HARC Adviser Profiles and Contact Details

The University of Reading launched the Health, Advocacy, Respect and Care Advisers Network (HARC) on the 2nd of November 2011. The Network, comprising volunteer from amongst the University's staff, provides informal and confidential peer-to-peer support to staff at the University.

The HARC Advisers provide an informal and confidential listening service to any member of staff who feels they need someone to talk to but are unable to approach a colleague or line manager. For example, this could be someone who may be feeling stressed or anxious, or are new to the University and is unsure where to turn for advice.

Advisers are not offering, and cannot offer counselling. Their role is a supportive one, where they offer to listen to concerns and signpost colleagues to support and resources available in the University.

Below are the profiles of the HARC Advisers along with their contact details. Please call any of them to arrange a time and place where you can meet to discuss your concerns in confidence.

Julia Munro
I have worked at the University since 1993, firstly as the Deputy Librarian and since 2001 as the University Librarian. As the Librarian I am ultimately responsible for quite a large group of staff and the concerns they sometimes have. I try to treat all my colleagues with respect and fairness and to listen to them as individuals, paying proper regard to confidentiality. I also interact with staff and students in many different areas of the University and I have acted as a mentor for new University staff.

Over the years my knowledge and understanding of the wide range of support that can be found within the University for staff has grown. I can be contacted via email (j.h.munro@reading.ac.uk) or on 0118 378 8774.

Joan Allibone
I joined Henley in 2005 as an editor of learning materials and accompanying documents. Previously I've worked in scientific information services, the
agricultural civil service and industry, and across these fields have dealt with a wide variety of people.

I’ve been a recipient of bullying in a previous workplace and empathise with those who feel they’re being undermined. I am happy to listen to anyone who needs a receptive ear. I work part time at Greenlands, normally Monday, Tuesday and Friday. You can contact me via email: joan.allibone@henley.com or on 01491 571454 x2394.

Dr Nina Brooke

I joined the University in 1992 as an undergraduate and never really left (except for short dalliances as a schoolteacher and Postdoc at Oxford). Working as a Postdoc in Biological sciences, a Lecturer in the former School of Continuing Education and now Academic Staff Development Manager in CSTD, I have a pretty good idea of how the University works. In my current role I mainly work with probationary lecturers, and juggle this with a young family. Feel free to give me a call on 0118 378 4482 or email: n.m.brooke@reading.ac.uk.

Laura Brown

I joined the University in 2009, as a project officer in the Centre for Career Management Skills; I worked on a website called Student Stories, which involved interviewing students one-to-one to create audio clips for an online narrative resource exploring people’s individual University experiences.

I now work in the Quality Support Office, helping to set up and review international collaborations, assisting with the creation and revision of policy, coordinating the publication of programme specifications and providing administration and research work for various working groups and sub-committees.

In my spare time I volunteer with The Samaritans, which has provided a great depth of experience in listening non-judgmentally and impartially.

You can contact me via email: l.j.brown@reading.ac.uk or via 0118 378 8262.

Emma Butler

I have worked in Higher Education for at least 16 years with the last 10 years at Reading as a Careers Adviser where I provide a confidential, non-judgmental guidance service for students & graduates. During my career I have experienced many changes and have been fortunate enough to work with some great colleagues and together we ensure we support one another. I realize that not everyone experiences this at work and as a working mum I also understand that sometimes there just aren’t enough hours in the day! I would hope that I am approachable, a good listener and a naturally supportive person. Feel free to contact me either via email e.l.butler@reading.ac.uk or on 0118 378 6614.
Emma Lambden
I joined the University in 2008 as Executive Assistant to the Director of External Affairs. Prior to working for the University I worked in roles across all sectors, including law, local and national government and I also worked for a charity that dealt with homelessness and resettlement. I am used to working with a wide range of people including vulnerable adults through to private sector senior managers.

I am currently studying for a post-graduate qualification in management, and through this as well as my work experience I have learned a lot about motivation, dealing with change, coping with stress and organisational culture.

I am empathetic and a good listener and am always more than willing to help others in any way that I can.

You can contact me via email e.l.lambden@reading.ac.uk or on 0118 378 6173.

Karan Fairley
In 2002 left Ernst & Young, where I had worked in Tax and then Corporate Finance, and joined the Finance team at the University working as PA to the Director of Finance, who not only oversees the management of Finance but other departments (forming the Directorate). Over the course of five years I saw the structure of the Directorate change and reform and when I left the University in 2007 I was working as PA to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, and had also completed a part-time degree in Philosophy and English.

I rejoined the University in 2010, assuming the same post, after a few years away pursuing personal interests and activities. During this period I spent some time living and working in Hertfordshire and London, worked for KPMG on a temporary basis for a while, and also did some voluntary work. I have continued my interest and participation in voluntary work since returning to Reading.

I have a broad outlook and a non-judgemental approach to life, which has been developed by my own life experiences. It is my belief that this, coupled with my professional experience and training, will enable me to be an effective and supportive listener.

You can contact me via email k.fairley@reading.ac.uk or on 0118378 8103.

Jonathan Crabb
I joined the University in 2006 as a Health and Safety Advisor. My role involves training, auditing, writing guidance and providing advice on health and safety issues. I hold a BSc. (Hons.) degree in Environmental Sciences from the University of Salford.

