

**Expression of interest**

**Title: Survey of Higher Education (HE) Providers and student unions: Measurement needs for a student mental health survey**

**Project reference: DFE/RPPU/2018/086**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 11.59pm Wednesday 16th January 2019**

**Summary**

Expressions of interest are sought to undertake research with HE providers, to inform the development of a student mental health questionnaire.

**Background**

In the context of increased demand for mental health services among higher education students, there is a need for more robust data about the prevalence and range of mental health issues affecting this group.

To inform the development of a future student survey, this research with HE providers will gather data on a range of issues.

**Research aims**

The main purpose of this research is to gather information from HE providers (including student unions) to inform the development of a representative student survey. It is anticipated this research will also provide some data for baseline evidence on institutional mental health service provision.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the main concerns and observations of HE providers around specific student mental health disorders: those which are perceived to prevail at institutions?
2. Among the range of risk factors relating to mental health problems have we identified all those potentially of concern – e.g. workload stress; pressures to achieve a high-class degree; problems adapting to self-directed learning and time-management. And have all risk factors relating to social factors been identified such as loneliness; a break from familial support; adapting to living with others; forming news friends and so on. What about early risks/early signs and risks associated with transition to university?
3. Among the range of risks, have we identified all those that concern universities? (e.g. risk of drop out; impacts on attainment and progression to graduate level jobs; and, in the most severe of cases a risk of student suicide. Are there other risks?)
4. In order to measure students’ perceptions of what works: what do providers offer or what are they developing in terms of mental health and well-being services? What are the comprehensive range and modalities of internal and/or external services available to students at their institution and what issues are emerging of importance around service provision?
5. What are the specific issues around transitions: are mental health problems initiated or exacerbated by the transition? What other issues exist around transitions to university? e.g. what are the issues relating to the break from the usual support for existing mental health problems for new starters in particular?
6. Are there other areas not currently identified that universities feel should be measured on a student mental health survey?

**Methodology**

**Survey of HE Providers and Student Unions**

The survey will be of all HE providers in the UK and their students unions. It will also include a sample of Alternative Providers.

It is anticipated that a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions will be needed to both explore issues and to measure institutional arrangements and perceptions of student mental health problems and risk factors.

The DfE hasn’t run a similar survey previously and suitable new questions will need to be developed for this study.

**Timing**

* Expressions of Interest submitted: 11.59pm, 16th Jan 2019
* Invitations to tender submitted: 30th Jan 2019
* Contract awarded/project start: 5th Feb 2019
* Fieldwork commences: End February
* Full report due: April 2019 (TBC)
* Finalised report due for publication: TBC
* Contract end: May 2019

**Assessment criteria**

* Experience of research topics to be covered
* Experience of research methodologies to be used
* Experience of research with higher education students and higher education institutions
* Capacity and capability to deliver the project in the timescales indicated

Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 1000 words overall; this includes any website links. Anything longer will be disregarded

| **Closing date for EOIs: 11.59pm Wednesday 16th Jan 2019****Send your EOI form to: jane3.carr@education.gov.uk** |
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**How to submit an expressions of interest**

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the [Department’s Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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