

The role of universities in student mental health and wellbeing

Professor Steve West CBE, DL

Vice-Chancellor and President, UWE Bristol

+2.3M students
engaged in higher
education in the UK

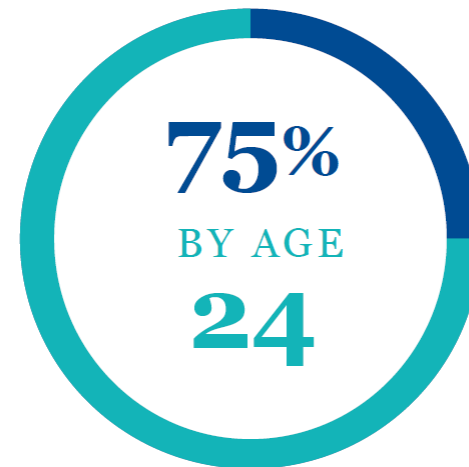
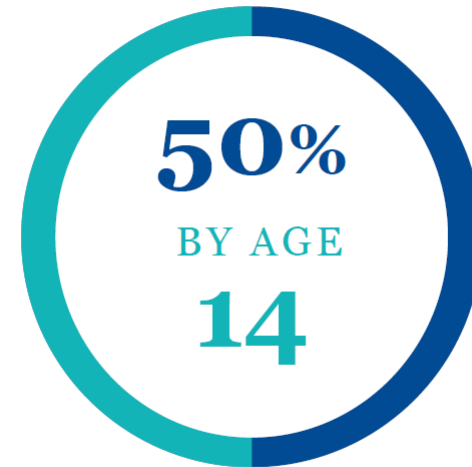
76% UG; 24% PG
78% FT; 22% PT
5.8% from other EU countries
13.3% from outside the EU

+400K staff working in higher
education in the UK.

The number of students disclosing a mental health condition to their higher education institution is increasing



The onset of mood, anxiety, psychotic, personality, eating and substance misuse disorders peaks in adolescence and early adulthood (Mental Health Foundation, 2017).



Higher education institutions have experienced significant increases in demand for (overall) student services, counselling services and disability services over the past five years:

