



The University of Birmingham

# **GUIDANCE ON PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

October 2010



Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

## Foreword

***'Promoting mental health and wellbeing'*** has been produced by the University's Wellbeing Advisory Group (WAG). WAG's membership includes academics and professionals from across the University as well as Trade Union representation. In developing this guidance WAG also worked with representatives from the Guild of Students.

The intention is that this guidance is used to promote mental health awareness across the University. It outlines the arrangements that are in place to support staff and students who experience emotional distress and mental health difficulties. It also provides practical advice as well as information about resources that are available inside and outside the University. Drawing on good practice that has been developed in the Higher Education sector this guidance supports the University's aim to create an inclusive community, which promotes diversity and equality of opportunity for everyone.

*'Promoting mental health and wellbeing'* also reflects the view of the Universities UK/Guild HE Committee for the Promotion of Mental Wellbeing in Higher Education that *'Effective mental health promotion involves not only attending to the needs of those with mental health difficulties, but also promoting the general mental wellbeing of all staff and students, which will in itself bring significant benefits to the HE institution'*.

(UUK/GuildHE:2006:2)

Professor Ann Davis, Director of the Centre of Excellence for Interdisciplinary Mental Health (CEIMH) and Chair of WAG.

**October 2010**

## **GUIDANCE ON PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

The University of Birmingham aims to:

- Create an inclusive community, which promotes diversity and equality of opportunity for everyone
- Provide all members with a welcoming secure and supportive environment
- Implement strategies that promote equality and that work towards reducing and eventually eliminating discrimination (Fairness and Diversity Policy)

This publication provides guidance about how these aims can be realised in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff. Evidence suggests that in the University's community of over 36,000 students and staff emotional and mental health difficulties will be experienced by at least 9,000 people each year. These difficulties will range from temporary experiences of emotional distress, emerging conditions of mental ill health and ongoing conditions that require treatment and support.

The purpose of this document is to build on the University's commitment to Equality and Diversity by providing guidance that will enable members of the University to play their part in:

- Creating an inclusive environment and culture in the University that positively promotes the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff.
- Providing the support required for students and staff with mental health difficulties to achieve their full potential through a range of accessible resources and services.
- Ensuring that all employees and students who experience mental health difficulties are treated fairly, sensitively and with respect, and are offered the support that they require.
- Ensuring that the University meets its legal obligations with respect to individuals whose mental health difficulties are recognised as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act.

## KEY DEFINITIONS

**Promoting mental health and wellbeing:** in this document this phrase is used to refer to ways of working at all levels of the University which seek to both:

- reduce unnecessary stressors on staff and students through creating positive learning and work environments.
- provide the support needed by those with mental health difficulties which will enable them to achieve their full potential.

For more information about Mental Health Promotion in Higher Education for students visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/student-mh> and <http://www.studentmentalhealth.org.uk>

for staff visit: <http://www.shift.org.uk/> and

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>. **Mental health difficulties:**

throughout this document this term is used to refer to two groups of individuals:

- (a) those who experience such emotional distress that their ability to undertake expected tasks is reduced. Emotional distress of this kind can be the result of a number of causes. It could be a temporary reaction to a painful or frightening event or experience. It could be a reaction to being under sustained pressure. It could be the result of factors such as using drugs, a lack of sleep, a change in diet or a physical illness. Sometimes it is an early indication of the beginnings of a sustained period of mental distress.
- (b) those with a recognised psychiatric condition for which they may, or may not, be receiving medical or psychological treatment. Such individuals find that difficulties usually arise when their condition becomes unstable in some way and symptoms recur, which may be the result of external factors or changes in response to treatment.

Individuals in each of these groupings may require support to enable them to participate fully in higher education as employees and students.

**Psychiatric condition:** is used in this document to refer to a condition which has been either diagnosed as a mental illness or behaviours which are of sufficient severity to be identified within one of the commonly accepted psychiatric categories.

For more information about psychiatric conditions see the set of leaflets available at: [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall.aspx)

## Key Issues

***Mental Health and wellbeing is an issue for all University employees and students.*** It is important to recognise that most of us experience mental health difficulties at some points in our lives and often these are typical reactions to particularly stressful circumstances. It is when these difficulties are severe and enduring that there is a negative impact on our capacity to function well as employees and as students.

Many individuals with recognised mental health difficulties have effective coping strategies and support already in place; they may not need or wish to seek adjustments or additional support. Always remember that not all individuals experiencing difficulties, even relatively severe, need any special action to be taken as long as they are part of a community in which they can find the following:

- Understanding and sensitivity
- Tolerance of difference
- An awareness by others of the activities which might heighten their anxiety
- A climate of acceptance by others

For more information about how to create working and learning environments at the University that promote mental health and wellbeing visit:

<http://www.mhhe.heacademy.ac.uk> and  
<http://www.studentmentalhealth.org.uk>

## **THE UNIVERSITY HAS LEGAL DUTIES IN RELATION TO STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES.**

The **Disability Discrimination Act (1995)** defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. In the HE context this has a number of implications:

