‘Do No Harm’ Framework

Student Services, University of St Andrews

In Partnership with the Rector’s Committee

What is the ‘Do No Harm’ framework?

The Hippocratic principle to help or to ‘Do No Harm’ (DNH) is an ethical principle underpinning much research-led health or social support systems. It means that those undertaking research and/or intervention should not, intentionally or otherwise, cause harm. In these contexts, harm can often be unintended and unforeseen; however, with appropriate good practice, policies, processes, shared understandings and means of communication, this harm can often be mitigated and precluded. The Rector’s Committee and Student Services are committed to piloting parallel work on a ‘Do No Harm’ framework with the aim to benefit students of the University of St Andrews, and to clarify commitment to these important principles.

The core aims behind this initiative are:

- To create a shared statement which will provide greater clarity and understanding for staff and students on the mechanisms that ensure support services are safe, caring, open and participatory, responsive, continuously improving and striving to uphold this Hippocratic principle.
- To build further trust in Student Services as a support service that is participatory, open and always seeking to continuously improve. We recognise that building trust is a means of risk reduction in that Students are more likely to seek help if they trust the body providing support and assistance. While APPTS provides Student Services with a robust

1“The physician must be able to tell the antecedents, know the present, and foretell the future — must mediate these things, and have two special objects in view with regard to disease, namely, to do good or to do no harm” (Hippocrates, Of the Epidemics. Section II, Second Constitution, 5: http://classics.mit.edu/Hippocrates/epidemics.1.i.html ).
framework for upholding the hippocratic oath, DNH provides an effective framework for student-centered communications, and guidelines and information specific to the St Andrews community.

- To ensure avenues are clear for feedback, complaints and opportunities for participation – this is vital for any occasion whereby DNH standards have not been met. DNH aims to enhance awareness that service-user and student feedback makes a big difference to the Rector’s Committee and Student Services.

This framework recognises the excellent precedent of the Girl Generation’s ‘Do No Harm’ framework, which provides a clear framework for communicating the ethical principles underlying their work in the area of FGM. With the permission of the Girl Generation, we have endeavoured to create a DNH framework tailored to our socio-educational contexts at the University.2

A core basis for Student Services’ existing work in Wellbeing, Counselling and Mental Health Services is the set of principles and standards set out by APPTS (Accreditation Programme for Psychological Therapies Services), the Royal College of Psychiatrists (in partnership with the British Psychological Society) accreditation programme. In 2019, Student Services was accredited by APPTS, having evidenced 56 standards demonstrating the service is safe, effective, caring, responsive to people’s needs, and well-led. Many of these standards relate to the work underway with the University Mental Health Charter programme, led by Student Minds, including the Charter’s principles of good practice for universities.3

It should be clarified that this ‘Do No Harm’ framework does not introduce a ‘new’ practice per se. It is recognised that the principles and commitments to do good or to do no harm are, and have been, in place and upheld in accordance with frameworks including and not limited to professional regulatory body ethical and professional standards and codes of conduct, University policy, procedures and codes of practice, alongside the commitments and agreements of students and staff in their respective roles within the University community. The Do No Harm framework endeavours to better communicate these pre-existing standards and practices in a meaningful

2 Do No Harm acknowledgement statement: “The University of St Andrews acknowledges that the Do No Harm (DNH) framework is adapted from the original framework developed by Options Consultancy Services for The Girl Generation. Permission to reproduce and adapt the framework for use at the University of St Andrews is granted subject to this acknowledgement.”

3 Student Minds MH Charter Principles of good practice: 1. Universities ensure that support services are appropriately resourced; 2. Universities ensure that support services are safe; 3. Universities ensure that support services are effective; 4. Universities ensure that support services are responsive to current and future need and to local context; 5. Universities ensure that support services are equally accessible to all students; 6. Universities ensure that support services are well governed. (MH Charter, p. 34: https://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/191208_umhc_artwork.pdf )
shared framework to enhance understandings, consolidate or build trust, and to develop opportunities that may sustainably benefit the University community.

**What is the DNH approach?**

The Do No Harm approach encompasses a number of key areas. Firstly, it consolidates shared understanding of the *Areas of potential harm* outlined in this document (see the relevant section below) and clarifies the accompanying DNH guidance on how it is envisaged this harm can be mitigated or precluded.

Secondly, the Do No Harm approach clarifies reliable and accessible avenues for support, advice, information or help for any student or staff member who judges their experience has not met DNH standards; this improved awareness is likely to build trust, identify areas for continuous improvement and ensure each person knows the importance of their feedback, suggestions and experience.

