

# Mental Health Plan

2021 - 2024

Making  
Learning  
Work

Forth  
Valley  
College



# Introduction

Forth Valley College is Scotland's first regional college, delivering from four campuses in Alloa, Falkirk, Raploch and Stirling to students on a range of full-time, part-time, flexible and work-based learning programmes. Our mission is Making Learning Work and our vision, shaping the future, developing a world class service and driving our momentum. The college has over 600 staff and 14,500 students per academic session with around 95% of students regularly progressing to further studies or employment upon completion of their course. Our curriculum areas are divided into four teaching departments;

- **Business and Communities**
- **Engineering and Science**
- **Care, Sport and Construction**
- **Creative Industries, Hospitality and Tourism**

Within these departments there are more than 1,300 diverse courses covering a wide range of levels and disciplines and offering qualifications from numerous awarding bodies from across the United Kingdom.



## Statement of Intent

At Forth Valley College, we are committed to mainstreaming access and inclusion. This includes supporting our students when they are struggling with their mental health. Over the last five sessions, we have seen an increase in the number of students telling us that they are struggling with their mental health. We can see this through the number of students disclosing a disability; the number of referrals to the Learning Support and Counselling teams and the number of safeguarding referrals. While our services have adapted to the changing needs of our students, there is now a need for a more strategic approach to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students that aligns with our wider Access and Inclusion and Equality Mainstreaming work. We are committed to working with our

staff, students and partners to ensure that our students are safe and well and feel supported throughout their college career. This document focuses on the needs of the students however, we also know that we need to have mentally healthy staff to support our students. The plan is aligned with our delivery of services to support the mental health and wellbeing of our staff as we acknowledge that we need mentally healthy staff to support our students well. We currently have a number of mechanisms in place to support our staff including a focus on health and wellbeing through our People Strategy; our employee assistance programme PAM Assist; fully trained Mental Health Ambassadors to support and signpost staff struggling with their mental health and our Work Positive process that supports staff to identify key stressors and to work with the organisation to combat these and reduce their impact.

### Data

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Disability		2,596	2,072	2,465	2282
Mental Health	269	276	376	389	337
Safeguarding	39	71	56	55	90
Counselling	69	80	128	134	173

## **Commitment**

We will create a culture of understanding around the impact of mental health on educational attainment

## **What will this look like?**

Staff will understand why we, as an organisation, have a responsibility to support students' mental health and what their role is in that support

We begin to see improved and more consistent retention and achievement rates for students who disclose poor mental health or a mental health condition

We will have an intersectional attitude to supporting the mental health needs of our students who share protected characteristics

Students will feel empowered to talk about their mental health and how this impacts them and staff will be able to have informed conversations with students who open up to them

## **How will we do this?**

Using PIs and existing survey information to create a baseline of information, highlighting gaps in our empirical knowledge and streamlining processes Inclusion and Student Services (ISS)

Expanding out data analysis to be able to analyse the journey of a student who tells us they are struggling with their mental health; understanding where crisis points are occurring and examining which interventions have meaningful impact ISS and Business Transformation (BT)

Rebrand and relaunch of the Respect campaign, using this as a springboard to develop our staff awareness around their role in supporting students struggling with their mental health and marketing the support available to students Marketing (MKT)

Ensuring that student support and disciplinary policies are fit for purpose and developing training and resources to support those working with students who are struggling with poor mental health and the impacts that it is having on their education ISS and Teaching Departments (TDs)

## **Commitment**

Our staff will have the skills to manage mental health disclosures appropriately

## **What will this look like?**

Staff will feel confident in dealing with mental health disclosures from students

Staff will feel supported with their own mental health

Staff will make appropriate referrals to the right service because they have a thorough understanding of the support available

We will see a reduction in the number of safeguarding referrals related to mental health because less students end up in crisis

## **How will we do this?**

We will have a suite of tiered training resources to support staff to support students with their mental health. These resources will be tailored to job role ISS

