



UNIVERSITY  
*of York*

# 2020-21 Supporting students: a guide for staff

Your guide to helping students access the right support:

What should you look out for

What should you do

What happens next



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## Look after yourself

Supporting students can be rewarding but also challenging. Make sure you look after yourself as well. Take some time out and talk to a colleague. HR also provide a range of support including:

- [Mental Health First Aid Contacts](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#)
- [Occupational Health](#)

## Introduction

Any University of York staff member who interacts with students, regardless of their role, may be approached by a student and asked for help and advice. You are not expected to offer counselling or know the answer to every question but you should be able to signpost the student to the appropriate support services.

There is a lot of advice and guidance about [supporting students](#) available on the staff web pages. This guide summarises that advice so you can help students access the right specialist advice and support.

## Confidentiality

Information relating to students **must not be released to a third party outside the University** (including relatives) without the explicit consent of the student.

**If anyone makes a disclosure to you which indicates they or others are at risk of harm, you should pass this information onto the appropriate student support services.** The information will be treated as confidentially and as sensitively as possible.

Areas of increased risk of harm include :

1. Safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children (ie, students under 18)
2. Inappropriate relationships, including sexual assault
3. Abuse of trust
4. Prevent (radicalisation)
5. Complex mental health difficulties

## Support to study/attend

The University is committed to fostering a supportive community of learning where students are able to participate fully in their studies. You may want to complete the Support to Study/Attend Referral Form when:

- There are significant concerns about a student's ability to fulfil academic progress requirements without serious detriment to their own physical or mental health or the safety and wellbeing of other members of the University community
- Other support processes within the University have been offered and have been exhausted
- A student has been detained under a section of the Mental Health Act, taking into account considerations of capacity and the student's involvement in the support to study/attend procedure.

For more information about the policy and procedure, visit [Support to study/attend](#)

## Adjusting or returning to university

Starting university is a time of great change and for many students it will be their first time away from home. It can be quite bewildering and it's not unusual for students to feel lost, lonely or homesick. Students returning after breaks and second or third year students can also experience difficulties in transitioning, e.g. into off campus accommodation or just settling back into life at university.

### What should you look out for?

Students who feel they don't belong at university or that they don't fit in are likely to appear generally anxious or unhappy. They may be struggling to develop friendship networks.

### What should you do?

Colleges are key to helping students settle into university.

1. **Encourage the student to talk to their College team.**
2. **Share your concerns with the student's College Manager.**

All students ( living on or off campus) can arrange an appointment with their College team by completing the support form: <https://bit.ly/colleges-support>

### What happens next?

If the student contacts the College team, they will help the student identify the problem and create an action plan. They will also signpost the student to additional support if needed.

#### College Managers

**Alcuin** - Jenny Underhill

**Derwent** - Andrew Kerrigan

**Halifax** - Cath Dickinson/Auriel Hamilton

**Langwith** - Jonny Exon

**Wentworth** - Claire Anderson

**Constantine** - Jonny Lovell

**Goodricke** - Sarah Hay

**James** - Mike Britland

**Vanbrugh** - Georgina Heath

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The health and wellbeing of students, staff and visitors to campus is our first priority at all times, and especially so during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Lots of work has gone into making our campus and facilities covid-secure, but every one of us has a role to play in keeping ourselves - and those around us - as safe as possible.

### What should you look out for?

We're asking all staff and students to stay smart, supportive and safe. There is a lot of information about how to do this on the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#). It includes guidance on face-masks, social distancing, self-isolation and support. The situation is very fluid and can change very quickly so it is important to check the web pages regularly and read email updates.

Keep an eye out for students who are not wearing face masks when they should or gathering too closely together. Look out for symptoms of COVID-19: temperature, cough, or loss of taste or smell. Students should self-isolate if they:

- have symptoms
- live with someone who has symptoms or tests positive
- have recently traveled to the UK from a non-exempt country
- are contacted by either the University or the NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate

### What should you do?

#### **If students are not following the guidelines**

Remind them of the guidelines and ask them if they have completed the COVID-19 Community Safety Module on the VLE.

#### **If you think a student should be self-isolating**

Encourage the student to self-isolate and complete the [self-isolation report form](#). This is how they access support.