- (a) It is unlawful for any University policies, procedures or practices to discriminate against someone because he/she has a mental health problem. For more information visit the Commission for Equality and Human Rights: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/> and the Equality Challenge Unit: <http://www.ecu.ac.uk>
- (b) The University is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable students and staff experiencing mental health difficulties to undertake their studies/duties. Advice on what this constitutes for students can be obtained from the Disability and Learning Support Service and for staff from the Employee Disability and Additional Needs Adviser or Occupational Health.
- (c) Students experiencing mental health difficulties are eligible to apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) to provide practical assistance to aid them in their studies. For more information visit: [www.direct.gov.uk/disability](http://www.direct.gov.uk/disability)
- (d) Staff experiencing mental health difficulties may be eligible to apply for Access to Work (AtW). This programme offers practical advice and help to employees and employers which may include a grant towards the approved costs that arise because of an individual's disability. For more information visit: <http://www.equality.bham.ac.uk/staff/areas/disabilitysupport.shtml>

### **Ensuring confidentiality is key to encouraging individuals to seek and use support when they need it.**

There is still a considerable stigma attached to seeking help for mental health difficulties. All those involved in providing advice, support and guidance in relation to mental health difficulties must be clear about their duties in this area and vigilant about delivering on them. In particular:

All individuals using a University service in relation to their mental health difficulties need to be able to trust the confidentiality of that service.

Confidential information should be kept in a safe, secure space at all times.

No information regarding an individual should be given directly or indirectly to any third party (this includes relatives) without the individual's expressed and informed consent to disclose such information.

When informed consent is given by an individual to share information, steps must be taken to keep sensitive personal data secure, e.g. not routinely using email to convey confidential information about individuals and where email use is necessary, ensuring that steps are taken to preserve confidentiality, i.e. using initials and not naming an individual in the subject headings.

Take note too that the law recognises that occasions may arise where a person providing support and guidance may feel they need to breach confidentiality. These are:

- It is believed that an individual is going to harm themselves (or has already) or will harm others (or has already) e.g. violence, self harm, arson, suicide.
- The law requires disclosure of information for the prevention and detection of a crime.

**If you become concerned about an individual's mental health and wellbeing** think about why this is. Typical signs that someone may be in difficulty include:

- The individual telling you or someone else that he/she has a problem.
- Changes in the pattern or standard of work.
- Significant changes in appearance such as loss or gain of weight, deterioration of personal hygiene or signs of sleeplessness.
- A noticeable change of smell, which may result from increased use of alcohol or non-prescription drugs.
- Change in the way he/she sounds (for example flat tone, very quiet, loud, agitated).
- Change of mood from previous experience of him/her (for example very up and down, miserable, tired).
- Other people, such as friends, housemates, relatives or other colleagues, expressing concern to you.
- Talk or evidence of self-harming behaviour such as arm cutting.

In such circumstances the first thing to do is to express your concern to the individual and give him/her the opportunity to tell you how he/she is. This may not be easy so be guided by the suggestions below:

- Talk to the individual in private, when both of you have the time and are not rushed or preoccupied with other matters.
- Be specific about your reasons for concern. Being vague or indirect is unlikely to be helpful.
- If the individual does not want to talk to you about your concerns do not persist with intrusive questions.
- Listen carefully. The aim is not to solve the problem, but to understand the situation or dilemma from the individual's perspective.
- Avoid criticisms, simplistic solutions or moral judgements.
- If it seems appropriate provide information about any relevant support services but remember that if the individual is upset it is important to provide them with written information that they can consider later.
- Follow up if needed. Arranging another time to meet communicates a commitment to help and can provide an opportunity to review the situation.

Out of an initial discussion a number of possibilities may result:

- (a) You may be convinced that your concerns are unfounded, in which case no further action is necessary.
- (b) Through this discussion the individual may confirm the existence of a problem and be willing to accept help. If this happens you should encourage the individual to seek assistance themselves. If an individual is going to seek help themselves, it is good practice to ask them to let you know how they got on and follow this up.
- (c) It may be that the individual recognises that he/she has a problem but does not want assistance, or says that that he/she has no problem but you remain unconvinced. In either case discuss this with a member of the Disability and Learning Support Service (for students) or Employee Advice and Support Services (for staff), remembering the importance of confidentiality.

The SHIFT website has detailed practical guidance on managing and supporting people with mental health problems in the workplace. The Line Manager's Web Resource is available at <http://shift.org.uk/employers/>

## **Supporting employees and students with mental health difficulties**

The University is committed to recruitment practices which do not discriminate directly or indirectly against applicants on the grounds of disability. This includes long term mental health difficulties, when these are known to the University.

University literature, including recruitment information should contain statements about the University's commitment to fostering an inclusive community and working positively with individuals with mental health difficulties to identify and address their individual needs.

On application for a University post or place on a programme individuals are encouraged to disclose information about their needs in relation to their disability. If an individual's needs change during the duration of their employment or study, their support needs should be reassessed to reflect this. It is the duty of the individual to inform the University of this change.

### **For individuals employed by the University**

#### Workplace Wellbeing Services

Services are detailed below that are available to support staff with mental health difficulties. If managers are concerned about the mental health of a member of their staff they can advise staff of the availability of the Employee Advice and Support Services and contact the service themselves for advice on supporting the employee. Managers may also refer the individual to Occupational Health.

