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| Version number: | 2.0 |  |
| Policy owner: | Director of Student Support and Transition |
| Effective date: | 01/06/2020 |
| Review date: | 31/10/2024 |

**Positive Mental Health Policy**

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| This policy was first issued 31 January 2019 | | |
|  | |  |
| Equality Analysis | |  |
|  | |  |
| LT&SE Team | | 20 May 2020 |
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| The Policy was last issued on 31 January 2019 The principal changes relate to: | | |
| Section/Paragraph | Title | Change: |
| Throughout |  | Mental health issues/mental impairment renamed mental health condition |
| Throughout |  | Student Support and Wellbeing services renamed |
| 1 | Policy Statement | Rewritten |
| 2 | Scope | Includes old ‘Duty of Care’ section; list of associated policies updated with links; references updated with links. |
| 3 | Aims | New bulleted sections added |
| 4 | Duty of care | Incorporated into section 2 Scope |
| 4 | Lead Members of Staff | Reordered list; student to be encouraged to attend a Wellbeing Pop-up; reference to concerns for member of staff added; contact details in Appendix B |
| 5 | Supporting Students with Mental Health Conditions as they Study | Title updated; footnote to Equality Act reference added; new paragraphs on responsibilities to students and offering support/mitigating circumstances. |
| 5.1 | SARA | Clarification of wording |
| 5.2 | Disclosure of MH Condition | ‘any needs’ reworded to ‘these requirements. |
| 5.3 | Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances | ‘Extensions’ added to title; new para on extensions |
| 5.4 | Individual Support Plans | ‘and Care’ removed from title; care plans renamed support plans; role of student added. |
| 6 | Signposting | ‘As far as possible’ added |
| 7 | Warning Signs | Student peers included; concerns to be taken to SSW. |
| 8 | Managing Disclosures | Disclosure should be recorded where possible or passed to SSW |
| 9 | Risk Issues | Off campus should be dealt with by emergency services |
| 10 | Confidentiality | Rewritten in line with guidance from Su Longden |
| 11 | Supporting Peers | Suffering from reworded to affected by/concerned. |
| 13 | Policy Review | Section revised |
| Appendix A | References | Retitled from Section 15 |
| Appendix B | Contacts and Services | Extension numbers highlighted, list re-ordered, service names updated. Wellbeing Pop-ups and Student Health Drop-in paragraphs rewritten. |
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Contents

[1. Policy Statement 1](#_Toc40880985)

[2. Scope 2](#_Toc40880986)

[3. Aims 3](#_Toc40880987)

[4. Lead Members of Staff 3](#_Toc40880988)

[5. Supporting Students with Mental Health Conditions as they Study 4](#_Toc40880989)

[5.1 Student Additional Requirements Agreement (SARA) 4](#_Toc40880990)

[5.2 Disclosure of a Mental Health Condition, Medical Condition, Physical or Sensory Disability, or Specific Learning Difficulty such as Dyslexia 5](#_Toc40880991)

[5.3 Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances 5](#_Toc40880992)

[5.4 Individual Support Plans 5](#_Toc40880993)

[6. Signposting 5](#_Toc40880994)

[7. Warning Signs 6](#_Toc40880995)

[8. Managing Disclosures 6](#_Toc40880996)

[9. Risk Issues 6](#_Toc40880997)

[10. Confidentiality 6](#_Toc40880998)

[11. Supporting Peers 7](#_Toc40880999)

[12. Training 7](#_Toc40881000)

[13. Policy Review 7](#_Toc40881001)

[APPENDICES 8](#_Toc40881002)

[Appendix A: References 8](#_Toc40881003)

[Appendix B: Contacts and Services 9](#_Toc40881004)

[Appendix C: Acute Risk Policy 11](#_Toc40881005)

**Positive Mental Health Policy**

# Policy Statement

A positive approach from students and University staff towards the management of mental health conditions is critical to student learning, academic achievement and the quality of the wider student experience for all.

Whilst a move to University can be exciting and stimulating with opportunities to develop resilience and independence, it can also present a challenge which at times can be overwhelming and stressful for any student. Mental health conditions can beset a student at any point in their academic careers but those with pre-existing mental health conditions can be particularly susceptible to the challenges this experience brings.

The University of Chichester aims to promote positive mental health and a culture in which mental health conditions are recognised and supported without stigma or discrimination. By providing a supportive environment, it will ensure that students are not disadvantaged, academically or otherwise, because of their conditions and that they have the opportunity to realise their full potential in accordance with the University's [Equality and Diversity Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/inclusivity-equality-and-diversity/inclusivity-documentation).

