



The Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) for 2022-2024 was signed and agreed on the 31st January 2022 between The University of Aberdeen and AUSA.

An action plan has been produced, detailing how we plan to achieve progress in each of the working areas. Work has also been done to link these into other projects that have interlinking themes and work, namely the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) Priority 1: Mental Health & Inclusion, and the University of Aberdeen Wellbeing Strategy document.

Work has already begun on our action plan, leads for each action have been identified and early progress has been made, please see below, a summary of the projects progress to date:

Raise awareness of support available:

- Ongoing promotion of existing services during Welfare Wednesdays, from Student Helpline to Safe Taxi scheme through AUSA and Sabbatical Officer social media channels. As well as discussions planned with Nightline & CASE in relation to social take overs with Q&A's and support to increase marketing and promotion of these services.
- Work ongoing to develop plans for further promotion of internal University services and an audit on how current promotion is focused, what changes may need to be made to increase visibility and awareness of accurate service information.
- We will be focusing on hidden disabilities (including Mental Health) at our rescheduled HDM events the end of April. And plans are in discussion for a 'Getting to Know Your Student Counselling Service in 60s' Video.

Encourage, promote, and facilitate student self-care:

- Work with schools to enhance and develop a more consistent framework for wellbeing and mental health support communications from schools. This will involve looking at what schools currently do and sharing best practice with the aim of producing an easy-to-use framework for all schools, with support to implement it.
- Work continues to be done to run activities that allow students to refresh and recharge during their working day, with plans currently forming for our 'Take A Break' activities, running at the end of April as part of Stress Awareness Month.
- There is ongoing work to enhance the 'Take 5 to Check 5' campaign to help support personal reliance and work/life/study balance. There are plans to utilise this through the upcoming Mental Health Awareness Week in May and to seek student feedback on the development of the campaign.

Raise awareness of support available

Encourage, promote and facilitate student self-care

Ensure that support services are available and accessible to all

Ensure that support services are available and accessible to all:

- Pastoral Student Support review, the feedback from this is to be discussed further and to be fed into knowledge base around service developments and recommendations.
- Research conducted to compile list of both internal and external supports available to our students in relation to mental health and general wellbeing, with a view to conduct a comparison study to identify any potential gaps or areas for development. Work also ongoing to enhance the MHW info on student-facing website.
- Initial connections and continued collaboration made with local external services and specialist supports. Namely Penumbra, Four Pillars and NHS. These contacts are to establish a better understanding and promotion of external provisions as well as to share best practice. The Counselling Service will have an intern over the summer, and one of their tasks will be to establish links with as many relevant local organisations as possible.

Continued development of staff support, training, and resources

Continued development of staff support, training, and resources:

- The student Support & Advice team have been rolling out meetings in Schools and giving training to staff about support services, handling of cases of concern, and how we can work better together. This has prompted quite a bit of discussion about mental health, and the Support for Study processes too, contributing to increasing understanding of support for students.
- Work is ongoing to develop a guide for staff to support students mental health, the start of the feature is available here: [Supporting Student Wellbeing: A Guide for Staff | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](#)
- There is continued work in the development and review of training for staff. Currently, we have trained more Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) and are offering bite-size training to the MHFA network (a range of teaching and front facing staff are involved here)
- There are also plans for conducting work on raising awareness of the signs of poor and deteriorating mental health, which will part of the role of the newly incoming post of Mental Health Advisor within the Student Experience Team.

Support Schools to develop a more consistent approach to study related support

Support Schools to develop a more consistent approach to study related support:

- Established what work was previously done in relation to establishing extension practices in 20/1 re covid. *Proposed next steps as follows:*
- Phase 1 - Encouraging Schools (and AUSA, Disability Team/SDCs, Student Experience etc.) to make clear the present arrangements in relation to extensions and evidence, noting that there are differences between Schools.
- Discussion at Student Support Committee 21 March - Members of the Committee are asked to discuss the Schools' processes of administering coursework extension requests, including the provision of 'agreed extensions to deadlines' for disabled students. This will also pick up approaches to engagement of Student Support re evidence and when students have engaged with Disability Team and when they have not.
- Phase 2 - Review of extensions policy over summer, as part of existing work planned led by Registry. Student Mental Health Group to be involved and contribute to this work. Focus likely on clear policy on what to be done, key question will be level of flexibility how Schools to implement.

smha



make
your mental
health a priority