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

report an increase in overall demand

81%

report an increase of over 25%

41%

COUNSELLING SERVICES

report an increase in demand

94%

report an increase of over 25%

61%

DISABILITY SERVICES

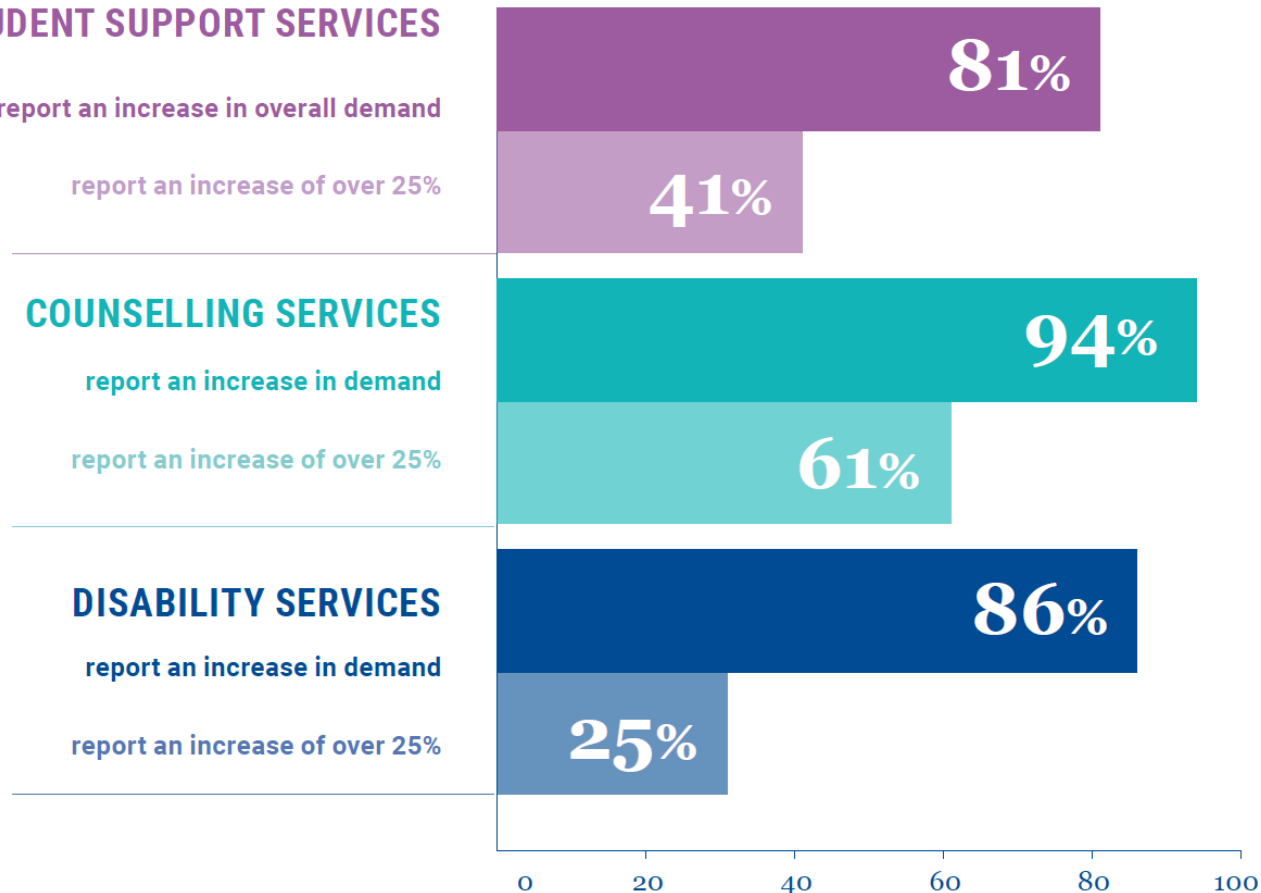
report an increase in demand

86%

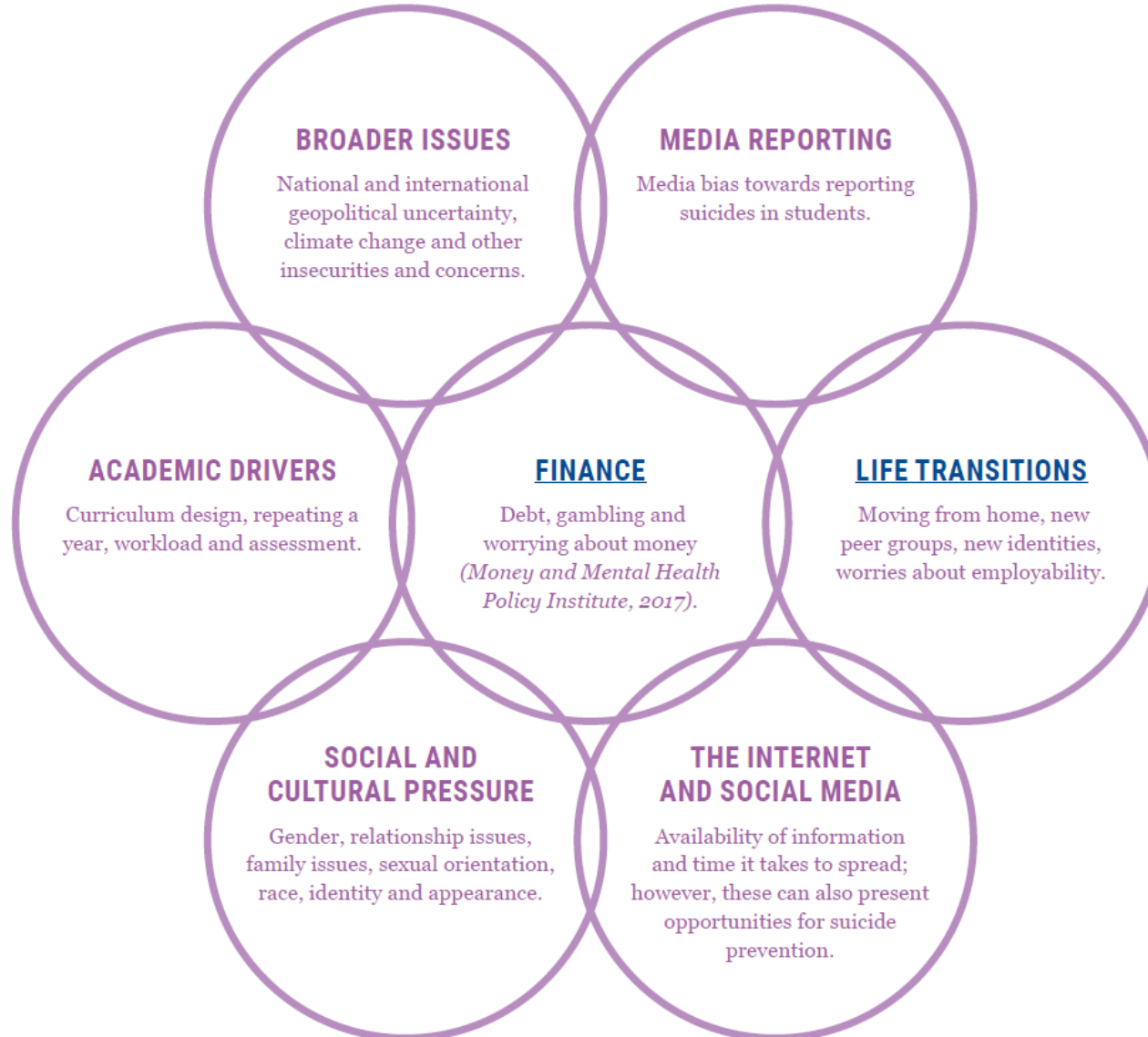
report an increase of over 25%

