**University Mental Health Charter
Award Scheme Pilot
Information Pack**

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About the University Mental Health Charter Award Scheme

[The University Mental Health Charter](#) was created by Student Minds, with input from thousands of staff and students, to shape a future in which everyone in higher education can thrive. The Charter provides a set of principles of good practice to support universities across the UK in making mental health a university-wide priority.

The Charter Award Scheme is a voluntary scheme that aims to support and encourage universities to develop a whole-university approach to mental health. It will achieve this by assessing universities against the Charter's principles of good practice and recognise and rewarding those that demonstrate good practice.

Aims and Objectives of the Award Scheme Pilot

Student Minds are currently conducting an initial pilot of the Award Scheme at Derby University. Our aim is to pilot the Charter Award Scheme at three additional universities in 2020 to determine the feasibility, validity, and reliability of the assessment methods in different contexts, and identify how Student Minds can best support participating universities.

This information will be used to refine the process and methodology before the final scheme is launched.

Through the pilot we will:

- Refine the assessment process and methods
- Refine grading model and criteria
- Develop and refine training, guidance and resources to support universities through the application and assessment process
- Consult on the pricing structure for participating universities
- Determine total resource, staffing and infrastructure requirements for Student Minds to run the scheme, including requirements for a digital platform
- Consult on the feasibility of impact assessment methods
- Explore any additional programme developments to ensure the process leads to real cultural change in universities

Benefits for participating universities

We hope that participating in the pilot will afford the following benefits for participating universities:

- Benefit from the range of experience and expertise in the review team convened by Student Minds to enhance the university's approach the mental health.
- Support to understand the university's progress towards a whole-university approach to mental health.
- Support to understand how the university can improve its approach to better meet the principles of good practice outlined in the Charter.
- Support to understand where the university has demonstrated excellent practice in developing a whole-university approach to mental health, which can be used as an example for the rest of the sector to follow.
- Recognition as a first adopter of and key partner in shaping a major quality improvement programme.
- Benefit from reduced cost of Award (see below)

Award Scheme Pilot Process

We are undertaking an iterative development of the assessment methodology. This means that the details of the assessment process, criteria and requirements are still being finalised and may be subject to changes as we test them at Derby University.

The three additional pilots will also be part of our testing process. We are looking for universities who are open to working with us as we determine the best approaches, appreciating the developing nature of the project.

There are likely to be the following stages:

- Briefing on pilot process: the Student Minds team will brief the university Award Lead on final process and requirements.
- Self-assessment/ evidence submission: The university will be required to submit a report, which provides information about how the university is working towards the principles of good practice across all 18 themes of the Charter and evidence how they know their approach is helping them to achieve the principles.
- Review of evidence: by a review team convened by Student Minds with clinical, academic and strategic expertise and a student representative.
- Visit preparation meeting: where the practical arrangements are finalised for the review visit.
- On-site visit: in which the review team will interview a range of university staff and students.
- Evaluation of pilot/ feedback on review process: in which representatives from all the pilot universities attend a workshop to feed back about the process and recommend improvements.
- Final review findings fed back to university: recommendations/ final judgments are fed back to the university either in-person or via a final report.

Criteria for achieving the Award

A review team convened by Student Minds with clinical, academic and strategic expertise and a student representative will assess how well the university is working towards the principles of good practice. We will not expect universities to have met all the principles of good practice within the Charter. Instead, we are looking for evidence that the university is working towards most of the principles and evidence that their chosen approaches are effective in helping to meet the principles. We will assess universities' approaches with careful consideration of their unique context, and the challenges and opportunities this provides.

Universities that apply for the Charter Award after Winter 2020 and demonstrate that they effectively working towards the principles of good practice, with no major gaps in approach or concerns, will achieve the Charter Award. We expect universities to be able to achieve various levels of the Award, so that those who demonstrate particularly high levels of good practice will achieve recognition. We will also provide feedback, including recommendations and highlighting areas of good practice.