Using existing platforms to monitor the nature and appropriateness of disclosures and any changes over time ISS and BT

Aligning our mental health priorities for students with that of staff to ensure a consistent and effective approach to mental health and wellbeing at FVC ISS and HR

ISS staff will encourage and lead on case conferencing and reflections to support staff to make the right referrals, ensure appropriate support is provided by the right people and to reflect on support provided for whole system learning and development

## Commitment

We will develop robust services to support students and their mental health needs

## What will this look like?

We will have services to support students that are based on and to react to student need

Our mental health support will be consistent and embedded across the organisation with projects providing added value

Our services will be reflective and will evolve along with our students

Our students will be able to access support when they need it and waiting lists will be minimal

Students and staff will understand the scope and reason for our support services, will make appropriate referrals and will access the service they need, when they need it rather

## How will we do this?

Consult with staff and students around our existing support to evaluate what is working well for students' mental health; highlighting areas of improvement and identifying stressors and pressures for staff and students ISS

Review the existing Extended Learning Support Facilitator provision and evaluate ELSF Review Working Group

Create a place on MyInfo that allows students to disclose a variety of information, including mental health support needs and enhance the ASN form to become a Student Support form to capture more information to allow for effective triage, referral and data analysis ISS and Business Transformation (BT)

Enhancing partnership working between ISS and FVSA to promote the plan, events around mental health and for information sharing

Develop an 'equalities' events calendar to schedule, market and share events on annual basis to ensure we are reaching all groups and their needs ISS

Creating a structured continuous improvement model for our services to support students that includes;

- A formalised timeline that aligns with the overall college cycle
- Using focus group and survey feedback to tailor our contact with students struggling with their mental health to tailor our marketing efforts ISS, FVSA and MKT
- Holding annual focus groups on the college's Mental Health Plan and ad hoc focus groups on changes that may affect those struggling with their mental health or those supporting them ISS and any other department making changes that impact on those students struggling with their mental health
- Finding out where we are not meeting the mental health needs of our students; who is not engaging and why through surveys, focus groups and asking students who choose to opt out of support why they opt out ISS
- ISS and TDs making use of the Continuous Curriculum Improvement process to shape service requirements

## **Commitment**

We will forge strong partnerships with other stakeholders to make accessing support and information as easy as possible for students experiencing poor mental health

## **What will this look like?**

Our services will work collaboratively with external partners, including NHS Forth Valley and our local authority partners to ensure we are part of the 'bigger picture' of mental health support in our region

Strong links will be established with Third Sector organisations and funding opportunities will be explored on a regular basis and in a structured, systematic manner, based on need

Robust and clear data sharing processes will exist. These will that inspire confidence in our students - allowing them to tell us what they do and do not want to be shared so that we can begin to bring partners into our support to create a holistic support scaffold around the student

## **How will we do this?**

ISS and FVSA will lead on the Student Mental Health Agreement, using student feedback to shape the priorities of the agreement

Working towards ensuring that we have robust data sharing agreements with our local authority partners and that our systems are working for us to support the students in the best way we can and in a way that is GDPR compliant BT, ISS, GO and DPO

We will work with partners to ensure we are active partners on the right networks and groups ISS

Creating a document that we share with our partners that outlines the role we will play as and how we would like to work together with other partners ISS

Sector scanning will take place so that we can ensure that we apply for the right funding for the right projects in a structure way Development and Fundraising Manager and ISS

Making use of all of our external partners and sharing information with them to ensure that they are aware of support available at the college for students with poor mental health ISS & FVSA along with any other departments interacting with stakeholders with an investment in mental health support

# Feedback

We welcome feedback on our Mental Health Plan and the experiences of those who are struggling with their mental health and those who are supporting them. If you have any such feedback, please contact Anna Vogt, Head of Inclusion and Student Services, on **01324 403113** or **[anna.vogt@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:anna.vogt@forthvalley.ac.uk)**

