

Welfare and Wellbeing Support: During your placements

Wellbeing Services at the University of Exeter are here to help students get the most out of their time at University. Health and Wellbeing are crucial ingredients of effective study as well as a rich and fulfilling student experience but staying well in mind and body isn't always easy. This can be particularly true if you are a distance learner studying away from the immediate support services your University offers. Wellbeing Services are committed to helping Distance Learners access support wherever possible and have therefore put together this short guide to accessing support while studying at Exeter, but at a distance. The support options are noted as (UK) if they can be used in the UK only, and (UK & Internationally) if they can be accessed anywhere in the world.

1. Registration with a Local GP (UK)

It is really important that all students are registered with a GP local to where they live. GP's provide the first point of contact for support. They are able to offer support, advice and guidance on all areas of your health and wellbeing, particularly for those struggling with their mental wellbeing through stress, anxiety, depression or other mental health conditions. Your GP will also be able to provide supporting evidence to the University of Exeter if you need any additional support, adjustments or arrangements to assist you in studying successfully. To find your nearest GP Surgery, enter your postcode here: <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4>

2. Telephone Signposting from Wellbeing Services (UK and Internationally)

All students studying at the University of Exeter are able to speak to a member of the Wellbeing Services team for initial guidance, support and signposting. You can speak to a qualified practitioner about something that is affecting your mental and emotional health by booking a Telephone Referral Appointment (TRA). This is a 15 minute conversation where you will be able to outline your concerns to a practitioner and discuss the best next steps. You can book a TRA by going to <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/contact/makeanappointment/>

Due to the high number of students on a regulated programme, if you are a student studying from the St. Lukes Campus – within University of Exeter Medical School, Graduate School of Education or Sport and Health Sciences, you may also be signposted to contact the Wellbeing Services St. Lukes Welfare Caseworker who can offer practical advice, support and signposting. You can contact the Welfare Caseworker by emailing stlukeswelfare@exeter.ac.uk.

3. Online CBT Support Through SilverCloud (UK and Internationally)

SilverCloud is an NHS developed programme which offers secure, immediate access to online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy programmes, tailored to your specific needs. The programme has shown high improvement rates for depression, anxiety and stress and there is also a separate course for body image. CBT helps you to identify and change those thought and behavioral patterns that have a negative influence on how you are feeling, helping you to make changes for the better. SilverCloud empowers you to take charge and manage your mental health and wellbeing, while being easy to use and interactive. You can access SilverCloud at any time – 24/7 – via a computer, tablet or smart phone.

You can find out more and sign up to SilverCloud using your University username and password here:

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/support/self-helpandpeersupport/onlineselfhelp/silvercloud/>



4. Online Wellbeing Services CBT-Based Workbooks (UK and Internationally)

Wellbeing Services have produced of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy based self-help workbooks that include information, coping techniques and stepped-methods of change across a wide range of areas including Exam Stress, Low Mood, Challenging Thoughts, Sleep, Procrastination, Perfectionism, Panic Attacks, Stress and Anxiety. The workbooks can be accessed through the Wellbeing Services website at any time, and can be completed at your own pace, at times which are convenient to you. You can access the workbooks here: <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/support/self-helpandpeersupport/>

5. Virtual Support, Advice and Fitness to Practice

All students are able to receive support to study where their health, wellbeing or behaviour is significantly impacting on their ability to progress academically and/or function at University. PGCE students fall under the Fitness to Practice policy which is designed to ensure students are well enough to practice successfully as a teacher and aims to ensure that the best interests of students are considered in relation to their personal situation, their health, wellbeing and any disability they may experience, while also considering the requirements of the profession and safety of children in their care. For students studying on regulated programmes – such as the PGCE – this is provided through a combination of Individual Learning Plans (see section 6) and Occupational Health recommendations for reasonable adjustments. If you feel your health is impacting on your ability to study successfully and would like to talk about next steps, please contact the St. Lukes Welfare Caseworker on stlukeswelfare@exeter.ac.uk to talk through support options available to you.

6. Individual Learning Plans (UK and Internationally)

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a document that informs Colleges within the University of the recommended adjustments that may be put in place once you have declared a disability. Individual Learning Plans are available to all students who have a health condition or disability which fits the criteria to be classified as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – this includes Distance Learners. Reasonable adjustments are put in place using an ILP in order to remove barriers that may prevent you from participating at University, and to minimize the impact that your health condition or disability may have on your ability to study. Examples of reasonable adjustments for Distance Learners may include regular support meetings via Skype with your College, specific equipment requirements, deadline extensions and exam arrangements.



If you have a mental health condition your ILP and relevant support would be arranged by the Wellbeing Services [Mental Health Pathway](#). If you have a learning condition, physical health condition or physical disability, your ILP and support would be arranged by the [AccessAbility Pathway](#).