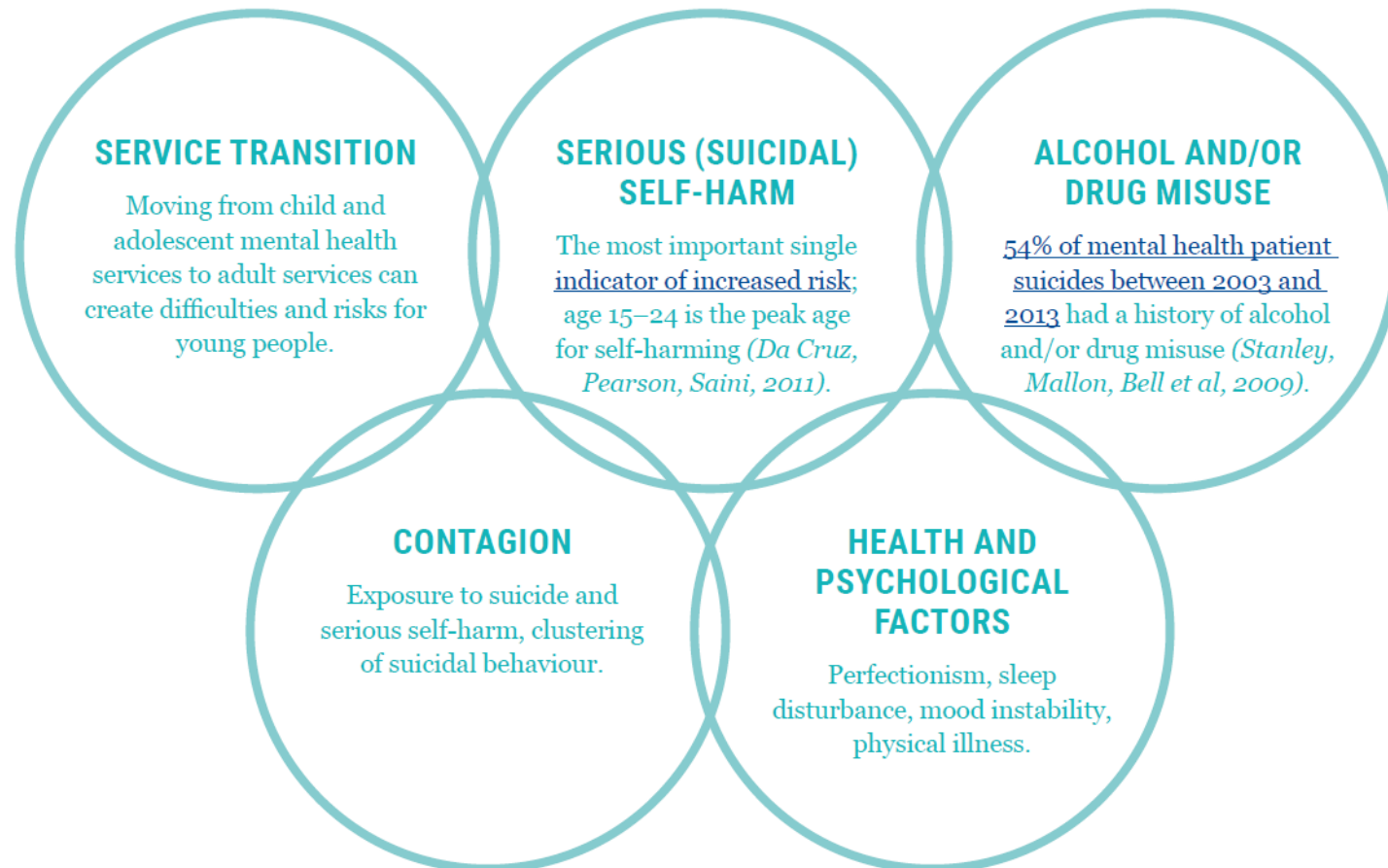
25%

0 20 40 60 80 100



FACTORS THAT MAY INCREASE MENTAL DISTRESS

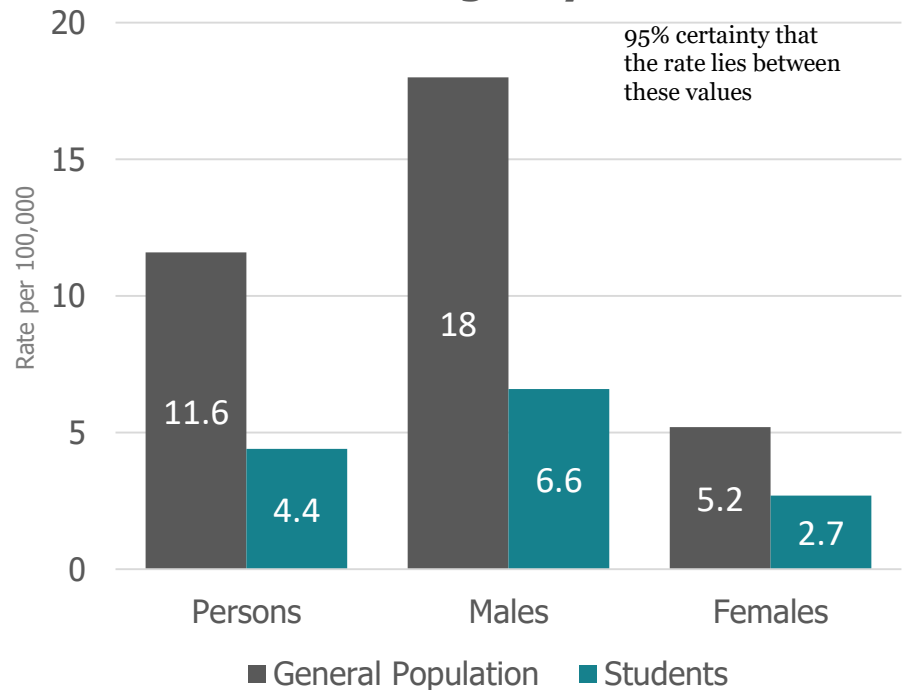




“The hardest questions I am asked are, ‘why did this happen?’ and ‘how could we have prevented it?’

For each of these tragic deaths, we need to ensure we learn and improve what we do to support the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff.”

