

Mental health

Toolkit for students' unions

October 2018

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Foreword



I have made mental health my priority campaign as NUS Wales President this year. I know that improving mental health services for students is also a priority for many officers right across Wales.

The theme of this year's World Mental Health Day on 10 October is **Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World**.

Poor mental health can affect any one at any time, for any reason or no reason at all.

But being a young person and/or a student in today's world can be a particularly difficult experience. Starting a course of education can be very stressful for a number of reasons: financial pressure, social pressure, academic pressure.

That's aside from any personal or family-related issues, as well as the wider stresses that are unfortunately part and parcel of being a young person today such as the unrealistic ideals of beauty often portrayed in the media and the scourge of cyber-bullying.

On top of that, too many women, people of colour, LGBT+ people, and disabled people still face unacceptable barriers and oppression, which contribute to the state of their mental health.

A lot of progress has undoubtedly been made in recent years, and I am happy that more and more people feel able to speak openly about their experience of mental ill health. But we need to keep up the momentum, and keep improving.

That is why I am proud that we as a student movement are prioritising this issue. By standing together and speaking with one voice, we are telling decision-makers—be they in our colleges or universities, our GP surgeries or hospitals, or our county halls or parliaments—that we demand better services and better support.

To mark World Mental Health Day on 10 October, I am pleased to provide you with this toolkit to help you get involved locally. I hope you will find it useful.

Thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Gwyneth'.

Gwyneth Sweatman
NUS Wales President

About our campaign

I am focussing my efforts in this area in two streams of work.

Working with partners to improve services in universities

- Working with HEFCW to improve mental health support and services in universities'

Student-led campaigning for better services across Wales

- Convening a Mental Health Advisory Group
- Reviewing services across Wales
- Making recommendations for improvements across Wales

My Mental Health Advisory Group is in its early stages. This group will advise me on student mental health issues, and will bring its perspectives from across Wales to our review of services and recommendations for improvements.

I am aiming for this group to have as wide a reflection across Wales as possible – as many students' unions as possible, and representation from each of our Liberation campaigns.

Over the next few months, I will be working with my Mental Health Advisory Group to establish a number of questions which we want to answer, and a set of measurements for students' experience of mental health services.

We will then compile this into a short report and recommendations which we will present to decision-makers.

If you are an officer, a student, or even a staff member in a students' union, and are interested in mental health, please do get in touch to get involved.

**President's Advisory Group
on Mental Health**

About World Mental Health Day

What is World Mental Health Day?

World Mental Health Day was observed for the first time on 10 October 1992. It was started as an annual activity of the World Federation for Mental Health by the then Deputy Secretary General Richard Hunter. The day is officially commemorated every year on October 10th.

The day is all about promoting global mental health education, awareness of mental health, and advocacy against social stigma.

In recent years, World Mental Health Day themes have included:

- 2010 Mental Health and Chronic Physical Illnesses
- 2011 The Great Push: Investing in Mental Health
- 2012 Depression: A Global Crisis
- 2013 Mental Health and Older Adults
- 2014 Living with Schizophrenia
- 2015 Dignity in Mental Health
- 2016 Psychological and Mental Health First Aid
- 2017 Mental Health in the Workplace

Although World Mental Health Day itself is marked on 10 October, the World Federation for Mental Health are keen to stress that it isn't just a one-day event. Awareness of mental health issues happens, and must continue to happen, throughout the year.

World Mental Health Day 2018 will show the importance of creating more services and better care for our young people, and the issues they are experiencing the most these days. The acts of prevention, early interventions, resilience, available information and services are the key factors in creating a healthy future for our young people.

World Federation for Mental Health



Facts and figures

1 in 4 people have a mental health problem.

- Office for National Statistics, Psychiatric Morbidity (2007)

The overall cost of mental health problems in Wales is an estimated £7.2 billion a year.