#### **1. Employee Advice and Support Service**

This can be the first port of call for employees experiencing mental health difficulties. Early diagnosis is important as it substantially increases the chances of recovery and accessing effective treatments. For individuals experiencing mental health issues a referral can be arranged to receive a mental health assessment through an NHS Trust and onward referral to NHS treatment where necessary.

Employees with sustained mental health difficulties can access ongoing support within the workplace from the Employee Disability and Additional Needs Adviser. With consent the Adviser will liaise with line managers and Human Resources (HR) to work proactively to provide a supported

and positive working environment. Individuals may access Employee Advice and Support Services directly or by referral from HR.

## **2. Occupational Health**

Staff may be referred to Occupational Health, usually by their manager, if they are on sick leave in order to support a return to work, or if they feel that aspects of the work are affecting the mental health of the employee.

Individuals may also refer themselves to Occupational Health.

**If an individual feels that an absence from work may help them with their mental health difficulties (paid sick leave is specified in their terms and conditions) they should:**

Discuss the option with their Line Manager or other appropriate member of staff.

Discuss the options with HR, Occupational Health, contact the Employee Disability and Additional Needs Service and seek assistance from their GP.

When an employee wishes to return to work, the individual's case should be referred by the department to the Employee Disability Adviser who will provide assistance with drawing up a plan for the return in consultation with the individual and their department. Individuals are advised to make contact with their department and with the appropriate support services well in advance of their returning.

Employees will only be readmitted to work once they have been declared 'fit for work' by medical professionals - either their GP or following a referral to Occupational Health. Consideration should be given as to whether an employee could benefit from a referral to Occupational Health if this has not already happened.

An individual will not be disadvantaged on the resumption of his or her employment by reason of the agreed leave of absence because of mental health difficulties.

The University will make all reasonable efforts to enable individuals with mental health difficulties to reach their full potential in the workplace.

## **For Students of the University**

Students who have registered their mental health difficulties on their application will be referred to the Disability and Learning Support Service. The Disability and Learning Support Service and the Academic department concerned are responsible for establishing a Learning Support Agreement determining what the University is able to provide to meet specific needs and agrees if and what recommendations will be communicated to tutors and other University staff.

For more information about the Learning Support Agreement visit:

<http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/disability/index.shtml>

The Disability and Learning Support Service also provides advice and information to students who did not declare their mental health difficulties on application or who acquire difficulties or a diagnosis after beginning their programme of study. They are also a source of advice and guidance for personal tutors who are supporting students.

**Temporary Withdrawal/Interruption of Studies** - temporary withdrawal is designed to enable students to suspend their studies if it is clear that their mental health difficulties are affecting their ability to take full advantage of the educational opportunities being offered. Temporary withdrawal or Leave of Absence must be approved by the Student's School, notified to Academic and Student Administration and will result in the individual ceasing to be registered with the University.

If a student feels that a suspension of study may help them, they should:

- (a) Discuss the option with an appropriate member of staff.
- (b) Discuss the options with their Personal tutor, Welfare tutor, Director of Studies or contact the Disability and Learning Support Service.
- (c) Contact the Advice and Representation Centre at the Guild of Students for advice, support and information with forms. When an individual wishes to return to their studies, the student's case should be referred by the academic department to the Disability and Learning Support Service.

The Disability and Learning Support Service will provide assistance with drawing up a plan for doing so, in consultation with the student and their academic department.

Individuals are advised to make contact with their academic department and with appropriate support services well in advance of returning. This is the responsibility of the student. Individuals will only be readmitted once

they are declared 'fit to study' by medical professionals. A student will not be disadvantaged on the resumption of his/her studies because of the agreed suspension due to mental health difficulties.

## **Assessment and Examinations**

Students can request special arrangements for examinations and assessments where they are experiencing mental health difficulties that affect their ability to undertake an examination or assessment in its standard form.

For guidance in relation to mental health and examination practice visit: <http://tinyurl.com/exam-policy>

The University will give due consideration to making reasonable adjustments to assessment methods for students with mental health difficulties. Individuals should make a request for such arrangements at the earliest opportunity.

Alternative arrangements will be agreed and managed in close consultation between the student and their academic department. The Disability and Learning Support Service will advise the student's department and the Student Records and Examination Office what alternative assessment arrangements should be made to accommodate the student's needs.

If an individual feels that their individual needs have not been satisfactorily accommodated in the assessment process, they should be advised about their right to submit a mitigation claim in accordance with the guidelines and time constraints.

A period of mental health difficulty can have an adverse impact on academic performance in:

- i. Examinations
- ii. Writing up stage of a project or production of a piece of created work
- iii. Assessment based on a talk or similar presentation or during the preparation period

Students are advised to consult their school/department to find out what their procedures are for applying for extenuating circumstances to take account of this within the marking of their work.

For more information visit:

<http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/sca/extcirc/index.shtml>

Students can get confidential advice and information about presenting mitigating circumstances from the Advice and Representation Centre in the Guild of Students.

## **Accommodation**

Where an individual declares a mental health difficulty prior to entry as a student they will be invited to discuss specific requirements for accommodation.

Staff in student accommodation should receive basic training to complement the support and work of the Student Mentor Scheme. Incidents in residences can occur and for this reason it is important that residence staff receive appropriate support and guidance in mental health awareness issues.

