**Mental Health and Wellbeing Service at University of Birmingham**

**Service FAQ**

**If you need to contact use at any point from registration, during or after your sessions please email** **mhw@contacts.bham.ac.uk**

**What support is provided by mental Health and Wellbeing Service?**

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Service sits within the wider University Wellbeing Support Network and its unique purpose to is to provide structured support over a number of sessions to students who wish to engage and work therapeutically on an emotional issue that is impacting their ability to fully engage with University life. The aim of the Service is to support students to engage as best as possible with all aspects of University experience.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Service provides short term support and we cannot offer specialist support for complex mental health presentations nor provide a mental health service commensurate with the NHS – if the presenting issues detailed in the registration form are beyond the scope of the University service you may be supported with a referral to your GP or more specialist community services to ensure you have the best possible support.

We’d advise all students to contact the [Student Disability Service](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/disability/about.aspx) to discuss if you are eligible for any Reasonable Adjustments to support you with your studies – including academic adjustments and access to a specialist mentor.

**How do I access the Mental Health and Wellbeing Service?**

To access the Mental Health Service please complete the online form here: [Personalised Support (birmingham.ac.uk)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/mental-health/therapeutic-support.aspx). If you cannot access this form, you can email mhw@contacts.bham.ac.uk and we will arrange an alternative form to be sent.

 If you need any assistance completing the form, please contact your [Course Wellbeing Officer](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/wellbeing-officers.aspx)

**Are there any restrictions to the Service?**

We can predominantly only offer ongoing sessions to students based in the U.K. due to difference in the legal situations around therapy provision.

We can only provide ongoing sessions to Normally Registered students – we cannot offer support for External students or those on a Leave of absence.

Approaching the end of a course we may be limited in what ongoing support we can offer due to the time available.

**What happens after I have completed the registration form?**

Once your form has been submitted you will receive an email to confirm we have received this. We will then read the information you have provided and triage you to the most appropriate service. We aim to triage registration within 2 working days of receipt so you should receive an email within 3 working days to tell you the outcome of your registration.

**How will I find out about my appointments?**

You will receive your first appointment information via email to your @bham.ac.uk email address which was provided on your registration form.

We know you have busy lives so we will attempt to give you as much notice as possible for an appointment and always aim to give at least 48 hours’ notice so you can make arrangements.

Very occasionally we may offer you a ‘short notice appointment’ potentially within the following 48 hours – normally this is because we have a space become available at the last minute so, please do keep checking your emails regularly.

Once you have had your first appointment your Practitioner will arrange your remaining sessions with you directly.

**Do you offer in person/online/evening/weekend appointments?**

You are asked to select how you want to attend your appointments on your registration form.

We do not offer in person appointments in the evening. Online appointments are available on the evening.

Occasionally we may need to complete a daytime assessment appointment prior to referring you to evening sessions.

You can switch between online and in person if this helps you attend sessions.

**What if I can’t make an appointment?**

Due to the demand on the Service, we do ask students to prioritise their appointments wherever possible. Most courses allow students to take time out to attend Counselling and therapeutic appointments that support wellbeing. Your [Wellbeing Officers (birmingham.ac.uk)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/wellbeing-officers.aspx) course can help make these arrangements if needed.

If you need to cancel your appointment, please give as much notice as possible by emailing mhw@contacts.bham.ac.uk and let us know as soon as you are aware that you cannot attend. If you can’t attend in person but can attend online please just let your Practitioner know and they can offer an online appointment.

Please only cancel your appointment if you are unable to make it due to illness or emergency. If appointments are cancelled with less than 48 hours’ notice for other reasons, we are unlikely to be able to replace these out of the 5 sessions available.

Every year we have 100s of missed appointments whilst also having a waiting list of students who are still waiting to access support so, please help us to make the most of all sessions available.

**What if my Practitioner cannot make the appointment?**

A Practitioner will always make a prearranged appointment unless there are exceptional reasons to cancel – for example if they are off work due to sickness. In these cases we will email you with as much notice as possible to let you know and advise you what will happen next. Please check your emails on the day of the appointment in case we have needed to contact you last minute.

**How many appointments do you offer?**

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Service offers short term support of up to 5 sessions per episode. Students can register for one episode of 5 sessions between September and June each academic year.

