

# The All-Party Parliamentary **University Group**

26 January 2021

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**This briefing document has been produced by Universities UK which provides the secretariat for the University APPG.**

## Table of Contents

<b>Agenda</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Speaker Biographies</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Work being done by the higher education sector</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities .....	6
Student suicides.....	6
Student Mental Health Charter .....	6
In-house university provision.....	6
Student-led services .....	7
<b>NHS mental health strategy</b> .....	<b>7</b>
NHS long term plan.....	7
<b>NHS and higher education- examples of a collaborative approach</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Student Mental Health Partnerships Project.....	8
Greater Manchester university student mental health service .....	8
Minding our future: starting a conversation about the support of student mental health..	8
<b>Government funding on student mental health</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Student funding premium .....	9
Challenge Competition.....	9
Catalyst fund: supporting mental health and wellbeing for postgraduate research students .....	10
<b>Government funding on student mental health during the pandemic</b> .....	<b>10</b>
One off funding for student hardship .....	10
Student Space .....	10
Additional £40 million for universities in Wales to support student hardship .....	10
Additional £1.32 million for student wellbeing in Scotland .....	10
<b>Additional resources</b> .....	<b>11</b>

## **Agenda**

**This meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group is being held to discuss student mental health**

- 5:00pm      Chris Skidmore MP, Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary University Group**
- c5:05pm     Professor Steve West, Vice-Chancellor, University of the West of England**
- c5:10pm     Claire Murdoch, National Director of Mental Health, NHS England**
- c5:15pm     Tahmina Choudhury, Vice President, Middlesex Students' Union**
- c5:20pm     Professor Sandeep Ranote, Mental Health Lead, Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership**
- C5:25pm     Questions, comments, and discussion with university leaders, MPs and peers**
- 6:30pm      Meeting concludes**

## Speaker Biographies

### Professor Steve West, Vice-Chancellor, University of the West of England



Professor Steve West CBE, DL is Vice-Chancellor, President and CEO of the University of the West of England, Bristol. He is Non-Executive Director for the Office for Students and Chair of the UUK Mental Health in Higher Education Working Group.

He is Chair of the West of England LEP, Chair of the West of England Academic Health Science Network and Non-Executive Director for the University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust.

Professor West is a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Gloucestershire and was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2017, for services to Higher Education.

### Claire Murdoch, National Director of Mental Health, NHS England

Claire Murdoch is NHS England's National Mental Health Director.

She has been a registered mental health nurse for 34 years, and joined NHS England in April 2016.

She is also Chief Executive of Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust. With a wealth of clinical and leadership experience she is leading delivery of the national mental health programme.



### Tahmina Choudhury, Vice President, Middlesex Students' Union

Tahmina is the Vice President of Professional and Social Sciences represents all students within the Business School, School of Law and School of Health & Education at Middlesex and works closely with Student Voice Leaders for these courses.

Re-elected for a second year in office, Tahmina is continuing to work with the University to close the BAME attainment gap and diversify representation, improve mental health provision, and tackle sexual harassment, discrimination and hate crime on campus.

**Professor Sandeep Ranote, Mental Health Lead, Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership**

Professor Sandeep Ranote is Executive Director of Mental Health and community services at Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust and a practising Paediatric Psychiatrist. Her published research includes perinatal neuroimaging, eating disorders and medical skin camouflage for self harm. She has been clinical advisor to The National Children's museum 'Eureka' and currently sits on the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Eating Disorder executive committee and is a regular expert media contributor.



She was part of the ministerial task-force, Future in Mind, 2015, and clinical expert for NHS England's eating disorder commissioning guidance and workforce curriculum 2015-2016. She is a contributing author to the Royal College of Psychiatrists' book 'The Female Mind' and was awarded a fellowship to The Royal College in 2014.

As Greater Manchester Health and Social Care partnership's Medical executive lead for mental health, Sandeep leads the award winning Mentally Healthy Schools Programme and the trailblazing pilot University Mental Health across Greater Manchester. Sandeep is a Visiting Professor in Mental Health at The University of Chester and The University of Salford, a member of the National clinical advisory board for Xenzone, one of the UK's leading digital mental health organisations, trustee for the eating disorder charity BEAT and creative arts charity, Sick! supporting the work of the third sector across health and social care.

