student.
- 8.4.3 Whether the mental health difficulty is relevant to the particular circumstance or disciplinary matter will form part of the advice provided.
- 8.4.4** In circumstances where a student's behaviour is such that it would usually be dealt with as a disciplinary matter but it is known that there is a relevant, pre-existing physical or mental health difficulty (or one subsequently disclosed by the student) it may be inappropriate for the usual disciplinary processes to be followed and adjustments might include the use of alternative processes such as Fitness to Study.

8.5 **Fitness to study**

The Fitness to Study policy (see Section 9 Related Documents) exists to ensure a suitable and coordinated response by academic and professional services staff in circumstances where a student may require help/intervention and it is not considered appropriate to apply other internal procedures.

- 8.5.1 The policy encourages early intervention and active collaboration between relevant staff and the student in question where there are concerns about a student's fitness to study, and includes provision of a consistent and sensitive approach to the management of situations where there is concern about risk.
- 8.5.2 Grounds for concern about a student's fitness to study may include, but is not restricted to: the student posing a risk to their own health, safety and wellbeing and/or that of other persons; the student's behaviour is, or is at risk of, negatively affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of others in the University community; the student's behaviour is, or is at risk of, negatively affecting the day-to-day activities of the University or a placement provider.
- 8.5.3 The policy is intended to encourage and support continued participation by the student in their studies whenever possible, and makes provision for arrangements for returning to study after a period of suspension (where this is relevant).
- 8.5.4 Each Faculty designates a member of academic staff as Faculty Fitness to Study Adviser (FSA), usually the Associate Dean (Students), who should at all times seek advice from the appropriate specialist staff/Head in DCQE. The Academic Registrar acts as the gatekeeper for Fitness to Study cases. See Section 9 for where to access the full Fitness to Study policy.

8.6 **Fitness for practice**

Certain programmes of study lead to a vocational qualification that is subject to fitness to practice and/or training procedures. The Code of Student Behaviour (see Section 9) sets out procedures

for dealing with questions of fitness for professional practice and may lead to a student's programme of study being terminated.

- 8.6.1 If the University is made aware of a mental health difficulty that might compromise fitness for practice, and the course leads to the right to practice a particular profession or vocation as recognised by the relevant professional body, then the University and/or the student may have an obligation to inform the appropriate body on, or subsequent to, registration.
- 8.6.2 Similarly, if the programme involves periods of placement then the University and/or the student may have an obligation to inform the appropriate body when making arrangements for placement. When the work placement performance provides an integral part of the overall course assessment and credit accumulation, a condition that precludes practice placement in a particular vocation will mean that the student will be unable to pass the course. This should be taken into account when applying for such a course.

9. Related documents or information

Equality Objectives

<https://www.port.ac.uk/about-us/structure-and-governance/corporate-governance/equality-and-diversity>

Dignity and Respect Policy

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-007.pdf>

Information for Disabled Students

<https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/additional-support-and-disability-advice>

Admissions Policy and Procedures

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-017.pdf>

Examinations and Assessment Regulations

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-107.pdf>

Extenuating Circumstances

<https://staff.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qmd/assessmentandregulations/>

Code of Student Behaviour

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-053.pdf>

Students Causing Concern: Staff Guidance

[press control and click to got to http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-191.pdf](http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-191.pdf)

Student Drug and Alcohol Policy

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-073.pdf>

Health and Safety Policy

[press control and click to go to http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-033.pdf](http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-033.pdf)

Annex 1 - [Draft] University of Portsmouth Wellbeing Charter

Please note that this new University of Portsmouth Wellbeing Charter is currently under consultation with students and staff. The draft version will be replaced with the final version once it has been agreed.

The wellbeing of our students, staff and University community lies at the foundation of our University Strategy and Vision, fuelling the fulfilment of our mission to create, share and apply knowledge to make a difference to individuals and society.

The University of Portsmouth is a values-led institution. Our Wellbeing Charter arises out of our University values - Ambitious, Responsible, Open - and is reinforced in the principles of our Student Charter and the Portsmouth Hallmark for our staff.

In line with the [University Mental Health Charter](#), we define optimum wellbeing as “the ability of an individual to fully exercise their cognitive, emotional, physical, and social powers, leading to flourishing.” For students this includes the “engagement with academic learning [which] makes a significant contribution to their wellbeing”.