**Who is a stakeholder?**

- **Student Services**
- **The Rector’s Committee**
- **Students’ Association**
- Student stakeholders and staff stakeholders.
- It is hoped that these parallel pilot projects may lead to further work in this area across the University community. The Rector’s Committee will develop a template for others (e.g. Student Societies, Clubs) who may wish to deliver DNH work relevant to their areas.

**Areas of potential harm and DNH guidance:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of potential harm</th>
<th>DNH guidance notes</th>
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| Chances of harm may increase where services do not meet sectoral or national standards for waiting times, to provide an appropriately accessible or responsive service to students. | **APPTS standards** to be upheld with criteria in the following core standards areas:  
- ‘Is it safe?’  
- ‘Is it effective’  
- ‘Is it caring?’  
- ‘Is it responsive to people’s needs?’  
- ‘Is it well-led?’ |
| Where waitlists exist, the service must signpost and communicate to avenues |
where help is available in urgent situations or crisis, or as an alternative to any wait time deemed unsuitable by a student.

The service will communicate **weekly wait times**, highlighting that any wait time will be for traditional appointments only, and that the service is contactable 24/7 via The ASC (daytime) and Security and Response (out of hours) for urgent matters or a crisis situation. The service will signpost to **In Crisis contact points** and resources, and in dealing with crises will work collaboratively with the NHS and emergency services. The service will continue to work with the NHS proactively to monitor presenting issues impacting on students’ ability to access care locally.

The service will continue to streamline and innovate to keep waiting times low and the service accessible, amidst high demand. Examples including the introduction of One-at-a-Time Therapy, Consultation appointments, psychoeducational groups and Student Services Responders are examples of this work in practice.

A service does not uphold high standards of care, as without as without these standards risks of harm can increase.

**APPTS standards** to be upheld with criteria in the following core standards areas:

- ‘Is it safe?’
- ‘Is it effective’
- ‘Is it well-led?’

The service will operate a Matching Care model cognisant of evidence-based practice and NICE guidelines.

Recognising the service is non-clinical and not a medical service, the service will liaise with and refer to the NHS and Third Sector where
more specialist support is required, and provide suitable, accessible and continuously improving support avenues for non-diagnostic, sub-clinical issues and needs that require suitable supports. This work is likely to equally benefit the provision of, and access to, evidence-based care.

The service will ensure alongside the University’s Report & Support tool, our complaints and feedback avenues are highlighted on webpages and in publicity. The information will include the following:

_We welcome feedback about your experience with Student Services._ Whether your experience has been positive or negative we would like to hear about it so we can understand what we did right or where we could have done better. If there are issues with the service that need to be resolved or if you haven’t formed a good rapport with your Adviser/Counsellor we may put you in touch with an alternative member of our team or signpost you to an external source of support (if appropriate).

_Please share your feedback with Ellen Mackintosh (ebm1@st-andrews.ac.uk) or Dr Penny Turnbull (pt28@st-andrews.ac.uk) Assistant Directors of Student Services. Alternatively, you can fill in our Comments and Suggestions online survey._

_Please also be aware that the University has Complaints Handling Procedure for formally addressing concerns._
Harm may be caused where services are not demonstrably engaged with service users, student stakeholders and the University community.

**APPTS standards** to be upheld with criteria in the following core standards areas:
- ‘Is it caring?’
- ‘Is it responsive to people’s needs?’
- ‘Is it well-led?’

Staff will invite feedback in session, creating opportunities for questions, concerns, or issues to be raised and supportively discussed.

Student Services Open Forum meetings will create opportunities to discuss and reflect on key issues and developments related to the service and the needs/concerns of students, alongside student representative groups of the University and Students’ Association.

Student Services Participation & Engagement forums will create opportunities to discuss and reflect on key issues and developments related to the service and the needs/concerns of students, alongside student service users.

Student Service will remain engaged with the ‘whole-University approach’ and collaborative work alongside students and student representatives through existing forums including but not limited to: the University Mental Health Taskforce and Prevention Group; the University committee for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; The University Equally Safe group; the Student Wellbeing Advisory Group; the Students’ Association Wellbeing Committee; engagement with the Students’ Association’s
| Harm and diminished trust in the service may result where feedback or complaints avenues are not known or understood to be available | **Stand Together Coordinators (GotConsent, GotLimits, GotSupport).**

**APPTS standards** to be upheld with criteria in the following core standards areas:
- ‘Is it caring?’
- ‘Is it responsive to people’s needs?’
- ‘Is it well-led?’