## **Work being done by the higher education sector**

### **Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities**

Stepchange: mentally healthy universities was produced by Universities UK in 2017 as a strategic framework for a whole university approach to mental health and wellbeing at universities. It calls on universities to see mental health as foundational to all aspects of university life, for all students and all staff.

UK universities should be places that promote mental health and wellbeing, enabling all students and all staff to thrive and succeed to their best potential. We can achieve this by all universities making mental health a strategic priority and adopting a whole university approach. This publication is a call to action and a shared framework for change.

### **Student suicides**

Universities UK and Papyrus, the UK's national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide, have published guidance to help university leaders prevent student suicides. At least 95 university students took their own lives in the 2016–17 academic year.

The guidance aimed at university leaders and section practitioners includes advice on developing a strategy focused specifically on suicide prevention.

### **Student Mental Health Charter**

Student Minds, NUS, Universities UK, the Department for Education and Higher Education institutions collaborated to develop the University Mental Health Charter. The Charter provides a set of principles to support universities across the UK in making mental health a university-wide priority. It forms the basis of the Charter Award Scheme, that is currently being developed, which will recognise and reward universities that promote good mental health and demonstrate good practice.

You can find the Student Mental Health Charter [here](#).

### **In-house university provision**

The demand for mental health support among students and staff has increased significantly. Universities currently resource a wide range of services to support those experiencing mental illness. There is no definitive service offer. Mental health support services may cover both students and staff or only students. They may include counselling, mental health teams, digital interventions, residential life teams, helplines and after-hours support.

As well as counselling or therapy, students may also be entitled to "reasonable adjustments" such as extra time in exams, extensions on coursework, and specialist mental health mentor support.

## **Student-led services**

Many student unions also offer student-led services. Although the students involved are not qualified counsellors, you may prefer to talk about problems such as stress and depression with another student. Individual universities also usually have student night line services.

## **NHS mental health strategy**

### **NHS long term plan**

Under the NHS Long Term Plan, the NHS is making a new commitment that funding for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than both overall NHS funding and total mental health spending. This means that children and young people's mental health services will for the first time grow as a proportion of all mental health services, which will themselves also be growing faster than the NHS overall.

The NHS Long Term plan outlines the proposals for children and young people's mental health services:

“Between the ages of 16-18, young people are more susceptible to mental illness, undergoing physiological change and making important transitions in their lives. The structure of mental health services often creates gaps for young people undergoing the transition from children and young people's mental health services to appropriate support including adult mental health services.

We will extend current service models to create a comprehensive offer for 0-25 year olds that reaches across mental health services for children, young people and adults. The new model will deliver an integrated approach across health, social care, education and the voluntary sector, such as the evidenced- based 'iThrive' operating model which currently covers around 47% of the 0-18 population and can be expanded to 25 year olds.

In addition, NHS England is working closely with Universities UK via the Mental Health in Higher Education programme to build the capability and capacity of universities to improve student welfare services and improve access to mental health services for the student population, including focusing on suicide reduction, improving access to psychological therapies and groups of students with particular vulnerabilities.”

## **NHS and higher education- examples of a collaborative approach**

### **Student Mental Health Partnerships Project**

University of the West of England is leading a partnership across the Higher Education sector to improve care for students in need of mental health support through the development and evaluation of local partnerships between universities, the NHS and Students' Unions, connected via a National Learning Collaborative.

The project is one of ten projects funded through the Office for Students (OfS) Mental Health Challenge Competition, and led by universities across the country, to find innovative approaches to improving mental health outcomes for students.

Five regional partnerships are being developed between universities and local NHS services in Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, North London and Sheffield.

### **Greater Manchester university student mental health service**

The Greater Manchester university student mental health service pilot is intended to meet the increasing mental health needs of university students and prevent them “falling between the cracks” of university and NHS services at a time when they are often away from the support they may get at home.

Around 500 students a year are expected to use the £1.6m service, which is the result of a unique partnership in England between Greater Manchester's universities and the city region's NHS.

The Greater Manchester university student mental health service pilot is a partnership between, the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Salford, University of Bolton, Royal Northern College of Music, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership.

### **Minding our future: starting a conversation about the support of student mental health**

Universities UK is working with NHS leaders to improve mental health support for students. As students become adults, they also take on the challenges of higher education, independent living and making new friends. At the same time, they move between their homes and university, meaning they may slip through the gaps in the health system when they are most vulnerable.

