

# HEALTH, WELLBEING AND FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY



## Policy Review

Author/Owner	Position	Approved by:	Approval Date	Review Cycle Review Date	Published on Website Y/N
Tina Callow	Head of Student Support	SMT		March Annually	Y

## Document Control – Revision History

Author/Owner	Summary of Changes	Date	Date last reviewed by SED	Version	Recommend to SED Y/N
Michelle Dennett		23.05.17	-		Yes
Michelle Dennett	Changed Work Experience Manager to Director of Employee Engagement. Add SMT Signature	23.02.21			
Michelle Joy	Adapted and update with minor changes due to role changes and increased use of ILP	10.1.22			
Sian Deasy	Amended formatting in line with Accessibility good practice. Addition of examples of where Level 2 or 3 referral may occur. Clarity of timelines to notify students of Level 2 or 3 meetings, and process for requesting a support person. Clarity of process for reduction of monitoring post-return to studies if appropriate. Clarity of where mental or physical health may be considered a disability in line with Equality Act. Consistency of language around student/learner. Clarity of how a non-staff member of the College community could raise a concern under this Policy. Addition of Appendix 1 (YCUC Approach to Suicide Prevention).	12.07.23		v1	
Donna Short	Minor updates	21/6/24		v1.1	
Donna Short/Sian Pering	Minor updates and removal of COVID 19 section	15/5/25			

Initial Equality Impact Screening					
<b>Has anyone else been consulted on this policy and/or procedure?</b>					
<b>What evidence has been used for this impact screening (e.g. related policies, publications)?</b>					
<b>Declaration (please tick one statement and indicate any negative impacts)</b>					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I am satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this Policy and/or Procedure and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. There are no specific negative impacts on any of the Protected Characteristics groups.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	I recommend that an Equality Impact Assessment is required by the Equality and Diversity group, as possible negative impacts have been identified for one or more of the Protected Characteristics groups as follows:				
	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Age Disability Gender Reassignment Race Religion or belief Sex Sexual orientation Marriage & civil partnership Pregnancy & maternity			
<b>Completed by:</b>	Donna Short	<b>Position:</b>	VP Q/E	<b>Date:</b>	15/5/25
Reviewed by Equality & Diversity Group: YES/ <b>NO</b> <span style="float: right;">If Yes: Date:</span>					
I confirm that any recommended amendments have been made					
<b>Summary of Comments including Recommendations from Equality &amp; Diversity Group Review:</b>					
<b>Amended by Author:</b>		<b>Position:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

## CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY .....	4
2. SCOPE.....	4
3. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY .....	5
4. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS .....	6
5. FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE .....	6
6. LEVELS OF CONCERN .....	8
7. LEVEL 1 .....	8
8. LEVEL 2 Level 2 can be triggered either:.....	10
9. LEVEL 3 .....	12
10. RETURNING TO STUDY .....	14
11. LEARNER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PROCESS .....	15
APPENDIX 1 .....	16
YCUC Approach to Suicide Prevention.....	16

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- 1.1. To ensure Yeovil College adheres to its legal obligation and social responsibilities in relation to the health and wellbeing of its learners and staff.
- 1.2. Yeovil College is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all learners and staff. The importance of providing a learning environment which promotes health, safety and wellbeing is enshrined in the College's values and strategic plan. We will promote opportunities for learners and staff to thrive and benefit from their learning or employment experience.
- 1.3. Learners and staff are encouraged to disclose any disability, learning difficulty, health condition, or other issue to the College, either pre or post admission, to enable the College to make reasonable adjustments to meet their needs and enhance their learning or employment experience. In line with the Equality Act (2010) this may include where a physical and / or mental impairment is classified as a disability, as it has a substantial, adverse, and long-term effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 1.4. The Fitness to Study Procedure (Section 5 onwards) will enable Tutors, Study Programme Managers and Curriculum Area Managers to support learners with their learning and their wellbeing as far as is reasonable. The framework also provides support for learners to meet Awarding Body requirements and current Education and Skills Funding Agency rules.
- 1.5. Maternity is supported under a separate policy (which can be found in the 'Policies and Reports' section of the College website<sup>1</sup> for students, or SharePoint Policies section for staff), however, post-natal health and wellbeing may be considered as part of fitness to study.
- 1.6. Any information related to health, wellbeing, or fitness to study will be treated in such a way to ensure that the College's guidelines on confidentiality are maintained.

