

SMHA

Borders College Student Mental Health Agreement 2024/25-2025/26



Introduction

The Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) project has been hosted by NUS Scotland since 2015 under the Think Positive campaign. The Borders College SMHA outlines the range of mental health and wellbeing initiatives the College and Students' Association will work on in partnership throughout 2024/25 and 2025/26.

In order to best represent the experience of Borders College students, student voices helped shape the SMHA. Borders College Students' Association (BCSA) worked with 24 students to create this Agreement. BCSA heard about their experience of mental health and wellbeing support at college, what they believe has supported them and what we could do to improve the student experience in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

The SMHA is structured by 4 parts using the NHS Borders 6 Ways to Be Well as inspiration. This allows the Agreement to connect with ongoing regional work to improve mental health and wellbeing in the Scottish Borders. Underpinning the Agreement is also the commitment to becoming a Trauma Informed College.

This Agreement not only demonstrates the valuable partnership that exists between Borders College, BCSA and students, but it also highlights the importance of mental health and wellbeing to the Borders College community. We work to create a culture where mental health and wellbeing is discussed without judgement and our College community is a place where we can all feel supported, and prepared to succeed as Global Citizens.



Signed:

Chris Alder
Borders College Student President
13/08/2024

Pete Smith
Principal & CEO of Borders College
13/08/2024



Nurturing

Nurturing

Borders College understand the value of a successful start and end to college life which helps create a positive student experience. Students shared with BCSEA that building trusting relationships with other students and staff allows them to feel supported with their mental health and wellbeing. Creating a nurturing environment and journey through college allows students to feel welcome and supported.

Supporting positive transitions in and out of college.

- Work to support students joining Borders College to ensure they have a smooth transition into college life.
- Promote pathways to employment and other progression opportunities post-College.

Leading with empathy.

- Review the language used across our policies and procedures to ensure it is accessible and inclusive to the Borders College community.
- Continue to build positive relationships between students and staff so individuals trust the support processes at Borders College.

Building partnerships to provide wrap-around support for staff and students.

- Work with our local partners to enhance the support available to our college community.

Success Measures

- Increased engagement in Quiet Introduction & Supported Enrolment events which take place through summer to deliver additional support to incoming students.
- Develop a range of progression support for students to become informed about what's next for them.
- Support a range of local and national organisations to visit college throughout the academic year to share the services they offer.
- Increased number of students who know their Student Support Officer is for their curriculum area.
- Be conscious of the language used when writing and reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure inclusivity.



Belonging

Belonging

Meeting other people, enjoying new experiences, and feeling a sense of belonging is an important part of college life. Borders College will work to ensure our students and staff feel like they are part of the college community.

Creating safe spaces for our staff and students.

- Develop our spaces to help improve wellbeing at college.

Organising events to build our college community.

- Host a range of relevant events throughout the year to support mental health and wellbeing and have fun.

Success Measures

- Undertake a Trauma Informed walkthrough of the college to assess the safeness of our spaces so that they are appropriate for the needs of our students and staff.
- Consult students sitting on the Student Support Forum and wider student body when creating student wellbeing spaces.
- Host a Winter-Wellbeing Fair after the festive break to ensure students are aware of mental health and wellbeing support available to them in their local area and services available at college (counselling service, Campus Pantry, wellbeing advice etc.)
- Deliver 1 event each month which promotes and raises awareness for a range of important wellbeing topics.



Being Active

Being Active

Students and staff engaging in physical activity and actively participating in our feedback procedures is important. We understand how beneficial physical activity is for mental health and wellbeing. We also work to listen to the voices of students and staff to help create positive change to college life

Promoting physical activity for all.

- Encourage student and staff involvement in a range of inclusive physical activities to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Encourage staff and student involvement in shaping mental health and wellbeing activity.

- Develop new and existing opportunities for students and staff to share their voices.
- Work with students to design and shape mental health and wellbeing services at college.

Success Measures

- Increased number of students and staff engaging in physical activities delivered at College.
- Increased engagement in focus groups, the Student Support Forum, survey numbers.
- Consult with students to help shape what support is available at college to ensure it is relevant.
- Create a steering group to monitor the Student Mental Health agreement.



Being Aware

Being Aware

Understanding the different experiences of others is important for us to be able to appropriately support our college community. Whether it's being trauma informed or engaging in opportunities to upskill and learn about the range of challenges that some of our students face, awareness supports staff to continue to meet the needs of our students. The wellbeing of staff is vital when having a college-wide approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Staff training and awareness.

- Staff are provided with a range of opportunities to improve their personal well-being and their ability to support our college community.

Building a whole college approach to wellbeing.

- Work towards becoming a trauma informed college to better support and recognise the needs of our college community.
- Encourage staff and students to actively campaign for change on matters relating to mental health and wellbeing.

Transparent information.

- Provide regular and understandable information to students and staff about mental health and wellbeing opportunities and services at college or in their local community.

Success Measures

- Deliver a range of awareness raising, training and supportive opportunities to staff so that they feel confident supporting students.
- Continue work with the College Development Network to become a Trauma Informed College and see this work shape college life.
- Support currently available to students is communicated throughout the year and any changes to what is offered is clearly communicated.