Tel: 01904 324140

Email: [student-hub@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-hub@york.ac.uk)

### What happens next?

After completing the student self-isolation report form the student will be contacted and provided advice, guidance and support. During self-isolation they will receive regular contact.

## Disability or long-term health condition

All students are entitled to an inclusive learning experience that removes barriers and enables participation. Some students declare a disability, some choose not to, and others may not have a diagnosis.

### What should you look out for?

Look out for students who regularly submit work late, seem to struggle with written elements of their course, display perfectionist tendencies or frustration at the marks they are receiving as they could potentially benefit from some additional support.

### What should you do?

Disabilities affect different people in different ways so the support offered by Disability Services is flexible and tailored to each individual. Students with disabilities should be directed to the [Student Disability Support webpage](#).

#### **Encourage the student to contact the Disability team.**

Web: [york.ac.uk/disability](http://york.ac.uk/disability)

Tel: 01904 324785

Email: [disabilityservices@york.ac.uk](mailto:disabilityservices@york.ac.uk)

### What happens next?

After contacting the team, the student will be asked for medical evidence of the disability and be allocated a Disabilities Adviser. The Disabilities Adviser will work with the student to develop a Student Support Plan and advise on accessing any support available through Disabled Students' Allowance.

# Discrimination or harassment

## What should you look out for?

Discriminatory behaviour or harassment can have a serious negative impact on an individual. It is morally and legally wrong and can also impact negatively on the whole University community. The University treats all cases seriously.

## What should you do?

- 1. If the student wishes to talk to someone for support and guidance.**  
Direct the student to a Student Adviser in the Student Hub.  
Web: [york.ac.uk/student-hub](http://york.ac.uk/student-hub)  
Tel: 01904 324140  
Email: [student-hub@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-hub@york.ac.uk)
- 2. If the student wishes to report the misconduct of another student.**  
Direct the student to the Report and Support tool  
<https://reportandsupport.york.ac.uk/>
- 3. If the student wishes to report the misconduct of a member of staff.**  
Direct the student to the complaints procedure.  
Web: [york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals/student-complaints](http://york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals/student-complaints)  
Tel: 01904 326507 - Sam McElhinney, Complaints Officer  
Email: [complaints@york.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@york.ac.uk)

## What happens next?

The Student Adviser will offer support and signpost the student to any relevant complaints procedures. If a student uses Report and Support and gives their contact details a member of staff will make contact to discuss their options. If the student reports anonymously we will use this information to better understand the issues impacting our University community, to monitor trends and inform proactive and preventative work.

## Financial problems or worries

### What should you look out for?

Students with money worries could have difficulties in concentrating on their day-to-day activities and making the most of their time at University. Students may come to you because they do not know who to speak to about their student loan, fees, bursaries or scholarships. Signs of worry or a drop in performance could indicate that your student is struggling financially.

The Student Support & Advice team provides specialist advice to students on a range of different University and practical matters. These include; Student Finance problems, money advice & financial hardship, private housing issues, benefit advice, academic progress advice and many other problems that students face during their studies.

### What should you do?

1. If the student or applicant is seeking general information about a finance issue Refer the student to the website.  
[york.ac.uk/students/finance/](http://york.ac.uk/students/finance/)
2. If the student wants to speak to a student finance specialist for advice about their individual circumstances, direct the student to the Student Hub.  
Web: [york.ac.uk/student-hub](http://york.ac.uk/student-hub)  
Tel: 01904 324140  
Email: [student-hub@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-hub@york.ac.uk)

Note: Giving advice about debt is an FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) regulated activity so should only be given by the Student Advisers in the Student Hub.

### What happens next?

The University's student finance specialists can advise on a wide range of issues and liaise directly with external organisations. In some circumstances, students may qualify for an emergency loan or the hardship fund.

## Mental health or psychological difficulty

We have a duty of care to provide support for students experiencing difficulties. Direct students with mild anxiety to their College team or the [health and wellbeing](#) web pages. If their emotions are overwhelming and impact on their studies signpost to additional support.

### What should you look out for?

**Ask yourself:** Is there a change? Do they seem different? Is there a difference in their work? Has their attendance dropped? Are they behaving in a way that indicates there is something wrong? **Ask them:** How are you, can I help?