- Mental Health Research Network (2009), Promoting mental health and preventing mental illness: the economic case for investment in Wales

By 2020 mental ill health related problems will be second to heart disease as the leading contributor to the global burden of disease.

- World Health Organization

53% of Welsh women suffer from low level mental health problems.

- Women Like Me, Supporting Wellbeing in Girls and Women, Platform 51 (2011)

Self-harm is a significant problem in Wales, as a result there are 6,000 emergency admissions to hospital per year.

- Talk to Me, Suicide and Self Harm reduction strategy for Wales (2008)

300 people die by suicide each year in Wales, 150,000 have thoughts of suicide.

- Talk to Me, Suicide and Self Harm reduction strategy for Wales (2008)

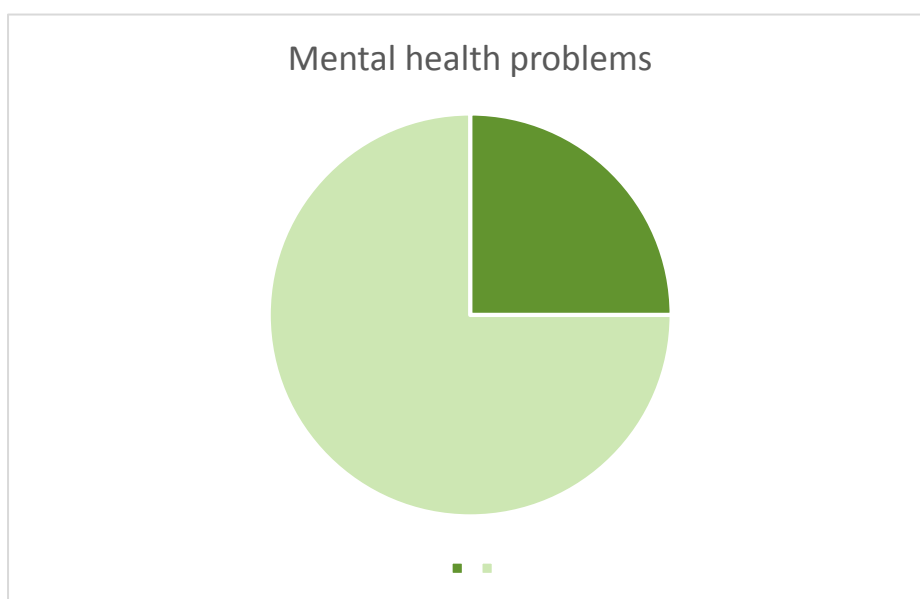
In 2010-11 there were 11,198 admissions (excluding place of safety detentions) to mental health facilities in Wales.

- Admission of Patients to Mental Health Facilities, 2010-11, Welsh Government (2011)

The rate of suicide for men in Wales is higher than UK average.

- Talk to Me, Suicide and Self Harm reduction strategy for Wales (2008)

All facts and figures sourced from <http://www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/mental-health-stigma/stigma-statistics/>.



Did you know that 1 in 4 people (25%) has a mental health problem?

Dealing with mental health

Your own mental health

If you or another person are at immediate risk of harm or death, you should call 999.

Although poor mental health can affect any one at any time, for any reason or no reason at all, there are steps that we can all take to improve our own mental health. The Mental Health Foundation recommends:

- Talking about your feelings
- Keeping active
- Eating well
- Drinking sensibly
- Keeping in touch with family and friends
- Asking for help
- Taking a break
- Doing something you're good at
- Accepting who you are
- Caring for others

For more information, visit <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health>.

Supporting others

If you or another person are at immediate risk of harm or death, you should call 999.