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1. The College is a diverse community, encompassing both Yeovil College (YC) and Yeovil College University Centre (YCUC) learners across both full and part time programmes, as well as apprentices and work-based learners. Learners of all types may be expected to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/>

engage in learning tasks remotely, including taught sessions or self-directed study outside of their timetabled hours. Yeovil College is committed to improving best practice throughout the organisation and ensuring that the health and wellbeing of learners is embedded into the delivery of programmes, enrichment activities and general services. This means that learners are encouraged to make positive and healthy choices around their physical, mental, emotional, and sexual health, that empower them to thrive (including refraining from the misuse of substances).

- 2.2. The College has a diverse workforce and is committed to ensuring that we maintain a healthy and safe environment and support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of staff during their employment, as well as the wider community who support the pastoral and learning experiences of our learners.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY**

- 3.1. It is the responsibility of all members of the College community, including learners, staff, and employers, to appropriately report any concerns surrounding the health or wellbeing of themselves, a learner, or colleague, to allow for appropriate support to be put in place and / or action to be taken. In most cases, a learner should report any concern to their tutor or another appropriate member of staff, a member of staff should report a concern to either their line manager or the tutor / study programme manager of the learner in question, and an employer should report a concern to their point of contact at the College. Where a concern is related to safeguarding, appropriate reporting channels as outlined in the Safeguarding & Prevent Policy<sup>2</sup> should be followed, including contacting the College's Safeguarding phone for urgent concerns (07973 898849), available during college opening hours). Please note that where a concern about mental or physical health is severe or substantial, it may be necessary to seek immediate support, which may include accessing First Aid in line with the relevant Health & Safety Policy<sup>3</sup>, or contacting the emergency services.
- 3.2. Whilst ultimate responsibility for this Policy and associated Procedure rests with the Principal and Governing Body, a range of committees, groups, and internal postholders support its effective delivery, including:
  - 3.2.1. Safeguarding Group
  - 3.2.2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/>

<sup>3</sup> The College's Health & Safety Policy is available at <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/>

- 3.2.3. Health and Safety Committee
- 3.2.4. Head of Student Services Vice Principal Quality of Education
- 3.2.5. Quality Manager

#### **4. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 This policy is supported by a range of other processes, including those listed below. College policies and procedures can be found in the 'Policies and Reports' section of the College website<sup>4</sup>.
- 1. Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Procedure
  - 2. Drugs, Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy
  - 3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure
  - 4. Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure (including complaints)
  - 5. Admissions Policy
  - 6. Attendance Policy and Procedure
  - 7. Respect at College Policy
  - 8. Learner Disciplinary Policy
  - 9. Student Maternity Policy
  - 10. HE Withdrawal and Temporary Suspension of Studies Policy
  - 11. Equality Act (2010)
  - 12. Office of the Independent Adjudicator – Good Practice Guidance – Requests for Additional Consideration<sup>5</sup>

#### **5. FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE**

- 5.1. The College has a duty of care to ensure that learners are fit to study their chosen programme and engage with their student experience. This procedure can be followed when there are concerns that a learner's mental or physical health is affecting their ability to participate fully and effectively in relation to their studies, and / or life generally within the College. This procedure may also be followed as an alternative to disciplinary action if there is a concern about the impact of a learner's health, wellbeing, or behaviour on their own safety or the safety of others, or their behaviour is diminishing the learning experience for other learners.
- 5.2. Instances in which the Fitness to Study Procedure might also be implemented include:

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/requests-for-additional-consideration/annex-1-support-for-study-processes/>

- 5.2.1. where there are a number of concerning reports regarding a learner's health, wellbeing, and / or behaviour, from a third party e.g. another learner, friends, Curriculum staff or external agencies, and / or
  - 5.2.2. a learner has not engaged in studies for a significant period, or their pattern of engagement is irregular or erratic, and / or
  - 5.2.3. where a learner is receiving a level of pastoral/wellbeing support beyond that which could be reasonably provided, and / or
  - 5.2.4. there is concern about how a learner might manage or engage whilst on placement or a field trip.
- 5.3. This procedure promotes good working practices with learners in difficulty or with a disability, learning difficulty, or health condition. It also provides guidance to ensure that problematic situations are managed sensitively and consistently. The guidance outlines the procedures necessary to respond swiftly to those occurrences when a learner presents as unwell and their ability to study may be compromised.