### What should you do?

- 1. When a student requires support but is not at immediate risk**, contact the Student Wellbeing Officer (SWO) for your area.

**Central** area: Email [student-wellbeing-central@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-wellbeing-central@york.ac.uk)

Electronics, Mathematics, Physics, English, Psychology, Education, Politics, PEP, Social & Political Science, Philosophy, Economics

**North East** area: Email [student-wellbeing-northeast@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-wellbeing-northeast@york.ac.uk)

Chemistry, Computer Science, TFTI, Women's Studies, Law, Social Policy and Social Work, Sociology, Health Sciences, Research Centre for Social Sciences

**North West & City** area: Email [student-wellbeing-northwest@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-wellbeing-northwest@york.ac.uk)

Biology, Environment & Geography, Natural Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Archaeology, History, History of Art, Medieval Studies, Music, Language & Linguistics

- 2. If you are uncertain of the risk and need advice.**

Contact the Open Door team for advice from 9am to 10pm on weekdays (10am to 4pm during holidays). The team will suggest a course of action and sometimes the student may be seen on the same day.

Tel: 01904 32 2140

Email: [opendoor@york.ac.uk](mailto:opendoor@york.ac.uk)

- 3. CRISIS - If the student is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or someone else.**

On campus - telephone Security on 01904 32 3333

Off campus - telephone emergency services on 999

Web: [york.ac.uk/students/health/crisis/](http://york.ac.uk/students/health/crisis/)

### What happens next?

The SWO or Open Door Practitioner will contact the student with an offer of help from a range of interventions from a listening ear or workshops through to one-to-one sessions with a mental health practitioner. If it's a crisis situation or out-of-hours and Security is involved, they will pass the details onto Open Door to ensure the team can follow up and offer the student longer-term support if needed.

# Sexual violence disclosure

## What should you look out for?

Anyone can be the victim of sexual violence. It does not have to include physical violence, it refers to a lack of consent and acts which are perpetrated beyond a person's control or choice. It is important to be clear about the difference between a disclosure and a report.

A **disclosure** is where someone tells you about their experience, but does not necessarily want action to be taken. A disclosing student should be given time to make an informed choice about whether or not to make a formal report to the police or to the University.

## What should you do?

### 1. Initial response.

Stay calm, be empathetic and show your concern. Listen without judging or directing. Allow the individual to stay in control of the conversation and of their decisions. Keep a confidential record of the conversation.

### 2. Look at the student facing sexual violence web page.

Help the student find and explore the sexual violence web page. It contains lots of information about the options available.

Web: [york.ac.uk/students/health/advice/sexual-violence/](http://york.ac.uk/students/health/advice/sexual-violence/)

### 3. If you need help or advice.

Contact the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) if you are unsure about how to respond to a disclosure or if you require any advice or support.

### 4. Encourage the student to talk to the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer.

Direct the student to the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer.

[Sexual Violence Liaison officer contact form](#)

## What happens next?

The Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) will offer support. This may include liaison with internal staff where a student consents to this in order to have their needs met, but the support itself is confidential.

## Visa or immigration queries

### What should you look out for?

International students will often have queries about their visas especially when they are approaching the end of their course or need a renewal, extension or leave of absence.

Visa rules and immigration laws are complicated and advice is regulated by the Office of Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) so legally must only be given by specialists.

### What should you do?

Direct the student to the International Student Support team in the Student Hub.

Web: [york.ac.uk/immigration](http://york.ac.uk/immigration)

Tel: 01904 324140

Email: [immigration@york.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@york.ac.uk)

### What happens next?

A specialist will be able to support the student with all aspects of their query and offer them a one-to-one appointment if needed.

# Withdrawing, changing course or leave of absence

## What should you look out for?

Look for changes in their behaviour and work. Do they seem different or has their attendance dropped? Are they behaving in a way that indicates there is something wrong?

## What should you do?

It is important that someone have a conversation with the student to understand their particular issues and challenges, explore the options open to them (such as Exceptional Circumstances claims allowing extensions or sits as if for the first time on examinations; or Leave of Absence) and to explain the different types of support available to them.