The University also recognises that the students are individual adult learners, with a responsibility to contribute to their own self-care and to the quality and wellbeing of the University community. The majority of students with mental health conditions are able to navigate their University careers successfully through a combination of self-care, peer support and pastoral support. However, where mental health conditions are adversely affecting the student’s ability to engage productively with their studies or University life, students are encouraged to responsibly access mental health support from either within the University (for example the Health and Wellbeing team) or externally (for example the NHS).

Whilst the University is committed to providing a supportive environment, it is important to recognise that it is not a mental health facility nor is it a therapeutic community. There are, of necessity, limits to the extent of the support that can be provided and it is not the responsibility of the University to replicate services that already exist within the wider community and within the NHS. The University cannot provide treatment for mental illness but aims to provide an environment and the resources to support students to maximise their sense of mental wellbeing and enable them to reach their academic potential.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are concerns about a student’s welfare and where the range of supportive measures that the University may be reasonably expected to provide have been employed but have not satisfactorily resolved concerns, the appropriate policy and procedure is [Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support) or [Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support). The Fitness to Study Policy applies for all conditions where there are concerns about a student’s capacity to engage in academic engagements, maintain their own safety or to reside in University communities without adversely impacting their peers or University staff. The Fitness to Practise Policy is applicable where there are concerns about a student’s capacity to meet professional standards associated with their programme or career route.

# Scope

This document describes the University’s approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing amongst our student body. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff (including non-teaching staff), visitors and students.

The policy applies to all students who are directly enrolled on a programme of study at the University as well as to applicants and students who are intermitting. The policy recognises that there are differences in how it applies depending upon the registration status and whether the person is an applicant, registered student in attendance, or an intermitting student. The policy does not apply to students who are enrolled on Academic Partner Programmes as these institutions will have their own policies and procedures.

It applies whether students are on University premises or elsewhere on University business or study activities, including on premises managed on behalf of the University by a third party. It applies where there may be a health and wellbeing issue to the individual or to others (such as students on University-organised work placements). It applies over the academic year when student programmes of study are running.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other University policies, including:

* [Academic Quality and Standards](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-quality-and-standards)
* Acute Risk (which can be found in Appendix C to this document)
* [Admissions Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
* [Eating Disorder Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
* [Equality and Diversity](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/inclusivity-equality-and-diversity/inclusivity-documentation)
* [Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
* [Privacy Standard](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/data-protection)
* [Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
* [Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
* Self-Harm Policy and Procedures

This policy is written in line with guidance from:

* Public Health England 2018 (updated 28 August 2019)  
  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wellbeing-in-mental-health-applying-all-our-health/wellbeing-in-mental-health-applying-all-our-health>
* Office for Students Guidance on Inclusive Teaching and Learning in HE 2017  
  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-teaching-and-learning-in-higher-education>
* Equality Act 2010 Chapter 1 Section 6 Disability  
  <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6>

# Aims

The University seeks to promote positive mental health, and a culture in which mental health conditions are recognised and supported without stigma or discrimination, by:

* Providing pastoral and welfare support services within the University environment and access to specialists in the Student Support and Wellbeing services in addition to the support services provided through external bodies (for example the NHS and Coastal Mind).
* Encouraging applicants and students with mental health conditions to make these known to the University and to seek support both pre-arrival and after they have commenced their programme, and at such times that their support needs may change, for example when undertaking work or study placements.
* Taking a proactive and collaborative stance in supporting students to develop an appropriate support plan such as a Student Additional Requirements Agreement (SARA) or a Health Support Plan.
* Ensuring that transparent and consistent procedures are adopted across the University to support students with mental health conditions.
* Providing clear guidance on the management of personal information provided by students and on compliance with current data protection legislation.
* Providing guidance, training and support to staff involved in student support including, where appropriate, academic and other professional staff.
* Maintaining strong links with local, external specialist mental health services to improve the provision of services to meet students’ needs and referring students with mental health conditions to these external services when appropriate.

In Addition, the Policy aims to:

* Promote positive mental health in all staff and students.
* Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health conditions.
* Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health.
* Provide support to staff working with students with mental health conditions.
* Provide support to students impacted by mental ill health and their peers
* Provide information on reasonable adjustments and support available to assist students with mental health conditions whilst they study, referencing the SARA process (Students Additional Requirement Agreement) and Mitigation Process.

# Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

* Dave Corcoran - Lead Safeguarding Officer and Director of Student Support and Transition
* Esther Hunt - Head of Health and Wellbeing and Head of Counselling - Registered MBACP Accredited Psychotherapist and University Caldicott Guardian
* Graham Francis and Karen Bridle - Health and Wellbeing Service - Registered Mental Health Advisers (RMHN & RGN and MH OT)
* Denise Wild and Rebecca Pothecary - Health and Wellbeing Service - Registered Nurses (RGN)
* Steve O’Melia - Head of Disability and Dyslexia
* Rev’d Dr Alison Green - Chaplain
* Health and Wellbeing Pop-up service advisers
* First Aiders - Campus First Aid

Any member of staff or a student who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should strongly encourage the student to attend one of the daily Wellbeing Pop-ups. If the concern is ongoing and the student is unwilling to seek support for themselves, the member of staff may seek advice from Student Support and Wellbeing services.

If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm (risk to self or others) then the University Acute Risk procedures (Appendix C) should be followed with an immediate referral to the Lead Safeguarding Officer, the Head of Student Wellbeing or the Health and Wellbeing Service.

**If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including calling a First Aider, the Student Health Nurse Advisers, or contacting the emergency services direct, as appropriate.**

Where a referral to Community Mental Health is appropriate, this will be supported by the Wellbeing Mental Health Advisers, in consultation and liaison with the GP and other mental health support services.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a colleague should speak in the first instance to their line manager in confidence.

Contact details for Student Support and Wellbeing Services can be found in Appendix B.

# Supporting Students with Mental Health Conditions as they Study

Students who have a diagnosed mental health condition may, under the Equality Act 2010, be viewed as having a disability if the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities[[1]](#footnote-1).

The University has specific responsibilities towards those students whose mental health is defined as a disability under the law to ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place to support their learning.

Where a student is facing academic progression or disciplinary processes, and mental health may be a contributing factor, the student will be offered support to protect their longer-term academic prospects. Extensions and/or Mitigating Circumstances may also apply, see section 5.3 below.

The Disability Team and the Health and Wellbeing Service will be able to give further advice and information about this. Contact details can be found in Appendix B.

## Student Additional Requirements Agreement (SARA)

As a University we are legally obliged to ensure applicants and students will not be discriminated against during the application process and during their studies here. We also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments[[2]](#footnote-2) to enable students to fully participate in their studies. There is a Reasonable Adjustment (SARA) process that can formalise an agreement as an official record between the student and the University based on supporting evidence and recommendations from the Disability Team and other professionals.

## Disclosure of a Mental Health Condition, Medical Condition, Physical or Sensory Disability, or Specific Learning Difficulty such as Dyslexia

Applicants and students are encouraged to disclose any condition and/or disability, including mental health conditions, which might impact on their ability to study. This enables the University to assess requirements which might be needed and to ensure there are facilities and services to meet these requirements. Appropriate members of staff are then able to facilitate reasonable adjustments.

**Applicants and students may decide not to disclose, but this may then have an impact upon what reasonable adjustments can be made available.**

All information provide will be processed in full compliance with current Data Protection legislation. Please see the [University Data Protection webpages](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/data-protection) and the [Disability and Dyslexia Service Privacy Notice](https://www.chi.ac.uk/ddsprivacy) for further information.

## Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances

Students impacted by a short-term concern that is affecting their ability to meet an assessment deadline may seek an extension from within their academic department. If this is not possible they may consider mitigation.

Students with mental health conditions may be eligible to apply for mitigation under the Mitigating Circumstances guidelines. These are available to registered students on their ChiView page. See: <https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-quality-and-standards/mitigating-circumstances>

## Individual Support Plans

In some circumstances it may be helpful to draw up an individual support plan for a student with a mental health condition or who receives a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health. This should be drawn up involving the student, the relevant health professionals and the academic department. This can include:

* + Details of a student’s condition
  + Special requirements and precautions
  + Medication and any side effects
  + What to do and who to contact in an emergency
  + The role the Department and University can play
  + The role and responsibilities to be undertaken by the student.

# Signposting

As far as possible the University will ensure that staff and students are aware of sources of support within the University and in the local community. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas such as the Learning Resources Centres and will regularly highlight sources of support to students. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of student help-seeking by ensuring students understand:

* + What help is available
  + Who it is aimed at
  + How to access it
  + Why to access it
  + What is likely to happen next.

# Warning Signs

Staff or peers may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff or student peers observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns to a member of the Student Support and Wellbeing team. Contact details in Appendix B.

Possible warning signs include:

* + Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
  + Changes in eating or sleeping habits
  + Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
  + Changes in activity and mood
  + Lowering of academic achievement or non-submission of work
  + Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
  + Abusing drugs or alcohol
  + Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
  + Changes in clothing - e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
  + Secretive behaviour
  + Lateness to or absence from sessions and lectures
  + Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
  + An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

# Managing Disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure. If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff’s response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. Staff can refer students direct to the Wellbeing Pop-Ups and Student Health Drop-ins for support and Triage. See Appendix B for contact details.

