

**UHI | PERTH**

**Student Mental Health,  
Well-Being, and  
Counselling Policy**

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UHI Perth is a registered Scottish charity, number SC021209

## Version Control History

Version Number	Date of Change	Summary of Revisions Made
5	September 2014	Draft 5 seen at CMT 29 April 15, and a revised version approved at CMT 27 May 2015. No EIA. Draft 5 published (?) with EIA pending. PerthNet Shared Files has version 4 only. Delay in publication due to lack of EIA and review due date. Published on the web 24-Feb-16 for external audit purposes. Footer tidied up and republished 8-Mar-16. Revised job role/responsibilities from Guidance and Counselling Adviser to Student Support Team/Leader/Counsellor. Revised definition of mental health. Revision of good mental held to positive mental health
5.1	July 2016	Footer updated to reflect new template model Role title changed : Vice Principal, Human Resources and Communications
5.2	December 2018	Footer updated to reflect revised owner, author and lead editor titles.  Role title change to Quality Manager.
5.3	December 2018	Updates to Job titles to reflect recent changes to job roles remit and team structures.  Minor changes to reflect structural changes within the team delivering this support and provision.  Wider context: A major review of this policy will be required in the near future. This is due to external government initiatives, along with increasing numbers of students presenting with mental health conditions and issues within the student population.  A formal review of Mental Health (UHI wide) was carried out during the summer 2018. Formal recommendations and developments from that review will be taken forward within a pan UHI structure and approach. A new UHI Mental Health Strategy is to be developed and implemented; any new policy (UHI) will need to reflect these wider changes.
5.4	March 2023	Rebranded

# Student Mental Health and Counselling Policy

## 1 Purpose

1.1 Perth College UHI is committed to supporting all its students effectively and appropriately. Providing support to students who are experiencing emotional upset, trauma or crisis, and those with identified mental health difficulties is an essential provision within both the College's overall Guidance and Extended Learning Support (ELS) services and in terms of its Duty of Care towards students. This policy specifies the work that Perth College UHI will undertake to protect and promote good mental health and well-being among its students, the provision that will be made for individual support in this area, and details the parameters within which services will operate.

## 2 Scope

2.1 This policy relates to all Perth College UHI students.

## 3 Definitions

Mental Health has been defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

The positive dimension of mental health is stressed as contained in its constitution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (World Health Organisation 2013)

While mental disorder is defined as "any disorder or disability of the mind" (Mental Health Act 2007).

The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy defines Counselling as:

"When a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or a dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose and can help them to see things more clearly, possibly from a different perspective. Counselling is a way of enabling choice or change or of reducing confusion. It does not involve giving advice or directing a client to take a particular course of action. Counsellors do not judge or exploit their clients in any way.

In counselling sessions, the client can explore various aspects of their life and feelings, talking about them freely and openly in a way that is rarely possible with friends or family. Bottled up feelings such as anger, anxiety, grief and embarrassment can become very intense and counselling offers an opportunity to explore them, with the possibility of making them easier to understand. The counsellor will encourage the expression of feelings and as a result of their training will be able to accept and reflect the client's problems without becoming burdened by them."

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**Version/Status:** 5.4, Final  
**Approved By/Date:** CMT/09/2014  
**Issue Date:** March 2023

**Owner:** Depute Principal, Academic  
**Lead Author:** Head of Student Experience  
Lead Editor: Student Services Manager  
**EQIA Approval Date:** September 2014