Feedback and Complaints avenues will be available via the website, in-person discussion, email signatures and social media. This may include: raising awareness of designated student services Assistant Directors for complaints handling (see [Advice & Support web page](#)); signposting to the University [Report & Support resource](#); ensuring the Unit’s [online survey](#) for feedback, suggestions or concerns is continuously open and monitored regularly; and that the University [Complaints Handling Procedure](#) for formally addressing concerns is available via the website and signposted to appropriately when a complaint is made.

Selected questions pertaining to DNH framework standards will be included in Student Services’ regular surveys undertaken each semester to gather feedback and the experience of service users on the service they have received.

| Harm may be caused where staff members may be under-informed in areas relevant to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, SGBV, | The service will work to ensure baseline training and guidance in key areas. Existing training programmes or resources will continue to roll-out, including training in |
trauma, cultural awareness or stigma associated with mental health struggles.

Lack of understanding or awareness in these areas can undermine trust in the support available, and reinforce stigma or feelings of unbelonging.

SGBV, good practice supporting LGBTQ+ students, a trauma-informed approach, suicide prevention and safety planning, good practice in supporting neurodivergent students. The service will work to secure new and improved training where this is identified, e.g. presently securing training in culturally competent therapeutic practice with an intercultural therapy organisation.

Service staff must uphold both the University’s, and their relevant professional standards bodies’, codes of ethical conduct.

Alongside training, the service will use its participation and engagement forums with students, student representative groups and the Students’ Association to:

- Promote equality, cultural competence and diversity in service practice
- Provide and participate in forums where issues of equality, cultural competence and diversity can be discussed and explored
- Support staff to develop and share best practice for working with service users from different cultural or social backgrounds;
- Continually work with students to increase understanding of the barriers that students may face and promote equitable access and understanding within the service and institution

Potential harms related to the professional standards and conduct of team members

APPTS standards to be upheld with criteria in the following core standards areas:

- ‘Is it safe?’
- ‘Is it caring?’
- ‘Is it well-led?’

Service staff must uphold both the University’s, and their relevant professional standards bodies’, codes of ethical conduct.

Regular clinical supervision from trained clinical supervisors will support good practice and address quality standards, alongside the support and monitoring of professional standards regular management supervision will provide.

As per previous DNH standard, avenues for expressions of feedback or concerns will be suitably signposted to and made available to students.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harm may be caused where practices or understandings surrounding students’ confidentiality are not appropriately established or carried out.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity on confidentiality and its limits is key for trust and the welfare for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidentiality is discussed in every student’s consultation session/initial sessions, and where any risks to student welfare may necessitate breaking confidentiality (i.e. risks to self, risks to others, safeguarding concerns or risks from others).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Student Services confidentiality policy will be linked in adviser email signatures, and in each appointment invite from the administrative team , to improve easy access to this information for service users.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidentiality procedures are revisited specifically in safety planning interventions between staff and students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harm or risks related to the DNH project itself</td>
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</table>

Some examples of DNH principles in action:

- Professional staff create conversational opportunities and space in sessions for students to raise any concerns, issues or feedback that could (or could have) provided a more helpful experience with the service, to facilitate a culture of listening, trust and valued feedback.
- Feedback on areas of concern raised pertaining to harm, trust or areas for development is routinely reviewed and actioned by the service, mitigating potential harms through structural actions attuned to feedback from service users.
- The service regularly engages with students and student community groups, remaining attuned to needs and concerns, and reporting deliverables and action points in those forums.
- Training and continuing professional development in the areas outlined in DNH standards is part of the framework, in order that staff members supporting students are aware, informed and reflecting on good practice with colleagues and in supervision.

Review Process:

August 2022 and December 2022 alongside the Rector’s Committee
Contact details:

Student Services: Adam Welstead, aw201@st-andrews.ac.uk

Rector’s Assessor: Stella Ezeh, rector@st-andrews.ac.uk

Head of Wellbeing & Mediation: Ruth Unsworth, ru5@st-andrews.ac.uk
Support resources

University Support Resources (concise & non-exhaustive):

Student Services

Student Services offers a range of support pathways. You can book an appointment with the wellbeing, counselling and mental health team who will work collaboratively with you to find the right appointment and support for you.

Appointments are available through video or audio calls with advisers and counsellors using Microsoft Teams (face-to-face appointments are not possible at the moment).

If you would like to request an appointment or aren’t sure where to start, you can email or call Student Services, and they’ll be happy to help. You can also access Student Services by booking online.

Advice and Support Centre (Student Services)
Phone: +44 (0)1334 46 2020
Email: theasc@st-andrews.ac.uk

Out of hours support

Support is available for students on evenings and weekends too.

