

Mental Health and Higher Education

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Mental health and adults in the UK

- **1 in 4 experiences mental distress**
- **1 in 200 goes to hospital**
- **Anxiety, depression or combination - 17%**
- **Phobias - 2%**
- **Eating disorders - 1% (higher in women)**
- **Self harm on the increase (especially young women)**
- **OCD - 3% lifetime prevalence**
- **Bipolar disorder and schizophrenia - 1% lifetime prevalence**
- **Suicide c5,000 pa (especially men)**

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Student mental health

- **Increased mental distress**
- **Less severe mental illness**
- **Less self harm**
- **International students and women at higher risk**
- **Suicide**

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Triggers for mental distress

- **Leaving home**
- **Looking after yourself**
- **High expectations**
- **Lack of guidance**
- **Relationships**
- **(religious affiliation)**
- **Sexual relationships/identity**
- **Financial problems**
- **Drugs**
- **Lack of sleep**
- **Not talking to anyone about it**

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DDA and Mental Health

- **Mental Health difficulty is considered a disability**
- **Covers students and applicants**
- **Covers higher education**
- **Covers short courses, distance learning, day and evening courses**
- **Covers visiting students**
- **Institutional and personal responsibility**

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What is discrimination?

- Treating a disabled person *less favourably*, for a reason relating to the person's disability, than it treats (or would treat) someone to whom that reason does not apply, without *justification*.
- Failing to make a *reasonable adjustment* when the person is placed/likely to be placed at a *substantial disadvantage*. This is *anticipatory* requirement.

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Justifications

- **Academic standards**
- **Reasons are material and substantial**

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What sort of provision is covered?

- **Admissions**
 - **Teaching**
 - **Field trips and placements**
 - **Studying facilities**
 - **Examinations/assessments**
 - **Catering facilities (whether provided directly or contracted out)**
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- **Accommodation services**
 - **Careers services**
 - **Counselling and advice services**
 - **Leisure, entertainment and sporting facilities**

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Exclusions

- **It is unlawful to discriminate against a disabled student by excluding them temporarily or permanently from the institution on the grounds of their disability without justification.**

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Finding out if someone is disabled

If the institution does not know, and could not reasonably have known that a person was disabled, then less favourable treatment cannot have occurred.

- **Asking**
- **Publicising provision and positive approach**
- **Clear about confidentiality**
- **Noticing**
- **Asking again**
- **Disclosure**

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Reasonable adjustments

- **Failing to make a *reasonable adjustment* when the person is placed/likely to be placed at a *substantial disadvantage*. This is *anticipatory* requirement.**

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Reasonableness

- **Academic standards**
- **Financial resources and cost**
- **DSA and other resources**
- **Practicality**
- **Health and safety**
- **Relevant interests of others**

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Reading the signs

- **Losing interest**
- **Feelings of worthlessness/hopelessness**
- **Episodes of anxiety/panic**
- **Low energy/changes in sleep patterns**
- **Changes in eating patterns**
- **Withdrawal**
- **Misuse of alcohol or drugs**
- **Hearing voices, seeing things**
- **Desire to self harm**
- **Troubled/unresolved feelings**

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Supporting students

- **Confidentiality**
- **DDA requirements**
- **Placements**
- **Boundaries**
- **Counselling services**
- **Links to external services**
- **Keeping in touch**

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Supporting staff

- **Which staff?**
- **Awareness and knowledge**
- **Boundaries**
- **Where to get help**
- **De-briefing and support**

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Support for other students

- **Healthy environment**
- **Reading the signs**
- **Boundaries**
- **Where to get help**

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Dealing with a crisis

Before:

- **Who?**
- **What?**

After:

- **Debrief for staff and students**
- **Learning lessons**