The key specialist support and guidance services to which students experiencing mental health difficulties can be referred are:

**University Medical Centre:** 0121 687 3055

**Counselling and Guidance:** 0121 414 5130

**Mental Health Support Team:** 0121 414 5130

## **The Role of the Academic Department**

After making a referral, a student will often need support from a number of services including the academic department. The Personal Tutor is likely to play a key role here in:

- Maintaining contact and assessing progress. It may be useful to meet at specific agreed times (20 minutes every fortnight for example) to discuss academic progress so that the student feels supported and that this area of major importance is being managed. Support could include help in sorting out a backlog of work, extensions for assignments, special arrangements for exams, liaison with other tutors, support for potentially stressful situations such as field trips, presentations, clarifying how learning may sometimes be impaired and how adaptations in approach may help.

- If the student is very distressed/confused, it can be helpful to write down the time that you agree to meet and give this to her/him.
- Even where academic work is not affected directly, it may be very important to maintain this contact and show interest.
- It may be necessary to consult with the Mental Health Support Team with regards to teaching and assessment issues and arranging practical support.
- Further information on support and pastoral care for students with mental health difficulties plus how to make referrals to the Counselling Service is available at:  
0121 414 5130.

### **Other services**

**The Guild of students** is also able to offer support and opportunities for students with mental health difficulties.

The Guild hosts a Disability and Mental Health Students Association (known as DAMSA). This is a relatively new committee set up in March 2010. The purpose of this committee is to enhance students experience outside of their university course by building a peer network with people who may face similar difficulties as them. This association is open to any student who self defines as having a disability or mental health difficulties and runs a range of social events throughout the year. In addition they are planning to lobby and campaign on issues that affect the members of their association for example mental health awareness and provision.

Students may need help for difficulties which involve several services besides the academic department. This may include:

- The Personal Tutor for support on academic progress.
- A Doctor for medical support and possible medication, and referral to psychiatry or Practice Therapy.
- A counsellor for therapeutic support.
- Welfare Tutor in the department.
- The Mental Health Support Team for discussion of educational implications and practical support and arrangements.

- The International Student Adviser for cultural issues and visa advice.
- A Chaplain for spiritual support.
- The Advice and Representation Centre based in the Guild of students gives professional advice and support across five core areas:
  - i) Academic issues – be that appeals, complaints, the need to withdraw, problems with academic staff.
  - ii) Housing – private sector housing concerns, such as repairs and deposit disputes as well as checking contracts on behalf of students.
  - iii) Finance – as well as being a debt management centre the ARC can also give advice on different funding options available to students both nationally as well as within the University
  - iv) Immigration – the ARC can provide basic level immigration advice
  - v) Employment – helping students with employment issues such as non-payment, breach of contract, working hours and conditions.
- The Student Mentor Scheme for support in halls of residences. We offer a mentoring service which provides ongoing one on one peer support or there is a support office based in residences for occasional queries.
- Nightline run a free and confidential listening service for all students during term time. There are a range of access points for this service including telephone (linked to the halls telephone network), email, web chat and face to face listening. This service is non-directional and aims to help students work through their own difficulties and find the solutions they need.

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

### UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM STAFF RESOURCES

#### Employee Advice & Support Services

Telephone: 0121 415 8774

Email: [A.S.McNeil@bham.ac.uk](mailto:A.S.McNeil@bham.ac.uk) and [J.Harris.3@bham.ac.uk](mailto:J.Harris.3@bham.ac.uk)

Web: [intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/yourwellbeing](http://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/yourwellbeing)

Location: 13 Pritchatts Road, Edgbaston

Employee Advice and Support Services offers a range of confidential help, support and advice to all employees, for both personal and work related issues. The Services provided include:

- 1. Employee Advice & Listening Service**
- 2. Disability & Additional Needs Service**
- 3. Employee Mental Health Assessment & Counselling Referral**
- 4. Harassment Advice Service**
- 5. Employee Mediation Service**
- 6. Citizens Advice Bureau**

#### 1. Employee Advice & Listening Service

Location: 13 Pritchatts Road, on the second floor with stair access only.

The Employee Advice and Listening Service is open to all University staff. Its aim is to help staff in making informed decisions on work and personal issues.

The service uses professional listening, and where appropriate allows for further exploration of the issue, which may result in guidance and advice being given. Referrals to specialised services both internal and external to the University may be suggested, and will not be made without consent of the staff member.

You will receive an initial listening and advice/guidance service from an Employee Adviser. The service works within a disclosure, confidentiality and data protection policy. Records made in regard to staff contact remain within the Employee Advice and Support Service and are not linked with any personnel files. You will be talked through the policy, and if you have any concerns as to where the policy allows for disclosure, or

for confidentiality to be breached, please do not hesitate to contact the Employee Adviser.

Jean Harris is the Employee Adviser and can be contacted on:

Telephone: 0121 415 8774 (ext 58774)

E-mail: [j.harris.3@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.harris.3@bham.ac.uk)

## **2. Disability & Additional Needs Service**

Based in Employee Advice and Support Services in Workplace Wellbeing, the Disability and Additional Needs Service has been introduced to provide disabled employees with practical support and guidance in the workplace, particularly in relation to workplace adjustments. The Service can also help managers to understand the needs of disabled employees.