Disclosures should be recorded in writing wherever possible, or the details below passed on to an adviser in the Health and Wellbeing team who will make a record:

* Date
* The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made
* Main points from the conversation
* Agreed next steps.

This information should be shared with the Health and Wellbeing team, who will store the record appropriately and offer support and advice about next steps to students and staff.

# Risk Issues

Risk issues may be discussed with a student and the Acute Risk Policy (Appendix C) should be followed in an emergency on campus.

Incidents of immediate acute risk with a student which occur off campus should be dealt with by contacting the Emergency Services immediately.

# Confidentiality

We work with confidentiality within our Student Support and Wellbeing services, however there may be occasions where we need to share appropriate information with staff, Professionals, other services, a parent/carer or other relevant person.

We may also need to share information so we can take steps to protect the student or others from harm if we have reason to believe the student or others are at risk, or where we are legally obliged to do so.

If so, we will discuss this with the student wherever feasible, however there might be occasions where this is not possible, due to the type of risk to the student or others, and the concerns.

Further information can be found in the University’s Student Support and Wellbeing Privacy Notice <https://www.chi.ac.uk\sswprivacy>.

If you have concerns about how your data is processed then please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer on [DPOfficer@chi.ac.uk](mailto:DPOfficer@chi.ac.uk).

# Supporting Peers

When a student is affected by mental health conditions it can be a difficult time for their friends or peers. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support.

Support may be offered either in one-to-one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the students concerned:

* What it is helpful for friends to know and what they should not be told
* How friends can best support
* Things friends should avoid doing or saying which may inadvertently cause upset
* Warning signs that their friend may need help (e.g. signs of relapse)

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

* Where and how to access support for themselves
* Safe sources of further information about their friend’s condition
* Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling.

# Training

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge on Mental Health conditions will be provided by Staff Development and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due to developing situations with one or more students.

# Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with standard University practice; however, in appropriate circumstances it may be updated as required in-year. Any question or suggestion about improving this policy should be addressed to Dave Corcoran, Director of Student Support and Transition, or Esther Hunt, Head of Student Wellbeing and Head of Counselling.

# APPENDICES

# Appendix A: References

* Charlie Waller Memorial Trust - Mental health policy and guidance  
  <https://www.cwmt.org.uk/mental-health-policy>
* NHS England - Mental health  
  <https://www.england.nhs.uk/?s=mental+health>
* Equality Act 2010 - Section 6 Disability  
  <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6>
* Equality Act 2010 - Contents  
  <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
* NHS UK - Mental Health Act  
  <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/mental-health-act/>
* Office for Students Guidance on Inclusive Teaching and Learning in HE 2017  
  <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/support-for-disabled-students/>
* Public Health England 2018 - Wellbeing and mental health: Applying All Our Health  
  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wellbeing-in-mental-health-applying-all-our-health/wellbeing-in-mental-health-applying-all-our-health>
* World Health Organization - Mental health: a state of well-being  
  <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/>

# Appendix B: Contacts and Services

**University Emergency Services**

* **University Emergency Service** (24/7) 01243 81 **6363**   
  who will call all the required University support services including a First Aider, the Duty Manager and Security.
* **First Aiders** can be called via the University Emergency Service (above) or from the   
  **Support and Information Zone** )(SIZ) at the Learning Resource Centres on both campuses: [help@chi.ac.uk](mailto:help@chi.ac.uk) 01243 81 **6222**

**Student Support and Wellbeing**

* Health and Wellbeing 01243 81 **6238** / **6402**[Wellbeing@chi.ac.uk](mailto:Wellbeing@chi.ac.uk)
* Dave Corcoran, Director of Student Support and Transition 01243 81 **6459**  
  and Lead Safeguarding Officer - [d.corcoran@chi.ac.uk](mailto:d.corcoran@chi.ac.uk)
* Esther Hunt, Head of Student Wellbeing and University Caldicott Guardian  
  [e.hunt@chi.ac.uk](mailto:e.hunt@chi.ac.uk)
* Steve O’Melia, Head of the Disability and Dyslexia Service 01243 81 **2066**  
  [s.omelia@chi.ac.uk](mailto:s.omelia@chi.ac.uk)
* Disability and Dyslexia Service 01243 81 **2076**  
  [disability@chi.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chi.ac.uk)
* Chaplain - Rev’d Dr. Alison Green 01243 81 **6041**  
  [Alison.Green@chi.ac.uk](mailto:Alison.Green@chi.ac.uk)
* Karen Bridle and Graham Francis, Wellbeing Mental Health Advisers 01243 81 **6402**[Wellbeing@chi.ac.uk](mailto:Wellbeing@chi.ac.uk)
* Becky Pothecary and Denise Wild, Nurse Health Advisers 07739 983703  
  [studenthealth@chi.ac.uk](mailto:studenthealth@chi.ac.uk) 01243 81 **6111**
* Emma Foster and Lorna Hammond, Student Wellbeing Advisers   
  [Wellbeing@chi.ac.uk](mailto:Wellbeing@chi.ac.uk)
* Robyn Thwaites, Student On-Track Mentor 07739 983704  
  [R.Thwaites@chi.ac.uk](mailto:R.Thwaites@chi.ac.uk) 01243 812117
* International Student Advisers - Päivi Leivo and Jane Smith 01243 81 **2146**  
  [international@chi.ac.uk](mailto:international@chi.ac.uk)