Our Wellbeing Charter is ambitious

We recognise that wellbeing is the essential foundation for staff and students to pursue bold ideas, to innovate, to create and to be empowered to fulfil their potential.

We commit to valuing and nurturing our relationships and partnerships to build a supportive, learning community which inspires and equips its members with life-changing skills to make a difference to the world, locally and globally.

We will:

- lead the sector in a whole-institution approach which puts wellbeing, resilience and emotional literacy at the heart of our learning, teaching, research, staff development and leadership ethos.
- develop and evidence innovative wellbeing-based teaching methods and workplace policies based on compassionate learning mindsets.
- set an example to the sector in our embodiment of the principles of the University Mental Health Charter.

Our Wellbeing Charter is responsible

We recognise that wellbeing within our University community is determined by the quality of our connections with each other and with the world around us, and that our success in upholding the highest academic and professional standards is founded on the strength of engagement in our shared purpose.

We commit to a culture of active inclusion, challenging ourselves to recognise and address any barriers to belonging so that every member of our community feels actively welcomed, respected, and valued.

We will

- work together and share ideas to nurture a culture of respect for our surroundings as well as each other.
- require every new or reviewed policy, strategy and curriculum to consider the impact on and contribution towards our wellbeing, inclusion and sustainability aims.
- develop definitions and measures to evaluate these impact assessments.

Our Wellbeing Charter is open

We recognise that staff and students are empowered to flourish and fulfil their potential within a culture of shared trust, and that transparency and collaboration are essential for supporting resilience in times of challenge and change.

We commit to listening and responding to the needs of our students and staff, providing quick access to appropriate individually-tailored support when they experience difficulties or poor mental health.

We will

- actively build a culture of mutual respect and compassion, where every member of our community feels empowered to both seek out and offer appropriate support when needed.
- promote a restorative culture, where every member of our community knows what role they can play in preventing and healing conflict.
- ensure that student and staff support services are well-resourced and accessible to all.

Our Wellbeing Charter is reinforced through the underpinning values of our Student Charter:

We encourage and empower all members of our community to play their part in:

- welcoming others into an inclusive **community**,
- valuing and showing **respect** and compassion for themselves and each other,
- in order to form and benefit from the strong **support** networks
- which provide the foundation for life-changing, whole-hearted commitment to their ongoing **education**,
- embracing challenges and making the most of every **opportunity** to develop, learn and fulfil their potential.

Our Wellbeing Charter also underpins the ability of our staff to reflect the Portsmouth Hallmarks:

In particular the Charter supports staff to be self-aware, self-motivated and engaged, taking pride in realising the University's aims, and to:

- Have an excellent understanding of their role and the part they play in ensuring that the University achieves its strategic aims;
- Have the ability to work independently as well as collaboratively, coming up with creative and better ways of doing things, embracing change and challenges as they arise;
- Be engaged, with a sense of professional responsibility linked to a culture of valuing equality, diversity, difference, respect and sustainability;
- Be effective team players, able to communicate clearly and effectively, supporting all members of the University community;
- Be able to work in a range of environments, responding positively to new situations by being aware, flexible, agile and realistic in their expectations;
- Be proactively engaged in and proud of working for the University, and striving for excellence in all they do in order to achieve the best outcomes for the University and its students;
- Be passionate and effective advocates in promoting the University to the wider community.

Annex 2 - University of Portsmouth Student Charter

Created by a partnership of students, staff, and the Students' Union, the University of Portsmouth Student Charter is a shared set of principles that staff and students agree contribute to an outstanding student experience. The charter supports students to demonstrate the Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate.

Do you know the SCORE at Portsmouth?

Support

Seek out and nurture strong support networks and partnerships to help meet your academic, career, and personal needs.

Community

Play your part in welcoming others into diverse, inclusive, global and local communities where ideas are shared, opinions are sought, and views are valued.

Opportunity

Embrace challenges, be intellectually curious, and seize the broad range of opportunities provided within and beyond the curriculum.

Respect

Value the people you meet and the places where you study, work, and live; be a role model in the ways you treat people with respect, equity and dignity.

Education

Commit wholeheartedly to a stimulating learning environment, provide and respond to timely and constructive feedback, and push the boundaries of your subject.