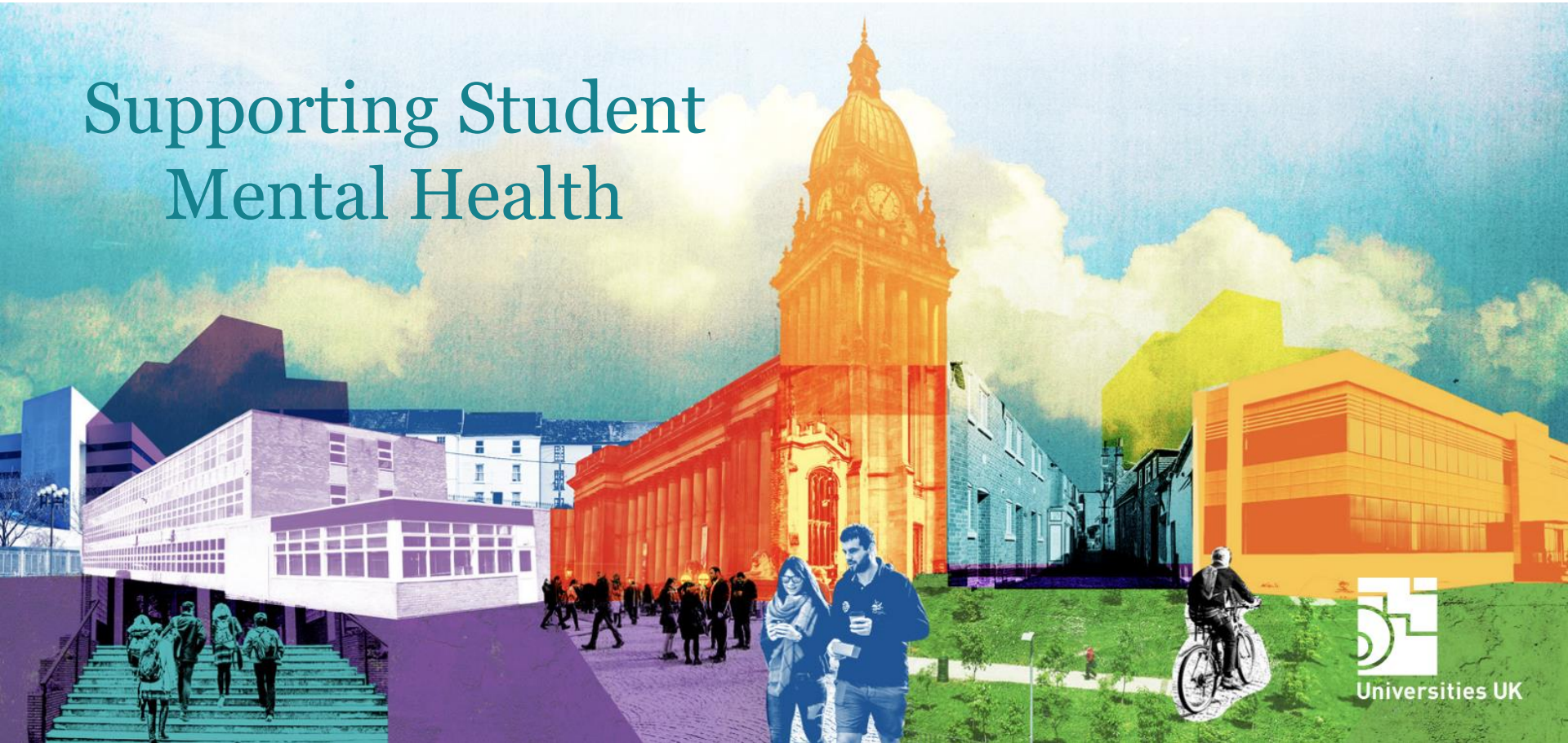
Rate of suicide in the 12 months ending July 2017



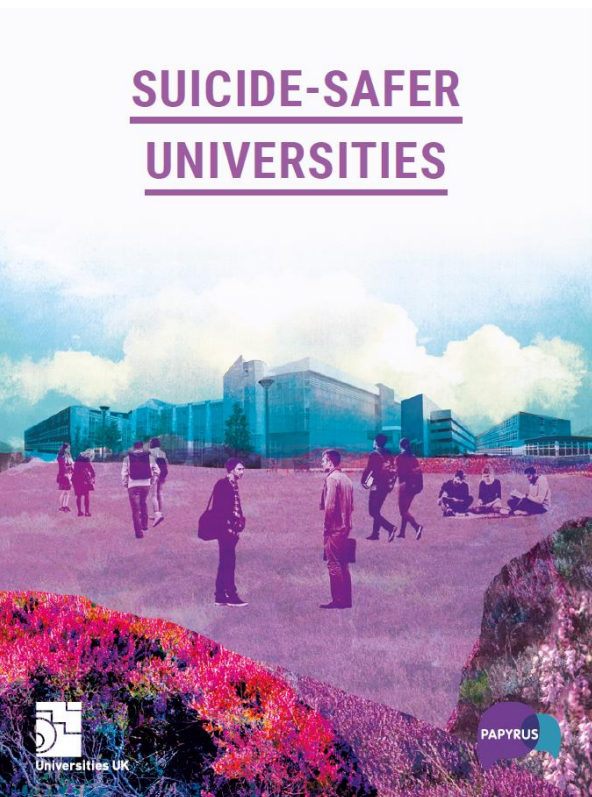
Office for National Statistics, Estimating suicide among higher education students, England and Wales: Experimental Statistics

"We know that doing more of what we have always done will fail. Innovation is the way, the only way we can meet these challenges"

Supporting Student Mental Health



SUICIDE-SAFER UNIVERSITIES



NEARLY 1 IN 4 YOUNG PEOPLE WILL EXPERIENCE SUICIDAL FEELINGS AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIVES. 1 IN 20 WILL TRY TO TAKE THEIR OWN LIFE.