**Estate Management**

* Contacts in hours:
  + John Kingdon - Director of Estate Management 01243 81 **6276**
  + Charles White - Head of Campus and Residential Services 01243 81 **6081**
  + Joe Ayres - Accommodation Manager 01243 79 **3417**
* Contacts out of hours:
  + Accommodation Officer and Staff Wardens (24/7): BOC - 01243 79 **3477**  
     BRC - 01243 79 **3488**
  + Stockbridge and Fishbourne 01243 81 **6449**

The Duty Manger and/or Security can be contacted on the University emergency number (above).

**External Contacts**

* Emergency services 999
* St. Richards Hospital A&E Department [Tel: 01243 788122](tel+:01243%20788122)
* NHS 111 help line service 111

**Wellbeing Pop-ups and Student Health Drop-ins**

**Wellbeing Pop-ups** run weekdays at both campuses in Semester time only. They offer a confidential space to talk through any worries or concerns with a trained adviser. Timetables are available at the SIZ and on the University help pages:   
<https://help.chi.ac.uk/wellbeing-pop-ups>

**Student Health drop-ins** are available on both campuses in Semester time only. They offer a confidential service with a Registered Nurse for all health concerns. Drop-in timetables are available from the SIZ and on the University help pages:  
<http://help.chi.ac.uk/student-health-service>

Please note that Pop-ups and Drop-ins may be subject to occasional changes due to staff availability.

**Support and Information Zone (SIZ)** can provide details of Wellbeing Pop-ups and Student Health drop-ins. The SIZ can be found at the main reception desks at both LRCs, email [help@chi.ac.uk](mailto:help@chi.ac.uk), phone 01243 81 **6222**.

# Appendix C: Acute Risk Policy

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Version number: | 3 |  |
| Policy owner: | Director of Student Support and Transition |
| Effective date: | 01/06/2020 |
| Review date: | 31/05/2022 |

**Student Support and Wellbeing and Campus   
Acute Risk Policy**

for Managing Presentation of Acute Risk of Harm to Self or Others

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| This Policy was first issued in September 2016 | |  |
|  | |  |
| Equality Analysis | |  |
|  | |  |
| LT&SE Team | | 20 May 2020 |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |
| The Policy was last issued on 31 January 2019 The principal changes relate to: | | |
| Section/Paragraph | Title | Change: |
| Cover sheet |  | New logo |
| Throughout | Throughout document | Health and Wellbeing services renamed; volunteer counsellors renamed Associate Counsellors |
|  | Scope | ‘issues’ reworded to ‘an incident’ |
| 2 | Policy | Risk procedure amended to Risk Assessment procedure |
| 5 | Policy | Associated policies reformatted to bulleted list and links updated, policy names updated |
| 6 |  | NMC code updated 2018 |
|  | Confidentiality | Section re-written in line with BACP Ethical Framework |
|  | Acute Factors | Definitions expanded to include self-destructive actions, and harming self or others as well as suicide. Age and Gender points replace with demographics |
|  | Procedures | Advice if emergency alarm fitted; subtitle risk to themselves amended; |
|  | Risk to themselves | Subsection name reworded; 3. Reworded to include if located in Chichester and number to call out-of-hours; 4. Reference to duty manager removed; 6. Addition of instructions on taking means of harm; 7&8 if appropriately trained; 10 documentation guidance expanded; case may be reviewed by WAM meeting. |
| Appendix A | Standard Risk Assessment Procedures | Title updated to include risk assessment for SSW |
| Appendix B | Confidentiality guidelines | Reference to BACP Ethical Framework clarified; ‘breached’ reworded to overridden. |
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|  | | |

**Contents**

Statement of Intent 1

Scope 1

Policy 1

Confidentiality 2

Acute Risk Factors 2

Procedures 4

Appendix A 6

Standard Risk Assessment Procedures for Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW) services (including Counselling and Wellbeing Services) 6

Appendix B 7

Confidentiality guidelines 7

**Statement of Intent**

The aim of this policy, and the accompanying procedures, is to provide a framework for reactive crisis management in cases where Acute Risk has been identified and the probability of a student causing harm to themselves or others is considered to be both imminent and high. It is written primarily for Counsellors and Associate Counsellors working within the University Wellbeing Counselling Service (possibly working out of hours). However, it may also be relevant for use by other members of University and Support staff who work directly with students on campus.