## **GUIDELINES**

These guidelines clarify a suitable response by curriculum and support staff in circumstances where there is concern regarding a learner's engagement with studies or student life related to their health, wellbeing, or fitness to study. This may arise when a learner's behaviour requires considered and sensitive management rather than disciplinary sanction. It may also be appropriate to refer a learner through to this process if concerns have been raised through a disciplinary process, but it is felt that a fitness to study process is the more appropriate way to proceed. As part of the fitness to study process the College will discuss reasonable adjustments where required. Any reasonable adjustments would be considered in terms of what is permitted by awarding organisations and accountable bodies, and what is reasonable and feasible in terms of factors such as timetabling and the availability of support. If a suggested adjustment is not considered reasonable or is not permitted by appropriate awarding organisations or accountable bodies, the College will try to find and suggest alternatives.

- 5.4. These guidelines recommend a co-ordinated approach to the management of a situation where mental, physical, or emotional health:
- 5.4.1. may not permit a learner to benefit from the educational opportunities afforded to them at a particular time, and / or

- 5.4.2. may not permit a learner to engage with their learning in the format that it is currently being offered, and / or
- 5.4.3. is adversely affecting the experience of others, including other learners, staff, tutors, placement supervisors, or other people the learner is working alongside as part of their learning experience, and / or
- 5.4.4. requires support at a level that has extended beyond that which can reasonably be expected of the College, and / or
- 5.4.5. impacts on their working environment as part of their apprenticeship or work-based learning programme.

5.5. These guidelines consider the appropriateness of referring a learner onto other agencies.

## **6. LEVELS OF CONCERN**

- 6.1. This procedure has three levels of concern.
- 6.2. The nature of the cause for concern can result in entering the procedure at any level, although it is hoped that most situations can be remedied by action taken at Levels 1 or 2.
- 6.3. Concerns about a learner's health or behaviour should be acted upon promptly. Early action/intervention can often prevent a situation from developing into a crisis. Referral to the Student Support Team and access to emotional support, counselling or external agencies is part of early intervention.

## **7. LEVEL 1**

- 7.1. Concerns emerge about a learner's health, safety and / or ability to engage fully with their programme of study, learning opportunities on offer and / or wider student experience, including apprenticeship/work-based learning programmes, based upon deterioration in health, appearance, attitude, and / or behaviour.
- 7.2. Prior to approaching a learner, staff should be confident that the issue arising under this procedure is not one for which there is already an agreed reasonable adjustment in place.
- 7.3. For learners with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) or identified disability, the information outlined below must be given in



an accessible format. If unsure, tutors should consult with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) before proceeding for an adapted format to meet the individual need.

- 7.4. A member of staff who knows and works with the learner (typically the tutor) should approach the learner in a supportive way and indicate that there is a concern about the learner's fitness to study. Learners with an additional need who would usually receive in-class support, or who would reasonably require additional support to engage with the conversation (for example, a sign language interpreter), should be given the option for that support person to also be part of this conversation. The nature of the concern should be clearly identified. The tutor should also make perfectly clear that this is a supportive, not a disciplinary, process with the intention of allowing the learner to engage fully with their studies. **The tutor should ensure that the learner is given a copy of this policy so that they are aware of potential future steps.**
- 7.5. Tutors should direct learners to the appropriate resources to support them with any concerns that may arise (including the Wellbeing section on Moodle). With the learner's consent, their concerns can be referred through to the Student Support Team who will make contact with relevant external agencies working with the learner or complete external referrals. For Yeovil College University Centre (YCUC) learners, the learner should be signposted to contact the Head of Higher Education and Adult Learning if they have any concerns.
- 7.6. The learner and member of staff should agree on actions to be taken, and the learner should be sent an email or letter within 5 working days summarising the meeting and the actions that have been agreed. **This should also be recorded on the learner's Individualised Learning Plan (ILP).** If a learner is under 18, or under 25 if they have Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) which stipulates parent / carer involvement in communications (whether due to assessment under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 or any other reason), the appropriate parent / guardian should also be informed. The learner and staff member should also set a time for a further meeting to review the situation. The email or letter to the learner should clearly indicate the time and place of this review meeting. The learner should also be informed that the same or additional causes for concern could result in their fitness to study being more widely considered by moving to Level 2.

