

Board of Management

Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 28 May 2024
Paper No.	LTSEC4-C
Agenda Item	3.3
Subject of Paper	Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) Draft
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Leo Subido
Date of production	14 May 2024
Action	For Approval

1. Recommendations

The Students' Association is seeking approval from the Committee to take the Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) to the Board of Management. (BoM) The draft of the SMHA has been attached to the appendix below.

2. Purpose of Paper

The purpose of this paper is to update the committee on the renewal of the Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) and to seek any recommendations before approval for the BoM.

3. Background and Context

The [Think Positive](#) project is funded by the Mental Health and Lifelong Learning and Skills Directorates of the Scottish Government. The project sits within the Scottish Government's 2017-2027 Mental Health Strategy as action 9 "Support the further development of 'Think Positive' to ensure consistent support for students across Scotland." Think Positive achieve

this by supporting Student Associations and institutions in establishing [Student Mental Health Agreements](#) as well as collecting reports on their progress for Scottish Government.

In 2019, we launched our initial Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA). The SMHA was developed in the 2018/19 academic year alongside NUS Think Positive and College partners. This agreement showcased a College-wide commitment to the mental health of our students, resulting in significant successes.

In 2021/22, recognising the severe impact on mental health of our students during the pandemic, the SMHA was renewed to ensure that the aims of the agreement would ensure impactful change.

4. Consultation

The following groups have been consulted, thus far, on the development of a new Student Mental Health Agreement:

4.1 Short Life Working Group (SLWG)

The SLWG was established to renew and update the latest iteration of the SMHA, key stakeholder across the college were involved of developing the new agreement. The SLWG consisted of faculty support and teaching staff, the student support & wellbeing team and the Students' Association.

4.2 Student Academic Experience Committee (SAEC)

The present [Student Mental Health Agreement](#) (SMHA) is presently under review with the Students' Association and stakeholders within the college. Endorsed by SAEC, the agreement has transitioned to a consolidated 5-year thematic plan, departing from its previous two-year cycle used in previous iterations.

It was agreed that the established SMHA Working Group will report to the SAEC for updates throughout the academic year.

5. Next Steps

To ensure that the draft agreement accurately reflects the needs and priorities of the student body, student feedback will be central for guidance on what approaches are most effective and where improvements are needed in the annual action plan. Additionally, the agreement's final draft will be presented to the Student Parliament for approval and feedback prior to the Board of Management meeting.

6. Impact and Implications

Student Experience – The College's SMHA has always strived to improve the student experience by providing robust support for our students. Improving the process of its creation and management will, in turn, intend to improve the experience of our students.

Quality & Performance – Development of a five-year plan would aim to have themes that would guide work. This would allow cross-department trends to be identified and best practice examples to be shared.

Equality & Inclusion – Creating annual action plans to support themes will allow faster response to student/staff changing needs including those around equality and inclusion.

Reputational – A longer-term plan provides sufficient time to gain traction with students and staff in understanding its purpose and objectives. Reporting outcomes to SAEC and Think Positive demonstrates the College's commitment to addressing the mental health challenges faced by our students.

Resource – A thematic five-year plan would only need to be resourced from committee systems once every year reducing burden on involved departments, administration, design team etc.

Financial – No financial impact would be expected, the SMHA is already resourced. We are only looking to action it differently.

Implication of Inaction – We would continue to operate as we previously have but this would continue to be resource heavy and Silo'd in nature.

Appendices

[Student Mental Health Agreement](#) – Final version to be submitted to College design team

Student Mental Health Agreement 2024-2029 (Draft)

Contents:

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Baseline statement
- Themes
 - Included
 - Supported
 - Resilient
- How the Student Mental Health Agreement Works

Introduction

The first iteration of the Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) was launched in 2019 by CitySA, in collaboration with City of Glasgow College. Since then, the educational landscape and student experience have transformed significantly, leading to evolving student needs. Despite the unprecedented challenges we've faced as a college, our students and staff have consistently demonstrated remarkable resilience.

In this new iteration, the SMHA has adopted a streamlined five-year plan centered around the question, “What does good student mental health look like at City?”. The plan focuses on three themes: Resilient, Included, and Supported. These themes aim to define what a content and well-supported student looks like and outline how our college will help students achieve this. To enhance visibility and ensure alignment with the needs of our students and staff, the Students’ Association has collaborated closely with faculty, support staff, and students in developing this agreement.

Moving forward, we remain dedicated to placing our students' mental health and emotional well-being at the center of the agreement. We strive to create an inclusive and respectful learning environment that actively works to combat the stigma surrounding mental health.

This document will solidify the partnership between the college and our Students’ Association.