Portsmouth 5 Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing ([New Economics Foundation, 2008](#)) is a framework based on research evidence for the activities most likely to promote positive wellbeing. The Portsmouth 5 Ways to Wellbeing connects the Five Ways to Wellbeing with each of the five values listed in the University of Portsmouth Student Charter:

Five Ways to Wellbeing...	... at the University of Portsmouth
Connect Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, and people you	Support Build and strengthen your supportive connections with the people around you at university and keep in touch with family and home community

<p>encounter day to day. Smile, say thank you, listen, reach out.</p>	<p>networks too. Recognise and make use of all the supportive resources around you.</p>
<p>Give to others Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you, or a kind word; or being there to listen when someone needs to talk. Larger acts, such as volunteering or playing a formal supportive role can also help you build new social networks.</p>	<p>Community Reach out to others and help build our inclusive learning community. Make the effort to pronounce someone's name correctly. Include someone who seems lonely or isolated. Step up to intervene if someone is being badly treated.</p>
<p>Be Active Find an activity you enjoy and make it a regular part of your life. Try to make sure this includes physical activity - even if it's just walking or cycling to classes rather than catching the bus.</p>	<p>Opportunity Take advantage of the great value deals on sport membership and explore all the activities on offer - there's something for everyone. Or join a Students' Union group, get involved in music or drama, learn a language.</p>
<p>Take notice Be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts, feelings, body and the world around you. Be better placed to appreciate what matters and what you value.</p>	<p>Respect Take a deep break, slow down, and be mindful of yourself, others, and your surroundings. Stay in touch with your values. Treat yourself, others and the world around you with respect.</p>
<p>Keep learning Stay in touch with the joy of learning both inside and outside your subject. Take pleasure in learning new skills and in the steps towards mastering your subject. Don't get so focused on achievements and goals that you lose sight of what fascinates and intrigues you.</p>	<p>Education Engage with all the learning opportunities on offer and see every piece of feedback as an opportunity to grow. Embrace the wonder of your subject and the opportunity to contribute to the growth of our collective knowledge.</p>

Annex 3 - Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate

Thanks to the University's exceptional teaching, facilities and student experience, students are empowered to meet and exceed the expectations in the Student Charter and develop the characteristics outlined in the Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate - and in doing so, setting themselves on the path to a successful and fulfilling career.

Knowledge, informed, intellectually curious, responsible, self-aware, self-motivated, independent and set for success in their future careers, our graduates will:

- Have a critical and reflective knowledge and understanding of their subject, with both the ability and the readiness to question its principles, practices and boundaries.
- Think independently, analytically and creatively, and engage imaginatively with new areas of investigation within and across discipline boundaries.
- Be able to synthesise new and existing knowledge to generate ideas and develop creative solutions of benefit to the economy and society.
- Be intellectually curious, embrace challenges and seize opportunities for development.
- Be able to locate, access and critically engage with information, using current and emerging digital technologies.
- Be informed citizens, with a sense of responsibility allied to a commitment to ethical practice and social justice issues, such as equality, respect and sustainability.
- Be effective team players, able to provide leadership and to support the success of others.
- Be able to communicate clearly and effectively, in a range of forms and to different audiences.
- Have an enterprising spirit, bringing innovation and productivity to the groups and communities to which they belong.
- Be able to work in a range of environments, responding positively to new situations by being aware, flexible, adaptable and realistic in their expectations.
- Be proactive in recognising and addressing personal development needs, and able to make informed career decisions.

Annex 4 - Student Support Services

Personal tutors

All students have a named personal tutor who takes responsibility for overseeing and/or providing general academic and pastoral support for their personal tutees. Your personal tutor is an academic member of staff in your department who is committed to helping you reach your potential at university. They'll maintain regular contact with you and support you throughout your degree. Your tutor should be the first person you speak to at University if you have any difficulties, especially if they impact on your studies. Personal tutors are there to coordinate your academic support and will direct you to other University services with appropriate professional expertise if you need them.

[Press control and click to go to https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/supporting-your-studies/support-tutors-and-advisors/personal-tutors](https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/supporting-your-studies/support-tutors-and-advisors/personal-tutors)

Student Wellbeing Service

The Student Wellbeing Service (SWS) is the hub for the University's whole-institution approach to wellbeing, and has developed the distinctive Learning Well framework informing the University's wellbeing and mental health policy. The SWS offers learning, advice and support for your emotional wellbeing and mental health, with free, confidential help for a wide range of personal and emotional concerns. Support from our friendly team of wellbeing advisers, counsellors and mental health advisers can be accessed in a variety of ways: online, by text, video or audio call, or in person, and you can also engage with our range of courses, workshops and events or recommended self-help resources.