EACH SUICIDE AFFECTS A MUCH WIDER CIRCLE OF AROUND **135 PEOPLE**.

SUICIDE IS **THE BIGGEST** CAUSE OF DEATH IN YOUNG ADULTS.

STUDENT DEATH BY SUICIDE IS **A GLOBAL CHALLENGE** WITH REPORTED RATES **IN THE USA, CHINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES BEING SIMILAR TO OR EVEN HIGHER THAN THE UK.**

THE SUICIDE RATE IS **EVEN HIGHER** OUTSIDE UNIVERSITIES.

ONLY 1 IN 3 PEOPLE WHO DIE BY SUICIDE ARE KNOWN TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

Mental Wealth First

| Our strategy to put mental health and wellbeing first for students and staff

Updated July 2019



Foreword – by Professor Steve West

In 2017 we pledged our commitment to make the mental health and wellbeing of our university community a strategic priority for UWE Bristol. We were one of three universities chosen nationally to pilot Universities UK's Step Change Framework as a tool for developing our own 'whole university' approach to support students and staff.

This became our Mental Wealth First strategy, which we launched in spring 2018 and which we are continuing to evolve as we learn from it. The clear values and objectives have been embraced and championed by our staff and students and we have seen new innovations and change happening as a result. Our Mental Wealth First principles are also embedded in our developing Strategy 2030.

University is a time of great transition and change for a young person. Most students have happy, fulfilling and rewarding experiences at university that they carry forward with them into their future lives. However, we must recognise that things such as changing attitudes towards mental health, tuition fees, living costs, a challenging jobs climate and the impact of social media mean that current and future generations have factors to contend with that previous generations did not have.

We are extremely proud to have a diverse student and staff body at UWE Bristol and we must continue to progress this, but it is vital that as part of this we understand that everyone has different needs and ensure our strategy is designed to reflect that.

Mental Wealth First considers how students and staff connect with all areas of university life and looks at ways to make sure the experience is as positive as it can be for them, providing an environment and culture in which they can thrive. We also want people to know that it's okay not to feel okay and make it easy for them to get help when they need, in a way that suits them.

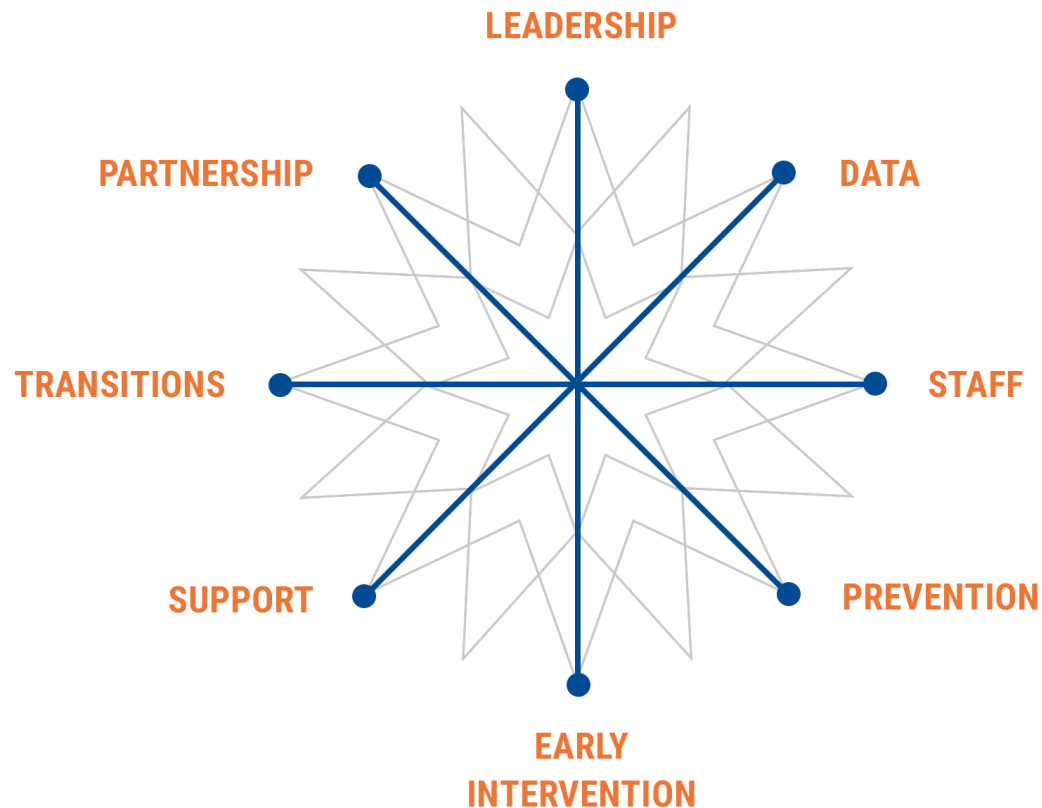
Going forward, our aim is to be recognised as a leading healthy university, demonstrating significant health benefits for our staff and students, and making a wider contribution to the wellbeing of people, places and the planet. We want to be recognised for innovations that empower people to flourish and shape the health and sustainability of future communities—through our students, staff and partners.

Professor Steve West CBE
Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West of England and Chair of Universities UK's Working Group on Mental Health in Higher Education

Universities UK's *#stepchange* initiative encourages universities to make mental health a strategic priority and to adopt a whole-university approach to improve outcomes.



