

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY 2023/24

APPROVED BY ACADEMIC BOARD ON JULY 2023

Applies to:	
Harrogate College	X
Keighley College	X
Leeds City College	
Leeds Conservatoire	
Leeds Sixth Form College / Pudsey Sixth Form College	
Luminate Group Services	
University Centre Leeds	X

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1. Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 This policy applies to all higher education students who are studying at University Centre Leeds, Luminate Education Group, along with higher education staff, irrespective of age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, neurodiversity, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 1.2 Its purpose is to increase understanding and awareness of common mental health difficulties, provide support to students who are experiencing mental health difficulties and to staff working with the students.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 University Centre Leeds recognises the World Health Organisations' definition of mental health; 'a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community.'
- 2.2.1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem of some kind each year in England. 1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem (like anxiety and depression) in any given week in England. This has increased due to COVID-19 and the aftermath of the pandemic.
- 2.3 At University Centre Leeds, we aim to promote positive mental health for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole university approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.
- 2.4 We strive to provide an environment where talking about mental health is the norm, it is acceptable to acknowledge difficulties and ask for help and where those with more serious problems are quickly responded to and referred to appropriate support.
- 2.5 In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. One in four people will experience a mental health problem this year. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

3. Responsibilities of Staff

- 3.1 University Centre Leeds recognises that it is the responsibility of all staff to:
 - Contribute towards a non-stigmatising and inclusive community.
 - Must attend/complete appropriate training as required by the university, this includes mandatory safeguarding training and mental health training via the Learning on Demand site.
 - Acknowledge this mental health policy including referral processes and issues of confidentiality.
 - Be familiar with the Luminate safeguarding policy including issues of confidentiality.
 - Remember that the students' wellbeing and best interests must be the focus at all times.
 - To identify students who may benefit from support with their mental wellbeing to either the University Centre Student Support team or external agencies as detailed in the Student Support Procedure.

- Never promise to keep a secret or confidentiality where a student discloses a risk of safety.
- Be alert to signs and indicators of a possible mental wellbeing issue.
- To attend future mental health awareness and support training.
- To advertise mental health support services to all students, both internal and external, as part of each student's induction process.

University Centre Leeds acknowledges the impact mental health could potentially have on a learner's attainment. To ensure the student is not placed at a disadvantage, a member of staff will discuss the potential of applying extenuating circumstances. In addition, the student will be offered an individual tutorial with an academic or pastoral tutor.

4. Signs and Indicators

4.1 HE staff may become aware of warning signs that indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should follow the process set out in this policy.

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.
- 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 college.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.

5. Responding to Concerns

5.1 If a staff member has concerns about a student's mental wellbeing, it is important to listen and observe for any signs or indicators, assess if there is a risk to themselves or others and take appropriate action.

5.2 Immediate risk

5.2.1 If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm including serious injuries, has taken an overdose or in your opinion is not safe, you must call 999 and alert the first aid staff. The incident should then be reported by following the university safeguarding process.

5.3 Urgent help

5.3.1 If a student expresses feeling of hopelessness or suicidal thoughts, but the situation is not an emergency then you must give the student your immediate attention:

- Take them somewhere where you can talk without being interrupted.
- Explain the limits to confidentiality i.e. you may need to get help for them and will need to inform the safeguarding team.

- Listen and encourage them to talk about their feelings and the events that may have led to them feeling this way.
- Gather information such as previous suicidal thoughts/attempts, access to means i.e. stockpiling tablets.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by asking for help.
- Offer to ring their GP.
- Inform the safeguarding team by following the safeguarding process.

5.4 Support Required

5.4.1 Where a student requires support with their mental wellbeing that does not require the immediate actions outlined above, a referral can be made for internal support through the HE Counselling and Mental Health Officer (see the Student Support Procedure) or they can be signposted to external services (information can be found in the appendix).

6. Confidentiality

6.1 We should be honest regarding the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass on our concerns about a student, then we should discuss and agree with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to.
- What we are going to tell them.
- Why we need to tell them.

6.2 We should never share personal information about a student without first agreeing this with them. However, there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff or external agencies.

6.2.1 If a vulnerable adult is at risk of significant harm, there is no right to confidentiality and we should always act in the best interests of the individual. In these circumstances the Luminate safeguarding policy and procedure must be adhered to.