Mental health support for students needs to understand these transitions and join up care around their needs. Minding our future contains new guidance to improve the coordination of care between the NHS and universities, so that all students can access the care they need.



## Government funding on student mental health

### Student funding premium

The Office for Students allocates recurrent funding to higher education providers. In 2020-21 academic year, the overall grant distributed was £1,426 million. This breaks down as:

- a. £1,255 million for recurrent teaching grant (including the high-cost subjects element and 'funding for student access and success' element- outlined below)
- b. £21 million for national facilities and regulatory initiatives
- c. £150 million for capital funding

The 'funding for student access and success' element of the recurrent teaching grant break downs as below:

Elements of grant	Total (£M)	Related to nursing, midwifery and allied health (£M)
<b>Funding for student access and success</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>16</b>
Of which:		
Premium to support successful student outcomes: full-time	150	12
Premium to support successful student outcomes: part-time	66	1
Disabled students' premium	40	2
Uni Connect	60	

\*source: [Office for Students – recurrent funding 2020-21](#)

The 'premium to support successful student outcomes' and 'disabled students' premium' totals £256m for 2020/21.

The government directed the Office for Students to allow universities to repurpose this funding to bolster student hardship support during the 2020/21 to address the impact of the pandemic on students.

As outlined in responses to recent parliamentary questions, this funding has been earmarked by government to cover a wide range of university student support activities such as student hardship, mental health and wellbeing support and IT support. It is not new money, but funding redirected from an existing allocation to support the successful outcomes of full-time, part-time and disabled students.

### Challenge Competition

In October 2018, the Office for Students launched a £6 million Challenge Competition to help higher education providers, working with students, students' unions and partners such as the NHS and charities, to generate new approaches to mental health issues.

In June 2019, 10 successful projects were announced. The projects cover a variety of innovative approaches to improving student mental health outcomes and includes more than 50 partners from a wide range of organisations.

In March 2020, the Office for Students launched a £1 million funding competition to explore innovative and intersectional approaches to target mental health support for students. This was paused due to the pandemic and relaunched in October 2020.

### **Catalyst fund: supporting mental health and wellbeing for postgraduate research students**

To support the mental health and wellbeing of postgraduate research students, the Office for Students worked with Research England to awarded £1.5 million to 17 projects to support mental health and wellbeing of postgraduate students between March 2018 and January 2020.

In October 2020 Research England published a report to evaluate the impact of this funding at programme level against its aims and identify learning and useful practice from across the programme.

### **Government funding on student mental health during the pandemic**

#### **One off funding for student hardship**

In December 2020, the government announced one-off funding totalling £20 million, to be distributed by the OfS to higher education providers to address student hardship.

#### **Student Space**

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the OfS has contributed up to £3 million to co-fund Student Space, a new mental health platform launched in July, the development of which was led by Student Minds. The programme was initially due to run for six months from July to December. In November, it was announced it would be extended to over to 2020-21 academic year.

The programme was designed to complement the mental health support already in place through universities, colleges and NHS services in England and Wales – filling potential gaps in provision and ensuring that all students have access to support they need.

#### **Additional £40 million for universities in Wales to support student hardship**

On January 18 2021, the Welsh Government announced an additional £40 million for universities to support students facing financial hardship, helping the students most affected by the pandemic with expenses such as accommodation costs. This funding is in additional to £10 million provided for student hardship, mental health support and students unions announced in October 2020.

#### **Additional £1.32 million for student wellbeing in Scotland**

In November, the Scottish Government announced an additional £1.32 million designed to allow support staff to carry out more frequent checks to identify potential mental health

issues, as well as wider welfare concerns, such as access to food deliveries and other necessities. The funding is also planned help to increase the number of drop-in chats for students, which will offer counselling on a digital platform.

### **Additional resources**

- [Good mental health services for young people](#) by Royal College of Psychiatrists
- [Not by degrees: Improving student mental health in the UK's universities](#) by Institute of Public Policy Research
- [Guidance Note: GP Practices serving Atypical Populations](#) by NHS England
- [University Challenge: Integrating Care for Eating Disorders at Home and at University](#) by Student Minds
- [Grand Challenges in Student Mental Health](#) by Student Minds
- [Survey on students with mental health conditions in Further Education](#) by Association of Colleges