Student Mental Health & Wellbeing: Overview of the current data and national resources

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Mental Health and Wellbeing: Impact of COVID on Universities

More work needs to be done to establish how university communities have been experiencing lock down and the short and long-term impact on their wellbeing and mental health. However, some key headlines are emerging:

- Stress and fear in the face of a pandemic are normal but staff and students have also demonstrated resilience and supporting one another.[1]

- Students have been more likely to feel anxious, hopeless, experience suicidal thoughts, and self-harm during the pandemic. [2]

- Many students and young adults are experiencing increased social isolation and loneliness, [3] and increased anxiety about the future [4]

- Many university staff are feeling unprepared and fearful about the future. [5]

- The impact of Covid-19 is being felt differently across the university community – magnifying health, social and educational inequalities.

Drawn on Planning for a Sustainable Future: the importance of university mental health in uncertain times

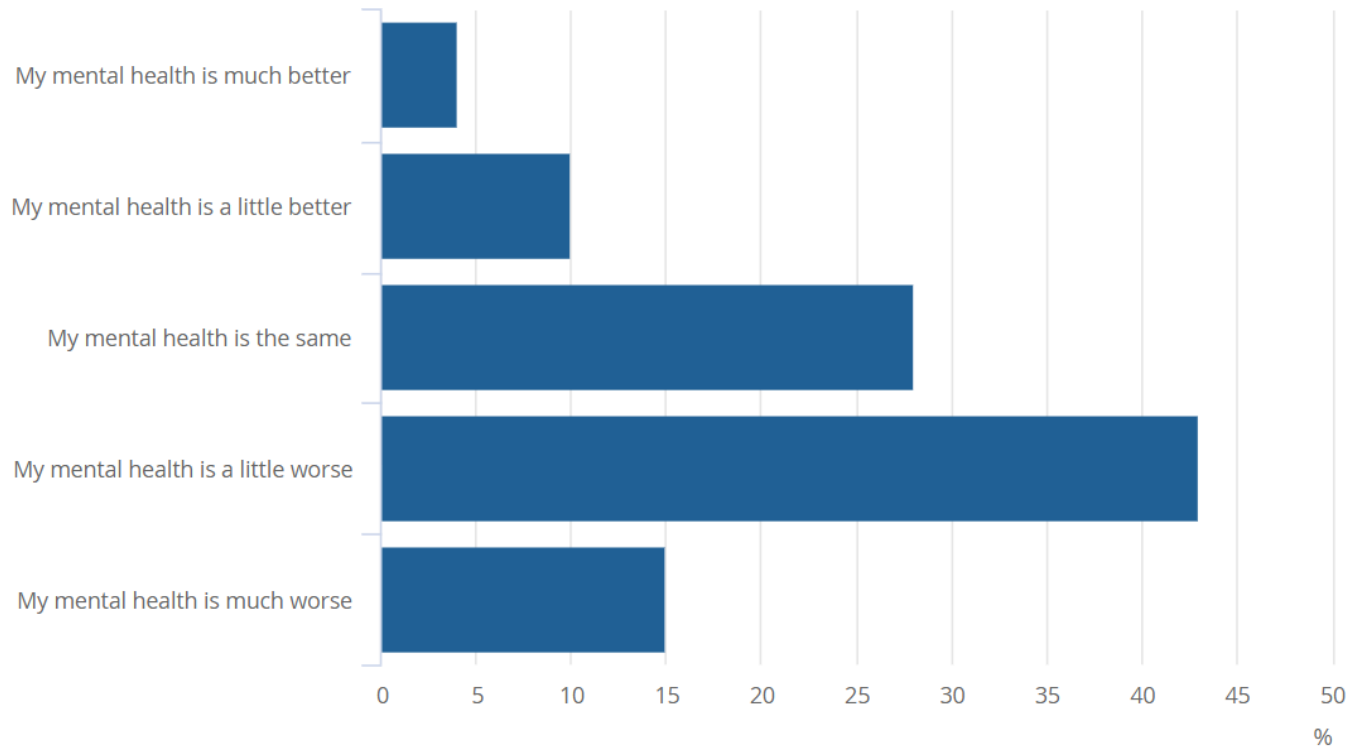# [Student Covid Insights Survey, ONS](#), December 2020

Key findings:

- Students follow coronavirus guidance in much the same way as the general public (as reported in the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN); however, students were more likely not to have left their home or accommodation in the seven days prior to being surveyed (between 2 and 3 in 10) than the general public (less than 1 in 10).

- Half of students reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their **academic experience** although 29% of students reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied in the autumn term.

- Over half (53%) of students reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their **social experience** in the autumn term.