The Universities UK Framework



"Student mental health needs to become a shared priority, to ensure that the mental health needs of students are understood, and services are redesigned to integrate university support with NHS care more effectively."

Mental Wealth First

| Our commitment to putting mental health and wellbeing first

#MentalWealthFirst



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#MentalWealthFirst

An empowered community who deliver a mental wealth culture at UWE.

Effective and timely provision that helps to reduce factors that contribute to mental ill-health and support those in need.

A whole institution and partnership-based approach to mental wealth.

Making Mental Wealth part of everyday language

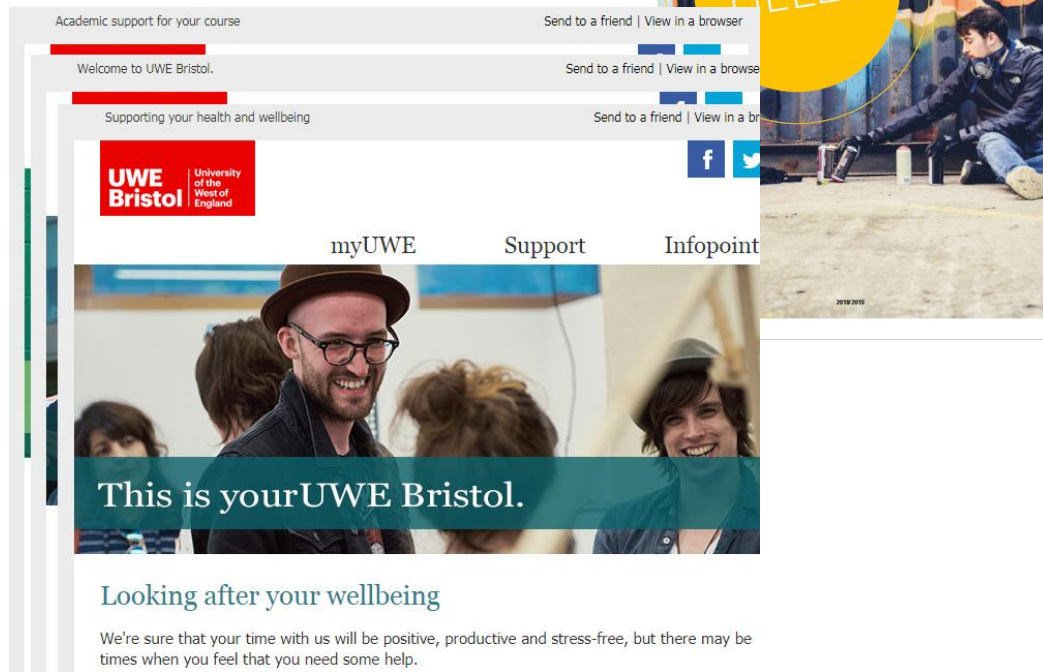


Mental Wealth First

#LetsTalkNow

Start of the year communications

- Disclosing a mental health problem.
- The seven skills of emotional resilience.
- Everyone's got friends but me.
- Making friends is hard?
- Xanax: It isn't a wonderdrug.
- Its normal to feel homesick.
- We're all human and we're all in this together.



Information for parents and supporters

New students

- > [Joining instructions](#)
- > [Pre-arrival checklist](#)
- > [When you arrive](#)
- > [Registration and paying fees](#)
- > [Registration sessions](#)
- > [New international students](#)
- > [Parents and supporters guide](#)

It's an exciting moment when your loved one gets a place at university, but then you might start getting a bit nervous. It's not just a big change for your student, but for you as well. After all, you've been supporting them for years and years, knowing this moment would come, but now it's here.

So, how do you help them now? The transition to university can present several challenges for students – adjusting to independent living, academics, and a new social life – all without the comfort of close friends and relatives. But, over time, you'll find that the initial difficulties faced by your student will settle with the support of those around them.

Top tips

1. **Be your child's trusted adviser.** Fully support them, but get out of the way. Listen to their woes and help them figure out where to go for help on campus. There are many professional people working here to support our students. Check out the [students' section](#) to see what support we offer.
2. **Don't project your anxiety.** They have enough on their minds with new flatmates and surroundings.
3. **Try not to worry too much...** and don't keep calling. You might even ask how often they would like to speak when they first move to university.
4. **Talk and ask about potentially uncomfortable things:** alcohol and drugs, relationships, mental health. Remind them that there are resources on campus for just about everything, and encourage your child to use them.
5. **[Sign up for our parents and supporters newsletter.](#)** This will be sent out a few times each term and give you an indication of what your student might be going through.

+ [Who to contact if you have questions](#)

+ [Who to contact if you have urgent welfare concerns](#)

+ [Wellbeing information for parents, guardians and friends](#)