### **How can they help?**

The University of Birmingham recognises the social model of disability. The University recognises that what disables a person is not any impairments they may have, but the physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers society creates by failing to take into account the requirements and aspirations of that person.

The service can support you through:

- General advice and guidance on disability in the workplace
- Advising on what 'reasonable adjustments' could be made to workplace practices to support you in your job (such as specialist equipment or changes to the physical environment)
- Supporting mental health needs
- Connecting you with external support organisations and other in-house support provided by the Employee Advice and Support Service

If you would like an informal discussion with someone who can offer guidance and answer any questions you may have, please contact Angela Breen, our Employee Disability and Additional Needs Adviser.

Angela can be contacted on:

Telephone: 0121 415 8799 (ext 58799)

Email: [a.m.breen@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.m.breen@bham.ac.uk)

## **3. Mental Health Assessment and Counselling Referral**

For individuals who are experiencing mental health issues arrangements are in place between the University Employee Advice & Support Services and the local Mental Health Trust to provide a mental health assessment and for any appropriate onward referral to NHS treatment. Counselling for a short period may also be arranged, where appropriate.

Any such referral is always with the consent of the individual with the aim of supporting them.

#### **4. Harassment Advice Service**

The Harassment Advice Service is provided by trained, volunteer members of staff for the benefit of the University community. It is a completely confidential service where you can discuss your situation with a trained staff volunteer. The Advisers can listen to your problem, offer impartial advice and talk you through your options. Your Trade Union harassment representative can also provide advice and support.

The University has a Harassment and Bullying Policy which is available at: [intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/documents/public/harassment-bullying.pdf](http://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/documents/public/harassment-bullying.pdf)

Contacts for the service:

Email: [harassment@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:harassment@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

Tel: 0121 415 8774, ext 58774

#### **5. University Mediation Service**

When there is conflict, a neutral third-party mediator can facilitate communication between those involved, help examine what has gone wrong and isolate the issues. The aim is to help all involved come together to find a mutually beneficial, working agreement for the future.

The University Mediation Service can help you to work through workplace conflict and disagreement through coaching, mediation, facilitation and other communicative processes. The University has a team of nationally accredited, neutral mediators who can help people or groups in disputes to work towards a sustainable, future looking agreement that will allow them to work in a positive environment.

If you are interested in using the mediation service, or want to find out more, please email [mediation@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:mediation@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

## **6. Citizens Advice Bureau**

A representative from the Citizens Advice Bureau comes to the University on a regular basis. They can provide free, independent, impartial and confidential advice to any member of staff in the following areas:

Benefits, Housing, Immigration, Debt, Relationships, Consumer issues, Employment and Retirement.

Appointments can be booked at 13 Pritchatts Road on 0121 415 8774 (internal: 58774), or by emailing [citizensadvice@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:citizensadvice@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

### **Occupational Health**

Location: 13 Pritchatts Road

The Occupational Health team are concerned with how your work affects your health, and how your health affects your work. The team provide expert help, support and guidance.

From time to time your manager may refer you to Occupational Health; for example in order to support your return to work after a period of sick leave. You can also self-refer if you have concerns about your health in the workplace.

Telephone (Enquiries): 0121 414 5116 (ext 45116)

Telephone (Staff Counselling Service): 0121 414 5177 (ext 45117)

Fax: 0121 414 4602 (ext 44602)

### **To contacts Occupational Health:**

Ext 45116 or email [occupationalhealth@bham.ac.uk](mailto:occupationalhealth@bham.ac.uk)

### **Staff Disability Group**

This group provides a forum for disabled staff to share their experiences and work in partnership with the University to improve services. This can be developing an accessible campus (they have close links with the Estates department), ensuring policies and practices consider staff with disabilities or any other issues the group feels strongly about.

The Group meets once a term and reports into the University's Equality and Diversity Committee through its Chair, David Cottam.

Any member of staff who considers themselves to be disabled can join the group.

They also have a number of members who are not disabled but have expertise or influence in key areas of the University. You can sign up to their mailing list to receive information about meetings and updates on relevant issues by contacting the HR Diversity Adviser at [equality@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:equality@contacts.bham.ac.uk) (This information will be treated in confidence and will not be considered a disclosure of disability).

For further information on Staff Disability Group meetings visit:  
[www.equality.bham.ac.uk/staff/disabilitygroup.shtml](http://www.equality.bham.ac.uk/staff/disabilitygroup.shtml)

## Trade Unions

Trade unions are able to give advice and information to their members about their rights in employment-related situations. For the purposes of collective bargaining, i.e. negotiating terms and conditions and pay increases and the like, there are a limited number of unions recognised by the University:

1. **University and College Union (UCU)** (for academic and related staff)
2. **Unite** (for support staff)
3. **Unison** (for support staff)
4. **GMB** (for support staff)

For individual representation, for example during a disciplinary investigation or attendance management procedure, you may be accompanied by a representative of any union of your choice. The local branch of your union should be able to put you in touch with a representative.