## **8. LEVEL 2**

### **Level 2 can be triggered either:**

8.1.1. As a result of continued concern, despite agreed reasonable adjustments being in place and the creation of an Action Plan at Level 1, about a learner's health, safety and / or ability to study, including for learners on apprenticeship/work-based learning programmes. This may include where an Action Plan from Level 1 has not been adhered to, where progress is not being made despite the measures set out in the Action Plan, or as a result of an ongoing deterioration in a learner's appearance, attitude, health and / or behaviour. If it is deemed that the continued decline is directly related to a lack of compliance to the actions set rather than, inability to engage with the support provided, the decision may be made to move forward using the College Learner disciplinary policy and procedure. This decision will be made by the member of staff conducting the meeting in conjunction with the SEND team or Student support where appropriate.

8.1.2. As a result of a staff member referring a learner in at Level 2 directly, as the level of concern warrants more serious intervention. This could include, but is not limited to, where concerns about a learner's health, wellbeing, or fitness to study may pose a risk to the safety of a learner or of others if they are not addressed promptly, and so moving straight to Level 2 prevents undue delay, or where the fitness to study procedure is being invoked in response to a learner having breached the Learner Disciplinary Policy.

8.2. The learner will be invited to attend a meeting with two appropriate members of staff, including the member of staff expressing concern (where appropriate). The learner should be invited and informed of the purpose of the meeting in writing at least 5 working days before the meeting date. In the invitation, the learner must be informed that they have the choice to bring a friend, family member, or mentor to the meeting to accompany them for support. Learners with an additional need who would usually receive in-class support, or who would reasonably require additional support to engage with the meeting (for example, a sign language interpreter), may also choose to request a support worker attends to support them in the meeting, or a learner with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) may request to be accompanied by the College Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), as appropriate to their needs. If a learner or their support person requires any further reasonable adjustments to be made to

engage with the meeting, they should contact the member of staff who has called the meeting to request this with as much notice as possible.

- 8.3. The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the learner's perception of the issues identified, to ensure that the learner clearly understands the College's expectations regarding fitness to study, and, to identify and agree on a plan of action moving forwards. This plan of action may include the introduction of short-term reasonable adjustments, where these would be permitted by awarding organisations and accountable bodies and would be reasonable and feasible in terms of factors such as timetabling and the availability of support.

Types of adjustments may be but not limited to

- Deadline extensions
- Minor adjustments to Timetabling
- Remote learning options
- Short term temporary suspension of study (ie due to family bereavement)
- Mentoring or additional support (academic or pastoral)

- 8.4. During the meeting, appropriate and proportionate evidence will be considered. This may include accounts from staff, learners, and other members of the College community. Where appropriate, evidence from external agencies or professionals with sufficient knowledge and understanding of the funding and rigour of study required of further / higher education learners will be considered, including GPs, CAMHS / AMHS, Social Workers and SEND teams. It may be necessary for some evidence to remain anonymous in the interests of protecting staff and learners, however, evidence will only be anonymised if there is a clear justification for this. Any evidence will be managed confidentially.
- 8.5. It will be important to identify and agree an action plan for next steps to be taken as part of the meeting. The consequences of not adhering to the action plan should be clearly outlined to the learner.
- 8.6. A short summary of the meeting, the agreed action plan, and the consequences of non-compliance should be sent to the learner within 3 working days of the meeting. **This should also be recorded on the Learner's ILP.** Regular review meetings should be set up with the learner with the Lead Tutor.