- Students reported lower levels of life satisfaction, life worthwhile and happiness, and higher levels of anxiety, compared with the general population (aged 20 to 24)
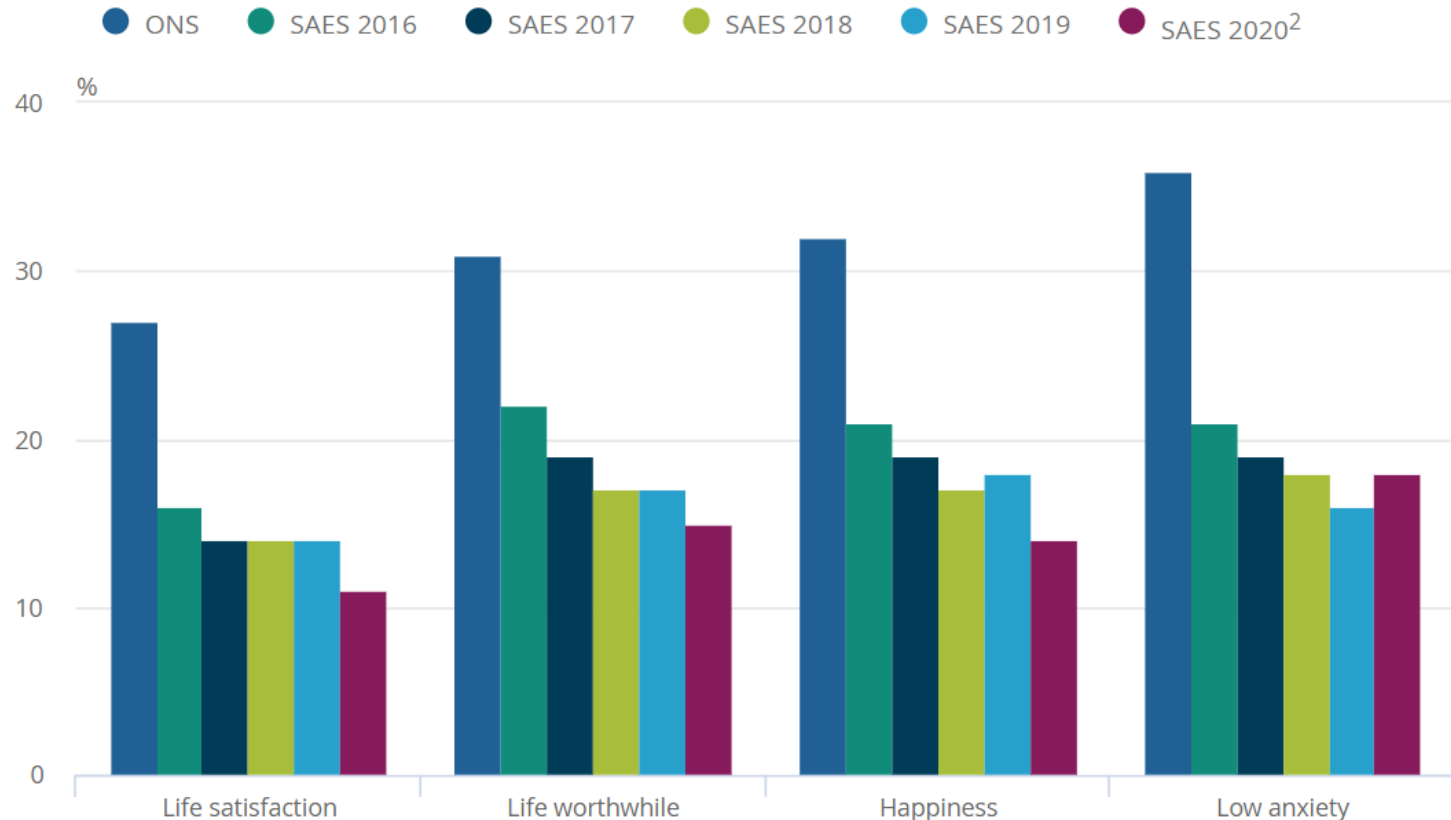
Source: Higher Education Policy Institute Student Academic Experience

Survey; Office for National Statistics - Measuring National Well-being

- More than half of students reported that their well-being and mental health has worsened as a result of the pandemic.

My mental health is much better

My mental health is a little better

My mental health is the same

My mental health is a little worse

My mental health is much worse

%

Source: Higher Education Policy Institute survey of undergraduate students

Mental Health and Wellbeing: A Holistic Response

A whole systems approach to prevention is needed, guided by core public health principles to support our University communities including:

- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing
- Using participatory methods
- Ensuring students have agency and control over decisions
- Working with those in the university community that are at highest risk
- Engaging with a broad range of partners

