

## CMHST Agreement

If you need this document in an alternative format such as braille or large print, please email [as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk) or call 0191 227 4200 with details of your requirements. We aim to provide alternative formats within 2 working days.

The services available from the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team (CMHST) are: short-term counselling, mental health practitioner appointments, guided self-help appointments and workshops. We aim to offer you the service(s) most appropriate to your individual needs and wishes.

Below is some important information we would like you to be aware of. Your clinician will also go through this with you at your first meeting. Please feel free to ask any questions.

### Confidentiality

What you tell us remains confidential within our team. Normally this means that what is said in the room stays in the room. However, there are rare exceptional circumstances when confidentiality can be broken. These exceptions would only be made for the purpose of public interest, law, our compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 or in order to ensure compliance with the University's duty of care and safeguarding policies. These exceptions might include situations in which a person's life is in danger (yours or someone else's), a situation in which there is active child abuse, a serious crime, active terrorism or issues affecting the safe practice of those on professional training courses. This list is not exhaustive. In one of these rare situations, your clinician will try to contact you and discuss how the boundaries of confidentiality will be kept and, if necessary, extended.

### Information about your clinician

#### Counsellors

The CMHST is an organisational member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). The counsellors are all accredited/senior accredited individual members of BACP, or working towards accreditation. Part of BACP's "Ethical Framework for Good Practice" requires counsellors to explain what is involved in counselling so that students can make an informed choice; this BACP document can be found at <http://www.bacp.co.uk>. If you require a printed copy of this document, please just ask.

#### Mental Health Practitioners

The Mental Health Practitioners (MHPs) come from different professions and are registered with a relevant professional body. Please feel free to ask for information about their professional body when/if you meet with them.

#### Supervision for your clinician

It is an ethical requirement of all of their professional bodies that clinicians in the CMHST receive supervision. Supervision involves the clinician talking to someone within their profession, who is external to the university, about their work. This may involve talking anonymously about the work

they have been doing with you. Clinicians also discuss their current student work in team meetings. If you would like more information, just ask us.

## **Disability Support for Students with Mental Health Issues**

The Equality Act 2010 (and formerly the Disability Discrimination Act) states that a person has a disability if he or she 'has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [their] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The University has a statutory duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled students where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled. The 'reasonable adjustment' may be to remove or alter the provision, criteria or practice or to provide an auxiliary aid or service to the disabled student to remove or reduce the disadvantage.

The purpose of the support recommended is to remove/reduce the disadvantage that you may experience in accessing your programme of study because of your disability.

If you consider that your mental health issue meets the definition of a 'disability' as set out in the Equality Act 2010, please let us know (if you haven't already done so).

## **Practical issues**

### **How to make an appointment**

If you would like to come and see us, simply fill in our online form, which is available at [www.northumbria.ac.uk/cmhsregistration](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/cmhsregistration). If you would like help completing the form, contact our administration team, whose contact details can be found in the next section of this document.

### **Cancelling or re-arranging an appointment**

If you need to cancel or re-arrange an appointment, it is important that you let us know so that we can offer that appointment to someone else who may be on our waiting list. In order to cancel or re-arrange, please contact our administration team by telephoning 0191 227 4576 or emailing us at [as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk). If you do not turn up to an appointment, or do not give us at least 24 hours' notice, the session that you miss may count as one of your allocated sessions.

### **Letters of support for Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PECs)**

Please note that the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team does not provide individual letters of support for students who are applying for Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC). Students are advised to contact their GP/doctor, who may or may not be able to help with evidence to support your PEC form. We can, however, provide you with a record of attendance, if necessary. A record of attendance will simply state how many appointments you have attended with our team, and can be submitted with a claim for Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC). If you would like to request a record of attendance, please speak to our administration team (contact details above).

## Comments and complaints

### Informal procedure

If you have any comments, either positive or negative, or if you have any concerns about any aspects of the work of the CMHST, generally the best person for you to speak to, in the first instance, is your clinician. If you have a concern, in most cases, speaking to your clinician will be the quickest way to enable us to address the concern. If you are not able to discuss a concern with your clinician, or if you raise the matter with your clinician and it remains unresolved, you may decide to make a formal complaint.

### Formal procedure

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the CMHST and wish to make a formal complaint, you can do this by putting your complaint in writing to the CMHST Manager (the address is on the last page of this agreement). If, for any reason, you do not want to contact the CMHST Manager, you can put your formal complaint in writing to the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (the address is on the last page of this agreement).

### The University's complaints procedure

Northumbria University has a Student Complaints Procedure which is in Section 9 of the Handbook of Student Regulations – available at: [www.northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud\\_reg\\_handbk/](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud_reg_handbk/) Should you require advice or assistance in completing the complaints form, or in relation to any other aspect of the Complaints Procedure, you can contact the University's Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman (Address: Student Appeals and Complaints, Northumbria University, Ellison Building, NE1 8ST), or you can contact the Students' Union, the University's Student Support & Wellbeing service, or your Faculty Office.

### Complaints to the relevant professional body

If you wish to make a formal complaint about a clinician in addition to the above procedure, you can make a formal complaint to the relevant professional body. Details can be obtained from our administration team.

## How we store and use information

The CMHST complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 in relation to how it requests and stores information that you provide. This section summarises how the information that you provide to us – some of which will be classed as 'personal data', and some of which will be classed as 'sensitive data' under the Data Protection Act – will be stored and used by our team. The information you provide information is kept for seven years after your last appointment, and then destroyed.

In order for you to access the services of the CMHST, in most cases, you will complete our online registration form, which asks for some information about yourself (for example, the name of the course that you are studying). This data is kept by the CMHST electronically on a database. Access to the CMHST registration forms and database is limited to those who 'need to know', for the effective running of the service and the safeguarding of students and others. This means that, in general, access is restricted to staff within the CMHST.

After each clinical session your clinician will make some session notes. Clinicians' session notes are stored electronically and without your name on them, in order to protect your anonymity. Access to session notes is restricted to the clinicians within the CMHST.

All email contact with the CMHST is subject to University Regulations, as explained within the Student Regulations. Within the CMHST, emails from students who are registered with the service may on occasions be stored electronically, within the session notes.

Frontline staff in the Service have access to limited, but identifiable information, about students accessing CMHS. This information is held, for the purposes of appointment management. This information includes a student's name; student's number and contact telephone number.

The CMHST is required to produce reports, constructed from the data held by the team. These reports contain anonymous quantitative statistics to inform the department of Student Support and Wellbeing and the University about the work it is doing. Occasionally, other similar reports are provided by the CMHST to others to demonstrate the kind of work the team is engaged in, but again, any information would be anonymous.

### **Accessing your records**

All requests for individual records – for example, confirmation of your dates/times of appointments or a copy of your session notes – must be made in writing (or by email).

- For confirmation of dates/times of appointments – please email us at [as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk)
- To read your CMHS notes - please send your request to the manager of the CMHST (see the last page of this agreement for our address), explaining what information it is that you are requesting.
- For a copy of your CMHS notes – you will need to make a freedom of information request, using this address: [us.foi@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:us.foi@northumbria.ac.uk)

Individual session material will only be disclosed outside of the CMHST where you have provided consent to do so, or where consent is not possible, where there is a legal requirement to do so under the provision of the Data Protection Act 1998, and only after full consideration of your rights and interests by the Data Protection Officer.

### **Evaluations**

We always welcome feedback about your experience of using any aspect of our service. We will send out a link to our evaluation survey by email at various times throughout the year. We endeavour to ensure that you will only receive one survey each year. These surveys are anonymous and treated as confidential. It would be very helpful if you were able to return it to us with your comments.

If you do **not** want us to contact you with the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team feedback survey please tick here:

The larger department within which our team sits, Student Support and Wellbeing, may also send you a survey to seek your feedback about the services you have received.

## Our contact details

You can email our team at [as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk), you can telephone us on 0191 227 4576, or you can write to us at: CMHST, Student Support and Wellbeing, Northumbria University, Northumberland Building, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST.

## Your details

Year of course:

Type of study: Undergraduate  Postgraduate taught  Postgraduate research

Mode of study: Full time  Part-time  Distance-learning

Are you currently enrolled as a student at the University? Yes  No

The main campus on which you study: City Campus  Coach Lane Campus

Nationality: UK  EU  International

By signing this document, I confirm that I have read and understood this Agreement and that I agree to access the support offered by the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team on the basis of this Agreement.

Name: .....

Date: .....

Signature: .....