While not everyone is a qualified mental health practitioner, there are a number of small steps we can all take to support others who are experiencing poor mental health. If someone tells you that they are experiencing poor mental health, you could try:

- Listening
- Offering them your reassurance
- Staying calm
- Being patient
- Trying not to make assumptions
- Keeping in contact with them

More practically, you could try:

- Finding information that might be helpful to them
- Helping them to write down a list of questions
- Helping them to arrange their paperwork
- Helping them to arrange appointments
- Attending appointments with them
- Learning more about the problem they are experiencing

It's also worth remembering that simply **listening** can be a great help. Many people experiencing poor mental health report afterwards that they appreciated someone listening to them and not judging, and that this has helped their recovery.

It's also useful to simply ask the person how you can help them. You can't force them to talk to you and you can't force them to get help, but what you can do is let them know that you're there for them.

For more information, visit <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/helping-someone-else-seek-help/#.W6yx6Hv0mUk>.

If you need urgent support

If you or another person are at immediate risk of harm or death, you should call 999.

Samaritans

Telephone 08457 90 90 90 (24 hours a day)

Email jo@samaritans.org

Website www.samaritans.org

Provides confidential, non-judgmental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. You can phone, email, write a letter or in most cases talk to someone face to face.

CALL (Community Advice and Listening Line)

Telephone 0800 132 737

Website www.callhelpline.org.uk

Offers emotional support and information/literature on Mental Health and related matters to the people of Wales. Anyone concerned about their own mental health or that of a relative or friend can access the service. C.A.L.L. Helpline offers a confidential listening and support service.

NHS Direct Wales

Telephone 0845 4647

Website www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Health advice 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Meic Cymru

Telephone 0808 80 23456 (8am – midnight, seven days a week)

Text 84001

Website www.meiccymru.org

Meic is a confidential, free helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. You can call, text or instant message them in Welsh or English for support, advice and information.

Mind Infoline

Telephone 0300 123 3393 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday)

Email info@mind.org.uk

Website www.mind.org.uk

Mind provides confidential mental health information services. With support and understanding, Mind enables people to make informed choices. The Infoline gives information on types of mental distress, where to get help, drug treatments, alternative therapies and advocacy. Mind also has a network of nearly 200 local Mind associations providing local services.

Rethink Mental Illness Advice Line

Telephone 0845 456 0455 (10am-1pm Monday to Friday)

Email info@rethink.org

Website www.rethink.org

Provides expert advice and information to people with mental health problems and those who care for them, as well as giving help to health professionals, employers and staff. Rethink also runs Rethink services and groups across England and Northern Ireland.

Saneline

Telephone 0845 767 8000 (6pm-11pm)

Website www.sane.org.uk

Saneline is a national mental health helpline providing information and support to people with mental health problems and those who support them. If you're a carer needing support you can contact all of the above as well as Carers Direct and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, both of whom are able to provide support and advice on any issues affecting you.

Template letter to your Vice-chancellor

How to use this template

You could amend this letter so that it suits your own campus and reflects your own relationship with your own Vice-chancellor. Feel free to remove or add anything you feel appropriate.

Dear Vice-chancellor,

You may be aware that Wednesday 10 October 2018 is World Mental Health Day. The theme of this year's World Mental Health Day is Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World.

Around the globe, people will be marking this important day and calling for better support and services for young people experiencing poor mental health.

Here in Wales, I am supporting the work of NUS Wales, who are forming a national campaign for improved mental health services, and are already working with HEFCW and other partners to improve what support is available at Wales' universities.

On our campus, you will know that mental health is an issue which is very important to us as a students' union and to the students we represent.

I know you will share my view that it is incumbent upon us all to support students who are experiencing poor mental health as best as we can.

That is why I invite you to support these five principles of student mental health provision which NUS Wales is setting out to mark World Mental Health Day:

- Being at university should not inherently contribute to poor mental health.
- All students should be able to access the support and services they need.
- There should be as few barriers to mental health support as possible.
- Students should be equal partners in shaping their own mental health services.
- Everyone in the university community should feel equipped to manage their mental health.

