

STAKEHOLDER COMMENT FORM

Stakeholder Comments

Please use this form to submit comments or suggestions.

1. Please put each new comment in a new row.
2. Please do not paste other tables into this table, as your comments could get lost - type directly into this table.
3. **Please always refer to section numbers (and not page numbers.)** Insert the **section number** and paragraph (within each section) in the first column (see examples).
4. If your comment relates to the document as a whole, please put **'general'** in this column. (See examples).

To be considered your completed form MUST be returned by 28 February 2008.

Names: Sandy Maclean, Moira Shemilt	
Organisation: Scottish Further Education Unit	

General

The Scottish Further Education Unit is the key development agency for Scotland's Colleges. SFEU contributes to the work of a wide range of national committees and delivers a range of high quality services which promote and support changes in Scotland's Colleges leading to excellence in learning effectiveness and college development. It achieves this by working in close partnership with colleges and maintaining a high level of understanding of the developmental issues facing Scotland's Colleges.

During the past five years, SFEU have provided a varied programme of support activities which aimed to equip staff in Scotland's colleges to recognise, understand and diminish the barriers to learning or work imposed by mental ill health. These activities included rolling out the government's Scotland's Mental Health First Aid programme into Scotland's Colleges, including mentoring of new SMHFA instructors. To date, all of Scotland's 43 colleges have sent members of staff to be trained in SMHFA. The courses have been very well received and feedback excellent.

In addition, SFEU project-managed a government-funded initiative that aimed to provide an online resource for staff in colleges and universities to support student mental health and well-being. The website address is www.ssmh.ac.uk

SFEU welcomes the shift in emphasis and focus from predominately national support activities to local actions that is outlined in the discussion document. As a national organisation, our response to the three main themes for future work is confined to the *national support* that Scotland's Colleges might require in order to meet the objectives of their individual local communities. Our model in this area has always been to use the national body to build capacity for delivery at local level.

The assumptions that underpins all the work that SFEU has delivered in this area is that through the continual professional development of staff to ensure mental health and mental health and wellbeing literacy:-

- institutions are helped and encouraged to demystify mental health, tackle stigma and fear within a social model approach to disability and promote positive mental health for all staff and all learners and
- teaching staff can promote and support individual learners to direct their own wellbeing and recovery.

9.1 Action 1 – Promotion of Mental Wellbeing

This could include a focus on:

- Improving 'literacy' around mental wellbeing and mental health, for key agencies, practitioners and the general public.

Comment

Previous work on improving the mental health and wellbeing literacy level in Scotland's colleges has been primarily with key staff in colleges with guidance and support or HR responsibilities.

SFEU considers that further development work is required targeted at senior staff, with an emphasis on policy and strategic development.

In addition, continuing professional development is required which is targeted at lecturing and support staff i.e. '*reaching the harder to reach*'.

- Prioritising work in the early years, and

Recent policy developments such as '**Lifelong**

<p>children and young people's mental wellbeing,</p>	<p>Partners; Scotland Schools and Colleges Building the Foundations of a Lifelong Learning Society; More Choices, More Chances and the implications of 'We Can and Must Do Better' have and will continue to increase the numbers of younger learners in Scotland's Colleges.</p> <p>SFEU considers that specific staff development promoting mental health and mental health and wellbeing literacy is required for those groups of staff working with younger, often vulnerable and fragile, learners.</p> <p>This is ongoing activity to ensure sustainable and high quality provision.</p>
<p>9.2 Action 2 – Prevention: Mental illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on addressing more common mental health problems and illnesses, 	<p>SFEU considers that staff development which:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encompasses a focus on addressing more common mental health problems and illnesses such as depression and anxiety in staff and students and the environmental factors in a College that help or hinder <i>'healthy working lives'</i> or <i>'healthy learning lives'</i>.
	<p>SFEU considers that a national organisation can progress the prevention of mental illness by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting self-help in staff and learners through the use of resources such as <i>Living Life to the Full</i>; • through a variety of capacity building, training and self-help work which could be customised to meet the needs of staff and learners; • highlighting, promoting and supporting individual responsibility and the necessity to seek help and early intervention and • generating and sustaining peer networks as a key support for staff working in a challenging context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and addressing co-morbidity, including substance misuse and mental health problems (see also Commitment 13 of <i>Delivering For Mental Health</i>). 	<p>SFEU considers requirements and opportunities exist to build on work already developed in relation to addressing co-morbidity including the impact of substance misuse and mental health problems within a learning environment.</p>
<p>9.3 Action 3 – Prevention: Suicide and Self Harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to addressing and preventing self harm. 	<p>Some colleges in Scotland have put forward staff to participate in the national programme for the prevention of suicide, <i>Choose Life</i>.</p>

	<p>A national programme, targeted at specific key staff in Scotland's Colleges would consolidate and extend this work and address the requirements to recognise and support learners who self-harm.</p>
<p>9.4 Action 4 - Support to improve quality of life, social inclusion, equality, recovery and addressing stigma, prejudice and discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of attitudes and behaviours within staff groups to help support improvements in the quality of life, social development, social inclusion, recovery and equality of opportunity for people experiencing mental illness and improve access and use of public services and community resources. 	<p>The attitudes and behaviours of staff groups within Scotland's Colleges are fundamental to a successful and happy student experience.</p> <p>Continued professional development is required which supports staff in the reflection of their own prevailing values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours and, if necessary, to move towards a changed set of behaviours.</p> <p>It is also important to support improved employment and vocational outcomes for people experiencing mental illness including staff.</p> <p>Colleges require support in relation to the development of 'mental health and well being' policies and procedures to support staff and students including adjustments to the college environment; promotion of mental health and mental wellbeing; prevention of mental ill health; proactive disability awareness on mental illness and an understanding of the barriers to learning experienced by learners with mental health problems.</p>
<p>9.5 Action 5 - Development of a local capability to improve capacity and provide leadership of, and support for, mental health improvement as a core part of mainstream planning and service delivery across each of the key themes</p>	<p>In relation to this action, an opportunity exists to build on the work already carried out by SFEU within Scotland's Colleges in relation to the strategic roll out of SMHFA.</p> <p>In addition, an opportunity exists to work with senior managers, through the SFEU, leadership and Principals CPD programmes to build the capacity of senior managers to work strategically with their Community Planning Partnerships to support mental health improvement of their local communities.</p>
<p>10.1 National Support Activities 10.1.1 Research, evidence and evaluation</p>	<p>SFEU continually encourages and supports development and innovation in Scotland's Colleges.</p> <p>SFEU have carried out an inquiry into the views of key stakeholders on a proposed development of a Professional Development Award (PDA) on Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing within a Learning Environment, through a blended learning approach.</p>

	This qualification would be validated by SQA. Stakeholders consulted agreed that there was a need for this qualification.
Progress of any initiatives would be tracked and performance assessed by:-	Feedback from participants leading to evaluation and review of any programmes; HMle reviews; Individual Colleges quality assurance systems; Learners voice through course team reviews;

Please add extra rows if needed.

Please return to: Nicola Radley, Area 3ER, Mental Health Division, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

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