

The Student Mental Health Manifesto: at a glance



The Manifesto sets out an ambitious, evidence-led vision for the next government to improve mental health in our university communities. Within, you will find immediate and long-term recommendations to affect meaningful change across every aspect of the student experience.

Our recommendations span the following five themes:

- » Healthcare
- » Financial hardship
- » Higher education
- » Inclusive healthcare and education
- » A mentally healthier nation

Who are we?

Student Minds is the UK's student mental health charity. We have a clear vision: No student should be held back by their mental health. We empower students to build their own mental health toolkit to support themselves and their peers through university life and beyond. We challenge the higher education sector, health sector, and government to make student mental health a priority.

What is the Manifesto?

The Student Mental Health Manifesto sets out our vision for a future where every student can thrive. Working with students and colleagues from the higher education, healthcare, and voluntary and community (VCSE) sectors, we've developed the Manifesto to provide clear recommendations for the government to support and improve student mental health. Our aim is not just to alleviate poor mental health, or prevent it in the first place, but to go further and make university a place where everyone can thrive.

How was the Manifesto developed?

- » Co-production: our Student Steering Group - comprising two sabbatical officers and seven current students- oversaw the development of the Manifesto.
- » Qualitative Research: built upon two "online community" exercises with over 100 students, and conducted ten evidence sessions with student leaders and colleagues from higher education, healthcare and VCSE.
- » Translation: we analysed findings, and developed and tested recommendations to suit the specific needs of our university communities.

Read the Student Mental Health Manifesto

Our Manifesto is now available to read in full on our website. Visit <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/student-mental-health-manifesto.html>



Get involved

Do you want to support our work to ensure no student is held back by their mental health? Find out how you can get involved in our work at <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/getinvolved.html>

Get in touch

Find and follow us on social media @StudentMindsOrg.

If you have questions about the Manifesto, please contact studentvoice@studentminds.org.uk

Themes and recommendations

Healthcare

All students should have access to quality and timely mental health support. We're calling for an urgent commitment to increase funding for the NHS and improve support for healthcare staff and students. We also want to see a long-term commitment to ensure the sustainability and improvement of mental health services, and improved support for students and young people who experience poor mental health.

Financial hardship

All students should have enough money to support them through their studies. This requires a review of existing student funding systems nationwide, reversing real-terms cuts due to inflation, increasing entitlement thresholds based on household income, restructuring Postgraduate Taught finance, and introducing maintenance funding for part-time students. We identify immediate changes to alleviate cost-of-living pressures such as a winter fuel allowance, increasing the minimum wage for all 18 year-olds to the Real Living Wage, further subsidising public transport, and introducing payments for healthcare students on placement. Students' specific experiences must be accounted for when policies designed to tackle the cost-of-living crisis are developed.

Inclusive healthcare and education

All students should have access to inclusive education and healthcare without facing barriers. The government must urgently improve support for marginalised communities, including trans, international, and disabled students; ensuring university communities are protected from discrimination and hate speech. We're calling for a long-term commitment to building truly inclusive education and healthcare systems, free from cultural, social and physical barriers.

A mentally healthier nation

We must move towards a holistic approach to the mental health and wellbeing of the nation, improving support, prevention, and equality. This includes, but is not limited to, early intervention and preventative policies for healthcare, suicide prevention, and embedding mental health and wellbeing into curriculums, to support transitions into and out of higher education. We are calling for the government to improve the state of housing in the country, particularly tenants' rights in the rental sector, commit to protecting green space and invest in mental health research.

Higher education

Our higher education institutions need improved support and investment. The funding model for higher education must be reviewed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sector without compromising on staff or student wellbeing. Clarity on the roles and responsibilities of universities and statutory health services must be provided to ensure mental health support is delivered appropriately. Continued political and financial support for the University Mental Health Charter should be given to enable these improvements through a whole-university approach. Higher education should be given greater esteem in recognition of its positive contribution to our economy and society rather than being undermined by "culture war" narratives.