1. **University and College Union - University of Birmingham Branch**  
This is the recognized trade union for academic and related staff.  
For more information call 0121 414 6895 or visit: [www.ucu.bham.ac.uk/](http://www.ucu.bham.ac.uk/)

## 2. **Unite (formerly Amicus)**

Unite was formed by the merger of Amicus and the TGWU. Previously, Amicus was recognised by the University. Contact any of the following for information or advice:

- David Westwood (Branch Secretary)  
Telephone: 0121 414 7393  
Email: [d.m.westwood@bham.ac.uk](mailto:d.m.westwood@bham.ac.uk)
- Terry Green (JTUC & JSAC rep.)  
Telephone: 0121 414 4365  
Email: [t.i.green@bham.ac.uk](mailto:t.i.green@bham.ac.uk)

Alternatively, visit the national Unite website: [www.unitetheunion.org/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/)

## 3. **Unison**

There is a dedicated Unison telephone number: 0121 414 5577. This will be answered by a Unison officer. Alternatively email either

**Lee Crutchley:** [l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.crutchley@bham.ac.uk)

**Matt Raine:** [m.j.raine@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.raine@bham.ac.uk)

For information visit the Birmingham Unison web site:

[www.unison.bham.ac.uk/](http://www.unison.bham.ac.uk/)

## 4. **GMB**

There is not currently an active GMB representative on campus. Contact the regional office on 0121 550 4888, or visit their regional web site:

[www.gmb-westmids.org.uk/](http://www.gmb-westmids.org.uk/)

In *urgent* cases David Westwood, JUC secretary, may be able to help.

David Westwood can be contacted on:

Telephone: 0121 414 7393

Email: [d.m.westwood@bham.ac.uk](mailto:d.m.westwood@bham.ac.uk)

## **UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM STUDENT RESOURCE**

### **University Medical Practice**

Telephone: 0121 687 3055

Web: [www.theump.co.uk/](http://www.theump.co.uk/)

Location: 5 Pritchatts Road

The Practice is open from 08.45 – 17:00, Monday to Friday, for appointments or general enquiries. Please see:

[www.theump.co.uk/Telephone.html](http://www.theump.co.uk/Telephone.html) for list of numbers to call that will transfer you to an on call Doctor.

The Medical Centre provides NHS services to all registered patients. Patients who are experiencing a mental health difficulty can make an appointment with a GP for advice or treatment. Furthermore, the GP can refer patients to the Common Mental Health Problems Service (or Practice Therapists) and other specialist services for further care.

The Common Mental Health Problems Service aims to give patients access to consultation and psychological treatment. Practice Therapists are qualified mental health professionals working in GP surgeries. They provide talking treatment for people suffering with a common mental health problem.

### **Mental Health Team**

Telephone: 0121 414 5130

Email: [disability@bham.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bham.ac.uk)

Web: [www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/disability/mentalhealth/](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/disability/mentalhealth/)

Location: 3 Elms Road

The work undertaken by the team is primarily of a practical nature and is based on a full assessment of the specific effects of the person's mental health on their experiences as a student, rather than on broader issues.

Members of the team are able to structure a range of support strategies aimed specifically at meeting the needs that students have, whether short-term crisis work or long-term preventative work.

The team liaise within the University, for example with academic departments or accommodation services, as well as externally with GPs, Mental Health Teams and other community based resources, to ensure that all appropriate agencies are used effectively to support students in achieving their academic potential.

The team adopts a proactive as well as reactive approach to student progression and retention, based firmly on a holistic understanding of the student experience. Early contact is therefore helpful.

The service provides an early intervention and preventative approach when problems or potential problems for students are identified.

They can also assist students by helping them to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowances which can provide funding for, amongst other things, specialist ongoing support and/or equipment for students with mental health difficulties, aimed at reducing the impact of their difficulties on their studies.

The Mental Health Advisor and Mental Health Development Worker are also involved in identifying appropriate reasonable adjustments which can be made to accommodate students' needs as required by the Disability Discrimination Act.

## **Counselling and Guidance**

Telephone: 0121 414 5130

Web: [www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/counselling/](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/counselling/)

Location: 3 Elms Road

The work of the Counselling and Guidance Service is primarily one of helping students to deal with a wide range of personal, social, academic and mental health problems as they arise and to develop life and personal problems solving skills. This approach integrates therapeutic and practical aspects.

Counsellors are all professionally qualified and accredited in counselling and psychotherapy and work to the highest levels of confidentiality in line with the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. They are familiar with University life and pressures. They are particularly experienced in helping students work through problems with depression (from low mood to actively suicidal) and anxiety (from mild to severe, including panic attacks).

These kinds of distress may have a major impact on the student's ability to function academically. Counsellors help with exam panic, procrastination, performance anxiety, writer's block, perfectionism etc. The service welcomes liaison with tutors when we have the student's permission.

The counsellors also help students who are having to deal with difficult issues or life situations eg. bereavement, eating disorders, decision making, culture shock, cross cultural issues, transitions; loneliness; relationship problems; family problems; divorce; low self-esteem; self-harm; abuse; identity; bullying and harassment; domestic violence; addictive behaviours; sports injuries; leaving the University; supporting others.

Counsellors also see students with clinically diagnosed mental health disorders where they want therapeutic support as opposed to the more practical support offered by the Mental Health Support Team.