**Scope**

All University employees, support staff, students, and Associate Counsellors in the Counselling Service are covered by this policy. The Policy is written to cover Acute Risk issues which may occur on campus only. Staff involved with an incident of Acute Risk with a student which occurs off campus, should contact the Emergency Services immediately.

**Policy**

1. All forms of suicidal ideation and threats of harm to self or others by students will be taken seriously.
2. Any student seeking support from the Wellbeing Counselling Service or Health and Wellbeing Service[[3]](#footnote-3) may be asked questions relating to risk of harm to themselves or others, in line with the University Counselling Service/Wellbeing Risk Assessment procedure (see Appendix A).
3. This policy covers incidents of Acute Risk, when a student (who may or may not have been assessed for risk by the Wellbeing Counselling Service or Health and Wellbeing Team) may become suicidal or show signs of risk of harm to self or others.
4. This policy covers threats of potential harm or risk to University of Chichester staff or Associate Counsellors, should a student or other person(s) display aggressive and/or unacceptable behaviour towards them or other(s) at any time on campus or over the phone.
5. This policy operates in line with all other University of Chichester Policies, including:
   * [Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
   * [Self-Harm Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
   * [Positive Mental Health Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
   * [Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
   * [Fitness to Study Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
   * [Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support)
   * the University’s [Privacy Standard and Privacy Notices](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/data-protection) and the [Student Support and Wellbeing Privacy Notice](https://www.chi.ac.uk/study-us/student-services/student-support-and-wellbeing-privacy-notice).
6. In addition this policy operates in line with the [BACP[[4]](#footnote-4) Ethical Framework (2018)](https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/3103/bacp-ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions-2018.pdf), and the [NMC[[5]](#footnote-5) Code (2015 updated 2018)](https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf).
7. Appropriate action must be taken in the case of every student contemplating suicide or harm to self or others - whether it is a chronic or an acute ideation.
8. In cases where the student is showing imminent signs of Acute Risk of harm to themselves, is expressing ideation, or has intent to harm themselves or others, then this policy will be implemented immediately.
9. When in doubt whether a situation is high or low risk, the default response must be in line with the high-risk possibility.

**Confidentiality**

The Health and Wellbeing Service (including the Wellbeing Counselling Service) operate within strict confidentiality guidelines; however, in exceptional circumstances, when the safety of the student or another person is at risk or if there is a legal requirement, it may be necessary to extend confidentiality with or without the consent of the student.

* In exceptional circumstances, the need to safeguard our clients or others from serious harm may require us to override our commitment to making our client’s wishes and confidentiality our primary concern. We may need to act in ways that will support any investigations or actions necessary to prevent serious harm to our clients or others. In such circumstances, we will do our best to respect the parts of our client’s wishes or confidences that do not need to be overridden in order to prevent serious harm. As stated in the BACP Ethical Framework for Counselling Professions (2018, Good Practice, page 13, Putting Clients First, Section: 10)
* Confidentiality may need to be extended with or without the consent of the client when the safeguarding of the student or others is paramount. See the NMC Code (2015, Section 5, Prioritise people, 5.4. and 5.5.) (see Appendix B).
* Confidentiality may need to be extended where disclosure is required by law e.g. a court subpoenas records required in court or under prevention of terrorism legislation.
* Confidentiality is therefore dependent on the legal and ethical risk of harm to self or others and public protection, and may need to be extended in certain cases in line with the University Privacy Standard as exemplified in the [Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Policy](https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/academic-and-student-support).
* Students receiving counselling or advice from a University Adviser or Counsellor will be notified whenever possible of the need to extend confidentiality where this is necessary. If it is not possible to notify the student, for example due to the Acute Risk factors, the Adviser/Counsellor will seek agreement from a Registered Professional member of staff or line manager whenever feasible.
* All personal data will be processed in accordance with current data protection legislation and in line with the Student Support and Wellbeing Privacy Statement.

