

# REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

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| <b>Subject:</b> Student Mental Health Agreement   | <b>Purpose:</b><br><b>For Approval</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br><b>For Discussion</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br><b>For Information</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Prepared by:</b> Amy Brydon  | <b>Date:</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> February 2020  |
| <b>Purpose:</b> To present the Student Mental Health Agreement 2020 for approval.   |   |
| <b>Linked to Strategic Goal 2: Deliver successful outcomes for all our learners.</b>  |   |
| <b>Executive Summary:</b><br><br><p>Student Mental Health Agreements are a requirement of all college Outcome Agreements and should support and compliment the college's mental health and wellbeing strategy.</p> <p>The Student Mental Health Agreement outlines the way in which the College and the Students' Association will work together to improve the mental health and wellbeing of students.</p> <p>The various work streams outlined in the agreement are outlined below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement ongoing campaigns to promote wellbeing and raise awareness of mental health challenges relevant to students</li> <li>Provide training opportunities to enhance the capacity of staff and student representatives to identify and support students who are experiencing mental ill-health.</li> </ul> <p>Focus on preventative aspects of mental health and wellbeing to raise overall awareness of mental health issues and help students self-manage their mental health</p> |   |
| <b>Recommendation:</b> To be approved.  |   |
| <b>Previous Committee Approvals:</b><br>At the point of submission, the agreement was awaiting approval by the Equalities and Inclusion Committee. This is required before Board ratification.  |   |
| <b>For publication</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  | <b>For publication with redactions</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not for publication</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   |

## **Borders College Student Mental Health Agreement 2019-20**

The Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) project has been hosted by NUS Scotland since 2015 under the Think Positive campaign. The Borders College SMHA outlines the range of mental health initiatives the College and Students' Association will work on together throughout the 2019-20 session.

The requirement to develop a SMHA is now included in all college outcome agreements. The SMHA should support and compliment the Borders College Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy<sup>1</sup> which encompasses the aims for Borders College in relation to driving improvements to student mental health and wellbeing.

In 2020 Borders College committed to the creation of a new Mental Health Wellbeing Officer post which will enable improved access to counselling support for students and provide additional capacity to develop and deliver a range of wellbeing activities.

The working streams for the 2019/20 SMHA are outlined below. They were developed through consultation with student representatives, Student Officers, the SMHA working group and the Equalities and Inclusion Committee;

### **1. Develop and implement ongoing campaigns to promote wellbeing and raise awareness of mental health challenges relevant to students<sup>2</sup>.**

These events and activities will encourage students to engage in open dialogue about mental health, access support services and learn about the benefits of mental health self-management. Events will be coordinated by the Students' Association in partnership with the college where participation from students and staff is expected. This will work towards a college environment of understanding, support and acceptance.

#### **Actions to be taken:**

- Complete a mapping exercise to identify key issues faced by students throughout the year (e.g. debt, funding applications, relationships) in order to identify the important themes for different stages in the year
- Contact organisations and individuals who are able to support activity
- Develop and implement evaluation activities to aid future developments
- Liaise with Mental Health Wellbeing Officer to provide additional support for the development and delivery of activities

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<sup>1</sup> Borders College Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019)

[http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/downloads/mental\\_health\\_and\\_well\\_being\\_strategyoctober2019v2.pdf](http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/downloads/mental_health_and_well_being_strategyoctober2019v2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Links to themes 2, 3, 5 & 6 within the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

**2. Provide training opportunities to enhance the capacity of staff and student representatives to identify and support students who are experiencing mental ill-health.<sup>3</sup>**

Training will aid the development of a consistent approach to providing mental health support, ensuring that all students have positive experiences when making disclosures to staff.

**Actions to be taken:**

- Online mental health modules to be made available to all staff within the suite of Engage induction modules
- Make Scottish Mental Health First Aid Training available to all staff.
- Organise Scottish Mental Health First Aid Training for Class Representatives.
- Develop policy to provide guidance for staff supporting transgender and gender diverse students

**3. Focus on preventative aspects of mental health and wellbeing to raise overall awareness of mental health issues and help students self-manage their mental health.<sup>4</sup>**

By creating opportunities for students to access information, skills and techniques that can prevent or alleviate the impact of mental ill-health we aim to build a more resilient and independent student community.

**Actions to be taken:**

- Ensure a range of wellbeing support options are accessible to students on the student portal
- Recruitment of Mental Health Wellbeing Officer with responsibility to develop and implement activities to support improved mental health and wellbeing.
- Promote the Big White Wall as a self-help resource for students
- Investigate the opportunity to deliver a suite of mental health self-management courses
- Develop a student mental health forum to drive improvements in local mental health support
- Deliver a range of wellbeing initiatives in conjunction with Borders College Students' Association

Ann Letham  
Student President

Angela Cox  
Principal

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<sup>3</sup> Links to themes 4 & 5 within the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

<sup>4</sup> Links to themes 2, 3 & 5 within the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy