	Last Updated: November 2026		
Job Title	Student Mental Health Practitioner		
Faculty/ Department	Chief Student Office – Wellbeing and Disability	**Legal Entity**	University of Surrey
Job Family	Professional Services	**Job Level**	4
Reports To	Head of Student Mental Health	**Line Manages (role title(s))**	None

Job Statement

This is a role for a highly skilled, flexible and dynamic Mental Health Practitioner with skills in triage, risk assessment, crisis management and mental health support for those with emerging or enduring mental health conditions and/or those experiencing emotional distress.

The post holder will support the University to respond to current wellbeing challenges in the higher education sector and work collaboratively with services on and off campus to ensure students have access to appropriate resources and services that support them to achieve their academic and personal goals.

The post holder will work within a multi-disciplinary team to develop and deliver a range of crisis and proactive support. This will include face to face, online and phone interventions and, where appropriate, psychoeducational workshops and activities. These will assist students to develop skills to manage and maintain their mental health and wellbeing.

The post holder will have experience in holistic assessment of need and experience of assessing and managing risk within a mental health service. Under the direction and support of the Head of Student Mental Health , the post holder will triage, respond to crises and provide case working support to clients with mental health difficulties and those in emotional distress. The post holder will work closely and proactively with the wider team internally and externally and act as a point of contact within the university offering support and advice on mental health related situations with associated concerns.

By on occasion delivering mental health related educational programmes and projects and work with wider teams, the post holder will promote a sense of community within the University to ensure that students can fully participate in university life, developing resilience and good physical and mental health.

Responsibilities will also include working to embed innovative and inclusive practices across the University through networking and contributing to training.

Key Responsibilities

This is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but the main responsibilities (5 to 8 maximum)

1. Act as first point of contact for students and referring parties in crisis, offering specialist advice and clinically appropriate referrals.
2. Deliver triage, duty and rapid response support as mat of the mental health practitioner team and with internal University partners, including Campus Safety, Oscar and other student support teams.
3. Assess mental health needs and risks; collaboratively develop intervention, safety and support plans and coordinate referrals and care.
4. Provide compassionate support and evidence-based short-term interventions for complex mental health needs, promoting self-management.
5. Where appropriate, develop and deliver mental health promotion projects, consultations, workshops and training, responding flexibly to changing student needs.
6. Maintain accurate, confidential and auditable records of assessments, decisions, communications and referrals in line with Data Protection and professional standards.
7. Contribute to service protocols, guidance and mental health strategies, and build effective relationships with NHS, University and voluntary-sector partners.
8. Work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding officers to provide specialist advice on safeguarding children and adults at risk.

N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.

Role Scope and Impact

This is a summary of the post holder's role in delivering outcomes, making decisions, and the complexity of problem-solving involved in the role.

Accountability

This post does not have any budgetary or supervisory responsibility.

Problem solving and decision making

The post holder is responsible for ensuring they maintain professional and technical skills and continuing professional development by attending CPD activities, engaging professional supervision and maintaining their professional registration.

The post holder is expected to contribute to the development of the Centre for Wellbeing's services, under the guidance of the Head of Student Mental health.

The post holder must co-ordinate client care in all clinical areas, across University departments and relevant NHS, private and volunteer services; operating flexibly and reacting positively to complex and rapidly changing circumstances and requirements.

The post holder is expected to contribute to the delivery of health promotion campaigns, training and workshops on and off campus in areas of mental health, and general wellbeing.

The post holder is expected to take a creative approach to their work to develop ideas for health promotion campaigns and initiatives in conjunction with the Students Union, Marketing & Communications and Centre for Wellbeing colleagues.

All Mental Health Practitioners will be expected to engage with regular clinical supervision and peer supervision. The post holder will be expected to access continuous training that is relevant to the service.

Planning and organising

The post holder is expected to exercise initiative and professional judgement to effectively manage risk and enhance safety within a range of new and established frameworks and guidance.

The post-holder will provide pro-active reach out and ongoing case management to students, and is expected to take decisions on making timely, accurate and appropriate referrals to a wide range of services including GP, specialist mental health services and

internal University support networks and processes. They will coordinate the care for these students and provide liaison between departments and provide a seamless, supportive framework for the benefit of the student and the institution.
The post holder will manage a case load of students and will, where appropriate, escalate cases to the University's Head of Student Mental Health. Designated Safeguarding Lead and Complex Case Group. The post holder will be expected to join the Complex Case Group in an advisory capacity and will also be required to provide opinion and evidence in relation to cases recommended for escalation to the University's formal Support to Study or disciplinary Panel procedures.
For the most complex problems and issues, advice and guidance can be sought from the Clinical Lead, the Case Review Management Group, or other professionals and professional networks.
In the absence of the Head of Student Mental Health/Deputy and/or the Associate Director Of Wellbeing and Disability, the post holder will be expected to make independent decisions on the provision of support and care, based on extensive knowledge of University regulations and statutory service involvement.

This post has no budgetary or supervisory responsibility. The post holder handles highly confidential clinical information and maintains accurate records. Key relationships include the Centre for Wellbeing, Student Support services, Campus Safety, OSCAR, the Students' Union, academic colleagues, and local NHS and specialist services.

