



## **Mental Health Strategy 2020 – 2024 – Updated September 2022**

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### **1. Introduction**

Here at Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College we are committed to supporting and developing the mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing of students and staff. Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College understands the challenges faced by people with mental health issues and the impact that this can have on both their personal and academic lives.

Our motivation to support the mental health of all our students and staff is to understand, support and contribute to the treatment of mental health problems with commitment, passion and drive.

That means working to improve:

- Prevention and early intervention;
- Access to treatment, and joined up accessible services;
- The physical wellbeing of people with mental health;
- Rights, information use, and planning.

We want to create a College where stigma and discrimination related to mental health is removed and awareness and understanding of mental health issues is raised through training, resources and information and education.

Through a joined up working programme of initiatives we aim to arm people with resources and training activities to ensure that all of our students and staff are contributing to the recommendations of policies such as the Mental Health Charter from the Association of Colleges.

“It is our commitment to provide a supportive and compassionate service for students of Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College that promotes positive health and wellbeing and aims to engage and empower individuals to thrive.

### **2. Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College Vision for Mental Health**

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is committed to the guarantee that it is an organisation in which students can reach their academic and individual potential to the full.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is dedicated to

- upholding the wellbeing of all the individuals of its community
- to allow all students and staff to flourish, to thrive and ultimately to succeed

### **3. Development in the Support of Mental Health**

At the heart of the Mental Health Strategy for Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is the drive to create campuses that are not only transformative spaces where students can achieve academically but also places where students well-being is supported and cultivated.

Prevention and early intervention are crucial in reducing the prevalence and occurrence of poor mental health. Prevention and early interventions are a focus for Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College in order to ensure that students and staff mental health remain a priority.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College Student Staff strives to ensure an improvement in mental wellbeing, encourage students' independence in learning and enhance the quality of the student experience, as well as contributing to the training of and awareness raising initiatives for staff within various areas of Wellbeing and Mental Health. Mental Health awareness courses are available for all staff.

We also have internal support mechanisms in place in order to provide opportunities to access various internal and external mental health related services. In conjunction, there are additional developments ongoing to fund improved resources for students with mental health issues including a College Nurse.

Safeguarding and Well-Being teams support students with mental health issues and are all qualified and trained in an abundance of relevant competencies. These are also supported by the Management structure.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College are dedicated to raising awareness and improving on the barriers that many students with Mental health issues face by conducting workshops, promotion events, creating resources and liaising with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all students get the best holistic support with any and all mental health issues.

### **4. Ongoing Development**

The appointment of experienced Student Support and safeguarding staff helps to contribute to an improvement in mental wellbeing. This in turn encourages the student's independence in their own learning and an enhancement to the quality of the student experience.

The main areas that the student support and safeguarding staff will cover are:

- Developing and delivering a range of Mental Health initiatives
- Contribute to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Improve communication between Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College and Health Promotion Services and improving links to agencies in order to support transitions.
- Instrumental in promoting and educating students and staff in regard to mental health and wellbeing thus contributing to an overall improvement of student and staff wellbeing – through ongoing training and workshops, including Mental Health First Aid, Mindfulness, Suicide Alertness etc.

- Working closely with NHS to promote positive lifestyle behaviours including tobacco prevention
- Enhance pathways to access services and support in the community to include stop smoking service, drug misuse, sexual health etc.
- Creating and producing Health and Wellbeing events and initiatives through campaign work
- Working directly with a cohort of students who require more in-depth Health and Wellbeing support
- Provide targeted wellbeing and emotional support for residential students who are living away from home, in partnership with the residential team.

The Safeguarding and Well-Being teams have a presence on each campus as well as online – providing a comprehensive and inclusive service to ensure that Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College’s focus on Health and Wellbeing for all its learners and staff is key.

Mental Health prevention and support has a presence online with the promotion of Health and Wellbeing via the Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College website, social media, and screen savers together with regular relevant and current information and resources.

The Health and Wellbeing role will organise and host a Health and Wellbeing Events for Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College.

## **5. Training and Support Strategies – Staff and Students**

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is dedicated to providing training and professional development, as well as other initiatives College-wide to make sure that there is inclusion, engagement and involvement in education. That means ensuring that providing a positive culture for everybody’s social, emotional and mental wellbeing, and that appropriate access to support is available.

The staff development programme provides staff with inside and outside stakeholders providing training and workshops to cover a host of wellbeing issues.

Regular in house training for staff is provided including Mental Health First Aid.