The multidisciplinary team of qualified mental health professionals are experienced in supporting students with mental health conditions. Having a private and confidential space to talk things over can, in itself, help in the management of mental distress. The SWS will also work with each student to develop a personalised support pathway, and to map and make best use of all the relevant support services within the University and beyond. This could include making use of the 24/7 text and phone support offered via our WhatsUp app, and/or the opportunity to access supportive counselling in any language.

The SWS has close relationships with NHS primary and secondary mental health services and can work collaboratively to support students with getting appropriate mental health treatment. Practitioners from the Primary Care Psychological Therapies Service (Talking Change) contribute to the SWS course and workshop programme and also offer assessment sessions bookable via the SWS for their psychological therapies service (mainly cognitive behavioural therapy). Where appropriate, the SWS is also able to refer students to the Secondary Care gateway assessment service, and/or the crisis and home treatment team. The SWS also works closely with ASDAC (see below) to ensure that students with declared mental health conditions have access to additional learning support, such as academic mentoring.

Contact the Student Wellbeing Service on 023 9284 3466 or email wellbeing-admin@port.ac.uk.

For more details about the many aspects of the service see:

[Press control and click to go to https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/student-wellbeing-service](https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/student-wellbeing-service)

Registering with a local doctor

All students are strongly encouraged to register with a Portsmouth doctor, known as a General Practitioner (GP). The Student Wellbeing Service works closely with local GP practices to ensure students have joined up mental health support.

<https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/gp-surgery>

Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC)

Contact ASDAC as soon as possible if you have a condition that might impact on your ability to access the campus, curriculum, teaching, learning, assessments or any other University service. ASDAC provides a confidential service for all students with additional learning needs and can give advice on appropriate academic support and discuss what reasonable adjustments you may require.

ASDAC provides additional support and advice for students and applicants with any chronic illnesses, sensory or mobility impairments, mental health difficulties and specific learning difficulties that may impact upon their ability to study at the University. ASDAC has qualified and experienced Disability Officers who offer confidential case study interviews. If an applicant has declared a mental health problem on application, ASDAC will be advised and will contact the student to arrange an initial session. Typical outcomes from these sessions will be liaison and communication with Departments over any special study and examination arrangements that may be appropriate, advice on eligibility for Disabled Students' Allowance, clarification of any particular confidentiality requirements and, where considered mutually appropriate, arrangements for referral to the Student Wellbeing Service.

<https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/additional-support-and-disability-advice>

Solent Recovery College

The University has a partnership with the Solent Recovery College (which exists through a collaboration between Solent Mind and Solent NHS Trust) to offer both staff and students at the University the opportunity to learn about recovery from mental health difficulties through a range of free courses and short sessions. The College is housed in a central location on campus, with courses taught in a classroom setting for learning about living with ongoing symptoms and getting the most from mental health services. Courses include understanding recovery and developing mindfulness, with a series of courses on understanding and living with common mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, personality disorder, and bipolar disorder.

<https://www.solentmind.org.uk/support-for-you/our-services/solent-recovery-college/>

Chaplaincy

The multi-faith chaplaincy is open to all students and staff regardless of your values and beliefs, offering a calm, friendly environment where you can come for a confidential chat, somewhere to have lunch with friends, or just some quiet space. If you're struggling with life's ups and downs the Chaplains can listen confidentially about whatever you want to explore and have pastoral skills that can help with establishing values, meaning and purpose for living. The Chaplains can point you in the right direction for other support services and they work closely with the Student Wellbeing Service and Res Life team, especially in contributing to out of hours support.

[Press control and click to got to https://myport.port.ac.uk/life-at-uni/life-on-campus/chaplaincy](https://myport.port.ac.uk/life-at-uni/life-on-campus/chaplaincy)

Res Life and Housing teams

The Res Life team supports first year students living in halls and in private accommodation in Portsmouth. They organise a programme of social events to help students meet like-minded people and make new friends. They offer one to one help and advice with common issues like settling in, health concerns, homesickness, noisy neighbours, and housemate conflicts. They also staff an out of hours pastoral support service reached by calling the Campus Security team. Book an appointment with the team on +44 (0)23 9284 x3789 or x4578 or x3924 or by emailing reslife@port.ac.uk

The Housing team supports students in finding suitable housing in halls and in the private sector. The team holds lists of private accommodation and can provide advice on things like house hunting, types of rental contracts, council tax, house-sharing and on disputes with landlords.

