

The University Mental Health Charter

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The Charter

Purpose

To reward and recognise universities for excellent work

To provide evidence informed guidance and structure to the whole sector for further improvements and debate



Universities and mental health

Understandably, much of the focus in national discussions has been on avoiding and responding to mental illness

Our view is that the absence of illness, while important, is not enough

Universities can be places that are good for the mental health of our communities



Part of a whole sector approach



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Co-creation principles

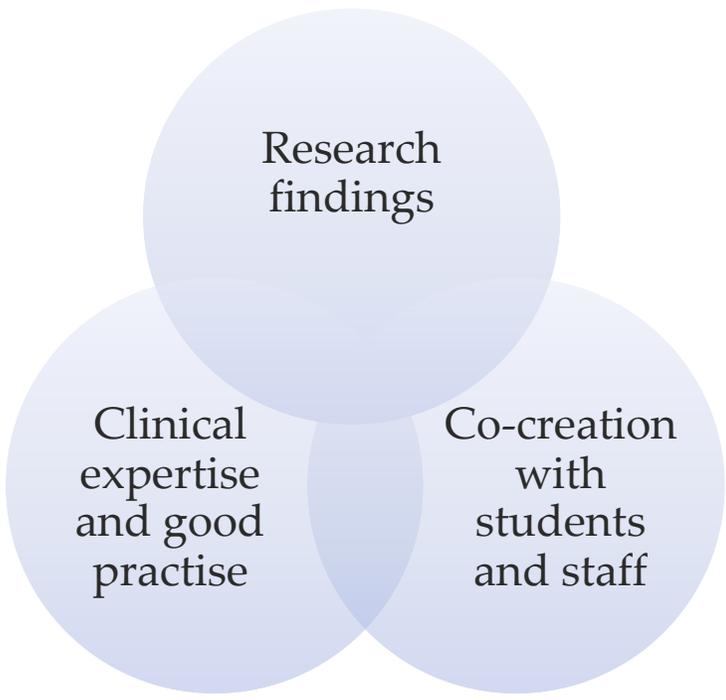
Research literature

Evidenced good practice

Experiences of students

Experiences of staff

Clinical and Research Expertise





Development

Began with a review of the literature (including grey lit) covering all aspects of university life

From this review we identified an initial 20 themes for further exploration and a series of gaps in current knowledge and understanding

These themes formed the basis of our consultation and evidence gathering phase



Charter consultation

6 consultation events

4 nations

Circa 360 staff and students

181 universities and organisations

90 focus groups, 18 co-creation panels and 18 workshops

Staff survey – 1244 respondents

Student survey – 1032 respondents





Analysis

Evidence derived from this work was analysed by our research teams

Qualitative evidence was subject to thematic analysis

Quantitative evidence was subject to statistical analysis

We sought to identify commonalities, areas of agreement and areas of disagreement and to understand what all of that was telling us



Synthesis

These findings were then brought together to identify key areas on which the charter should focus

18 themes were identified and will be included in the Charter framework, organised under the new Mentally Healthy Universities domains

In some areas, there were still gaps in knowledge, understanding and in the representation of some voices

We have conducted a further literature review, based on these new themes

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Expert panels

Student Minds and UUK have hosted a series of expert panels focussed on specific themes or to gather the views of particular groups

The panels brought together individuals with expertise derived from research, practice and representative organisations

The contributions of these panels have been included in the draft framework document



Charter Framework Document

On the 9th December, we will launch the Charter Framework Document

This will set out

- The background to the Charter
- What each theme covers
- Why that theme is important and what we know about it
- Principles of good practice for that theme – synthesised from the literature review and our evidence gathering



Where we are now

The Framework Document has just returned from peer review

The whole document was reviewed by 2 reviewers and each theme was additionally reviewed by 2 reviewers, with expertise in that area.

We are now revising the document in the light of those reviews

The final document will be available on our website on the 9th December, alongside a self improvement tool, developed with UUK



What next?

December 2019 – launch content, guidance and rationale

Early 2020 – initial pilot test and development of evaluations at Derby

Spring 2020 – full pilots at a small number of volunteer units

Autumn \ winter 2020 – open for applications



Evaluation

3 types of audit common in sector

1. Quality assurance
2. Improvement
3. Combination of above

Our intention is to go with option 3 but with most of our focus on improvement, working with universities in a process of mutual investigation



A few early headlines

A significant number of universities are already working towards a genuine whole university approach to mental health

A clear need to better define the role and boundaries of universities in this area

Staff and students see clear links between learning, teaching and mental health

There are clear links between staff and student wellbeing

Marketization of HE appears to have created narratives that are not helping the mental health of our communities

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Conclusion



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