Person Specification This section describes the knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships	
Registered mental health nurse, social worker or occupational therapist with current membership of the NMC/Social Work England/HCPC	
Membership of a recognised medical defence organisation for indemnity purposes	

Technical Competencies (Experience and Knowledge) This section contains the level of competency required to carry out the role (please refer to the Competency Framework for clarification where needed and the Job Matching Guidance). Level 1: basic level of understanding/experience and can apply it with guidance. Level 2: good level of understanding/experience and can apply it with little or no guidance. Level 3: expert level of understanding/experience and can apply, develop it and guide others.	**Essential/ Desirable**	**Level 1-3**
Experience of crisis/urgent mental health support including risk assessment, safety planning and referral	E	3
Thorough knowledge of mental health issues, services, practices, provision and legislation within the UK	E	3
Post-qualification experience of working with young adults with severe and enduring mental health conditions	E	3
Experience of providing short-term focused interventions focused on issues common to the client groups of students (e.g. transition, anxiety, self-esteem, self-harm, procrastination, exam panic)	E	3
Ability to demonstrate awareness of the needs of patients and clients from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds	E	2
A commitment to following professional and ethical principles and guidance, combined with the ability to work flexibly, learn new skills and take on new areas of work, as required by the changing needs of students, the service and the University.	E	3
Experience of working within a Higher Education setting	D	n/a
Understanding and experience of working with at adults at risk and/or children and advising on safeguarding matters	D	n/a
Experience of delivering therapeutic and/or psychoeducational workshops, groups and training courses	D	n/a
Experience of presenting cases through participation in internal and/or multiagency case conferences	D	n/a
Competent IT skills including Microsoft Office, Email, internet and client documentation databases such as EMIS and CORE	D	n/a

Special Requirements This may include a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, regular overseas travel, driving licence, shift work.	**Essential/ Desirable**
Due to the nature of the role there is an expectation that the post-holder will stay outside usual hours when required to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for individuals, particularly when there is a significant risk of harm to self-others. Ability to work across campus locations as demand requires Ability and willingness to work occasional weekends for open days and welcome weekend (list not exhaustive)	E
Current professional indemnity insurance through a recognised provider	E
Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Clearance	E
Ability to demonstrate self-care and psychological resilience	E

Core Competencies This section contains the level of competency required to carry out this role. (Please refer to the competency framework for clarification where needed). n/a (not applicable) should be placed, where the competency is not a requirement of the grade.	**Level 1-3**
Communication	3
Adaptability and Flexibility	3
Customer, Client service and support	3
Planning and Organising	2
Continuous Improvement	3
Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills	3
Managing and Developing Performance	1
Creative and Analytical Thinking	1
Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills	2
Strategic Thinking and Leadership	1

This Job Purpose outlines the core activities of the role. As the Department/Faculty and the post holder evolve, the duties and focus of the role may change. The University expects the post holder to adopt a flexible approach to work, including undertaking relevant training when necessary. If significant changes to the Job Purpose are required, the post holder will be consulted, and the changes will be reflected in a revised Job Purpose.

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Work to achieve the aims of our Environmental Policy and promote awareness to colleagues and students.
- Follow University/departmental policies and working practices in ensuring that no breaches of information security result from their actions.
- Contribute towards broader university initiatives that have a positive impact on student experience, recruitment and campus operations. This may include participation in cross-functional activities such as open days, confirmation and clearing, welcome week, graduation.
- Ensure they are aware of and abide by all relevant University Regulations and Policies relevant to the role.
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager.
- Work supportively with colleagues, operating in a collegiate manner at all times.

Help maintain a safe working environment by:

- All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are, therefore, required to adhere to the University's Our Safety Policy Statement and associated Procedures.

Organisational/Departmental Information & Key Relationships

Background Information

The Wellbeing and Disability department supports the University of Surrey with its wellbeing agenda, the Centre for Wellbeing offers counselling and mental health advice and support to around 15,500 students and 2000 staff.

The department includes mental health, counselling and ThriveWell services, and disability and neuroinclusion teams. Through its work and relationships, the department aims to provide a holistic, professional and expert approach to all aspects of wellbeing. In addition to the work with individuals in crisis and on an ongoing basis, the department works with colleagues to improve awareness on all wellbeing and welfare topics, provide training, challenge attitudes and improve the overall wellbeing to the University community.

The Centre for Wellbeing plays an integral part of the wellbeing agenda, seen as the central point for all mental health and wellbeing activities, from crisis care, counselling and support to training, awareness raising and health promotion. The Mental Health Practitioner plays a key role to the crisis and ongoing care and support to the University community by providing a single point of access to those in distress, expert risk assessment and referral to appropriate primary or secondary care services. Ongoing work with individuals providing mental health advice, coordination and liaison provides a proactive approach to mental health and wellbeing especially in collaboration with internal and external services to ensure individuals can succeed at University.

Key Relationships

The post holder will work as a key part of the Wellbeing and Disability team and will liaise frequently and closely with other members of the University notably with Student Experience, Campus Safety and OSCAR. The Student's Union and academic colleagues will be key relationships to foster to ensure a whole University approach to wellbeing and critical to the development of the wellbeing agenda. Development of strong and positive relationships with local NHS services and tertiary services will be crucial in providing high standards of care and clinical oversight to the students and staff. Any internal or external referring parties will be treated with equal respect and professionalism.

Department Structure Chart