7. Signposting

7.1 University Centre Leeds will ensure that staff and students are aware of sources of support within the University Centre Leeds and in the local community.

7.2 Relevant sources of support will be displayed in communal areas such as study areas, notice boards and online using the UC Hub. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of students seeking help by ensuring students understand what help is available and how to access it.

8. Raising Awareness

8.1 The importance of looking after mental health and wellbeing will be discussed at key points during the academic year, such as at freshers' events, induction and times in the year which may be difficult e.g., Christmas, times around deadlines.

8.2 This will be carried out through tutorial sessions, in-person workshops or online sessions depending on what is suitable.

8.3 Relevant information and tips will be shared with staff and students on how to look after themselves and who to reach out to.

9. Campaigning

9.1 As part of our positive approach to mental health, University Centre Leeds will deliver campaigns throughout the year with the aims of:

- Promoting positive mental wellbeing.
- Raising awareness of mental health issues.
- Providing information on where to get support.

9.2 Campaigns, where possible, will tie into local or national campaigns such as World Mental Health Day. They are planned collaboratively with support staff, curriculum staff and occasionally the FE mental wellbeing team. Local external partners may sometimes be invited to contribute to the campaigns e.g., Leeds Mind.

10. Mental Health Resources

The Student Support team can work with staff to provide relevant mental wellbeing and resilience tutorials and resources to departments that request it. Resources are also utilised from MindWell and other local organisations.

11. Relevant training

- Mental Health First Aid training - <https://mhfaengland.org/>
- Charlie Waller - Higher Education Mental Health training - <http://learning.cwmt.org.uk/e-learning/higher-education/>

12. Links to other Policies

The policies outlined below also relate to the health and wellbeing of students:

- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
- HE Student Support Procedure
- HE Student Support Strategy

13. Appendix

Internal Support Services

Staff wellbeing information - <https://lms.luminate.ac.uk/pages/29/health-wellbeing>

External Support Services

MindWell - www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk

A mental health website for people based in Leeds that provides information to support your own mental health or someone else's.

MindMate - <https://www.mindmate.org.uk/>

MindMate is here to help young people in Leeds find help with their mental health and wellbeing.

The Market Place - www.themarketplace.org.uk

Offers services which are free, confidential and available for 11-25 year olds in Leeds. They offer several services including one to one support, counselling, group-work and drop-in. All these services are delivered by our Youth Work Service and Counselling Service.

Leeds Mind - <https://www.leedsmind.org.uk/our-services/>

Leeds Mind supports people with mental health difficulties, providing supportive services and activities throughout the Leeds area such as counselling, peer support, employment support and suicide bereavement support.

Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service - <https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/what-we-offer/>

This is a free service through NHS for people aged 17 and above providing support to cope with issues such as low mood, depression and anxiety. It offers one to one support, group work, online and phone support.

Black Health Initiative - <https://www.blackhealthinitiative.org/counselling>

Offers a free and confidential counselling service to African, African Caribbean, Dual Heritage and other minority ethnic adults and young people aged 13+.

Women's Counselling and Psychotherapy Service - www.womenstherapyleeds.org.uk

Offers free counselling and psychotherapy for Leeds women and girls on low incomes. Venues are in the city centre and in communities around Leeds.

Women's Lives Leeds - <https://www.womenslivesleeds.org.uk/>

Provides one to one intensive support and takes a holistic approach to meet the woman or girl's needs. Whilst covering multiple needs, they offer specialisms in domestic violence, sex working and mental health.

Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service - www.leedssbs.org.uk/

Provides group work, one to one support, family support and counselling by anyone 16 + and bereaved by suicide.

Leeds Bereavement Forum - <http://lbforum.org.uk/>

Signposting local people to bereavement support.

Forward Leeds - <https://www.forwardleeds.co.uk/>

Contact number: 0113 887 2477

Forward Leeds is the alcohol and drug service in Leeds for adults, young people and families. They offer a range of services from 9am-5pm, Mondays and Fridays and 9am-7pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Carers Leeds - <https://www.carersleeds.org.uk/>

Contact number: 0113 380 4300

Contact email: advice@carersleeds.org.uk

Carers Leeds operates the single point of access for all carers in Leeds and offers information, advice and support.