## 9. LEVEL 3

- 9.1. The most serious level of concern can be reached either:
- 9.1.1. Following progression from Levels 1 and / or 2.
  - 9.1.2. Via a member of staff triggering Level 3 directly if there are serious and significant concerns about the health and / or safety of a learner, including those studying on apprenticeship/work-based learning programmes. Examples of where a staff member might refer a learner straight to Level 3 of this process might include, but are not limited to, if there is serious concern about the risk a learner may pose to their own safety or the safety of others, or a learner experiences a health or wellbeing event that has a serious and immediate impact on their ability to engage with their programme of study and / or wider student experience (for example, a learner being involved in a serious accident that requires them to remain an inpatient in hospital for over a month) and it would cause undue delay that may serve to disadvantage the learner to have to progress through earlier stages of this process.
- 9.2. A case conference will be called by the Curriculum Area Manager to discuss an appropriate course of action. Members from the appropriate college teams who will contribute to the learner's support will be invited to attend. In some cases, the College may also request a representative from an external agency be invited to attend the meeting (for example, a Social Worker involved in supporting the learner in question). Notes should be taken at the meeting **and the outcome recorded on the learner's Individualised Learning Plan (ILP)**. The relevant Assistant Principal Curriculum should be informed of the meeting outcome.
- 9.3. The learner will also be invited to attend the case conference meeting and will be invited and informed of the purpose of the meeting in writing with at least five working days' notice. In the invitation, the learner must be informed that they have the option to bring a friend, family member, or mentor to the case conference meeting to accompany them for support. Learners with an additional need who would usually receive in-class support, or who would reasonably require additional support to engage with the meeting (for example, a sign language interpreter), may also choose to request a support worker attends to support them in the meeting, or a learner with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) may request to be accompanied by the College Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), as appropriate to their needs. If a learner or their support person requires any further reasonable adjustments to be made to engage

with the case conference meeting, they should contact the Curriculum Area Manager who has called the case conference to request this with as much notice as possible.

- 9.4. During the meeting, appropriate and proportionate evidence will be considered. This may include accounts from staff, learners, and other members of the College community. Where appropriate, evidence from external agencies or professionals with sufficient knowledge and understanding of the funding and rigour of study required of further / higher education learners will be considered, including GPs, CAMHS / AMHS, Social Workers and Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) teams. It may be necessary for some evidence to remain anonymous in the interests of protecting staff and learners, however, evidence will only be anonymised if there is a clear justification for this. Any evidence will be managed confidentially.
- 9.5. The case conference may consider various options including part time study, distance learning, moving to a different study programme, additional support, a period of interruption, or a recommendation for withdrawal of the learner. All options will be considered in terms of what is permitted by awarding organisations and accountable bodies, and what is reasonable and feasible in terms of factors such as timetabling and the availability of support. A reduced timetable would only be offered where feasible and permitted by accountable bodies and awarding organisations, and it would be important to be clear for how long a reduced timetable would be offered, and if there is an expectation that a learner will return to a full timetable, and if so, by when. It is important to be clear that it is not always possible to alter the mode of delivery for a programme (i.e. on-site / theory / practical / remote / self-directed study etc.)
- 9.6. The actions arising out of the case conference will be agreed, documented and circulated to all in attendance and to the learner, including representatives of any supporting external agencies who had been in attendance (for example, if a learner had brought an external support practitioner with them, or if the College had invited an external professional, such as a Social Worker, to attend). The actions, and the reasons why they have been agreed, should be written in straightforward language so the learner is clear as to the outcome reached. All actions should have specific time frames where appropriate and adherence to such timeframes will be a condition of any re-entry to programmes of study. **This should also be recorded on the learner's ILP.**
- 9.7. If the case conference considers that withdrawal or exclusion is the best course of action this must be approved by the Assistant Principal. A letter should be sent to the learner informing them of the decision.

- 9.8. If a learner is not satisfied with the response and wishes to appeal the outcome, then they should do so within 10 working days of receiving the outcome. A learner should appeal by making a formal written complaint in line with the College's Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure (including Complaints), available in the 'Policies and Reports' section of the College website<sup>6</sup>, and the learner should be clear in their correspondence that they are making this complaint to appeal the outcome of a Fitness to Study process. If a University Centre learner reaches the end of the College's Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure (including Complaints), they should be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter in line with Office for the Independent Adjudicator guidance.