We understand that there are circumstances that lead to students having been in, or continuing to be care experienced and it is important that mental and emotional health and wellbeing needs are considered throughout for these students to aid improved outcomes.

It is vital to understand the mental health needs of disabled students. Some may be disabled because of mental health issues while others may have poor mental health as a result of physical impairment or long-term illnesses. Students with physical health conditions can experience higher risks for anxiety, low mood or mental health difficulties than others. Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College are conscious of mental health and wellbeing inequalities and are determined to help reduce these inequalities, remove barriers to education and progress to guarantee better outcomes for students.

## 6. Best Practice

Partnership relationships with other colleges and universities is essential in order to share good practice and develop networks for the benefit of all our staff and students.

With this in mind Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College collaborate with a number of institutions, sharing resources and opportunities in an open, honest and cooperative way to ensure professionalism and joined up working.

## 7. Evaluation and Assessment

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College regularly review the provision of mental health initiatives and continually track and monitor effectiveness of its service provision.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College are dedicated to the creation and maintenance of policy, procedure and legislation within its own documentation, including Mental Health policies and strategies and other policies and procedures that adhere to Mental Health legislation. There is also a commitment to the development of Anna Freud's 5 step Mental Health Plan which will include measures across;

- Leading Change
- Working Together
- Understanding Need
- Promoting Wellbeing
- Supporting Staff

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College will look to carry out annual progress reviews to ensure evolution and developments are maintained within this sphere.

A major area for evaluation and assessment is within student withdrawals and monitoring the number of students who are leaving courses early due to mental health. Withdrawal data is provided on a regular basis that highlights withdrawal numbers and makes comparisons to previous academic periods. The data of students who are withdrawing due to mental health will be followed up appropriately by Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College.

## 8. The Association of Colleges and Mental Health

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College are committed to supporting and enhancing where possible, the Mental and Well-Being Charter which the college signed up to in 2019.

This framework implements actions to review existing policy and staff training and consider improvements which could have a positive effect on the staff and student experience, and can go a way to ensuring that anyone facing mental health issues can remain on their courses without facing stigma or judgement.

Signing up to the agreement supports networking opportunities for students' associations and college staff to promote further joined up working initiatives. This has resulted in a Mental Health Action plan which can be found in Appendix 1.

## **9. Commitment - Attendance and Achievement**

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College recognises that particular behaviours such as attending class, participation in class activities and discussion, being conscientious with work and deadlines and adhering to College Policies and Procedures can all be regarded as useful measures of student engagement.

Additional measures of student engagement can be monitored through a student's demonstration of qualities such as curiosity, motivation, interest and enthusiasm. Monitoring student attendance is an important measure of student engagement. Attending classes provides students with the best opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that are necessary to successfully completing their course and good attendance can be a significant factor of student success.

Through the use of the Attendance Monitoring and Withdrawal Procedures, academic staff, can liaise on a weekly basis to ensure that all the varying measures of student engagement, including attendance, are considered and that the necessary support interventions can be implemented.

Combined working between academic and support departments ensures that students receive a holistic and well-rounded commitment to their needs.

## **10. Partnership Working**

Smoking rates among those with mental health problems has not changed in over twenty years; 1 in 3 people with mental health problems in the UK smoke, as compared with 1 in 5 of the general population. Smoking can adversely disturb the effectiveness of medication taken for mental health issues. The Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College Student Support, Safeguarding and Well-Being Teams works closely with the NHS in order to raise awareness and provide resources to help students to stop smoking as this can reduce depression, anxiety and stress amongst other health concerns. There is also work ongoing with the team to promote smoking cessation programmes and target those programmes towards people with mental health issues.

At Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College we work in collaboration with many internal departments to encourage the Health and Wellbeing of students and staff, including working with the Sports and Public Services Departments on initiatives external to the college to promote health and Wellbeing.

Change can be stressful as well as an opportunity for growth. At Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College we understand that transitions are a process of change and as such we are committed to managing every transition whether it be from school to college, from one course to another or from College to work or University. Transitions can cover a range of experiences, all of which involve some degree of challenge and readjustment and they can carry a factor of risk affecting student's mental health. To ensure we manage these changes we have staff dedicated to transitions including Guidance, School transitions, Developing workforce partnership, quality and curriculum partnership, student hub etc.

## **11. Diverse Access to Mental Health Services**

Universities and colleges should, in partnership with care providers and NHS, have in place a range of support services that are sensitive to the varying needs of all students, which identify mental health difficulties early and provide appropriate support to meet these.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is committed to growing its access to a diverse range of both internal and external mental health services. The Health and Wellbeing Adviser role does look to create and build upon existing partnerships such as CAHMS, as well as to continually source new ones.