For new students starting at the University for their first year of study we accept registration after Arrivals weekend however they are very welcome to use UBHeard [Mental Health Support Line (birmingham.ac.uk)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/mental-health/ubheard.aspx) and [Pause drop-in sessions (birmingham.ac.uk)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/mental-health/pause-drop-in-sessions.aspx) and [Talking Space (Inc Crisis Support) - Birmingham Mind](https://birminghammind.org/what-we-do/talking-space-inc-crisis-support/) before this point.

Appointments with Counsellors/Therapeutic Practitioners are structured, focussed and can only be offered either weekly or fortnightly – we cannot stretch appointments out over longer periods of time due to demand. However, there are services such as UBHeard who can provide a more ad-hoc support if this is preferred.

**Will I see the same Practitioner each time?**

All 5 sessions should be with the same Practitioner unless you want to request a different person – in which case email us to request this on mhw@contacts.bham.ac.uk . The only time we would change your Practitioner is in the event of unforeseen circumstances – e.g. a Practitioner leaves or is off work due to illness for a length of time.

**Contact between sessions**

Please only contact your Counsellor or Practitioner between sessions for practical issues such as appointments. If you need support between sessions, please us 24/7 Counselling support from UBHeard [Mental Health Support Line (birmingham.ac.uk)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/mental-health/ubheard.aspx), [Pause drop-in sessions (birmingham.ac.uk)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/mental-health/pause-drop-in-sessions.aspx), [Wellbeing Officers (birmingham.ac.uk)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/wellbeing-officers.aspx), [Talking Space (Inc Crisis Support) - Birmingham Mind](https://birminghammind.org/what-we-do/talking-space-inc-crisis-support/) or [Where to get urgent help for mental health - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/) OR GP.

Please be aware that the inbox used by Mental Health and Wellbeing Service is one that is accessible by all Practitioners in order for us to manage emails in event of a Practitioner absence.

**Requesting Extenuating Circumstances memo**

Once you have seen a Practitioner we can provide a memo detailing the contact you have had with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Service however we cannot comment on any academic impact. Your memo will contain: date of registration, number of sessions offered and attended, CORE score and a brief summary of the presenting issues you described in your registration form. This will be emailed to you as a pdf.

To request an extenuating circumstance memo please email your request to mhw@contacts.bham.ac.uk

**What happens if I still need support at the end of sessions?**

If you need ongoing support or further support your Practitioner or Counsellor will discuss this with you and help with any referrals or sign posting. They may discuss this with you during sessions if it is apparent that longer term support or more specialist support is required.

You are advised to contact the [Student Disability Service](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/your-wellbeing/disability/about.aspx) to discuss if you are eligible for any Reasonable Adjustments to support you with your studies – including academic adjustments and access to a specialist mentor.

**What if I no longer require my sessions?**

If you do not wish for any further appointments, please let your Practitioner know or email us on mhw@contacts.bham.ac.uk and let us know.

If you decide to finish your episode but don’t have the full 5 sessions you can request these sessions later in the academic year – however you will have to re-join the waiting list at time and we cannot guarantee you will see the same Practitioner.

**What happens if IT disruption occurs?**

If IT causes disruption to the session either your Practitioner or a colleague will make contact asap after the session to rebook. If the IT disruption happens your end please just let us know when it is fixed or if you would like to change to in person appointments.

**What is a CORE 34 and why do I fill it out each session?**

The CORE 34 is the clinical measurement tool we use to measure how you feel things are in the areas of functioning, problem solving, wellbeing and risk. You will be sent an invitation to complete this in the days before your appointment and if you don’t get chance your Practitioner may invite you it in session. Your Practitioner may use some of the scores to guide/ask about during your session and you are welcome to ask to see your CORE scores represented on a graph at the end of your sessions. If you have a very strong objection to completing the CORE 34 please talk to your Practitioner however we generally would prefer all students complete CORE forms when using the Service.

**Risk management**

Typically any contact with the Service is confidential. The exception to this is if, during any part of your contact with Mental Health and Wellbeing Service, you disclose or there is strong evidence to suggest that you cannot keep yourself safe – or that you are a risk to another person we may need to share information with your GP, other agencies or your emergency contacts to manage this risk and ensure yours or another person’s safety.

**Feedback Survey and complaints**

Once you have finished your sessions with Mental Health and Wellbeing Service you will be invited to complete anonymous feedback about your experiences. If you have a complaint about the Service you can contact Sue Dalton-Head of Student Wellbeing and Therapeutic Support on s.j.dalton-knight@bham.ac.uk or Drew Linforth Assistant Director Student Services a.h.t.linforth@bham.ac.uk