



Student Wellbeing and Mental Health

Outcome requested:	Council is asked to consider the paper on Student Wellbeing and Mental Health
Executive Summary:	This paper details the introduction of a new UUK framework for mental health, current activities within the university that support both students with a mental health condition and support for student wellbeing more generally, and activities currently underway to enhance student wellbeing.
QMUL Strategy: strategic aim reference and sub-strategies [e.g., SA1.1]	<p>Strategic Aim 1: to recruit students and staff of the highest intrinsic talent and potential, and to nurture their careers.</p> <p>1.2 Support students to ensure that they can succeed and match their own and the university's high expectations for their academic and personal progress, providing both academic support and co-curricular development.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 3: to provide all our students, wherever based, an education that is judged internationally to be of the highest quality, and which exploits innovations in teaching, learning and assessment</p> <p>3.1 Encourage all students to achieve their potential by ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment, and student support are optimised, with the provision of appropriate levels of resource.</p>
Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:	UUK #stepchange Framework for Mental Health
Strategic Risks:	2: Student experience, teaching, learning and assessment 13: Maintain effective and constructive governance
Equality Impact Assessment:	This paper does not require an Equality Impact Assessment as it is a narrative of the current activity at Queen Mary. However, all of the suggestions for future work will have an Equality Impact Assessment as they proceed through the governance structure.
Subject to prior and onward consideration by:	QMSE only.
Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA:	NO
Timing:	The paper details current activity and a list of activity that will take place in the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic sessions.
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Date:	29 June 2018
Senior Management/External Sponsor:	Laura Gibbs Chief Operating Officer

Student Wellbeing and Mental Health – update for Council July 2018

The rise in the use of mental health services across the sector has been dramatic with a fivefold increase in student mental health disclosures between 2006 and 2016, and a 79% increase in student suicides between 2005 and 2015. The narrative around a crisis in student support has been prominent in the media with increasing concerns also being voiced by the Office for Students.

The increase in the number of disclosures amongst students at Queen Mary mirrors the national picture, although, fortunately, we have not seen the same increase in the numbers of student suicides as some other universities. We have also seen a steady increase in the demand on our counselling services and have increased resources accordingly. However, the wider picture of the mental health of our students and its impact on their studies, academic outcomes, and more widely their health and wellbeing is not so well understood. We will start to collect more data in this area from September and continuing to increase our understanding of the mental health of our students and its impact on their lives is key to ensuring the best support and most effective interventions are in place.

In response to growing concerns, UUK launched the #stepchange Mental Health in Higher Education framework in September 2017. This framework argues for a whole institution approach to supporting student mental health, which means moving away from the model where mental health was considered the remit solely of disability and counselling services. Instead UUK are advocating for mental wellbeing to be factored into the entire student journey with all parts of the institution working together to provide a supportive environment for students. It should be noted that this does not involve making the curriculum less challenging, but rather that the university as a whole should ensure that its policies, practices, behaviours and infrastructure support student wellbeing.

Queen Mary already provides a range of services for all students either with or without a mental health condition. This support includes:

- Wellbeing services that include the Disability and Dyslexia Service, Advice and Counselling, a system of Student Support Officers, personal tutoring, and a variety of other pastoral support in residences, the Students' Union and the chaplaincy.
- Specific support for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Close liaison with local NHS mental health services and on-site triaging services for students in a mental health crisis.
- A programme of mental-health first aid training across the university.
- Suicide awareness sessions for both students and staff.
- A system of training, guidance and support for staff across the university.