Counsellors aim to be as understanding as they can of the issues students bring. It is a process of helping to explore and express thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Doing this usually brings relief and may enable the student to make some changes in their life or it may help them deal more effectively with things that can't be changed. There are also groups and workshops available. For information regarding anxiety and confidence, relaxation and coping with bereavement workshops visit:

[www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/counselling/workshops/booking.shtml](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/studentlife/counselling/workshops/booking.shtml)

The counselling service has a comprehensive list of virtual leaflets on their web pages. There is also a section on consultancy support to departments and tutors, referrals, emergencies, personal tutoring and links to staff counselling.

### **Advice and Representation Centre**

Tel: 0121 251 2400

Email: [thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk)

Web: [http://www.guildofstudents.com/content/188405/your\\_support/arc/](http://www.guildofstudents.com/content/188405/your_support/arc/)

Location: The Guild of Students – Edgbaston Park Road

The aim of the ARC is to offer free, impartial and confidential information, advice and representation on a wide range of issues to all students of the University of Birmingham.

Whatever your question – or difficulty – we'll always try to help and if we can't, we're sure to know someone who can, within and outside the Guild or University.

### **Student Mentor Scheme**

Tel: Student Mentors are available in halls of accommodation,

Email: [mentors@guild.bham.co.uk](mailto:mentors@guild.bham.co.uk)

Web:

[www.guildofstudents.com/content/188365/your\\_support/student\\_mentor\\_scheme/](http://www.guildofstudents.com/content/188365/your_support/student_mentor_scheme/)

Location: In ALL halls of accommodation out of hours.

The Student Mentor Scheme is the welfare support system in residences at the University of Birmingham. The scheme aims to provide a friendly face to help students enjoy their University experience and deal with any issues which may arise. Student Mentors will be at all University of Birmingham residences.

Student Mentors are students living in residences who are employed to provide welfare support to fellow students. Every student in University accommodation has a Mentor. You should see your mentor weekly or fortnightly, dropping by to say hello or delivering useful information.

An important part of the job of a Student Mentor is the 'on-call' work. Every night during term time there will be a Student Mentor 'on call' (two at larger sites) in the event of a welfare emergency. The Mentor on call can be contacted in their flat – the names and flat numbers of the Mentor on call are displayed on signs around the site

Student Mentors are expected to get to know their group of students through their regular visits. This should mean that if a student is struggling during their time at University they would see their Mentor as an ideal person to approach for help. Mentors will provide a listening ear and they are trained to signpost students to the professional help available within the University, the Guild and beyond.

The Mentor Scheme is managed and supported by a team of professional support staff based in the Student Mentor Office on the first floor of the Guild of Students. They are responsible for recruiting and training the mentors and then monitoring and supporting them throughout the year.

In addition to the normal office hours of 10am – 5pm on weekdays there is a member of support staff on call every night and during weekends to provide support to the Student Mentors if they have any emergencies or problems during their shift.

## **Niteline**

Tel: Phone number on the back of your Student Guild card [internal phone 7999]

(6pm – 8am every night of term)

Email: [nightline@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:nightline@guild.bham.ac.uk)

Web: [www.bugs.bham.ac.uk/niteline/](http://www.bugs.bham.ac.uk/niteline/)

Location: From 6pm – 12am in St Francis Hall for Face to Face Service.

Niteline is a student listening and information service, similar to the Samaritans, which operates every night of term from 6pm-8am. You can contact Niteline about anything, without fear of being judged or told what to do. It is also completely anonymous: calls cannot be traced, you will not be asked for your name and any information disclosed is treated as confidential. No problem is too trivial to call Niteline about; volunteers are happy to discuss anything that may be bothering you.

Every Niteliner undergoes extensive training in how to answer phone calls and emails.

If you've just had a bad day, you're feeling homesick or you're arguing with your flatmates then ring them and tell them about it.

## **Chaplaincy**

Tel: 0121 414 7000 / 7001

Email: [chaplaincy@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

Web: [www.chaplaincy.bham.ac.uk/about/](http://www.chaplaincy.bham.ac.uk/about/)

Location: St Francis Hall – next to the Guild of Students by the East Gate just off Edgbaston Park Road.

The Chaplaincy provides confidential pastoral help, support, advice, spiritual direction and prayer (if required) or even just a 'listening' service. This is available to anyone of any religious persuasion or none and at any time – see the website for out of hours contact details. The Chaplaincy aims to provide a caring and supportive environment in which matters of faith and spirituality can be explored and examined and, where they can be appropriate, sustained, nurtured or developed.

The Chaplaincy actively maintains links with local Christian and other religious communities who can also provide additional means of support, guidance or help.

## **RESOURCES FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS**

### **CEIMH- Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health**

Tel: 0121 414 6223

Website: [www.ceimh.bham.ac.uk](http://www.ceimh.bham.ac.uk)

Location: University of Birmingham

This University based resource develops mental health materials through working with the expertise based in the University, in mental health

organisations, with those who have used or are using mental health services and those caring for friends and family members.

View the website for information about events and resources on a range of mental health issues.

## **Dealing with exceptional circumstances**

If you find yourself in a situation where the individual you are in contact with is demonstrating that they are a danger to themselves or others and you judge that an immediate response is needed then options are calling:

- An ambulance - 999 - if there is a danger of the individual immediately harming themselves.
- Police - 999 - if there is an immediate threat to the safety and wellbeing of others.
- University Security - 0121 414 4444 - should also be notified so that they are aware of the situation and can facilitate Emergency Services access to University property . They are available 24 hours every day.