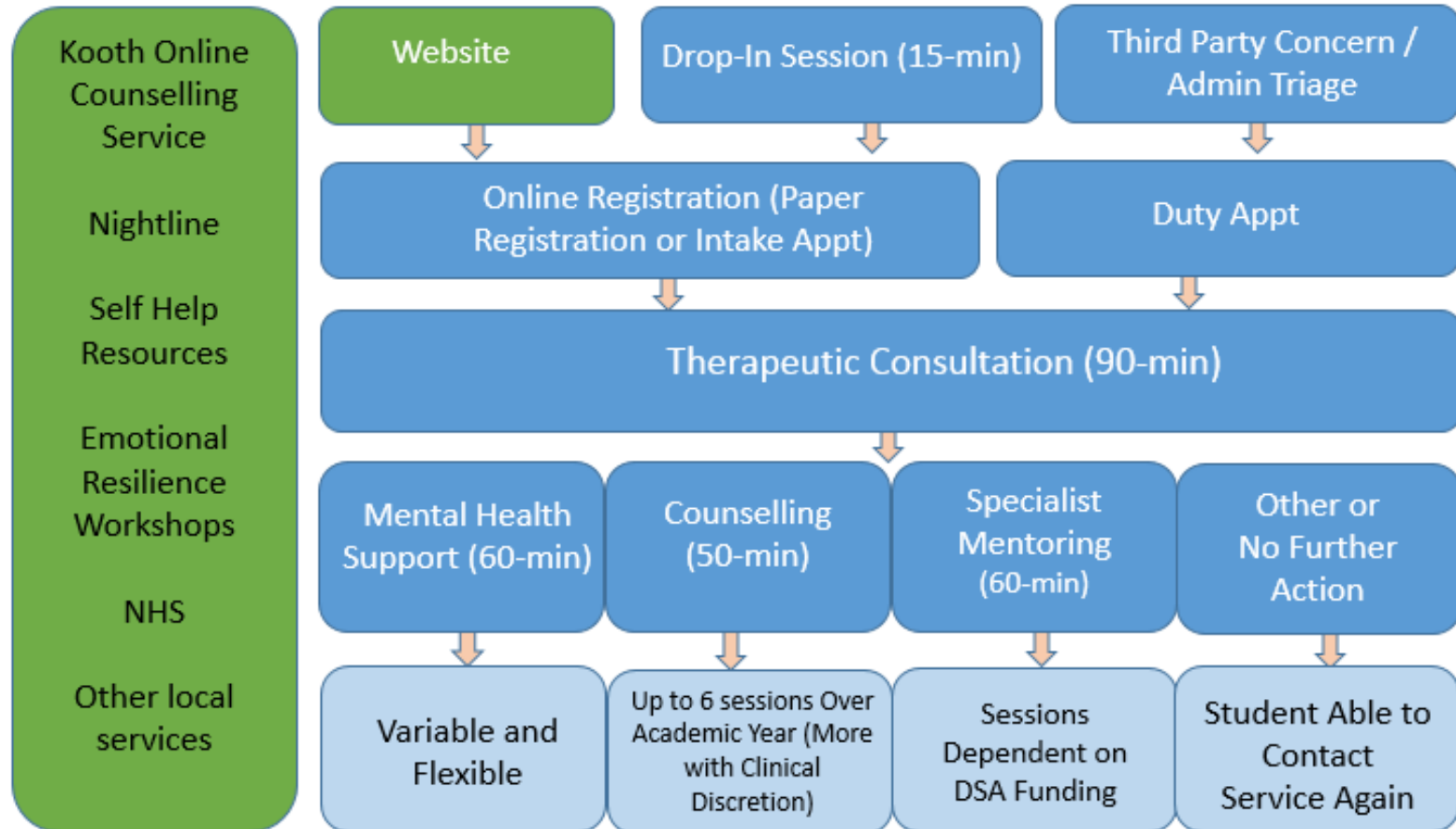
A Healthy University

From the design of our spaces to initiatives and campaigns running throughout the academic year to support student and staff health and wellbeing.



- **Feel Good February**
 - A month dedicated to promoting health and wellbeing activities and events, encouraging participation and raising awareness of the support and services available within UWE and locally
- **Feel Good Focus** every month
 - Communications targeted at staff focus on the five ways to wellbeing
 - Communications to students cover a variety of health and wellbeing topics relevant to the student life cycle e.g. Transition in September, Exam stress in April

UWE Wellbeing model



Mental Wealth

Ieso provides 1 to 1, online CBT delivered in real-time by a live therapist using a text-based format



Network of therapists



Proven CBT based sessions tailored to needs of patient



Works on any connected device on virtually any connection, even mobile



Improved learning retention through reading and writing (vs speaking and listening)



Data collection (clinical outcomes, QoL, health care resource utilisation) and data analytics