You can find out more about getting an ILP here:

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/support/individuallearningplans/>

7. Accessing Free Psychological Therapies (UK)

You may feel, during your time studying that you would benefit from someone to talk to about how you're feeling. If you are a Distance Learner who lives within a commutable distance to Exeter, you may like to contact Wellbeing Services to explore the Psychological Therapies we offer and whether they are right for you. You can find out more about Wellbeing Services therapy options here:

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/psychologicaltherapiespathway/about/> and talk to someone about your needs by booking a Telephone Referral Appointment.

If you live a long way from Exeter or would prefer to access support closer to home, there are two main free options available to you.

- Local NHS Support

Talk to your GP about your local NHS Talking Therapies Service. The services have different names in different counties/cities but are sometimes known as the Depression and Anxiety Service, Talking Therapies Service, Wellbeing Therapies Service or IAPT Services. Most NHS Psychological Therapies accept self-referrals, or you can talk to your GP about whether they are able to refer you. Generally, you will be offered 6-8 sessions with a practitioner to work through the areas of your life which are impacting on you the most. To find out about what is on offer in your area, please visit:

[https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)

- Charitable Organizations

Many towns and cities have counselling services run as part of charitable organisations which you can access for free or at a very reduced rate. The offering will depend on your area but searching “Charity Counselling Near Me” will bring you a list and a map of the services closest to you. Charitable organisations such as MIND and RELATE work nationally but there are likely to be smaller independent services local to you as well. If you would like to know more about charitable counselling organisations near you and are struggling to find information, please contact your HUB Welfare Team on the email addresses listed above.

8. Accessing Private Talking Therapies (UK and Internationally)

If there is not a charitable service near you, or if you feel some longer term therapy may be beneficial, you may wish to explore private counselling options. There are a vast number of private therapists at work in the UK, many of whom will have different specialisms. To find a private therapist, Wellbeing Services recommends using the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy website for a list of therapists accredited to them. You can use their therapist finder tool here: <https://www.bacp.co.uk/search/Therapists> or search “Its Good to Talk”.

9. Local and National Services (UK)

There are a number of local and national organizations that offer support specializing in specific areas including Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Abuse and Violence, Anxiety, Bereavement, Depression, Drugs and Alcohol Addiction, Eating Disorders, Family Difficulties, Health, Legal Advice and Support, LGBT+ Support, Self-Harm and Suicide. Wellbeing Services has compiled a directory of some of the services that we think are useful which includes contact details and information. You can find the directory here: <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/support/localandnationalservices/>



10. Funding Specialist Support (UK)

UK students who receive Student Finance will be able to apply for Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) if they have a physical disability or mental health difficulty, long term health condition or specific learning difficulty. DSA is put in place to help fund specialist support which can be accessed across the UK, depending on where you are located.

DSA can help towards the cost of:

- Specialist equipment – e.g. digital voice recorder, assistance software
- One-to-One Support – e.g. specialist study skills, specialist mentoring
- Other costs associated with your disability

You can apply and find out more about DSA here:

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/support/fundingyoursupport/>

Once you have completed your application form, and submitted your Medical Evidence, you will be asked to attend your local Access Centre for a Study Needs Assessment. You will meet with an advisor who will talk to you about your needs and what could be put in place to support you in your studying. The support can be arranged for your locality so that you can access it from where you are living. The whole process can take up to 12 weeks so ideally, apply before you begin studying or as soon as you receive a formal diagnosis of a long term health condition or disability.

Urgent Contact List (UK)

At certain points, you may feel that you need some urgent support. If there is an immediate emergency and you require the police, ambulance or fire services, call 999. In case of overdose you must seek immediate medical help by calling 999, even if you do not feel unwell. The effects of an overdose can be delayed by hours (even days) and can be fatal.

If you or somebody else needs urgent help, but it is not a medical emergency or life-threatening situation, you can:

- Make an appointment with your GP. Most GP services will offer on-the-day appointments which you can request if required.
- Call the NHS 111 number for advice
- Visit the A&E Department of any hospital where you will be assessed and treated by the relevant mental health team.

As well as the statutory services listed above, you are able to contact the following support and listening services to receive support from a trained volunteer.

- The **Samaritans** provide a confidential listening and support service where you are able to talk through your troubles and concerns in a safe and non-judgmental space, available at all hours. You can:
 - Call: 116 123
 - Text: 07725 909 090
 - Email: jo@samaritans.org

Your local Samaritans may also offer a drop-in service. See <https://www.samaritans.org/branches> to see your nearest branch.

- **Shout** for support in a crisis, you can get help via text by texting shout to 85258, see more here: <https://www.giveusashout.org/>
- **Papyrus** provide confidential help and advice around mental health and suicide to young people and anyone worried about a young person. Their opening hours are 10am-10pm weekdays, 2pm-10pm weekends and 2pm-5pm on Bank Holidays. You can:
 - Call: 0800 068 41 41
 - Text: 07786 209697
 - Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

It is important to seek support if you are feeling in need of urgent support. The services are there to support you and there is no shame in needing that support.



Finally, remember:

Needing support is not a sign of weakness, but a sign that you would like the situation to change. Wellbeing Services will do all we can to support you as a Distance Learner and if you are in doubt of which steps to take next, you can call us Monday-Friday 9am-5pm on 01392 724381 or visit our website at <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/>