## 10. RETURNING TO STUDY

- 10.1. The learner should be informed of the procedures to be followed for returning to study as soon as possible.
- 10.2. Each learner's case will vary depending upon the context and specific circumstances out of which the original concern arose. In all cases, return to study will be dependent upon evidence of fitness to study and of appropriate support systems. In some cases, medical evidence of the benefits of returning to study will be required. Evidence submitted must be from a recognised health worker such as a mental health professional, doctor or psychiatrist who has sufficient knowledge of the learner and the demands of further or higher education in order to make an informed decision regarding return to study. In particular, specific reference should be made to the learner's capacity to return to study.
- 10.3. The decision to allow return to study will be made by the Curriculum Area Manager, in consultation with appropriate departmental Heads. The Curriculum Area Manager must be assured of fitness to study, compliance with any conditions imposed, regulatory requirements, and the availability of support upon return. Where appropriate it may be necessary to undertake a risk assessment.
- 10.4. A learner may be offered an alternative course option more suited to their current needs as part of this process.
- 10.5. A learner's continued fitness to study should be monitored throughout the continuation of their studies. **This should also be recorded on the learner's Individualised Learning Plan (ILP).** Regular review meetings should be arranged with appropriate staff from the

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/>

learner's Curriculum Area so that learner progress can be monitored, and support regularly reviewed and modified if necessary. Over time, it may be appropriate to reduce the frequency of review meetings, or to eventually discontinue altogether, if both the learner and Curriculum Area Manager are in agreement that the learner is making good progress and there is no need for further intervention, monitoring, or support related to the learner's fitness to study.

- 10.6. When return to study is not deemed to be an option and the learner wishes to challenge this, the existing complaints and appeals policies and processes, as outlined in the 'Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure (Including Complaints)', available in the 'Policies and Reports' section of the College website<sup>7</sup>, should be followed.

## **11. LEARNER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PROCESS**

- 11.1. It is the expectation of the College that learners will engage fully with Fitness to Study processes and support made available both by the College and external partners. A learner's failure to engage with the Fitness to Study process, once reasonable adjustments have been made, may result in the College having to take disciplinary action against the learner.
- 11.2. A learner who discloses a health or wellbeing concern, but does not want support, must be made aware of the consequences of this which could include implications for reasonable adjustments including additional exam arrangements, reduced programme of study, continued ill-health, and wellbeing. If the offer of support is declined, **this should be recorded on the learner's Individualised Learning Plan (ILP)**. The member of staff should not make a referral for support without the learner's consent. However, there is an expectation that they will work together as a team in the Curriculum Area and inform the tutor/ lecturer/ lead tutor and Curriculum Area Manager as appropriate to ensure the health and wellbeing of the learner and their fitness to study.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.yeovil.ac.uk/policies-reports/>

## YCUC Approach to Suicide Prevention

In line with Office for Students (OfS) effective practice advice on how providers might approach and develop suicide prevention strategies, we have mapped our current approach and strategy at Yeovil College University Centre (YCUC) in line with OfS themes. This analysis has been undertaken giving thought to ways in which support can be most effectively provided in a small, non-residential, HE in FE provider.

### 1) **Take a whole provider approach.**

- a) Given our size, learner profile, and context, Suicide Prevention is embedded within our approach to Safeguarding. This ensures appropriate and robust oversight, as well as reducing the risk of confusion or failure to follow correct reporting mechanisms by introducing multiple approaches for different concern types.
- b) We use one central reporting mechanism for safeguarding concerns across all learners, levels and provision types. This system is used by all staff (curriculum, business support, and managerial) and is well-understood and included in mandatory annual training. Updates on the number of active safeguarding cases are shared in weekly management team meetings, as well as reported periodically to the Safeguarding Group.
- c) Dedicated Safeguarding Officers sit within our Student Experience team to manage all safeguarding reports and concerns and respond accordingly, including sharing concerns with relevant academic and support staff.
- d) The use of one central system, supported by designated staff, in a small college where bureaucratic barriers to communication are relatively low means that information-sharing is strong.
- e) Annual safeguarding training, along with additional bespoke training as required, means all staff are familiar with signs and indicators that a student might be at risk.
- f) Established attendance reporting mechanisms mean that follow-up action is taken where data suggests students may be disengaging from study.
- g) College Safeguarding Group, which includes in membership the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Safeguarding Officer, the Link Governor for Safeguarding, and other key strategic personnel, steer and monitor safeguarding work, including regular review of statistics pertaining to safeguarding concerns.
- h) A bespoke IT monitoring system (which, at the point of writing, is Smoothwall) alerts staff to any student IT usage that might suggest a student is at risk of harm.
- i) As outlined in more detail in Section 5, a range of mechanisms are in place to ensure clear visibility of support available to students, and how to request support, or report concerns about others.