Purpose

The purpose of the Student Mental Health Agreement is to support the college community with celebrating best practice and developing innovative new approaches to improving student mental health,

This is with the understanding that the existing core essential services are sustained throughout the agreement period. This includes but is not limited to:

- Student counselling and advisory services
- Staff counselling and wellbeing services
- Academic Guidance support

- Access to wellbeing activities through college (eg Sports Clubs)
- Staff training opportunities

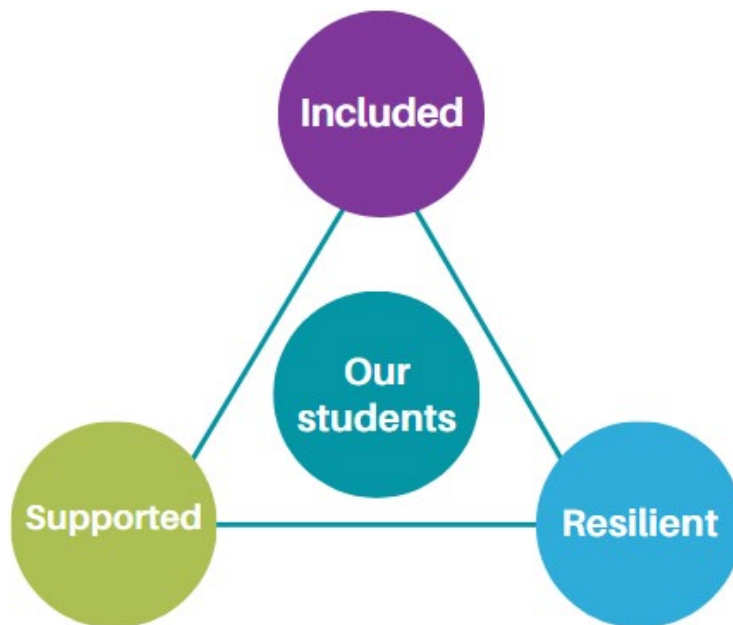
For information about the existing services available for staff and students please see below:

MyConnect, CityLife, Think Positive, CitySA page (*4 buttons in design*)

Themes

Through collaborative efforts, three overarching themes emerged. These themes are intended to be a reflection of what a content and well student would look like with an outline of how our college will support them to achieve this.

Themes Diagram -



Included - It is important for students to feel included because it fosters a supportive and engaging learning environment, which enhances their academic success and overall well-being.

Supported - It is important for students to feel supported because it boosts their confidence and resilience, enabling them to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential.

Resilient - It is important for students to feel resilient because it equips them with the ability to adapt to adversity and persist in their academic and personal goals.

Theme 1: Included (1 page)

Our students will have the chance to feel included by connecting with others and build a sense of community.

The college will encourage the development of communities and celebrate their achievements.

This could look like:

- Existing and new societies
- Group activity opportunities
- Awareness Raising Campaigns
- Events on campus

Theme 2: Supported (1 page)

Our students y will have access to a wide range of support services, which will support them to overcome barriers to achieving their full potential.

The college will adapt to student needs by resourcing relevant services and inviting recommendations from staff and students.

This could look like:

- Mental health support embedded into college induction/curriculum
- Effective use of guidance sessions for student pools
- Peer support systems
- Knowledge of mental health support in and out with college

Theme 3: Resilient (1 page)

Our students will have the opportunity to develop the skills that they need to succeed throughout their learner journey.

The college will provide time, space and guidance for students to explore and practice these skills.

This could look like:

- Skills building training for staff and students e.g. mental health awareness
- Wellbeing workshops for staff and students
- Prevention resources e.g. self help tools

How would the Student Mental Health Agreement work?

For Students (for me?)

Students will have the opportunity to submit pieces of work that they wish to see developed over the course of an academic year. These projects will have to relate to an area of the Student Mental Health Agreement.

For example, a student may develop a project based on the theme Included. Their project may involve creating new sports opportunities for students who do not normally take part in sport.

Another example could include that a student has developed a project based on the theme resilient. Their project may involve developing a peer support system within the college.

For Staff

There will be an established steering group reflecting on the agreed themes of the SMHA. This will then be reported to the Student Academic Experience Committee (SAEC). This committee will identify the terms of reference for this Steering Group.

The process for the steering group will be as follows:

Diagram 1



Invite Ideas - Students and staff will be invited to submit ideas for pieces of work

Agree Projects - Projects will be agreed by the Steering Group based on a suitability criterion

Implement Projects - Projects will run over the course of the year with regular check ins from the steering group

Reflect and Evaluate - Project Leads will be asked to reflect on their experience and evaluate the effectiveness of their project

Share Best Practice - Learning from these projects will be shared with the Steering Group and wider staff and student population.