

# Mental health wellbeing at university

<b>Submission date</b> 20/02/2023	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 20/03/2023	<b>Overall study status</b> Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 21/01/2026	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

There has been a marked increase of 12-20% in the rates of students experiencing mental health conditions reported over the past few years. According to a 2012 report student mental health rates in that year equalled that of the general population. This study aims to explore the reasons behind undergraduate and postgraduate students' difficulties with mental health across the years of their study to allow for a greater understanding of difficulties and protective factors to inform targeted approaches.

### Who can participate?

Undergraduate and postgraduate students at participating Higher Education institutions

### What does the study involve?

An online questionnaire survey will be distributed every year for 5 years. The survey will collect demographic information as well as access to student wellbeing services and usage of mental health resources, mental health information, the association of this with loneliness and perceived social support, and experience and satisfaction with university wellbeing services in supporting their mental health wellbeing.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The findings will inform current initiatives and identify key themes for prioritising in further developing robust approaches to support student mental health wellbeing.

### Where is the study run from?

The University of Southampton and Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

### When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

September 2019 to December 2026

### Who is funding the study?

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust (UK)

### Who is the main contact?

Kathryn Elliot, [kathryn.elliott@nhs.net](mailto:kathryn.elliott@nhs.net)

# Contact information

## Type(s)

Principal investigator, Scientific, Public

## Contact name

Miss Kathryn Elliot

## Contact details

Tom Rudd Unit  
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SO30 3HG  
+44 (0)2380 475112  
kathryn.elliott@nhs.net

# Additional identifiers

## Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)

274776

## Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS)

44624

# Study information

## Scientific Title

Mental health wellbeing at university: student survey exploring mental health wellbeing and access to support in UK universities

## Study objectives

This study aims to explore the reasons behind undergraduate and postgraduate student's difficulties with mental health across the years of their study to allow for greater understanding of difficulties and protective factors to inform targeted approaches.

## Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

## Ethics approval(s)

approved 14/02/2020, Health and Care Research Wales/HRA) (Health Research Authority, 2 Redman Place, Stratford, London, E20 1JQ, United Kingdom; +44 (0)207 104 8000; hra.approval@nhs.net), ref: 20/HRA/0090

## Study design

Longitudinal quantitative online self-report survey

## Primary study design

Observational

### **Study type(s)**

Other

### **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Mental health and wellbeing in university students in the UK

### **Interventions**

This study is a longitudinal quantitative online self-report survey. Quantitative data will be collected via an online University of Southampton Qualtrics XM platform yearly for 5 years. The survey link will be distributed to students via their respective university student offices. Qualitative data will be collected from a small number of optional open-ended questions within the survey that invite the participant to recount a recent encounter accessing support for their mental health wellbeing at campus.

### **Intervention Type**

Other

### **Primary outcome(s)**

Mental health problems measured using self-reporting at baseline

### **Key secondary outcome(s)**

The following measures are assessed at baseline:

1. Loneliness measured using the Three-Item Loneliness Scale
2. Social support measured using the 12-item Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)
3. Mental wellbeing measured using the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS)
4. Patient experience of support services measured using the Patient experience questionnaire (PEQ, IAPT)
5. Depression measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)
6. Anxiety measured using the Generalised Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD-7)

### **Completion date**

31/12/2026

## **Eligibility**

### **Key inclusion criteria**

All students enrolled at University in undergraduate years 1-6 and postgraduate students, including all full-time, part-time and distance learning postgraduate taught students (including but not limited to MA, MSc, PGCE, PGCert, PGDip courses, or credits at PGT level)

### **Participant type(s)**

Other

### **Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Other

**Sex**

All

**Total final enrolment**

6560

**Key exclusion criteria**

Participants who do not consent to the study

**Date of first enrolment**

12/03/2020

**Date of final enrolment**

31/12/2025

**Locations****Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

Northern Ireland

Scotland

Wales

**Study participating centre****Moorgreen Hospital**

Botley Road

West End

Southampton

England

SO30 3JB

**Sponsor information****Organisation**

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

ROR

## Funder(s)

### Funder type

Hospital/treatment centre

### Funder Name

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

## Results and Publications

### Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

Current IPD sharing plan as of 21/01/2026:

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are/will be available upon request from Dr Peter Phiri (p.phiri@soton.ac.uk) or Kathryn Elliot (kathryn.elliott@nhs.net). Contact the Governance office at hiowh.research.governance@nhs.net for data access.

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Previous IPD sharing plan:

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are/will be available upon request from Dr Peter Phiri (peter.phiri@southernhealth.nhs.uk) or Ayaat Al-Sudani (ayaat.al-sudani@southernhealth.nhs.uk). Contact the Governance office at research.governance@southernhealth.nhs.uk for data access.

### IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

### Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Student Mental Health Questionnaire version 1.4	07/02/2023	01/03/2023	No	Yes
<a href="#">Protocol file</a>	version 1.8	07/02/2023	22/02/2023	No	No