## **12. Training Provision**

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College runs the certificated Mental Health First Aid course for staff at least once a year. The aim of this is to train as many staff as possible to be Mental Health First Aiders. The main benefits of this is the promotion of Mental Health provision and raised awareness of Mental Health issues, their impact and the support available to help those who suffer from them.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College also run regular on-line sessions on Mental Health Awareness.

Our tutorial programme, features a wide range of free training courses aimed at helping people prevent ill-health, improving health and wellbeing. This provides continued professional academic and pastoral support for staff and students.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College also look to offer a Wellbeing Day for staff. This is an opportunity, to work with other staff across the college and select an activity or visit to support their own mental well-being.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College has a occupational health and counselling services for all employees to access.

## **13. Suicide Prevention**

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is committed to promoting the ideals of organisations like Choose Life and the NHS Suicide Prevention National Action Plan, MIND guidance and Papyrus in order to help reduce the statistics on suicide.

## **14. Tackling Stigma Campus Wide**

At Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College we are devoted to the reduction of stigma in mental health and raising awareness of mental health issues in order to allow students and staff to access support and engage in meaningful education and pastoral activities that improve lives.

By increasing information streams, through marketing and information sessions we hope to disseminate non- judgemental and factual information that challenge myths and promote mental health problems in an accurate and realistic manner.

Posters, screens, activities and initiatives that challenge attitudes and behaviours are evident

throughout Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College. Contesting prejudices and judgmental thinking by seeing the person behind the mental health issue is a challenge that Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College take very seriously.

## **15. Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College Strategic Plan 2020-2024**

The Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College Mental Health Strategy supports the ambition of Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College, demonstrated within the Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College Strategic Plan, to provide all students with “transformational learning opportunities that are tailored to their own aims, aspirations and circumstances.

## Mental Health Action Plan 2022/2024

Action	Intention	Intervention	Intended impact	How Monitored and Assessed	Responsible Person
Raise and promote student wellbeing through focussed interventions	To ensure that students are the focus and that they have easy and quick access to supportive interventions	Use of counsellors and PWMs plus increased utilization of the MHFA's	Increased positive outcomes for students who need support. Increasing quantity of support	Feedback from students – to be collected verbally and via FORMS - once they are at end of sessions	DB/BJ
Provide named SAO contact and focused support for all residential students.	To ensure smooth transition and on programme support for students living away from home, identify loneliness and early warning signs when emotional and wellbeing support is needed.	Named SAO for all residential students.  Low level homely activities to promote wellbeing such as 'supper time'.	Increased sense of emotional wellbeing for student living away from home.	Verbal feedback from students  Referrals into HUB.	BJ/AM
Develop peer to peer support	To create peer group supports for students to develop their own coping mechanism and help them to create support bubbles	Creation and facilitation of groups discussed on self-harm, wellbeing, LGBTQ+ and exam stress	Developing more resilience and independent coping strategies and support	Verbal feedback from students  Questionnaire at end of year to see what students have found useful  Student focus groups – identify what the students want	NB
Creation of a mental health policy	To have a fully comprehensive mental health policy in place for February 2023	Utilising existing policies and building on current work to create a detailed MH policy	Ensure all staff and students aware of the importance of MH and wellbeing and that there is structure resources and support available	Through CLT	BJ/NB
MHFA	To develop and expand the provision of the Mental health First Aiders	Using existing MHFA to develop a mentoring and support program  Rota system.	To utilise existing MHFAs to support staff and students more effectively	Feedback from MHFA  Discussion at the MH forum  Feedback from student focus	DB/BJ