## 4 Key Principles

- 4.1 The College recognises its responsibilities in relation to promoting positive mental health, and supporting students with mental health difficulties, and adopts a pro-active, student-centred approach.
- 4.2 Supporting students who have an on-going mental health difficulty is a key element of both Extended Learning Support (ELS) and Guidance provision within the College.
- 4.3 Supporting students experiencing emotional upset, trauma or crisis also forms an essential part of the provision.
- 4.4 Promoting positive mental-health to all students and offering opportunities for students to learn more about mental-health and well-being will form a core part of the College's work.
- 4.5 Mental Health, Well-being, and Counselling support within the college works to complement statutory psychiatric, mental health and counselling services and not to duplicate or replace them.
- 4.6 Counselling provision is coordinated and delivered by the Student Support Team.
- 4.7 Where appropriate we will liaise with staff in other College teams in relation to an individual's circumstances and the impact this may have on their studies.
- 4.8 It is acknowledged that recognising indicators of possible emotional distress or mental ill-health, and making early interventions is important in most fully and effectively supporting students. As such advice and on-going support will be provided to key members of staff to assist them is recognising indicators and taking appropriate action.

### 4.9 Statement of Confidentiality

- 4.9.1 A Stepped Care services are in place to meet the needs of all students: eg Enhanced transitions support, The Student Support Hub, Drop-in, Appointment services and online provision.
- 4.9.2 Crisis Intervention is offered to any student experiencing short-term crisis or trauma.
- 4.9.3 Support is offered to students with an on-going mental health difficulty through ELS provision and via reasonable adjustments being made to their learning, teaching or assessment arrangements or where appropriate, individualised personal support arrangements.
- 4.9.4 Counselling may be offered to students on both a referral, and self-referral basis and after initial assessment. Counselling will be offered via Skype, Email and in some circumstances telephone if it is not practicable for the student to attend in person.

- 4.9.5 Initial assessment of an individual's suitability for Counselling will always be undertaken by a member of the counselling team.
- 4.9.6 Students who require long term, or specialist mental health, Psychiatric or Counselling support will be assisted through supported and unsupported referrals to external agencies.
- 4.10 All services are offered on a confidential basis. However, confidentiality may be broken if a member of staff deems that this is essential for the safety and well-being of the student and/or another person.
- 4.11 Services are offered free to students.
- 4.12 Support Staff involved in delivering 1:1 intense support sessions will be supported through the provision of monthly professional Supervision sessions, of at least 1.5 hours in length depending on caseload.
- 4.13 Student Support and Counselling Team Leader reserves the right to withdraw support as appropriate to therapeutic need, and in line with any statutory service provision.

## 5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Student Services Manager has overall responsibility for this policy.
- 5.2 The Student Support and Counselling Team Leader is responsible for the effective operation, development and update of the policy.
- 5.3 The Student Support and Counselling Team Leader is responsible for the delivery of the range of Counselling Services offered, for monitoring on-going effectiveness and for making recommendations for future development.
- 5.4 The Student Support and Counselling Team Leader has specific responsibility for the delivery and development of services relevant to Mental Health, Well-being and Counselling. However, work is carried out in conjunction with the Additional Support Coordinator where the service forms part of ELS, and the Students' Association where relevant.
- 5.5 The Student Support and Counselling Team Leader has responsibility for the coordination and delivery of services provided under ELS and, together with the other members of the Student Support Team, for offering crisis intervention where required.
- 5.6 The Student Support Team together with the Students' Association, and on occasion, the Spiritual Care Team has responsibility to provide a range of services and activities to students relevant to welfare, and as part of this, mental health and well-being.
- 5.7 Quality approval checking of the policy is the responsibility of the Quality Manager who will arrange for the policy to be posted on the web.

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## 6 **Linked Policies/Related Documents**

- 6.1 Perth College UHI Student Mental Health, Well-being and Counselling Procedure.
- 6.2 Perth College UHI Guidance Policy.
- 6.3 Perth College UHI Extended Learning Support Policy.
- 6.4 Perth College UHI Extended Learning Support Procedure.

## 7 **Relevant Legislation**

- 7.1 Disability Discrimination Act (2005).
- 7.2 Additional Support for Learning Act (2004).
- 7.3 Mental Health Act (2007).
- 7.4 Mental Health (Scotland) Act (2003).
- 7.5 Data Protection Act (1998).
- 7.6 Equality Act (2010).

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