Call for Evidence: case studies of support for mental health

**We are working with partners across the sector to help higher education providers (HEPs) identify and make use of effective practice to support student mental health. We aim to develop a digital repository of information and resources to support HE providers.**

**We are inviting higher education providers to submit case studies of initiatives that are designed to support student mental health in higher education. We are aiming to collect a range of case studies from across the sector. Case studies could cover practice or policy initiatives designed to improve student mental health, for example, changes to service provision, innovation around peer mentoring or peer assisted learning, support for mental health crises, adaptation of academic processes or support for academics to adapt their approach to teaching.**

**Background to the project**

Funded by the Office for Students, TASO is leading a Consortium of five partners to help HE providers identify and make use of effective practice to support student mental health. The work will lead to the creation of a central, online hub to share [what works to support student mental health](https://taso.org.uk/research/current-projects/student-mental-health-project/).

The overarching aim for this project is to develop and promote a digital repository of information which the HE sector can access and apply to improve the efficacy of their mental health practices, including:

* A typology of mental health practices delivered in HE;
* A toolkit drawing together evidence of what works (and what does not), why, in what context and for whom in relation to student mental health;
* An evidence map, capturing current practice and evaluation;
* Evaluation guidance to help providers assess the impact of their mental health practices on longer-term outcomes such as retention, progression and attainment.

**Scope of the case studies**

We are particularly interested in hearing about initiatives that:

* Are specifically designed to improve student mental health and outcomes in higher education and which are not currently being evaluated against longer-term student outcomes (retention, progression, awarding) but are interested in doing so.

Some examples of projects this might include are set out below. These are intended to be illustrative examples, we would welcome case studies of initiatives that are not mentioned.:

* + Therapeutic initiatives (including CBT, ACT, Counselling, mindfulness and stress management)
  + Recreation programmes (e.g., music, art)
  + Physical activity/exercise
  + Active Psychoeducation initiatives (taught skills via training and workshops)
  + Passive Psychoeducation initiatives (self-service access to information and guidance)
  + Pedagogy
  + Professional Training
  + Places and spaces (infrastructure, buildings etc)
  + Setting-based (security, feeling safe, finance)
  + Peer mentoring/support
  + Intersystem collaboration (university policy, communication between services both internally and externally)

We are particularly interested in hearing from HEPs:

* + **Who are implementing initiatives targeted at disadvantaged and underrepresented students, including, but not limited to:**
    - **Students who identify as LGBTQ+**
    - **Socioeconomically disadvantaged students**
    - **Students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds**
    - **Students with experience of care**
    - **Students with caring responsibilities**
    - **Mature students**
  + **Have adapted standard university policy and practice such that the students should benefit from the initiative without being aware of its implementation.**
  + **Have co-created initiatives with students.**
  + **Are not evaluating their programmes against longer-term student outcomes (retention, progression, awarding) but are interested in doing so.**
* Initiatives may be ongoing, or where data collection and analyses have concluded within the last five academic years.

**What will we do with case studies?**

Some case studies will be used to inform our evidence map, helping the sector understand the initiatives being explored. A selection of case studies will be used to inform the digital repository of current mental health evidence. To be included here, initiatives must:

* Aim to improve student mental health or provide support for those experiencing difficulties with their mental health.
* Be currently active or completed within the last five academic years.

Using the template below, please submit your examples of evaluation best practice to [research@taso.org.uk](mailto:research@taso.org.uk) by **5pm** on **Friday 16th December**.

If you have any questions regarding the open call, please get in touch and we can arrange an informal conversation.