Action	Intention	Intervention	Intended impact	How Monitored and Assessed	Responsible Person
		Possible faculty/ department linked MHFA		Feature of the agenda of department meetings	
Transition support	To ensure excellent support for transition that identifies students that are most needing support and ensures they are supported	Questionnaire to all students to ID areas of MH support  Ask mental health question at application  Inclusion of wellbeing into transition tutorials	To quickly identify and support students with MH/family issues during transition period	Feedback from questionnaires/applications  Discussion with departments regarding usefulness of the information	BJ/NB
Raise staff awareness & knowledge of mental health issues	Staff will be better informed and able to more confidently identify issues to enable support to be put in place	CPD opportunities for staff via on-line learning platform.  Mental health support to be available through faculty links	Early identification and intervention to promote mental health and academic achievement	Take up of support available.  Attendance figures  Achievement data  Qualitative / anecdotal evidence of increased confidence for staff	DB/BJ
Promote Togetherall and Health Assured services to college community	To enable all to engage in activities to support mental health and well-being  24hr helpline for all students	Promotion strategy in conjunction with marketing  Supported access for those with learning difficulties / disabilities	Learners and staff will be able to access support when required  Access for all	Reports provided by company	NB/BJ
Develop opportunities for peer support – groups for learners with anxiety	To enable learners to support themselves and others to develop coping strategies	Staff led group initially until learners able to lead themselves	Learners will be able to employ tools learned from others to effectively manage anxiety. To develop confidence to ask for help and know where to go when this is needed	Attendance at group  Impact statements from members of the group that identify a positive response.  Improved attendance and educational outcomes	NB/BS/LH
Provision of information and activities to support	To support staff and learners to identify and utilise strategies to manage the negative impact of	Provision of tutorial activities prior to examinations	To reduce the level of stress felt by learners and enabling them to	Learner focus groups to ascertain qualitative data and	NB/BS/LH

Action	Intention	Intervention	Intended impact	How Monitored and Assessed	Responsible Person
stress reduction at exam times	stress at exam & assessment time		use strategies to reduce stress	an increase in success / grade profile – qualitative data.	
Development of a MH and well-being tutorial programme	To provide ongoing information and awareness raising	Accessible tutorial resources / discussion points to be provided	To enable and empower learners to take care of themselves and others and to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental ill health	Focus groups, learner voice identifies usefulness  Timely and appropriate referrals to support.	BJ/SH/TD/KE
Promoting the inclusion of MH into review point interviews	To maintain regular check-in re mental health and well-being. To encourage and promote open and honest dialogue with all learners.	PTs to ask re MH and well-being status of learners – referrals to be made to SG team where appropriate	Early intervention for issues identified. To work in partnership with learners / parents where appropriate to promote wellness.	Learner's attendance and success monitored.  Questions asked at PT 1/1 meetings identify issues being supported / managed effectively	BJ
Development of activities / opportunities to promote resilience	To enable learners to be able to cope in a healthy way with life events.	College wide opportunities identified by teaching team / area staff to build resilience to situations and support appropriate and healthy responses	Learners will be able to acknowledge challenges and have their own strategies in place to support the effective management / resolution of these.	Discussion with learners in tutorials and focus groups will identify positive responses to challenging situations.	BJ & SSM'S
Produce bulletins for dissemination to tutors  Some of these to have a MH focus	To have a proactive response to potential issues. To raise awareness and promote discussion	Submit information for dissemination in tutorials	To develop awareness of issues / support options to enable staff to recognise when something is not as it should be and to enable learners to keep themselves and others safe.	Questionnaires to be completed on-line that identify knowledge and ability to show responses.	NB/BS
Promote safeguarding knowledge through the development of an on-	To enable all staff to access CPD opportunities. For safeguarding	CPD plan to be developed for the year to include a variety of awareness	Numbers and range of staff undertaking training will increase.	Staff attendance will be monitored.	DB/BJ/NB

Action	Intention	Intervention	Intended impact	How Monitored and Assessed	Responsible Person
line CPD platform and CPD plan for all staff Some of these to have MH focus	knowledge to be developed and not a 'one off' activity	raising topics, mandatory updates and child protection sessions	Safeguarding Confidence in ability to be able to identify concerns increased.	Responses to the training obtained via evaluations undertaken on-line	
SS staff to deliver themed tutorial activities. Some of these to have MH focus	To build learners knowledge and to raise their awareness of the team members	SG staff to deliver planned sessions to tutor groups on a variety of sessions	Learners will be able to identify the safeguarding link person for their faculty and feel more confident to approach them with any issues.	Learner reporting of issues can be measured via safeguard system / data analysis.  Impact of sessions to be monitored though the use of an online evaluation tool – collated responses to form report writing. Focus groups identify usefulness.	SSM's
Provision of a range of opportunities to inform and educate learners about mental health issues	Enable learners / staff to have differentiated opportunities to experience real life issues	Theatre productions, speakers, events involving professionals from a wide range of organisations to be invited to events within the college	Learners will have multiple opportunities to increase their knowledge of safeguarding issues to promote keeping both themselves and others safe	Calendar of events planned e.g. Mental health awareness week, suicide awareness week, health awareness week  Feedback obtained from learners / staff attending events  Focus groups to identify learning that has taken place and the value of this.	SSM's