



# Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

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## Contents

- Context
- Pressures for students
- UoE Student Mental Health Strategy
- ‘Whole university’ approach
- Questions/ comments/ reflections



## Context

- Mental health conditions are common (1 in 4)
- More students disclosing MH conditions pre-arrival ([IPPR 2017](#)):  
reduction in stigma & increase in earlier diagnosis
- Widening access: student populations reflecting wider socio-economic and demographic profile
- University: 'the best days of our lives'
- Amazing opportunities and experiences
- ***BUT it can often be tough too!***



1 in 4 people every  
year are affected by  
mental ill health



## Pressures for students

- Many different pressures- PGR/ PGT/ UG ([HEPI](#) 2021)
- Transitions into university/ moving away from home
- Academic and financial pressures (NB: 'cost of living crisis )
- Isolation and loneliness
- Growing up in a culture of competition
- Perfectionism (Hill and Curran), fear of failure, imposter syndrome
- Impact of covid pandemic: [MHF](#), [Student Minds](#), [Cibyl](#)
  - Increased levels of social isolation and loneliness
  - Increased levels of anxiety re transitions to HE and academic performance
  - Increased awareness of mental health and wellbeing





## UoE Student Mental Health Strategy

- Good mental health crucial for students' academic success
- First version 2017
- Refreshed 2021
- Alignment with (a) curriculum developments; (b) student support model implementation; (c) wider work on student experience
- UUK- Step Change Framework
- [Mentally Healthy Universities](#)
  - Whole-university approach
  - Recommends that all aspects of university life promote and support student and staff wellbeing

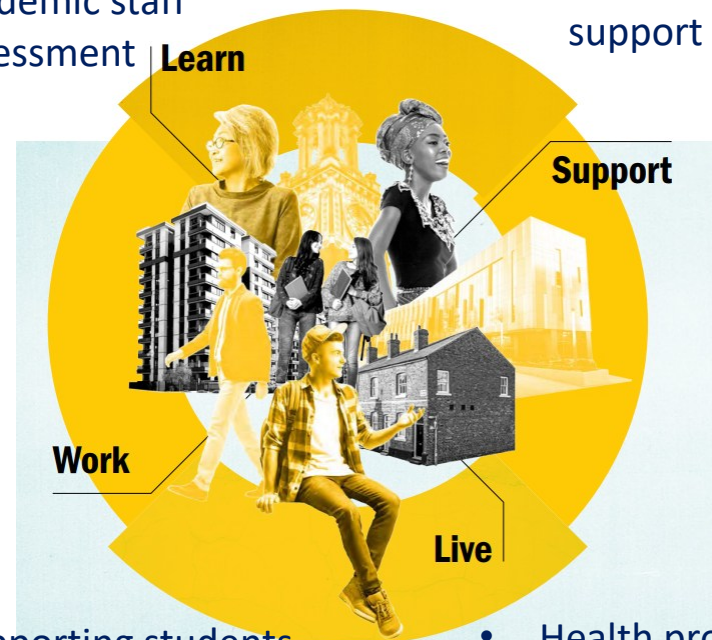




## UUK Step Change: Mentally Healthy Universities (4 domains)

- **Support**
- **Live**
- **Learn**
- **Work**

- Curriculum & pedagogy
- Learning communities
- Academic staff
- Assessment
- Mental health support services



- Staff supporting students
- Staff mental health
- Health promotion
- Healthy culture
- Health environment
- Healthy community



## UoE whole university approach (1)

- Early intervention/ prevention (Counselling, Disability Service, Chaplaincy Listening Svce, Res Life & Student Wellbeing Service)
- Holistic support for students (engaging with University staff and external organisations)
- Curriculum development: ‘wellbeing in the curriculum’
- Student Experience work programme:
  - EDI/ transitions/ induction
  - Sense of belonging
  - Comms and engagement
- Collaboration and partnership (e.g. EUSA/ EUSU, Sport and Exercise, other universities)



## UoE whole university approach (2)

“Our vision is for the University of Edinburgh to be an environment which enables and supports our students to flourish”

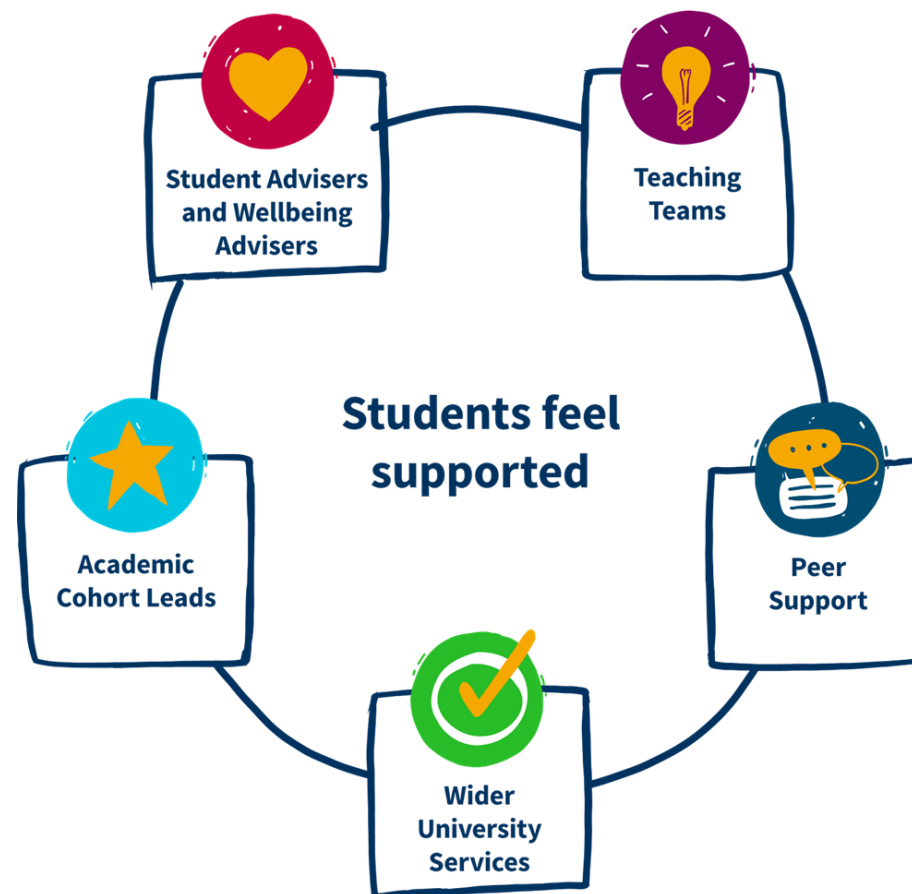
- Increase in number of students coming forward for support (a good thing) and complexity/ risk profiles
- Scaling up: demand, resources, growth and capacity- space
- Promotion of services, accessibility (drop-in, online referral) and location
- International students and distance learners- new ways of working
- Expectations: our responsibilities/ NHS and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector services/ contacting a student’s ‘Trusted Contact’ and home institutions
- Awareness raising: Student Mental Health Training for staff
- Suicide Prevention work ([Suicide Safer Universities](#))



# Student Support Model

- In the new Student Support model, a **joined-up team of academics, professional services staff and fellow students will work together** to give students clear, actionable guidance and advice with practical matters, their wellbeing or their studies.

Expanded teams of **trained professional advisers** in each School/Deanery will take on the day-to-day work of supporting and advising students, **replacing the Personal Tutor model.**





Questions/ comments/ reflections