| **Data Protection Notice** | Case studies selected may be used to inform a digital repository of current mental health evidence which will go live next year.  However, no higher education providers, local authorities, charities or other organisations will be identified in any publication unless we receive written permission to do so. We may also ask your permission to refer to your evidence in a repository of best practice as part of our online evidence toolkit.  Please read the [Data Protection Notice](https://taso.org.uk/taso-privacy-notice/) for this project before submitting your evidence. |
| --- | --- |
| **Data Protection Notice** | Do you confirm that you have read and understood the Data Protection Notice?  Yes  No  Would you like your institution to be identified if your case study information is included in the digital repository?  Yes  No |
| **Lead organisation** |  |
| **Contact name** |  |
| **Contact job role** |  |
| **Contact email** |  |
| **Contact telephone** |  |
| **SECTION A: Initiative design**  *Please provide details of your initiative, following the outline below:*   * Aim of initiative (including the key outcomes for students) * Who is the initiative is aimed at * How the initiative was developed * Number of students initiative worked with (if specifiable) * Future plans for delivering / scaling initiative   *[750 words max]* | |
| **Initiative name** |  |
| **Completed (please include date) or ongoing?** |  |
|  | |
| **SECTION B: Evaluation**  *Please provide an outline of why you are interested in evaluating your initiative. If you are currently collecting data, please outline your current data collection or evaluation plans.*   * Outline your evaluation design, e.g. a cross-sectional end of initiative evaluation, a pre-post initiative evaluation, etc. * Include details of the measures you are using to evaluate the initiative, e.g. qualitative data collected, names of survey measures used, etc.   *[400 words max]* | |
|  | |
| **SECTION C: Recommendations and conclusions**  *Please provide an overview of the key recommendations and conclusions from your evaluation or experience.*  *[300 words max]* | |
|  | |

| **Sector Engagement Interviews**  In addition to the call for evidence, TASO will be conducting a suite of interviews with sector professionals working in this area. We aim to conduct interviews with:   * ***Mental health practitioners and evaluators in HE*.** We plan to conduct 20-30 semi-structured interviews to explore the types of initiatives providers are delivering and their approach to evaluation. * ***Representatives from key stakeholder groups*.** We plan to conduct 10-15 semi-structured interviews with sector organisations that deliver and / or evaluate mental health initiatives with students. | |
| --- | --- |
| *(Delete as appropriate)*  I am / am not willing to participate in an interview.  I am a mental practitioner or evaluator / representative from a stakeholder group. | |
| **Evaluation guidance pilot**  As part of this project TASO will be selecting 3-5 HEPs to pilot a measurement framework for assessing student mental health in conjunction with evaluation support provided by TASO.  Please indicate below if you would like to be considered for the pilot. | |
| *(Delete as appropriate)*  I am / am not interested in participating in the evaluation pilot. | |

***Additional guidance***

* TASO reserves the right, acting reasonably, to:
  + Discontinue the open call in the absence of appropriate submissions;
  + Change the timetable for the delivery of the project, and in such circumstances TASO will notify all applicants of any change by the fastest means possible;
  + Terminate discussions with organisations which apply;
  + Not to accept submissions at all as a result of this process.
* Under no circumstances shall TASO incur any liability in respect of any of these actions.
* No publicity regarding the project will be permitted until TASO has given express written consent to the relevant communication. No statements may be made to any part of the media regarding the nature of this open call, its contents or any proposals relating to it without the prior written consent of TASO.
* TASO will not reimburse any costs incurred by organisations in connection with preparation of their submissions.
* If you are unsure of the meaning of a question or anything in this call for submissions then it is your responsibility to ask TASO to clarify in writing via email.
* TASO will aim to answer clarification questions within five (5) working days, but does not undertake to do so. TASO may also decline to answer a question if it deems the question to be inappropriate. If TASO is unable to answer a question, this will be communicated.

**Introduction to TASO**

The Centre for [Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO)](https://taso.org.uk/) aims to improve lives through evidence-based practice in higher education (HE). Our vision is to eliminate equality gaps for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, allowing all students to have the same chance to enter HE, get a good degree and progress into further study or employment. TASO was set up in 2019 by a consortium of King’s College London, Nottingham Trent University and the Behavioural Insights Team.

We are an independent hub for HE professionals to access research, toolkits and evaluation guidance to eliminate equality gaps. We inform practitioners of the best available evidence and produce new evidence on the most effective approaches. TASO is an affiliate ‘What Works’ centre and is part of the [UK Government’s What Works Movement.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network) This means that TASO is committed to the generation, synthesis and dissemination of high-quality evidence about effective practice in widening participation and student success. Our role is to help the sector produce more [Type 3 evidence](https://taso.org.uk/evidence/toolkit/what-is-causal-evidence/) as this provides us with the best possible understanding of which activities and approaches are most effective.