1. We would always recommend that students speak to their academic supervisor initially.
2. To get more detailed advice, especially if the student is considering leaving, direct the student to the Student Advisers in the Student Hub  
Web: [york.ac.uk/student-hub](http://york.ac.uk/student-hub)  
Tel: 01904 324140  
Email: [student-hub@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-hub@york.ac.uk)

You may also point the student to the web page about changing their plan  
[york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/plan/](http://york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/plan/)

## What happens next?

The Student Advisers will contact the student and offer them support and guidance to help them come to an informed decision.

If after that conversation the student wishes to withdraw, the Student Adviser will send them a Confirmation of Withdrawal form to complete.

## Support for specific student groups

The Student Support and Advice team also provides dedicated support to students from certain underrepresented groups, such as mature students and care leavers. A full list of groups can be found under Student Communities on the Support & Advice page.

Specific events have been organised for undergraduate students in the following groups:

- students living locally or commuting to the University (all year groups)
- students who were 21 or over on the first day of their course (all year groups)
- first Year students who meet one (or more) of the Step Ahead criteria.

Direct the student to the Student Support and Advice web page where there is a full list of different student groups and communities.

Web: [york.ac.uk/students/support/](http://york.ac.uk/students/support/)

Tel: 01904 324140

Email: [student-hub@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-hub@york.ac.uk)

## Student Buddying Scheme (for first years)

First year students can request a student buddy via the Student Buddying Scheme co-ordinated by the Student Support and Advice Team. Student Buddies are friendly continuing students who will share their own university experiences and be on hand with advice. For more information about the Student Buddying Scheme and to request a Student Buddy students should visit [york.ac.uk/student-buddy](http://york.ac.uk/student-buddy).

Direct the student to the Student Buddying Scheme web page.

Web: [york.ac.uk/students/support/studentbuddyingscheme/](http://york.ac.uk/students/support/studentbuddyingscheme/)

Tel: 01904 324140

Email: [student-hub@york.ac.uk](mailto:student-hub@york.ac.uk)

# Contacts

## Student Life and Wellbeing

**Paula Tunbridge**, Director of Student Life and Wellbeing  
Tel: 01904 32 3007, Email: [paula.tunbridge@york.ac.uk](mailto:paula.tunbridge@york.ac.uk)

**Mickey Hollman**, Head of Student Conduct and Respect  
Advice on discipline and conduct (harassment or hate crime)  
Tel: 01904 32 3129, Email: [mickey.hollman@york.ac.uk](mailto:mickey.hollman@york.ac.uk)

**Amy Perch**, Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO)  
Advice and support on sexual violence  
Tel: 01904 32 5214, Email: [amy.perch@york.ac.uk](mailto:amy.perch@york.ac.uk)

**Anne Haversham**, Head of Open Door & Disability  
Advice on mental health and disability  
Tel: 01904 32 4399, Email: [anne.haversham@york.ac.uk](mailto:anne.haversham@york.ac.uk)

**Jill Ellis**, Head of Student Support  
For all other matters, general enquiries or if you're not sure  
Tel: 01904 32 4704, Email [jill.ellis@york.ac.uk](mailto:jill.ellis@york.ac.uk)

## Independent advice and support

Some students may not be comfortable discussing their issues or problems with a member of University staff. If this is the case, there are a number of independent sources of support available on campus.

### University of York Students' Union (YUSU) Advice and Support Centre

Web: [yusu.org/advice-support](http://yusu.org/advice-support)  
Email: [asc@yusu.org](mailto:asc@yusu.org)  
Tel 01904 32 3724  
Drop in: YUSU building near James College

### Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Welfare Advice

Web: [yorkgsa.org/support/welfare/](http://yorkgsa.org/support/welfare/)  
Email: [advice@yorkgsa.org](mailto:advice@yorkgsa.org)  
Tel 01904 32 2718  
Drop in: First floor of Vanburgh, V/N/120

**Nightline** - Confidential listening by students for students, open 8pm to 8am (term-time).

Web: [yorknightline.org.uk](http://yorknightline.org.uk)  
Email: [listening@york.nightline.ac.uk](mailto:listening@york.nightline.ac.uk)  
Tel 01904 32 3735