Contact the Student Housing team on +44 (0)23 9284 3214 or student.housing@port.ac.uk

<https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/accommodation>

UoP Global

The UoP Global office has a team of staff dedicated to supporting international students. The Global reception team can help with general enquiries and things like travel letters. The International Student Adviser team is here to support international students settle into life in Portsmouth and the University and can help more detailed help and advice on any issues or problems you wish to discuss. Whether it's getting used to life in Portsmouth, problems or questions about your visa, settling into your new home, or struggling academically, the Student Advisers are here to help. The Student Advisers are able to work with the Student Wellbeing Service to make sure international students can access appropriate wellbeing support.

Contact the International Student Advisers by email: international.student.adviser@port.ac.uk or phone +44 (0)23 9284 3524.

Students' Union Advice Service

The University of Portsmouth Students' Union (UPSU) Advice Service provides independent support, advice and advocacy to help students understand University policies and procedures and provides support in disciplinary or other formal meetings. They aim to help students resolve issues and ensure that students are treated fairly. For example, they can support students with extenuating circumstances applications or in following through a complaint about bullying or harassment. The Service also helps students access the independent Sort It Out conflict resolution service.

<https://upsu.net/advice/academic-advice/advice-service>

Other student support services

There are a number of other student support services which may play a role in the network of supportive connections that each student is encouraged to develop in order to support their wellbeing:

MyPort information hubs

The MyPort information hub network is the starting point for information, support and guidance with any aspect of University life.

<https://myport.port.ac.uk/my-course/myport-information-hubs>

Faculty support

In each Faculty there are specialist learning support tutors with the knowledge and expertise to help you develop your academic skills and enhance your academic work.

<https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/supporting-your-studies/support-tutors-and-advisors>

Academic skills unit (ASK)

ASK has developed an extensive set of online resources and works with teaching staff, as well as offering one-to-one tutoring, to help undergraduate, postgraduate and research students develop their academic skills as independent learners. <https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/supporting-your-studies/academic-skills-support>

Student finance centre

The Student Finance Centre is there to help you manage your money effectively, and offer information, advice and individual support about student loans, and additional support options like bursaries and hardship funds.

Annex 5 - Mental Health & Wellbeing Terminology

Mental health and wellbeing can be viewed most usefully as a continuum of experience from flourishing wellbeing through to a severe and debilitating long-term illness. Descriptions of some of the more commonly encountered mental health problems can be found at the MIND website: www.mind.org.uk/information-support

This policy follows the terms used in the University Mental Health Charter:

Mental health refers to the full spectrum of experience ranging from good mental health to mental illness.

Good mental health means more than the absence of illness. It refers to a dynamic state of internal equilibrium in which an individual experiences regular enduring positive feelings, thoughts and behaviours, can respond appropriately to normal negative emotions and situations and is able to make a positive contribution to their community.

Mental illness means a condition and experience, involving thoughts, feelings, symptoms and/or behaviours, that causes distress and reduces functioning, impacting negatively on an individual's day to day experience, and which may receive or be eligible to receive a clinical diagnosis.

Mental health problems or poor mental health refers to a broader range of individuals experiencing levels of emotional and/or psychological distress beyond normal experience and beyond their current ability to effectively manage. It includes those who are experiencing mental illness and those whose experiences fall below this threshold, but whose mental health is not good.

Wellbeing encompasses a wider framework, of which mental health is an integral part, but which also includes physical and social wellbeing. Optimum wellbeing is defined by the ability of an individual to fully exercise their cognitive, emotional, physical and social powers, leading to flourishing.

Student wellbeing recognises that in addition students' engagement with academic learning is a key component part of their experience and makes a significant contribution to their wellbeing.