Prior to working at the University I worked as an Environmental Health Officer in London, Reading and West Berkshire. My various roles mean I deal with a wide range of people in a variety of job roles and I am able to communicate effectively with all.
I have an open and relaxed approach and feel that I listen effectively with a non-judgmental manner.

You can contact me via e-mail j.w.crabb@reading.ac.uk or on 0118 378 7738.

Karin Lesnik-Oberstein

I started my job as a lecturer in English and American Literature at the University of Reading’s Department of English Literature in April 1995. Since then, I have been Senior Lecturer and Reader, and this year (2011) was awarded my Professorship in Critical Theory, which is the field, which questions how assumptions underpin claims made about books, literature and reading, but also more widely any kinds of arguments or writings.

Being a specialist in this field means I have written extensively and supervised PhD research on gender issues and issues of sexual and ethnic identity and disability, which I feel has also helped me in my practical work as my Department’s Senior Tutor (since 1999) and Disability Representative (since 2002). In these roles, I have also worked on University policy and advisory committees to do with Extenuating Circumstances and Disability.

I have extensive experience in both my roles of working with students and staff who are struggling with difficulties of all kinds, including mental health issues. I try to be a non-judgmental but engaged listener. I can best be contacted by e-mail on k.b.lesnik-oberstein@reading.ac.uk.

Ian May

I joined the University of Reading in April 1990 as a Heating and Ventilating Maintenance Fitter as part of the then Buildings Office over the years my job role has changed along with my department’s name. I am now Head of Building Maintenance heading up FMD’s Maintenance Services. My day-to-day role involves supporting my managers and staff in ensuring that we provide a service to the Universities campuses, buildings, students and staff. I am responsible for the welfare and wellbeing of all my staff and get involved with a number of HR issues as part of this. I am customer focused and I enjoy the networking opportunities that the University offers.

Outside of work I have a long history of working in the volunteer sector and have been involved in Scouting many years taking on roles that are mainly about supporting adults. I am currently a Deputy District Commissioner and Training Advisor in Reading. I am also a school governor of long standing at both Radstock Primary School and Maiden Erlegh Academy. To relax I spend time with my family, play badminton, run and enjoy home matches at Reading FC.

I have a positive outlook to life, like to smile, a good listener and feel that supporting my colleagues here at Reading is very important and an opportunity to use the qualities and skills that I have gained over a number of years.

You can contact me via email: i.r.may@reading.ac.uk or on 0118 378 6382.
Rachel Hill-Kelly
I joined the University in 2008, having previously studied here as an undergraduate until 2006. I am a good listener and am friendly and approachable and I am always happy to help if I can.

My role in the Graduation Office has given me a wide experience of many areas of the University, and I know many of the members of staff here. I’d like to think that during my time here I have worked out whom to ask for help for most things, and have become a source for advice as well. I am well aware of the stress working towards important deadlines can create and I think a work-life balance is crucial for all members of staff.

You can contact me via email: r.hillkelly@reading.ac.uk or on 0118 378 8117.

Trevor Pitman
I have been a member of technical staff at the University since 1975 and am currently a Technical Manager in the School of Biological Sciences. I have qualifications in Applied Biology and Management and have sat on many University Committees, including Council. I am involved in representing the interests of technicians by being chair of Unite the Union, Reading University Branch.

You can contact me via email: abqpitma@reading.ac.uk or on 0118 378 4403.

Lucy Virtue
I have worked for the University since joining in September 2001. Initially I worked as a PA/Office Manager in Research & Enterprise Services then in March 2005 I moved to the School of Systems Engineering as the School Manager. In October 2010, I was appointed to the role of Enterprise and Operations Manager in the International Study and Language Centre. In my life “before Reading” I have worked as a Project Manager for an Education Business Partnership, had my own Cake decorating business (commissions and teaching the art in FE colleges) and worked as a Customer Service Manager for a Computer Networking company.

Some of the work places I’ve experienced have endured extreme processes of change, which have been exceptionally stressful for all those involved. I feel that this first-hand experience has enabled me to develop myself both professionally and personally and I have learnt to appreciate the necessity for respect, tolerance and fairness for everyone.

I am a total advocate of getting the work/life balance right and try to lead by example. I would like to think of myself as having a positive outlook with a friendly, relaxed and open approach, non-judgemental and a good listener.

I can be contacted by email l.j.virtue@reading.ac.uk or on 0118 378 7220.

Julie Withington
I have been working in FMD Maintenance Services since 2008, initially joining the University in 2003 as a Payroll Administrator in Human Resources. Previously my career was in the Civil Service, and in my various roles as a Civil Servant I have
worked in a number of job roles, which included, HR as an administrator and Area Recruitment Co-ordinator, a Team and Section Manager, a Training Advisor and a Client Advisor. The job roles allowed me to learn and develop many skills to assist others and me in work or in private life. I will always aim to provide a non-judgmental, friendly approach to all situations and consider myself a sensitive and confidential listener.

I proactively take on the role of a ‘sign poster’, someone who can point a person in the right direction to assist them in identifying a personal action plan to help with their problems or lift their immediate concerns, whether these are work or personal life issues.

I attained the Bedfordshire Standards in Guidance for Adults, which is aimed at helping individuals identify a stepping stone approach to areas of concern in a positive manner, which I feel is an excellent tool to problem solving and assisting others. I can be contacted on j.withington@reading.ac.uk or via 0118 378 7279.