## **NATIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Ahead 4 Health**

Website: [www.leeds.ac.uk/ahead4health/](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ahead4health/)

A website designed to help students understand what mental health is and what to do when you have mental health difficulties.

### **Anxiety UK**

Website: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk/](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/)

A national organisation providing advice, information and guidance about all forms of anxiety and a helpline for people affected by anxiety, phobias, compulsive disorders, or panic attacks.

### **Beat**

Tel: 08456 341414

Website: [www.b-eat.co.uk/Home](http://www.b-eat.co.uk/Home)

**Beat** is the leading UK charity for people with eating disorders and their families. **beat** is the working name of the Eating Disorders Association. Eating disorders are a serious mental illness affecting 1.1 million people in the UK. **beat** provides helplines for adults and young people, online

support and a UK-wide network of self-help groups to help people beat their eating disorder.

### **CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)**

Tel: 0800 585 858 (Saturday – Tuesday, 5pm – 12am)

Website: [www.thecalmzone.net/](http://www.thecalmzone.net/)

A helpline and website for men aged 15-35 who are depressed or suicidal.

### **Depression Alliance**

Website: [www.depressionalliance.org.uk](http://www.depressionalliance.org.uk)

Works to relieve and to prevent this treatable condition by providing information and support services to those who are affected by it via our publications, supporter services, and network of self-help groups for people affected by depression.

### **The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness**

Website: [www.eatingdisorderinfo.org/](http://www.eatingdisorderinfo.org/)

Information, help and support for people affected by eating disorders (anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, compulsive eating, binge eating and obsessional behaviour about food).

### **Life Signs**

Website: [www.lifesigns.org.uk](http://www.lifesigns.org.uk)

Life signs raises awareness about self-injury and helps people who rely on self-injury by providing a safe message board, ideas for distraction techniques and finding alternative, healthier coping mechanisms. Guidance and downloadable factsheets are available.

### **Manic Depression Fellowship**

Website: [www.mdf.org.uk/](http://www.mdf.org.uk/)

A user led BiPolar organisation for people whose lives are affected by bipolar disorder. MDF aims to enable people affected by bipolar to take control of their lives through the services that it offers: e.g. self-help groups, information and publications, employment advice self-management training programme, 24-hour legal advice line for employment, legal, benefits and debt issues, and a travel insurance scheme.

### **Mentality**

Website: [www.mentality.org.uk/](http://www.mentality.org.uk/)

Though Mentality has now closed this website provides a range of resources for mental health promotion.

### **Mental Health Alliance**

Website: [www.mentalhealthalliance.org.uk/aboutus/index.html](http://www.mentalhealthalliance.org.uk/aboutus/index.html)

A coalition of 75 organisations working together to secure a better mental health legislation. It is the broadest coalition in the mental health world.

### **Mental Health in Higher Education**

Website: [www.mhhe.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.mhhe.heacademy.ac.uk)

MHHE aims to increase network and sharing of approaches to learning and reaching about mental health across disciplines in UK higher education. It has a useful page of resources on student mental health.

### **Mind**

Tel: 0845 766 0163 (Mindinfo: Monday – Friday; 9.00 am – 5.00 pm)

Website: [www.mind.org.uk/](http://www.mind.org.uk/)

Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales, working to create a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress. Mind produces information and publications and campaigns on mental health issues.

### **Read the signs**

Website: [www.readthesigns.com.au/](http://www.readthesigns.com.au/)

A campaign promoting help seeking and suicide prevention.

### **Rethink**

Tel (General Enquiries): 0845 456 0455

Tel (Advice and Information Service): 0207 840 3188 or 0845 456 0455 (open 10am to 2pm; Monday - Friday)

Website: [www.rethink.org/](http://www.rethink.org/)

Major national mental health organisation providing support, information, and advice for people with severe mental health difficulties, their friends and families.

### **Samaritans**

Tel: 0845 790 9090

Website: [www.samaritans.org/](http://www.samaritans.org/)

Help for anyone experiencing a crisis. Confidential, non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair; including those which could lead to suicide. For local details go to [www.befrienders.org/](http://www.befrienders.org/)

### **Sane**

Tel: 0845 767 8000 (everyday 6pm – 11pm)

Website: [www.sane.org.uk/](http://www.sane.org.uk/)

Helpline offering information and advice on all aspects of mental health for those experiencing mental illness or their families or friends.

### **Shift**

Tel: 0845 223 5447

Website: [www.shift.org.uk/](http://www.shift.org.uk/)

Shift is working in a number of areas to reduce and remove the stigma and discrimination directed towards people with experience of mental health problems.

### **Students in Mind**

Website: [www.studentsinmind.org.uk/](http://www.studentsinmind.org.uk/)

Students in Mind is a national charity specifically for the 7 million students in Further and Higher Education. 1 in 4 students will experience some form of mental distress. Students in Mind is there to help the 1 in 4.

### **Young Minds**

Website: [www.youngminds.org.uk/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/)

Young Minds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional well being and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers.

### **FURTHER NOTES & RESOURCES:**

*(space for you to add your own notes)*



To download copies of this guidance go to:  
[www.ceimh.bham.ac.uk](http://www.ceimh.bham.ac.uk)

University of Birmingham  
2010