At Portsmouth in addition we talk about learning mindsets:

Mindset

Your mindset is your typical attitude towards new information and beliefs about yourself and your ability to deal with challenges. Our Learning Well approach fosters a 'compassionate mindset' towards yourself and others, which in turn fosters a learning mindset encompassing growth, belonging and purpose mindsets. <https://mindsetscholarsnetwork.org/learning-mindsets/#>

Annex 6 - Support in a crisis

This page replicates the 'Support in a crisis' web page, where you can access the additional links provided with the advice:

[Press control and click to go to https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/student-wellbeing-service/support-in-a-crisis](https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/student-wellbeing-service/support-in-a-crisis)

See also information about the consultation service available if someone is concerned about a student:

[Press control and click to go to https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/student-wellbeing-service/support-in-a-crisis/concerned-about-a-student](https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/student-wellbeing-service/support-in-a-crisis/concerned-about-a-student)

In an emergency

If you or someone else has experienced an incident and/or someone is at immediate risk of serious harm then call 999.

On campus you can also call (0)23 9284 3333 for campus security. We recommend adding this number to your phone right away.

If you need medical help fast, but it's not a 999 emergency, contact the NHS 24-hour helpline on 111. This is the number to call for mental health crises.

During office hours - Student Wellbeing Service

The Student Wellbeing Service is open 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am-4pm on Fridays. Daily advice sessions are bookable on the day on a first-come first-served basis. Phone +44 (0)23 9284 3466 to find out times and book a slot. Let the administrator know if you are in need of urgent crisis support, as it may be more appropriate to contact emergency services.

In the event of a serious mental health or psychiatric problem, a duty practitioner can be contacted via Student Wellbeing Service reception +44 (0)23 9284 3466 for consultation or to arrange a possible urgent assessment with NHS mental health services.

The consultation service is also available to anyone who is concerned about a student, including fellow students, parents and University staff.

In an emergency, or if there is immediate risk of serious harm to yourself or others, please call 999.

Out of hours

If you need to talk to someone outside our normal opening hours:

- Use the emergency information listed above where relevant
- The Campus Security team can contact the out of hours support team. This could be someone from the Res Life team or one of the Chaplains from the University Chaplaincy Service.
- If you already have our WhatsUp app the SOS Text function will provide a connection to the 24/7 CAM Crisis Messenger service or just text CAM to 85258. Also check the latest update for the 24/7 SOS Phone function which will shortly be staffed by a multilingual international support service.
- Consider contacting the Samaritans. They provide a 24-hour listening service on 116 123.
- You can also contact your GP who has 24-hour responsibility for your care.

If you feel at risk of taking your life

Many people who have thought about or attempted suicide feel grateful later that they did not act or succeed with that impulse.

If you have harmed yourself, or are intending to do so now as you read this, please use the emergency advice above and make it clear that you feel at risk.

Alternatively, please try the following options:

Seeing a doctor

During GP opening hours you may be able to get an emergency appointment.

St Mary's NHS Treatment Centre

If you are not registered with a doctor in Portsmouth then you can call +44 (0)33 3200 1822 to find out if you can be seen at the St Mary's walk-in treatment centre.

Accident & Emergency Department

Go to A&E if you can get a friend to accompany you. If not, phone 999 and let the staff know that you're feeling unsafe and at risk of harming yourself.

Helplines and websites

Talking honestly to someone about how you are feeling can really help. If you are unable to use the 24/7 support available via the WhatsApp app, then phone the Samaritans free on 116 123 or use the CAM Crisis Messenger service by texting CAM to 85258.

You might also find these websites helpful:

- **Papyrus** - The national charity dedicated to prevention of young suicide. They can provide you with confidential advice and support.
- **Supportline** - Confidential telephone helpline and web pages with support on the issue of suicide.
- **Students Against Depression** - Student-focused advice and resources for those affected by low mood, depression and suicidal thinking.

Create a safety plan

Develop a safety plan for times when you're feeling low. A safety plan can help you make sense of your suicidal thoughts and learn strategies for surviving them. And can help you keep yourself safe when you're at risk.

Use a safety plan worksheet from Students Against Depression to develop your safety plan.

Think about making an appointment with the Student Wellbeing Service to discuss how you feel with a member of the team. We can help you think through your safety plan and build strategies for keeping yourself safe.

To make an appointment call +44 (0)23 9284 3466, email wellbeing-admin@port.ac.uk or drop in to reception on Floor 2 of the Nuffield Centre, St Michael's Road.

