

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Student Wellbeing Services

1. Objective

This document outlines the terms under which services are delivered by Student Wellbeing (including Counselling & Wellbeing Service, and the Disability Advisory Service. It should be read in conjunction with our service statement at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/counselling>, and <http://www.reading.ac.uk/disability>. The document (and information on websites) outline the services we provide to support students at the University of Reading.

2. Period of the agreement

This document covers the period September 2017 to July 2018. Towards the end of this period we will review and revise it as necessary.

3. Who we are and what we do

Student Wellbeing Services comprises of Disability Advisors, Mental Health Advisors, Counsellors and Administrative Staff.

Disability Advisors act as advocates for students, providing a connection between students, academic teams, student support centres and external agencies, including UPP, the company contracted to manage the halls of residences. They develop recommendations for reasonable adjustments based on needs assessments, to allow students an equal standing when completing their course. They collaborate with the Accommodation team to support appropriate adjustments for those in halls and make recommendations for potential new applicants.

Mental Health Advisors and Counsellors provide emotional support in the form of counselling sessions and mental health consultations, up to a maximum of six per academic year, dependant on the needs assessment. Emotional support for those with a diagnosis can vary, from once weekly 50 minute long meetings to 30 minute meetings stretched over the year, it is totally dependent on the students' needs. Students may present with a variety of emotional difficulties, ranging from Anxiety and depression to serious mental health conditions such as Bipolar disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Our Admin Team works very hard to keep student information confidential, but also to share in appropriate circumstances. They have varying specialisms and essentially facilitate all other staff to see as many students as possible. They are integral to communication and data storage, they also assist in funding applications/processes, and creating and managing events for the teams so that we can share our work more widely.

We also provide an extensive programme of talks through the Life Tools programme to promote and encourage self-management and proactive action to build resilience for studies and life beyond university. The aim is to help them strengthen their personal resources, and maintain their health and wellbeing to achieve their personal and professional goals.

https://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/_support-and-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing.aspx

Email: counselling@reading.ac.uk

Tel: 0118 378 4216

Disability Advisory Service: Ground floor, room G02

https://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/_support-and-wellbeing/disability.aspx

Email: disabililty@reading.ac.uk

Tel: 0118 378 4202

b. Who can request our services

All registered students can access our Service to request professional support for counselling and mental health problems, and students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties or long term medical conditions which have a substantial effect can access our Disability Advisory Service. Any student who is not sure if their condition is welcome to book an appointment to discuss this with the disability team.

4. Our commitment to service users

We strive for best practice in the provision of high quality Counselling and Mental Health support, as well as Disability advice and support to promote health and wellbeing, make recommendations for reasonable adjustments related to disabilities and mental health problems so that students have the opportunity to engage with their studies, and life at university.

5. What we need from our service users

In order to deliver an effective service, we require **members of staff** to:

- Contact Counselling and Wellbeing or DAS when concerned about students. Where a member of staff has a concern about a student's needs they can send in a 'notification of concern' form. Please obtain consent where possible to be able to coordinate support. Referrals can be made to DAS by calling to make an appointment for your student.
- Develop good working relationships so that we can communicate appropriate needs and recommendations.
- Keep us informed of any events that may impact our students.
- Seek advice when needed.
- Give us feedback to help us improve

We require **students** who use the service to:

- Attend appointments booked, or cancel in good time
- Use service resources responsibly
- Give us feedback to help us improve
- Take responsibility for their own wellbeing and development by engaging with the service and the recommendations made
- Give us consent when possible to share information as needed and with appropriate people to help support wellbeing and success.
- Alert us to changes in needs or if risks become apparent
- Take part in Life Tools and other events as hosted by the University to support students.

- Applicants who require daily personal care or assistance to live independently and are based in the UK, should contact their home Social Services team as early as possible to ensure appropriate support with independent living.
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6. Service limitations and dependencies

The following factors may affect the service we can provide to users:

- Neither service provides emergency support.
 - o For Counselling & Wellbeing students are advised to contact their GP, Accident and Emergency Department at a local hospital, the Crisis team 0300 365 0300 24 hour mental health support line. We also provide a list of contact if we meet with a student who presents with higher needs.
- Both teams are impacted by limited capacity of confidential space in the area. This has a significant impact on appointment bookings.
- The team has very few full time staff which can mean a slight delay in responding to students and requires careful planning around diaries and working patterns.
- Staff training sometimes needs to take place in term time which can impact the student work, and can add a delay. Sometimes in-house training is not suitable due to the specialisms of each staff member so attending training externally means more time away.
- The major dependency is on students' willingness and commitment to maintain contact with the teams, and their willingness to give consent to collaborate with others to support them. Allowing for appropriate consent enables good working relationships, appropriate risk management and a continuation of consistency for the student.
- Working briefly in the C&W team has the benefit of allowing us to provide support to a larger number of students. It also draws a boundary between supportive service provision and an NHS secondary care support. This is however a limitation, and so higher risk students' needs careful support into more appropriate support services.
- Students can encounter delays in the processing of their Disabled Students Allowance applications due to the volume of enquiries which the funding bodies receive and this can be a time consuming process which can limit and in some instances delay support provision.
- Students who need assistance with independent living or personal care will need to ensure they apply to their local Social Services in plenty of time to ensure this is in place for the start of their studies. This can take 6 – 12 months for Social Services to assess student needs.
- Offers of accommodation will be subject to the policies of the Accommodation Contract Management Office. DAS will advocate the needs of disabled applicants and students, but the final decision will rest with ACMO and be subject to availability and ACMOs allocation policies.
- There is an increasing number of students who are international, language difficulties or cultural differences may create communication difficulties.
- Students who register at the University Medical Practice often are better supported when there is a risk, however, we cannot instruct students to register if they choose to be registered elsewhere.
- Some students contact C&W for ECF statements, it is very important that all students and staff understand that we can only support an ECF if we have a) seen the student for two appointments or b) have a diagnosed condition. Counselling and Wellbeing always recommend that students seek confirmation of difficulties from a GP or equivalent medical practitioner as these are often faster. However, DAS can support ECFs for students who have provided medical evidence and are known to the Service.
- The C&W waiting list is between 2-6 weeks on average, but during exam time increases. To manage this we triage students upon registration, identifying priority student support needs and seeing those students first. With increasing student numbers we anticipate waiting lists all year long.

7. Managing our service

Selina Patankar-Owens is responsible for managing the overall service and strategy.

8. Reporting and resolving problems with our service

Users experiencing problems with our service should contact our administrators in the first instance,

counselling@reading.ac.uk Tel: 0118 378 4216, or disability@reading.ac.uk Tel: 0118 378 4202

9. Providing feedback on our service

We welcome constructive feedback on our services. Compliments and complaints, and suggestions for additions and improvements to our standard services, should be sent to Stuart Murchie s.murchie@reading.ac.uk in the first instance. Periodically, we will request this information as part of the ongoing review of our services and their provision.

10. How we monitor our performance

We will monitor our performance using:

- User feedback from student service users, capturing perceived impact as a result of the intervention (e.g. 1-1 consultations, training)
- Feedback collected from staff who have been in contact with the Service.
- Collect emails-communications from students and staff who provide feedback from time to time.
- Monitor waiting times

Version control

VERSION	KEEPER	REVIEWED	APPROVED BY	APPROVAL DATE
1.0	Selina Patankar- Owens			
1.1				