Clearly more is required as we move towards the aim of the UUK framework of a whole institution approach to supporting student mental health. Work has started on completing the self-assessment section of the UUK framework and we have drawn up an action list of next steps. Some of the key actions we are either currently taking or are committed to include:

- The completion of a full and honest assessment of how we perform against both the strategic and operational checklists set out in the #stepchange framework. This work has started through the Professional Services Student Experience Action Plan, the work is at a very early stage and is currently focused on fixing known problems. It will move to being a more holistic assessment of our overall approach to student mental health and wellbeing. We will be developing a student wellbeing strategy that is embedded in every part of the university. A core part of this strategy will be promoting a culture of friendliness and approachability across the university, one that welcomes students and provides them with a supportive environment that allows them to flourish in their academic studies. This will involve, but not be limited, reviewing our existing policies and processes that require students to apply for extensions, extenuating circumstances, interruptions and so forth. This work will be completed over the course of the 2018/19 academic session.
- The #stepchange framework calls for wellbeing support to be embedded in academic schools and for a move away from seeing mental wellbeing as just the responsibility of counselling/disability services. We already have a network of Student Support Officer (as they are normally titled) within most of the university's schools but it can be stretched and students can get an unequal level of support depending on their choice of degree. We will be looking to develop a standard nomenclature for the role across the university and, as part of the function review of student support, we will be looking at the resourcing of the role and aiming to provide an equal level of support for all students. The function review will also look at the job profile with the aim of having a uniform job profile across all schools. Furthermore the function review will examine where the role is being eroded by other duties and ways in which the role can be protected to ensure time is available to focus on student support.
- As part of the implementation of the framework we will also be considering the academic management roles that cover student support (Senior Tutor, Academic Leads for Student Experience) to ensure that they are appropriately resourced and supported in carrying out this role.
- The role of personal tutor is critical to student success and there is much good practice across QMUL, with resources and training to support the role. However, tutor / tutee ratios in many schools, the status of personal tutoring and time pressures on academic staff, mean that often, the recommended *pro-active* good practice is unable to be delivered. Learning from others in the sector shows us that the following have been essential to improving this: personal tutoring to be referenced in all job profiles, time allocated and monitored in educational workloads, training and attendance noted and good practice in relation to personal tutoring rewarded in the promotion process. Personal tutoring is perceived to be undervalued in the current promotions process and the time it takes to do well is underestimated. We will be working with the new VP Education to examine ways in which the personal tutor can be supported and ways in which personal tutoring can be embedded in promotions procedures. We will also be considering whether a standard nomenclature for the personal tutor should be implemented across the

university. It should be noted that the personal tutor work is dependent on the function review outcomes for Student Support Officers and the provision of local support for personal tutors is vital.

- A paper will go to Senate in autumn of 2018 proposing the creation of a Student Wellbeing Committee. Currently the only committee that explicitly addresses the student experience is the Student Experience Advisory Group but it is not regarded as a 'weighty' committee and the reporting lines are unclear. Some early suggestions for this new committee would include responsibility for considering student impact statements for new policies and procedures, annual reports on mental health and counselling service usages, and reports on issues within the sector including best practice. It would have oversight of the implementation of the #stepchange framework and would hold responsibility for the implementation of an institution-wide approach to student mental health. The Committee will be a permanent committee rather than a task and finish group as the #stepchange framework is not a one-off activity but a continual embedding and improvement of approach.
- Another area for improvement is around our use of the student voice. This area of our work is being examined as part of the review of our Engagement, Retention and Success programme and it is likely to recommend that we move resources to devote staff time to developing a comprehensive student engagement strategy for the university.
- Finally there are technical solutions available within the sector that would allow a greater range of students to access support. Platforms such as Silvercloud or Big White Wall can provide online mental health and wellbeing services that offer self-help programmes, creative outlets, moderated online communities and a safe space online to find out about, and express, mental health and wellbeing concerns. This platform service would complement the specialist mental health and psychological services provided by QMUL's Advice and Counselling Service and Disability and Dyslexia Service by providing interactive and engaging online, evidence-based programmes on a range of mental and behavioral health issues to the whole student (and staff) community 24/7.

Sarah Cows
Director of Student and Academic Services.
July 2018

Student Wellbeing and Mental Health – Summary of Current Activity

For the purposes of this summary the following definitions are used.