**Acute Risk Factors**

Individuals may be more likely to contemplate suicide, self-destructive acts, harming self or others, at certain points in their lives or if certain conditions exist. The following factors should be considered when assessing Acute Risk to self or others and should be discussed with the student:

* **Acute Risk** refers to the level of current risk (of suicide, self-destructive acts, harming self or others) with progression along a continuum based on escalating intent and risk. The level of risk also accounts for the extent of the individual’s risk, protective factors, and any known history regarding the student’s behaviour towards themselves or others and their potential and/or capacity/intent to harm themselves or others.
* **Chronic Risk** refers to the ongoing likelihood of a person making a future attempt and is based on historical information e.g. previous suicide/self-destructive attempts, history of depression, extent of background and current risk factors and presence of protective factors. People who have a chronic risk can experience acute crises which would impact others as well as themselves.
* **Intent or motivation** reflects whether the student has a reason to live or a reason why they may choose to carry out an act of harm to self or others. The greater the motivation to die or to harm self or others, the greater the risk. The student should be asked about their intent by the member of staff or Associate Counsellor.
* **Plan** is how/when/where the student will carry out his/her suicide or plan to harm self or others. A more detailed and specific plan indicates a greater risk and they should be asked for details on when/how/if they plan to act on their thoughts to harm themselves or others.
* **Means** is what the student intends to use to commit suicide or harm self/others. The more lethal the means, the more serious the risk (e.g. a gun could be deemed a more immediate threat to self and others rather than pills). Moreover, the more available the method, the more serious the risk (e.g. loaded gun).
* **History**: An individual who has attempted suicide in the past, or who has seriously harmed themselves/others may be at higher risk of achieving their goal than someone who has no history of suicide/harm to self or others. A student who has been known to be aggressive towards others may also become quickly agitated or aggressive with others in stressful circumstances. The risk may also be increased by alcohol or drugs.
* **Demographics (suicide):** In the UK, suicide rates among young people have been increasing in recent years. The suicide rate for young females is now at its highest rate on record. The rate of deaths by suicide among the under 25s increased by 23.7% in 2018. In the UK men are three times as likely to die from suicide than women, the highest rate being men in the 45 to 49 age range[[6]](#footnote-6). Men tend to seek help only when problems have reached serious proportions.
* **Stress:** Someone with a lot of stress in their life is at greater risk of suicide/harm to self or others.
* **Resources:** A person with fewer resources and support networks is at greater risk than a person with considerable resources. The more socially isolated the individual, the greater the risk.

**Procedures**

In the first instance when a member of staff or Associate Counsellor is aware that a student is showing signs of Acute Risk of harm to themselves or to others:

Risk to you or others:

1. It the student is showing signs of intent to harm you or others, or becomes aggressive and their behaviour is unacceptable then put your safety first. If an emergency alarm is fitted please activate this, leave the room (if safe to do so) and call for help on the University 24/7 emergency phone number (01243 81) **6363**, or ask the student to leave, and/or seek support from other staff.
2. If you are seeing a student who is known to be aggressive or has shown unacceptable behaviour towards others, then please see the student with another member of staff, and alert staff that you may need support.
3. If you are uncomfortable about a student’s behaviour and would prefer not to meet with them, then please give advance notice to your line manager, so other arrangements can be made to support the student.

Risk to themselves:

1. This should be explored with the student to establish their: intent, plan and means (as stated in the Acute Risk Factors section above) as appropriate.
2. Communicate clearly to the student that you do not want them to take their life / harm themselves or others, and that you will stay with them in person (or on the phone) whilst you seek assistance for them.
3. If at the Chichester campus, explore with the student if they feel safe enough to walk with you, or a friend, or another member of staff across campus to A&E at St Richard’s Hospital. If so call SIZ (out-of-hours call the University emergency number) and ask them to let an appropriate manager know you or someone else is escorting a student to A&E so support staff can be alerted.
4. In all other circumstances you should call the University emergency line immediately whilst keeping the student with you or on the phone:
   * **Dial 6363 on any campus phone line (or 01243 816363 from a mobile). Until 10pm you will speak to a member of the SIZ Team, and after 10pm you will reach Site Security.**
   * **If you cannot get through on 6363, then call 999 immediately and report the risk, and then call the 6363 desk to alert them.**
   * Inform them that you require an ambulance immediately as a student is at Acute Risk and ask them to call the Emergency services for you. Pass on any health information about the student, if necessary, (e.g. they have swallowed 50 paracetamol).
   * Tell them your location with the student, and ask them to arrange for Emergency services to access campus and meet you at your location.
   * Ask them to pass on this information to campus security immediately, and to send a member of staff to support you and the student, whilst you wait for Emergency services to arrive.
   * Ask them to repeat back to you your message so you can check the details are correct.
5. Whilst on campus, or if escorting the student to emergency services, please do not leave the student alone. Keep the student continuously engaged in conversation. They must be escorted to the lavatory, if they wish to go.
6. Ask them to help you keep them ‘safe for now’ by giving you any means they may have on their person to harm themselves or others. (As far as reasonable and where this is safe for you, such as handing over pills). Anything taken in this way should be bagged by campus security and made secure. It may be necessary to return any such item to the student at a later date.
7. Wait for Emergency Services to arrive and, if you have appropriate training, try and help the student identify the problem and reframe it. Do not offer unrealistic outcomes, or promises.
8. Wherever possible a member of site staff will accompany the student to hospital, or the student may ask a friend or family member. Staff who accompany a student to hospital should feel able to leave the student once they have been registered at reception, or triaged, according to their training and/or professional judgement.
9. Immediately consult your supervisor or the first available manager, and seek support for yourself.
10. Document all actions and responses according to your established processes, for example Student Support and Wellbeing Advisers and Associate Counsellors record notes in the Student Services database. Make sure your line manager and all appropriate University services (such as Wellbeing Services) are notified. An appropriate summary report of the incident will be passed to the STARnet (Students At Risk Network) meeting by your manager.

