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| Press release |
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| Embargoed until 12:01am Wednesday 26 April 2017 |
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| New model for university accommodation with launch of guide to supporting student mental health |
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| The UPP Foundation, a charitable trust created by University Partnerships Programme (UPP) to help tackle the biggest issues facing the higher education sector across the UK, has today launched a student mental health guidance pack aimed at university teams and providers of university accommodation, in collaboration with student mental health charity Student Minds.  Following the UPP Foundation’s ground-breaking partnership with Student Minds on the joint “Student Living” pilot project, an initiative focused on training front line employees at Nottingham Trent University in supporting student mental health, the guidance pack was launched earlier today (Wednesday 26 April) at a high level roundtable event in central London.  Taking into account the role and opportunities of accommodation providers and their employees, the cross-sector report offers a new model in ensuring that these voices are heard and considered. It uniquely focuses on how partnerships and auditing between universities, accommodation services and third sector organisations can support early intervention for students experiencing mental health difficulties.  In a first for the higher education sector, this new guidance will help to inform UPP and the sector’s approach to student mental health where student’s live.  Recognising that it can often be those working within the halls of residence- a cleaner, the night porter or security teams - that pick up on issues, training was delivered to UPP accommodation staff and student resident assistants to enable them to spot signs of mental health issues early on and engage in supportive conversations to help students get the support they need.  The report makes a series of recommendations with three overriding themes running throughout: the need for collaboration and auditing across sectors; to improve the level of understanding about mental health across the whole university community including accommodation teams; and to embed a sustainable and resourced strategic approach.  Dr Paul Marshall, Chair of the Board of Trustees at the UPP Foundation, said: “One of the key UPP Foundation goals is increasing student retention and helping to erode the barriers many students face to remaining in higher education. Student mental health is an extremely important issue and the UPP Foundation recognises the unique difficulties that can arise for students with mental health issues whilst studying at university.  “From a university perspective, it remains vital to adapt a strategic approach to wellbeing and invest in mental health. Cultivating environments and communities that are supportive of mental health, whilst providing timely access to support services, is the most effective approach to reducing mental health difficulties in our society.  “We are extremely proud to have been involved in this exciting opportunity with Student Minds to develop a research-led, bespoke project in UPP accommodation at Nottingham Trent University and are confident that our resulting guidance pack will help to inform the sector’s approach to student mental health.”  Rosie Tressler, CEO at Student Minds, said: “It’s been great to have the opportunity to collaborate with the UPP Foundation and Nottingham Trent University in developing this whole-community approach to supporting student mental health. Around a third of students may be experiencing levels of psychological distress, so equipping employees to create supportive communities and taking health promotion and peer support to where students actually live and socialise provides exciting opportunities for prevention and supporting students to manage this important transition.”  Today’s high level roundtable event was held at the University of London’s Garden Halls in Bloomsbury, and attended by Professor Edward Peck, Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham Trent University – who was also the Keynote Speaker – Rosie Tressler, CEO at Student Minds; Rachel Piper, Policy Manager at Student Minds, and other higher education leaders and experts. The private event enabled attendees to discuss the mental health of students, share best practice and explore the potential new approaches in light of the guidance pack being launched by the UPP Foundation and Student Minds. Copies of the guidance pack were available at the event.  **ENDS** |
| Notes to editors |
| **About the UPP Foundation**  The UPP Foundation is a registered charity that offers grants to universities, charities and other higher education bodies. |
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| In recent years, as higher education has expanded, the burden of paying for a degree has shifted towards the individual. This naturally presents difficulties in terms of maintaining the ‘University for the Public Good’, as well as ensuring there is greater equity in terms of going to, succeeding at and benefiting from the university experience. We believe the UPP Foundation can make a small but significant contribution in helping universities and the wider higher education sector overcome these challenges. |
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| The UPP Foundation was created in 2016 by University Partnerships Programme (UPP), the leading provider of on campus student accommodation infrastructure and support services in the UK. UPP is the sole funder of the UPP Foundation. |
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| The UPP Foundation is an autonomous charity and all of its grants are reviewed and authorised by its Board of Trustees. The Foundation is supported by an Advisory Board. |
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| More information is available at the UPP Foundation website: [www.upp-foundation.org](http://www.upp-foundation.org) |
| **About Student Minds**  The charity Student Minds empowers students and staff to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to look after their mental health, support others, and create change, so that all in higher education can thrive.  Student Minds is working with over 100 universities across the UK to deliver a range of peer support groups, staff-run workshops equipping students to support friends, student-led campaign activities and the national University Mental Health Day.  The Student Living Report has been authored by Rachel Piper, Policy Manager at Student Minds.  [studentminds.org.uk](http://studentminds.org.uk/) |
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| For further information, please contact: |
| **University Partnerships Programme:** |
| Richard Brabner, Head of UPP Foundation +44 (0)20 7398 7189 |
| richard.brabner@upp-ltd.com |
| **Lodestone Communications:** |
| Harry Padfield +44 (0)7896 140 920 |
| harry.padfield@lodestonecommunications.com |
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