Mental Health: psychological well-being and satisfactory adjustment to society and to the ordinary demands of life.

Mental Health problems, conditions and mental ill-health: mental health problems can affect the way we think, feel and behave. They affect around one in four people in Britain, and range from common mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, to rarer problems such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Conditions that have a substantial, long term negative effect on someone's day to day life qualify as a disability under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

Support for Students with Mental Health Conditions/Mental Ill-Health

All students with mental health conditions can seek advice and support through the mental health team in the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS), this includes specialist one-to-one mentoring for academic support. The aim is to help students to address the barriers to learning created by their mental health condition and support them in developing strategies to address these barriers, particularly at times of transition. Support also includes liaison with NHS mental health services to ensure joined-up care plans, and to manage hospital admissions / acute episodes effectively and safely. A notable trend this year has been the increase in the complexity of cases and an increase in the number of students with multiple mental health conditions. A list of the other support provided to students with mental health conditions is given in the below bullet list:

- All students who declare a mental health condition are contacted by DDS to set up support plans with the mental health team. This contact enables the development of bespoke academic support plan and reasonable adjustments to be in place before applicant arrives.
- One example of the pre-arrival support is the residential session for student with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) where we run a 2-day induction event for new students who have disclosed an ASD diagnosis. The event gives students with ASD the opportunity to meet the relevant members of the DDS team and start thinking about their support needs at university. The induction covers what to expect from enrolment and welcome week, ideas for socialising and tips for feeling comfortable on campus. There are presentations from across Student and Academic Services, QMSU and sessions with current students. Lunch is taken with the mental health team on both days and students have the opportunity to stay overnight in halls before the arrival of other students, for many ASD students this will be their first experience of staying away from home.
- Students can also access counselling, psychological and psychiatric services available through the Advice and Counselling Service which offers therapeutic interventions to support students with emotional and psychological difficulties. The services offered are delivered through individual counselling, group therapy, cognitive behavioral informed therapies, self-help resources and psycho-educational workshops. Weekly clinics are run by consultant psychiatrists

employed by QMUL provide fast assessments for students experiencing acute episodes / emerging conditions, and enable timely referrals to NHS primary and secondary care services.

- We provide specialist triage and urgent referrals in a mental health crisis. Mental health professionals in the Advice and Counselling and Disability and Dyslexia services provide referral to, and liaison with, local authority and local NHS mental health services in cases of acute mental health crises. This might range from facilitating immediate psychiatric assessment at A&E, through to ongoing liaison with Community Mental Health Teams, Home Treatment Teams and Crisis Intervention services over weeks and months. It also involves working with the police in cases of missing and/or acutely unwell students. Frontline staff across a range of professional services and school student facing roles are trained and supported to involve the emergency services, and to pass cases to the mental health team in DDS to provide ongoing professional support and liaison.
- Welfare advice for students with mental health conditions is provided through the Advice and Counselling Service which offers specialist advice, case working and advocacy service covering areas such as disability benefits, welfare benefits, securing appropriate housing, and money and debt advice. Students with mental health conditions are generally more vulnerable to these issues exacerbating their mental health condition/s and negatively impacting their academic engagement, retention and success.
- Student Support Officers (and related job titles) within schools provide students with existing or emerging mental health conditions with a consistent, student-centred first point of contact. These key staff members provide a pro-active approach to supporting students with mental health difficulties, who may be more vulnerable to obstacles that negatively impact on student success.
- In May 2017 the university launched the mental health first aid project, developing a network of mental health first aiders across the university. We have trained two members of staff (with one more currently being trained) to deliver sessions for staff and students to promote awareness of mental health/wellbeing and understanding about mental health conditions including how to spot signs of distress. Every member of the Professional Services Leadership Team will be trained in September 2018 and we are working towards ensuring every member of student-facing professional services staff is trained in mental health first-aid.
- Student and Academics Services coordinates suicide awareness sessions for staff and students, this started in May 2017 and is run by [Samaritans](#). A collaborative approach between Samaritans and Professional Services Raise to promote awareness and understanding of the different issues that lead to suicidal thoughts and actions or self-harm, and noticing and understanding the warning signs of suicide and depression.