The case will be reviewed by members of STARnet and other University staff (for example the Wellbeing Allocation Meeting (WAM)), to ensure that appropriate support is put in place for the student.

Staff may contact other students affected by the incident and offer support as appropriate.

**Appendix A**

**Standard Risk Assessment Procedures for Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW) services (including Counselling and Wellbeing Services)**

1. A student’s capacity for suicide risk/harm to self or others will be discussed with the student, as appropriate, initially by a suitably trained member of SSW (eg a member of the Counselling Team or one of the Registered Health Professionals) wherever possible.
2. The student will be asked questions relating to Risk in accordance with the training of the team member working with them.
3. If the student appears to be at high risk then the procedures in this policy should be followed (see pages 1-5).
4. If a student is expressing risk of harm to self, or others, but this may not be imminent and they are ‘safe for now’, then the Counsellor or another appropriately trained member of Student Wellbeing should discuss Risk with the student and fully explore this issue.
5. If the student appears not to be at imminent risk then the Counsellor / appropriately trained member of Student Wellbeing should document the discussion of Risk with the student and seek advice/discuss this with their supervisor/manager as soon as possible.
6. Counsellors and appropriately trained members of Student Wellbeing working with students who may be at Risk will continue to review Risk regularly with the student, as appropriate.
7. Students expressing suicidal thoughts may also be referred to their GP for further Mental Health Assessment or other approved professional in line with the Mental Health Act 2007.
8. If a student has been aggressive or behaved in an unacceptable manner to a member of staff or other person(s) on campus or over the phone, then a full report needs to be provided, and an investigation will follow in line with University policy.

**Appendix B**

**Confidentiality guidelines**

Under the BACP Ethical Framework for Counselling Professions (2018, Good Practice, page 13, Section: 10), confidentiality may need to be overridden, with consent of the client or without their consent, in the following circumstances:

“In exceptional circumstances, the need to safeguard our clients or others from serious harm may require us to override our commitment to making our client’s wishes and confidentiality our primary concern. We may need to act in ways that will support any investigations or actions necessary to prevent serious harm to our clients or others. In such circumstances, we will do our best to respect the parts of our client’s wishes or confidences that do not need to be overridden in order to prevent serious harm.”

In line with the NMC Code (2015, Section 5, Prioritise people, 5.4. and 5.5) confidentiality may need to be breached to:

“5.4 share necessary information with other healthcare professionals and agencies only when the interests of patient safety and public protection override the need for confidentiality

5.5 share with people, their families and their carers, as far as the law allows, the information they want or need to know about their health, care and ongoing treatment sensitively and in a way they can understand.”

Confidentiality is therefore dependent on the legal and ethical risk to the harm of self or others, and public protection, and may need to be overridden in certain cases, in line with University safeguarding. Students receiving counselling (or support from another appropriately trained member of Student Wellbeing) will be notified of this when consent is obtained to access a service.

1. Equality Act 2010, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 6 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Reasonable adjustments are what the Equality Act 2010 calls any special facilities, assistive technology or support services which enable students to make the most of their studies. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Health and Wellbeing Services includes the Student Wellbeing Advice Service, the Student Health Service, the Mental Health Advice Service and the Counselling Service. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Copyright © 2016. British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. First published 2015 the Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions is effective from 1 July 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Published by the Nursing and Midwifery Council 29 January 2015, effective from 31 March 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Charlotte Simms, Elizabeth Scowcroft, Mette Isaksen, Joe Potter and Jacqui Morrissey, *Suicide statistics report, latest statistics for the UK and Republic of Ireland December 2019*, (Samaritans, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)