Sector-led support and resources for universities
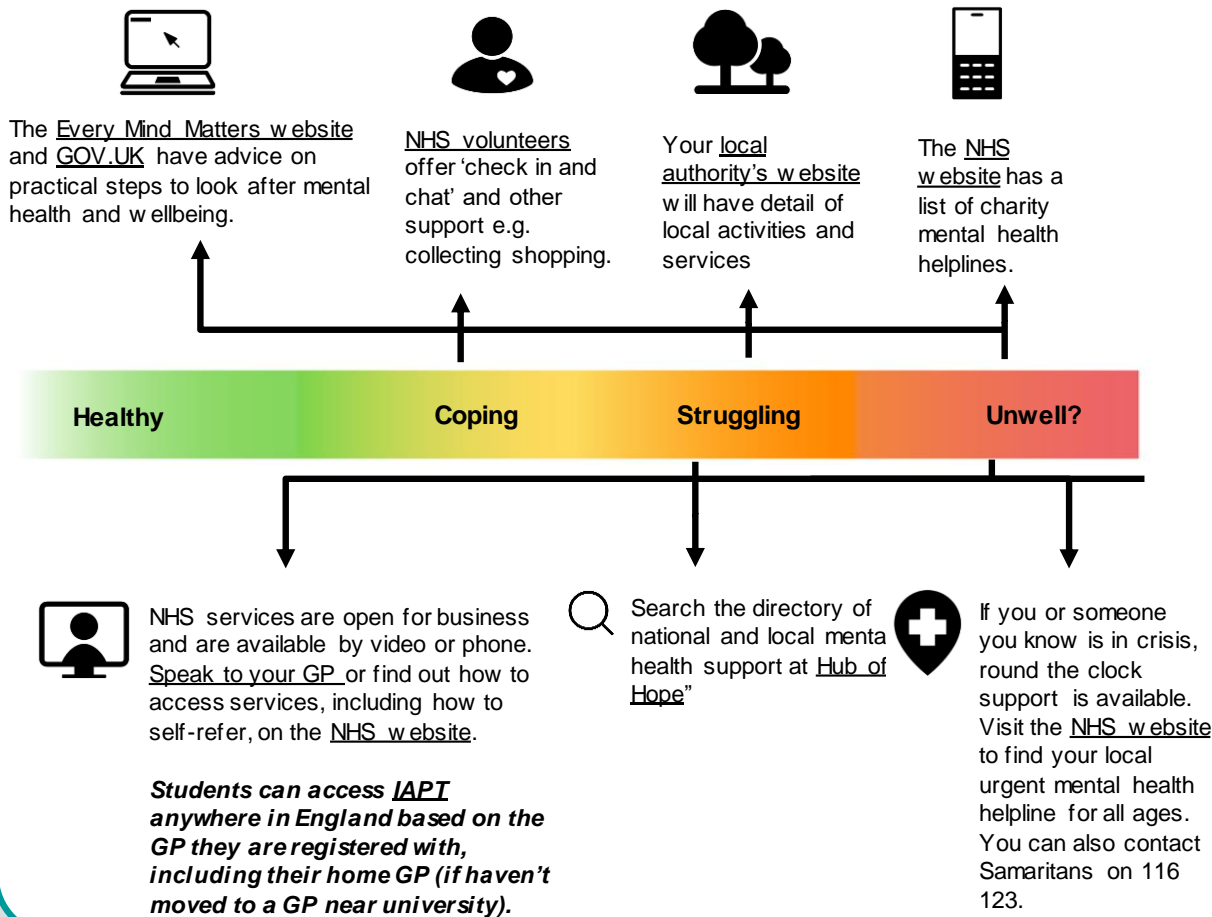
Universities UK:
- Checklist for self isolating students – key considerations to support mental health and wellbeing.
- Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities - helps universities think through ow they can prioritise the mental health of their students and staff by taking a whole university approach
- Self-Assessment Tool developed with the Child Outcomes Research Consortium, supports universities to plan and implement a whole university approach
- Suicide -Safer Universities developed with Papyrus provides a framework to understand student suicide, mitigate risk, intervene when students get into difficulties, and respond to these tragic deaths.

University Mental Health Charter provides a set of principles to support universities make mental health a university-wide priority. It forms the basis of the Charter Award Scheme, being developed in 2020.

UK Healthy Universities Network supports its members to develop and implement 'whole university' approaches to health, wellbeing and sustainability. Website includes links to key organisations supporting student populations during COVID-19.

Mental Health and Wellbeing: National Resources

Support for the public (students and staff)

The Every Mind Matters website and GOV.UK have advice on practical steps to look after mental health and wellbeing.

NHS volunteers offer 'check in and chat' and other support e.g. collecting shopping.

Your local authority's website will have detail of local activities and services

The NHS website has a list of charity mental health helplines.

Healthy   Coping   Struggling   Unwell?

NHS services are open for business and are available by video or phone. Speak to your GP or find out how to access services, including how to self-refer, on the NHS website.

Students can access IAPT anywhere in England based on the GP they are registered with, including their home GP (if haven't moved to a GP near university).

Search the directory of national and local mental health support at Hub of Hope"

If you or someone you know is in crisis, round the clock support is available. Visit the NHS website to find your local urgent mental health helpline for all ages. You can also contact Samaritans on 116 123.

Targeted for staff

- Join 90,000 others and sign up for online psychological first aid training
- Mental Health at Work has a range of resources for the workplace.

Targeted for students

Student Minds has a dedicated coronavirus website, **Student Space**.

Students can get help finding what support is available at their place of study, as well as helpful resources, tips and dedicated support services by phone or text.