Wellbeing Support for all Students

This section focuses on what Queen Mary currently provides to support the mental health, and hence the wellbeing and success, of all students.

- Supporting mental health begins with both university and school-level pre-entry activities and communications to parents/carers to support transition to university.

These communications are aimed at all applicants, or specific groups who may be more at risk of transition difficulties, such as care leavers, estranged students, autism spectrum students and international students. These activities extend into Welcome Week and from this year the activities undertaken in Welcome Week are coordinated through Student and Academic Services.

- The welfare service within Advice and Counselling sees approximately 1,200 students a year, many of them more than once, it offers advice on a variety of subject from financial advice, visa advice, benefit claims, extenuating circumstances and a whole range of issues related to life both within and outside the university. The front line team within Advice and Counselling deals with around 10,000 enquires a year and are equipped to triage students and decide who needs immediate support. The front line team also offer significant amounts of guidance to students who do not need an appointment with a specialist.
- The university has a personal tutor/academic advisor/mentor scheme in all schools and these members of academic staff are supported by staff training, resources and good practice guides from across professional services. Examples of the guidance include the 'student in distress' guide, referral guides and support for university processes. Student and Academic Services runs personal tutor training as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and as a standalone session.
- A crucial part of our student wellbeing support are student support staff in academic schools. Most of these staff have the job title of 'Student Support Officer' and their role is to provide frontline support and guidance to students from within the academic school. The role should provide students with a student-centred first point of contact for wellbeing issues, and ensures a joined-up, pro-active approach to student support, especially those most at risk of dis-engagement such as students with emerging mental health difficulties.

Wellbeing support is provided by a number of areas outside of academic schools, and Student and Academic Service, some examples include:

- Residential support for the well-being of students living in halls, encouraging a spirit of community and cooperation that supports success in students' personal and academic lives. This work is led by the Head of Residential Experience located in Estates and Facilities. The university's security staff also provide a vital frontline service for students in distress, particularly overnight.
- St Benet's Chaplaincy provides a wide range of wellbeing activities throughout the year – faith related and non-faith related – such as weekly mindfulness meditation, free lunches, communal cooking and eating, arts events, international / community events. We are considering expanding our chaplaincy to include faith-based advisor for other non-Christian faiths.
- Drug and Alcohol support is offered through two weekly clinics delivered on campus in a partnership between Advice and Counselling Service and RESET, Tower Hamlets Drug and Alcohol Services
- Support services run via the Students' Union, including the academic advice service, the buddy scheme and many sports-related activities.

- Study Well campaign and various wellbeing activities: QMSU and the university run a series of events and awareness raising activities throughout the academic year, peaking in the run up to the main exam period, to support healthy living and study, and self-care in relation to academic demands and pressures.

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Written: June 2018

Appendix B

Figures Relating to Mental Health Declarations and Usage of Supportive Services

Academic year	Number of students with mental health conditions as reported to HESA
2012/13	160
2013/14	198
2014/15	317
2015/16	434
2016/17	512
2017/18	637 (as of 14 June)

Academic year	Number of students in receipt of specialist (mental health) mentoring, organised through the Disability and Dyslexia Service
2012/13	66
2013/14	84
2014/15	97
2015/16	128
2016/17	105

Academic Year	No. of student appointments with the Mental Health specialist staff in DDS
2014/15	579
2015/16	495 (in addition to 51 'Did Not Attends' and 25 cancellations)
2016/17	744 (in addition to 109 'Did Not Attends' and 45 cancellations)

NB: As of academic year, 2016/17 Student Finance England adopted a system whereby two quotes were required when costing human support; this means that some QMUL students may be provided with this form of support through agencies that we do not have a working relationship with.