However, the exact criteria for the Award and the levels are still in development. Piloting the Award at a range of universities will help to refine our criteria by determining what is reasonable to expect of most universities and what is considered particularly excellent practice.

Please note this means that participation as a pilot university **will not** automatically result in a Charter Award. For pilot universities to achieve an Award, the university will need to submit a reassessment within 12 months of the pilot being completed. Student Minds will assess the submission and confer an Award letter stating the level and conditions of the Award.

Pilot universities will, however, receive feedback, recommendations and areas of good practice to support them to enhance their approach.

Timeframe of the Pilot

The initial timeframe for the pilot will be 6 months, commencing on 6th April. Please only apply if you can commit to completing the pilot within this timeframe.

Briefing on pilot process: w/c 6th April 2020
Self-assessment/ evidence submission deadline: w/c 25th May 2020
Visit preparation meeting: w/c 29th June 2020
On-site visit: July 2020
Evaluation of pilot/ feedback on review process: August 2020
Final review findings fed back to university: September 2020

Requirements of participating universities

We hope participating universities will be able to fully commit to the pilot and we will support them to the best of our ability. We expect the following commitment from all pilot universities:

- ***Identify a lead staff member*** The Award Lead will have responsibility for coordinating the self-assessment submission, the review visit, attend necessary briefing and evaluation meetings and ensure communication and collaboration between the university and the Student Minds team.
- ***Submission of a self-assessment*** The university will be required to submit a narrative description of how they are working towards the principles of good practice in each theme within the Charter, and provide supporting evidence.
- ***Coordination of review visit*** The university will coordinate a two-day review visit, in which the review team can interview a range of staff, students and senior leaders at the university. This includes setting up interviews, providing rooms and catering/ refreshments during the day. Student Minds will be responsible for arranging travel and accommodation for the review teams.

- ***Feedback*** The university will provide detailed, prompt and honest feedback on the process at pre-agreed points to enable student minds to develop the Award Scheme.
- ***Commit to the timeframe*** Please only apply to be a pilot institution if you can align with the timescales we have set out above.
- ***Participate openly and transparently*** The university should provide information about the university and its activities in an open, honest and transparent manner. This is not an exercise to simply evidence the university's achievements, but a process to enable ongoing improvement.
- ***Identify students and staff for interview*** We recognise that the review visit is planned at the end of the academic year. Please only apply if you can guarantee that the review team will be able to speak to groups of students and senior staff during a two day period in July.

Cost of the pilot

There is no charge for universities to participate as a pilot university. However, there will be time and resource costs to the institution. Please note that these will not be reimbursed.

There will be a £2000 fee for the pilot university to undertake the post-pilot accreditation, and an annual £1000-£3000 fee (estimated based on university size) for every subsequent year of accreditation thereafter.

Which universities can apply?

We are piloting the Award Scheme at universities or degree-awarding institutions in the first instance. These can be both private or publicly funded, and may have student bodies made up of undergraduate and/or postgraduate students, taught and/or research students, full-time and/or part-time students, campus-based and/ or work-based or distance-learning students.

We strongly encourage applications from providers from the private sector, small specialist providers and providers based in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

We welcome applications from universities who are just starting their journey towards a whole-university approach to mental health, as well as those with well-established and recognised approaches to student support. However, there must be a commitment from senior leadership to work towards a whole-university approach to mental health through enthusiastic participation in the pilot.

The university must also be able to meet all of the requirements detailed above, as well as commit the time and resources to completing the pilot project.

Pilot application process

Please fill in this form by **midnight on Sunday 23rd February** in order to be considered as a pilot university. The Student Minds team will make their decision based on: i) universities meeting the requirements set out in this document, and ii) ensuring that the three universities selected allow the Award methods to be tested at a diverse range of institutions and contexts.

We may contact you to arrange a phone call to confirm details of your application before making the final decision.

Key contacts

For more information, please contact Leigh Spanner, Sector Improvement Lead at Charter@studentminds.org.uk.