Over the next few months, students from all across Wales will be working with NUS Wales to review mental health services nationally and produce a set of recommendations for government.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about this work.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

SU President

Template letter to your local AMs

How to use this template

You could amend this letter so that it suits your own community. Feel free to remove or add anything you feel appropriate. The areas in red are where you should input the correct or relevant information about your students' union.

Students' union name
Students' union address

Date

Assembly Member's name
National Assembly for Wales
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

Dear Assembly Member's name,

Re: World Mental Health Day 2018

I am writing to you ahead of World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2018. The theme of this year's World Mental Health Day is Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World.

As you will know, today's young people face many challenges: financial pressure, social and family pressure, pressure in education. What's more, poor mental health can happen to anyone at any time, for any reason or no reason at all. It's not an easy world in which to be a young person or student.

Mental health is a national priority of NUS Wales, and it is an area of significant concern for us at Students' Union name too. In the last few years on our campus, we have done...

- List some activities that your students' union has undertaken relating to mental health
- For example, have you campaigned for a specific policy?
- Do you have any student-led mental health services or societies?

I would be very pleased to meet with you to discuss some of this work.

We are also supporting NUS Wales' work in this area, and have written to our Vice-chancellor asking them to support NUS Wales' five general principles of student mental health provision:

- Being at university should not inherently contribute to poor mental health.
- All students should be able to access the support and services they need.
- There should be as few barriers to mental health support as possible.
- Students should be equal partners in shaping their own mental health services.
- Everyone in the university community should feel equipped to manage their mental health.

Over the coming months, students from across Wales will be working with NUS Wales to review mental health services and will be producing a set of recommendations for government.

I hope that we can count on your support for the five general principles noted above, and for our ongoing work in this area, both locally and nationally.

Yours sincerely,

SU President

Politicians' contact details

Each university is represented by a constituency Assembly Member, four regional Assembly Members, and one Member of Parliament. Please send your letter to all of them.

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Template Student Council motion

How to use this template

You could amend this motion so that it matches the format used by your students' union. Feel free to amend, remove, or add anything that makes this appropriate for your students' union.

World Mental Health Day 2018

Student council notes:

1. 10 October is World Mental Health Day.
2. 1 in 4 people has a mental health problem.
3. Poor mental health is a significant barrier to education.
4. Poor mental health can happen to anyone at any time, for any reason or no reason at all.

Student council believes:

1. Being at university should not inherently contribute to poor mental health.
2. All students should be able to access the support and services they need.
3. There should be as few barriers to mental health support as possible.
4. Students should be equal partners in shaping their own mental health services.
5. Everyone in the university community should feel equipped to manage their mental health.

Student council resolves:

1. To call on the university to invest in mental health services on campus.
2. To call on the university to ensure that frontline academic and non-academic staff are equipped to respond to student mental health issues.
3. To call on decision-makers in our community and nationally to ensure that students are able to access well-resourced mental health services when they need them.

Student council further resolves:

1. To mark and support World Mental Health Day 2018.
2. To support NUS Wales' national mental health campaign.

Template email to students

How to use this template

You could amend this email and send it your students in a formal mailout from your students' union. Feel free to add or remove anything that makes it more appropriate for your students. Please pass this on to your communications staff. It would be a good idea to send this email on World Mental Health Day on 10 December.

Hey [insert name field]

Today is World Mental Health Day. People across the world are coming together to raise awareness about mental health, and call for better services.

The theme for this year's World Mental Health Day is Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World. So let's face it, we all know that being a young person or a student in today's world isn't easy.

But did you know that poor mental health can happen to anyone at any time, for any reason or no reason at all? That's why it's so important that well-resourced mental health support and services are available for whenever you need them.

Here at **Students' Union name**, we have...

- List some of the services that are available to students at your students' union
- These could include services which the students' union itself provides, or within the university or wider community

We're also supporting NUS Wales who are going to be reviewing mental health services across Wales this year, and making a set of recommendations to government.