Students in halls of residence can contact their wardenial team, and all students can contact the University Security and Response Team (01334 46 2020) who can arrange for the Student Services member of staff on call to contact you.

See crisis contact points for emergencies or urgent situations.

Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy offers pastoral care for any student or member of staff, regardless of faith or philosophy of life. This could be a sympathetic, confidential listening ear, support in emotional issues, a safe place to explore questions of faith or sexuality, someone to talk to in a crisis, or support when all else fails.

You are welcome to contact the Chaplaincy at chaplaincy@st-andrews.ac.uk, the Chaplain Donald MacEwan on dgm21@st-andrews.ac.uk or Assistant Chaplain Samantha Ferguson on sjf6@st-andrews.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.

Education Advocate (Students’ Association)
Iain Cupples is the Students’ Association’s full-time Education Advocate, providing free advice and support to students who have a problem with the University. This includes academic alerts, appeals, and misconduct cases. Iain can also help with non-academic discipline cases, and in making complaints to the University. Support is independent, confidential, and non-directive.

Contact Iain via HelpHub@, 01334 46 2700, or by making an appointment at Union reception.

**Grief Group**

The Chaplaincy’s **Grief Group** is open to all students who are grieving, and this does not have to be a recent loss. Change, such as starting university, often reopens buried feelings, and the Grief Group is here for you.

**Mediation**

The **Mediation Service** is for anyone who works or studies at the University. Mediation can be used on a one-to-one basis and for groups and teams who are looking for solutions to fraught or stressed situations

Mediation can help:

- when people feel they have been unfairly treated
- when there are difficulties with communication
- when there are issues about forthcoming changes or unresolved past problems
- to find options to prevent the breaking relationships.

Please get in touch if you are in conflict or disagreement or if you have any questions. Email mediation@st-andrews.ac.uk.

**Report & support**

Report a concern or issue to the University via: Report + Support

**Guided self-help options**

**SilverCloud CBT**

SilverCloud is available to all staff and students and is an online resource that offers support using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) methods to address a range of issues including:

- low mood and depression
- anxiety
- mindfulness
- Covid-19 and mental wellbeing.
You can sign up to SilverCloud and access helpful content that comprises of audio, text and video clips that can be accessed at any time.

**ShelfHelp**
The University Library has a selection of books which explore common problems that students may face. These books are available to borrow from the Library or read online.

**Peer-led resources**

Nightline St Andrews

*St Andrews Nightline* is a student-run confidential, anonymous listening and information service at the University of St Andrews. Nightline’s dedicated volunteers provide a safe space for students to speak about whatever might be on their mind in a non-directive, judgment-free environment. There are a number of ways to connect with Nightline, including phone, email and IM.

Students’ Association Peer Support

The *Peer Support Network* is still operating remotely. If you are interested in being matched with a peer supporter, all you have to do is send an email with your name to peersupport@st-andrews.ac.uk. They’ll take care of the rest!

BAME Students’ Network

The *BAME Students’ Network* of St Andrews provides a strong community, adequate resources, and effective support to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students at the University.

In consultation with the BAME SN and University CEDI leadership, Student Services have published a resource for students on Race, Ethnicity, Culture, and Discrimination: Key support, resources and information.

LGBTQ+ resources

The *Saints LGBT+ committee* have curated an excellent list of contacts and resources, which are aimed primarily at LGBTQ+ individuals but are available to everybody. Student Services LGBTQ+ Support and Information resources are available here.

**NHS Advice & Support**

**Gallop Support Services**

**Populus**
Finding isolation hard? Populus is a Scottish charity which aims to reduce loneliness amongst students at university, and this semester they'll be holding a variety of opportunities for connection.

**Website - Populus St Andrews**

**Facebook – Populus St Andrews**

**External Support Resources (concise & non-exhaustive):**

You may wish to access support outwith the University.

**NHS support**

The NHS can offer support for physical and mental health, and normally your GP (doctor) will be the best place to start. If you are new to St Andrews and have yet to register with a GP practice, you can [find out how to register](#).

**Need a listening ear?**

National helplines with trained volunteers are always available too:

- **Breathing Space (Scotland)**
  Phone: 0800 83 8587 (open from 6pm to 2am Monday to Friday. Weekends: open Friday from 6pm till 6am Monday)

- **Samaritans**
  Phone: 08457 90 9090 or 116 123 free from any phone or 0330 094 5717 local call charges apply
  Email: jo@samaritans.org

- **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)**
  Phone: 0800 58 58 58
  [Webchat](#) is open 5pm to midnight every night for free and confidential support.

- **Andy’s Man Club** – online support groups for men over 18 years of age.

- **The Mix** - essential support for under 25s