Academic Year	Number of students who have had at least one appointment for counselling over the last 4 academic years
2013/14	701
2014/15	823
2015/16	875
2016/17	656 (staffing shortage – now remedied)

Appendix C: UUK #stepchange framework for strategic leadership – follows on next page

Appendix D: UUK Stepchange Framework for Operational Leadership – follows on next page.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	FOR LIVING ENVIRONMENT	FOR WORKING ENVIRONMENT	FOR SUPPORT
<input type="radio"/> Review of teaching and learning practice	<input type="radio"/> Culture – setting the tone of what is expected	<input type="radio"/> Supporting staff	<input type="radio"/> Embedding mental health in strategic planning
<input type="radio"/> Policies on inclusive curriculum design and flexibility of programme	<input type="radio"/> Leisure/ social/ cultural environments	<input type="radio"/> Training and professional development	<input type="radio"/> Strategic links with NHS and local authorities
<input type="radio"/> Engagement of faculty and teaching department staff	<input type="radio"/> Campus and building design	<input type="radio"/> Equality and diversity	<input type="radio"/> Shaping response to regulation and policy
<input type="radio"/> Policies on learning analytics and data	<input type="radio"/> Digital environments and social media policies	<input type="radio"/> Senior leadership engagement	<input type="radio"/> Initiating needs assessment
<input type="radio"/> Mentoring and advocacy	<input type="radio"/> Zero-tolerance to bullying and harassment	<input type="radio"/> HR and staff policies	<input type="radio"/> Initiating service co-design
<input type="radio"/> Social environments within departments and schools	<input type="radio"/> Pastoral systems	<input type="radio"/> Engagement within academic community	<input type="radio"/> Deploying resource
<input type="radio"/> Procedures, statutes, fitness to study and practice	<input type="radio"/> Communications	<input type="radio"/> Distributed responsibility	<input type="radio"/> Crisis management
	<input type="radio"/> Policies and resource for health and safety, security, healthy living and eating		<input type="radio"/> Working groups

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	FOR LIVING ENVIRONMENT	FOR WORKING ENVIRONMENT	FOR SUPPORT
<input type="radio"/> Personal tutors	<input type="radio"/> Chaplaincy and multi-faith support	<input type="radio"/> Transport and access	<input type="radio"/> Counselling, mental health, wellbeing and support services
<input type="radio"/> Peer supporters	<input type="radio"/> Accommodation services/ housing	<input type="radio"/> Childcare	<input type="radio"/> Financial support services
<input type="radio"/> Timetabling, curriculum and syllabus	<input type="radio"/> Catering	<input type="radio"/> Supporting staff (counselling and support services)	<input type="radio"/> Careers services
<input type="radio"/> Laboratories and write up spaces	<input type="radio"/> Communication services	<input type="radio"/> Supporting students (guidance on referring students)	<input type="radio"/> Student health and/ or occupational health services
<input type="radio"/> Virtual Learning Environments	<input type="radio"/> Transport and access	<input type="radio"/> Crisis management	<input type="radio"/> Alumni services
<input type="radio"/> Work available in different formats, in a timely way – lecture packs, PowerPoints	<input type="radio"/> Sport	<input type="radio"/> Training	<input type="radio"/> Links with local GP and mental health services
<input type="radio"/> Returning from absence	<input type="radio"/> Residence welfare staff	<input type="radio"/> Appraisals/ performance review	<input type="radio"/> Links with relevant third-sector organisations
<input type="radio"/> Returning from year abroad/ placement	<input type="radio"/> Sport/ exercise Facilities		<input type="radio"/> Code of conduct
<input type="radio"/> Study abroad/ placements			<input type="radio"/> Online and print resources available
<input type="radio"/> Needs assessment and reasonable adjustments			<input type="radio"/> Housing advice/ support
			<input type="radio"/> Peer support
			<input type="radio"/> Mentors and ambassadors