If you're looking for support for your own mental health, there are a number of places you could turn to:

- List any counselling services in your university
- List any local services you know of
- Choose some of the other services listed on pp. 7-8

Or if you're just interested and want to find out more about mental health, try visiting:

- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>
- <http://www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Remember, if you or another person are at risk of immediate harm or death, you should call 999.





Wishing you a happy and meaningful World Mental Health Day,

SU President

Content plan

How to use this plan

Please use this plan on your students' union's corporate social media channels and/or on your own channels. It would be a good idea to pass this on to your communications staff.

Day	English	Welsh	Graphic
Weds 10 October - morning	Today is #WorldMentalHealthDay. Did you know that 1 in 4 people have a mental health problem? Find some tips on how to manage your mental health at https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health .	Heddiw yw Diwrnod Iechyd Meddwl y Byd. Wyddech chi fod gan 1 ymhob 4 o bobl problem iechyd meddwl? Cewch wybod sut i reoli'ch iechyd meddwl yma: https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-to-mental-health . #WorldMentalHealthDay	 The graphic features the NUS Wales logo and the title 'World Mental Health Day'. It states that 16 October is World Mental Health Day and that this year's theme is 'Young People and Mental Health is a Changing World'. It mentions a long way in understanding mental health and the need to go further. It calls on the Welsh student movement to stand together to break down the stigma of poor mental health and to demand better services and support.
Weds 10 October - afternoon	This #WorldMentalHealthDay we're proud to support @NUSWales' call for well-resourced student mental health services. Let us know what you think!	Ar y Diwrnod Iechyd Meddwl y Byd hwn rydym yn falch o gefnogi galwad @UCMCymru am wasanaethau iechyd meddwl i fyfyrwyr ag adnoddau digonol. Rhowch wybod beth yw'ch barn! #WorldMentalHealthDay	 The graphic features the NUS Wales logo and the title 'Mental health'. It lists signs of poor mental health: feeling all the time like a wall, not knowing what to do, not being able to sleep, not being able to eat, not being able to study, and not being able to enjoy life. It encourages students to talk to someone about their feelings and to seek help if needed. It also mentions that some people may have mental health problems and that it's important to get help if you're struggling. It ends with the hashtag #WorldMentalHealthDay.
Thurs 11 October	Poor mental health can happen to anyone at any time, for any reason or no reason at all. But there are some steps we can all take to better manage our mental health... #WorldMentalHealthDay	Gall iechyd meddwl gwael ddigwydd i unrhyw un ar unrhyw bryd, am unrhyw reswm neu ddim rheswm o gwbl. Ond mae rhai camau gallwn oll eu cymryd i reoli ein hiechyd meddwl yn well... #WorldMentalHealthDay	 The graphic features the NUS Wales logo and the title 'Managing your mental health'. It lists several tips: Talk about your feelings, Keep active, Eat well, Drink sensibly, Keep in touch with family and friends, Ask for help, Take a break, Do something you're good at, Accept who you are, and Care for others. It ends with the hashtag #WorldMentalHealthDay.
Fri 12 October	Sometimes, just listening can help someone who's experiencing poor mental health. Here are some other things you could do... #WorldMentalHealthDay	Weithiau, gall gwrandao fod yn help mawr i rhywun sy'n profi iechyd meddwl gwael. Dyma rhai pethau eraill gallwch eu gwneud... #WorldMentalHealthDay	 The graphic features the NUS Wales logo and the title 'Supporting others' mental health'. It lists several ways to help: Listen and offer them your reassurance, Stay calm and be patient, Try not to make decisions for them, Keep in contact with them, Find a few minutes that might be helpful to them, Help them to write down a list of questions, Help them to arrange responses and appointments, Attend appointments with them, and Learn more about the problems they are experiencing. It ends with the hashtag #WorldMentalHealthDay.

All graphics are available to download [here](#).

Contact

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with us.

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