- j) A joined-up approach to student support in Higher Education is implemented, ensuring all students who declare a mental health need at enrolment are provided with information about accessing in-house support, along with various self-help strategies, and support available through DSA. Student DSA information is shared with all relevant staff (with the learner's consent), and regular monitoring of outcomes for learners with DSA is in place.

**2) Ensure active and effective leadership.**

- a) The College Safeguarding Group, which includes in membership the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Safeguarding Officer, the Link Governor for Safeguarding, and other key strategic personnel, steer and monitor safeguarding work, including regular review of statistics pertaining to safeguarding concerns. This group meet regularly, as do the Safeguarding Sub-Working Group who are responsible for carrying out relevant actions related to safeguarding.

**3) Work in partnership with the wider community.**

- a) Our Student Services Team have strong links with a range of local charities, services and support networks to ensure learners are signposted to the most appropriate agency for their needs, including Kooth, Mind, and the Somerset Suicide Bereavement Service. Alongside this, signposting is available for all HE learners to self-refer to local NHS trusts to access wellbeing support.
- b) Our Head of Student Services works closely alongside the Somerset Suicide Bereavement Service and sits on the Children and Young People's mental health action group.

**4) Follow an evidence-based approach.**

- a) Student feedback on wellbeing support is sought at every Programme Team Meeting and every YCUC Student Voice meeting to monitor levels of student confidence in how to access support, if it is needed, and the quality of support available.
- b) HE student retention and outcomes data is regularly monitored and cross-referenced against learners accessing wellbeing support to closely track outcomes and success of interventions, as well as identifying where learners may have *not* accessed support and if this impacted upon outcomes.
- c) In 2021/22 we undertook a Wellbeing internal audit to better understand strengths and gaps in provision which identified many areas of strength and assurance in our existing work. This audit was then shared with a sub-committee of the College Corporation for oversight.
- d) Some of our Student Experience Team are ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) first aiders, and other relevant staff have completed online suicide prevention CPD.

#### **5) Centre on the needs of students.**

- a) There are a range of mechanisms in place for students to access wellbeing support. For HE learners, this support, including how to either contact a Student Support Officer directly or complete a self-referral form, is signposted every week in our weekly student bulletin to ensure this information is always accessible and top-of-mind. This also includes signposting to a range of wellbeing resources, and how to report safeguarding concerns about others.
- b) All students have information about safeguarding and how to access support or report a concern on their lanyards, which they must wear at all times whilst on-site.
- c) Across campus, there is a strategic and coordinated approach to signage, ensuring that 'Let's Talk About' noticeboards are regularly placed for students to access a range of wellbeing and mental health signposting.
- d) All learners have access to a dedicated wellbeing app to provide 24/7 support, and established information sharing mechanisms are in place so any concerns that might require escalation or follow-up action are shared with the College.
- e) Firewalls and IT monitoring technology restrict and report on access to information on suicide methods, allowing rapid follow-up from safeguarding staff.
- f) As a site with children and vulnerable adults, the whole site is risk assessed to be safe, including measures such as restrictors on windows, and policies surrounding locking of spaces when not in use. Daily duty managers, security staff and morning and lunchtime duty patrols ensure the site is well monitored, and staff can speak to any learners who appear upset, distressed, or otherwise cause concern.
- g) Information sharing is in line with our safeguarding policy, and specific consent to share forms are completed by learners accessing 1:1 pastoral support.
- h) Our attendance monitoring mechanisms and referrals for fitness to study include sending hard-copy correspondence to students' home addresses.
- i) Where appropriate, suicide and self-harm risk assessments are in place for learners, and these are shared with relevant curriculum, business-support, and management staff.

#### **6) Develop postvention plans and support.**

- a) Our Student Bereavement Policy outlines comprehensive support measures for those who might be impacted by bereavement, including specific guidance around referrals to Cruse and / or Suicide Bereavement Service if a student dies by suicide.
- b) Where appropriate, action would be taken to prevent risk of suicide contagion and to ensure all relevant lessons can be learned.