Supplementary educational materials and information



Complete record of therapy available to patient for review post discharge



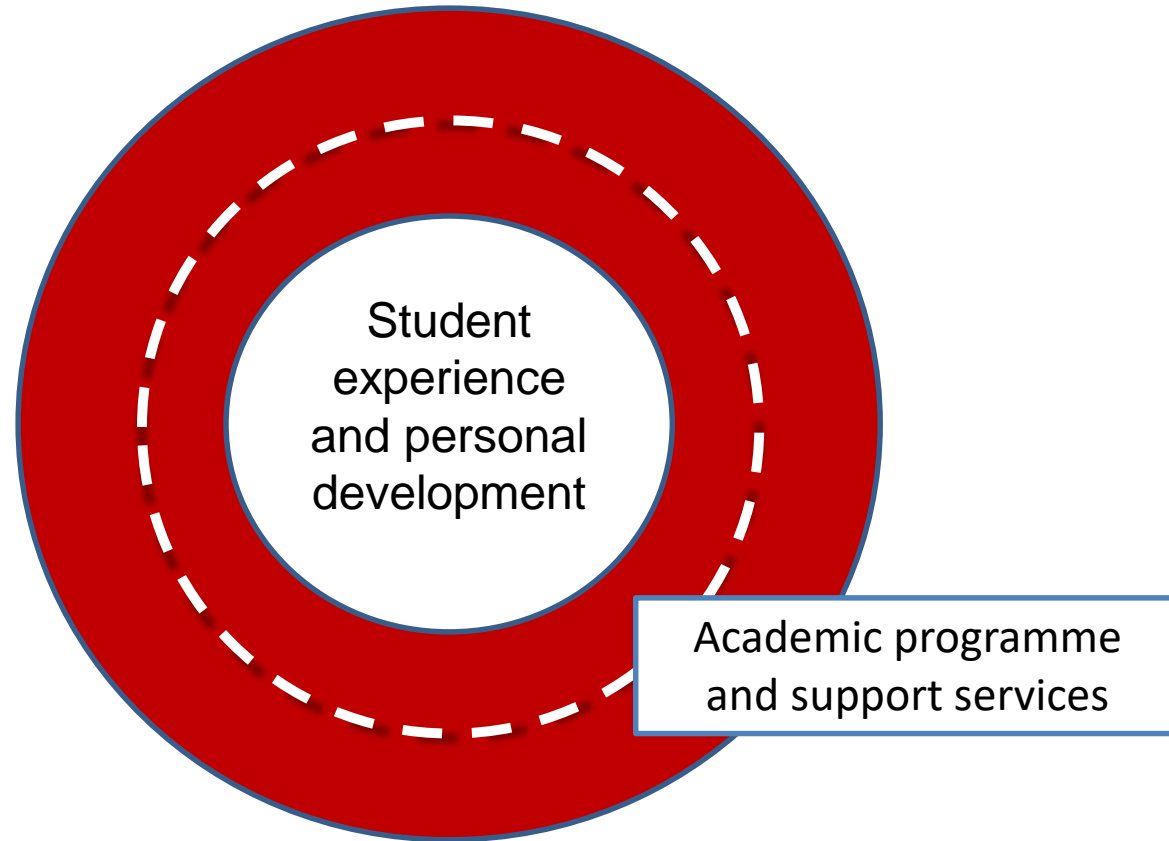
Transcript data support therapist quality control



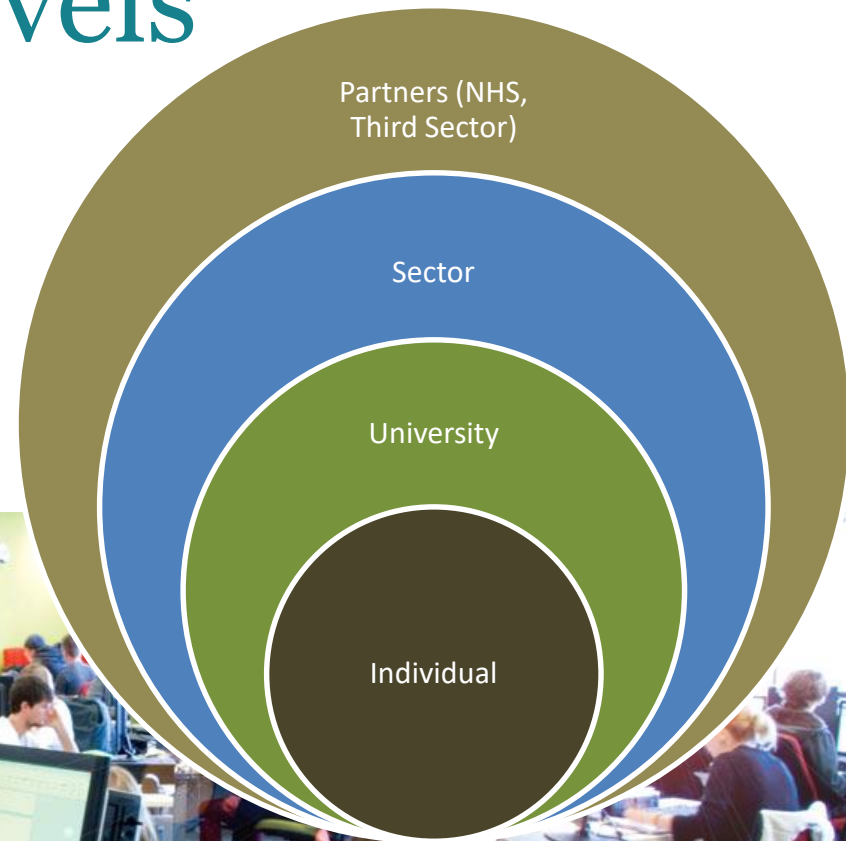
Emotional resilience workshops



Personalisation



Looking at all levels

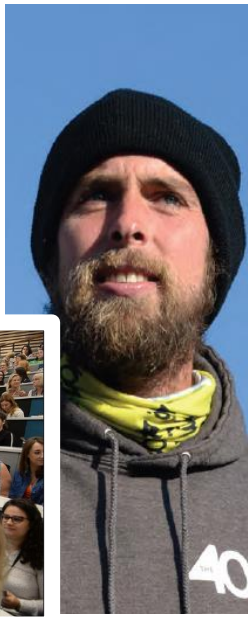


Mental Wealth | LAB

Learning. Researching. Understanding. Putting Mental Wealth First.



Events



New scheme to open to UWE Bristol staff and students which can offer up to £500 towards a project, event or initiative which:

- explores promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- benefits all, or part of the UWE Bristol community
- is inclusive and accessible to all
- is an innovative or new approach
- can be evaluated to measure the impact
- provides value for money

Brand new podcast series to remove the stigma around mental health.

- Staff and students share their positive stories
- explore ideas
- Raise awareness of mental health issues.

Mental Wealth | LAB fund
Learning. Researching. Understanding.
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#LetsTalkNow
Podcasts

Helping students reach their full potential