Support after sexual violence

For specialist and confidential medical support and advice after a sexual assault the best place to go is the Treetops Centre, Portsmouth's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). Phone the 24/7 helpline on 0300 123 6616. You can use the SARC at any time even if the sexual assault took place some time ago. (If you are not in Portsmouth then look for information about your local SARC).

Also contact the Student Wellbeing Service to get further support and advice for dealing with the impact on your studies.

Annex 7 - Confidentiality and data protection

Confidentiality

The University deals with significant amounts of personal and sensitive personal data on a daily basis and recognises student concerns about the uses to which this data could be put. The University's Data Protection Policy sets out the responsibilities of students, staff and the University itself in relation to processing this data. This Policy can be viewed online at [Press control and click to go to http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-022.pdf](http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-022.pdf).

Further guidance on the types of data the University processes about students and the purpose behind this processing can also be accessed at [Press control and click to go to www.port.ac.uk/dpa](http://www.port.ac.uk/dpa).

Legislation

The University is subject to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, which places a duty not to discriminate on the grounds of disability. Students with a mental illness that has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities are defined as disabled under the Act. Where this is the case, and in order to comply with the Act and ensure that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are provided, students are encouraged to disclose any disability including mental health. This should preferably be at the pre-admission stage to ensure timely provision of appropriate arrangements and adjustments, but disclosure can take place at any stage in the student's time with the University.

There is no duty on a student to disclose a disability. Institutions are expected to take reasonable steps to find out if a student is disabled so that the appropriate action can be taken but the University cannot be held to have discriminated against a student by not taking such action if his or her disability was not known to it. The University is also subject to Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998, which provides for a right to respect for private and family life.

Data protection

To ensure student information is kept confidentially, protocols (consistent with the principles of UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018) will apply. All personal data is obtained and used fairly and only used for the purposes the student is told it will be used for. Personal data is handled and processed securely and kept as up to date as possible.

Information relating to physical or mental health constitutes special category data. Under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, explicit permission from the data subject will be sought before this type of information is passed on to a third party, unless there is a legal obligation to provide the information. 'Special category' data will only be released within the University on a 'need to know' basis, and with the student's explicit permission. The student will be informed why there is a need to disclose the information, who will have access to that information, and what the likely consequences are of giving or withholding consent.

Exceptional disclosure

The University has an equal duty to all students. Certain exceptional circumstances may require the release of special category data or the breaching of confidentiality requests. These include:

- Where there is an immediate and serious threat to the personal safety of the student concerned.
- Where there is an immediate and serious threat to the safety of others.

- Where there is a legal requirement to disclose that information (e.g. certain criminal activities or where it is covered by health and safety legislation)
- Where professional fitness to practice may be compromised.

In cases of exceptional disclosure the consent of the student will not be sought where it is likely to increase the level of risk to that student or to the third party.

Confidentiality requests

A student with a mental health difficulty has the right to request that the existence or nature of his or her difficulty be treated as confidential. In such cases the University will then take into account the extent to which making appropriate adjustments will compromise that request for confidentiality. This may result in the effectiveness of some adjustments being compromised or that reasonable adjustment cannot be provided at all.

If a student discloses his or her difficulty to a member of staff and asks for confidentiality, the disadvantages of not disclosing will be discussed. However, the decision not to disclose rests with the student and will be honoured if still required after such discussion. In such cases discussion will then move to consideration of ways in which reasonable adjustments can be made without compromising the confidentiality requirement. Written confirmation of the student's request for confidentiality will be required.

Annex 8 - Recommended staff training

In the first instance, staff should familiarise themselves with the relevant University policies and guidance, and with the Learning Well model (via resources and training supplied by the Student Wellbeing Service and Department for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement).

In addition it is recommended that any staff working with students should undertake the free e-learning training package offered by the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust 'Keeping mental health in mind'. This can be found at cwmt.org.uk/e-learning.

The training consists of the following 20-minute modules:

1. Key principles
2. Signs to look out for
3. Key skills
4. Transitions
5. At risk or in crisis
6. Case study

Further guidance can be found in the following book - several copies are available from the University library:

Barden, N. & Caleb, R. (2019) *Student mental health and wellbeing in higher education: a practical guide*. London: Sage

Additional training can be followed via the Solent Recovery College, which has a partnership with the University and is located in the Students' Union building on Cambridge Road.

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