



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

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HELPING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

A GUIDE FOR STAFF

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HELPING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS: A GUIDE FOR STAFF

Many people experience emotional and psychological difficulties at some point in their lives. Usually these difficulties can be resolved by talking them through with family and friends. Sometimes professional help is needed.

If you are required to offer extra assistance to a student it is important to be mindful of your competence and capabilities, as well as the boundaries of your role.

This guide has been produced to :

- Help you to recognise when a student may be in difficulty
- Provide advice to help you respond/refer appropriately and effectively
- Remind you of the sources of support within the University
- Raise awareness of issues relating to student mental health



The health and welfare of all members of the University is everyone's concern. This guide gives you advice on dealing with students in crisis, as well as guidance on supporting students in emotional distress. It is important to be prepared for emergencies, but also to be aware they occur rarely and that expert help is always available.

A safe campus is the responsibility of everyone who is part of the University community: staff, students and visitors. If you are concerned about something that has happened, you can contact any of the services listed in this guide or use the online Report and Support service to let us know: <https://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/strathlife/reportsupport/>

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Listen
- Give the student time to talk
- Understand the situation from their point of view
- Be sympathetic and not dismissive
- Help the student to feel supported
- Make appropriate referrals
- Document, Review the situation and escalate concerns where appropriate.

WHAT YOU CAN'T DO

- Solve all the student's problems
- Take responsibility for their emotional state or actions



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

IDENTIFYING SOURCES OF SUPPORT

It is not always possible to know what the best source of support might be. The student may have more than one problem, or the initial problem may not be the most central.

What is important in the first instance is to refer the student to somewhere that is acceptable to them.

A further referral can be made later, if appropriate.

This guide can be used as a tool to be used alongside a student to identify what support may be most suitable for their needs. You may wish to use Page 7 of this guide to help the student to identify any issues that they are experiencing, and decide which service could best support them.

OFFERING SUPPORT DIRECTLY

If you offer support yourself, you must ensure that:

You have sufficient time within the context of your other commitments to do this.

It does not conflict with other aspects of your role.

You have access to appropriate advice and support.

You seek advice from colleagues or Student Support and Wellbeing services if you have persistent concerns.

Remember — You are not solely responsible for a student's emotional state.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Treat personal information about students with discretion.

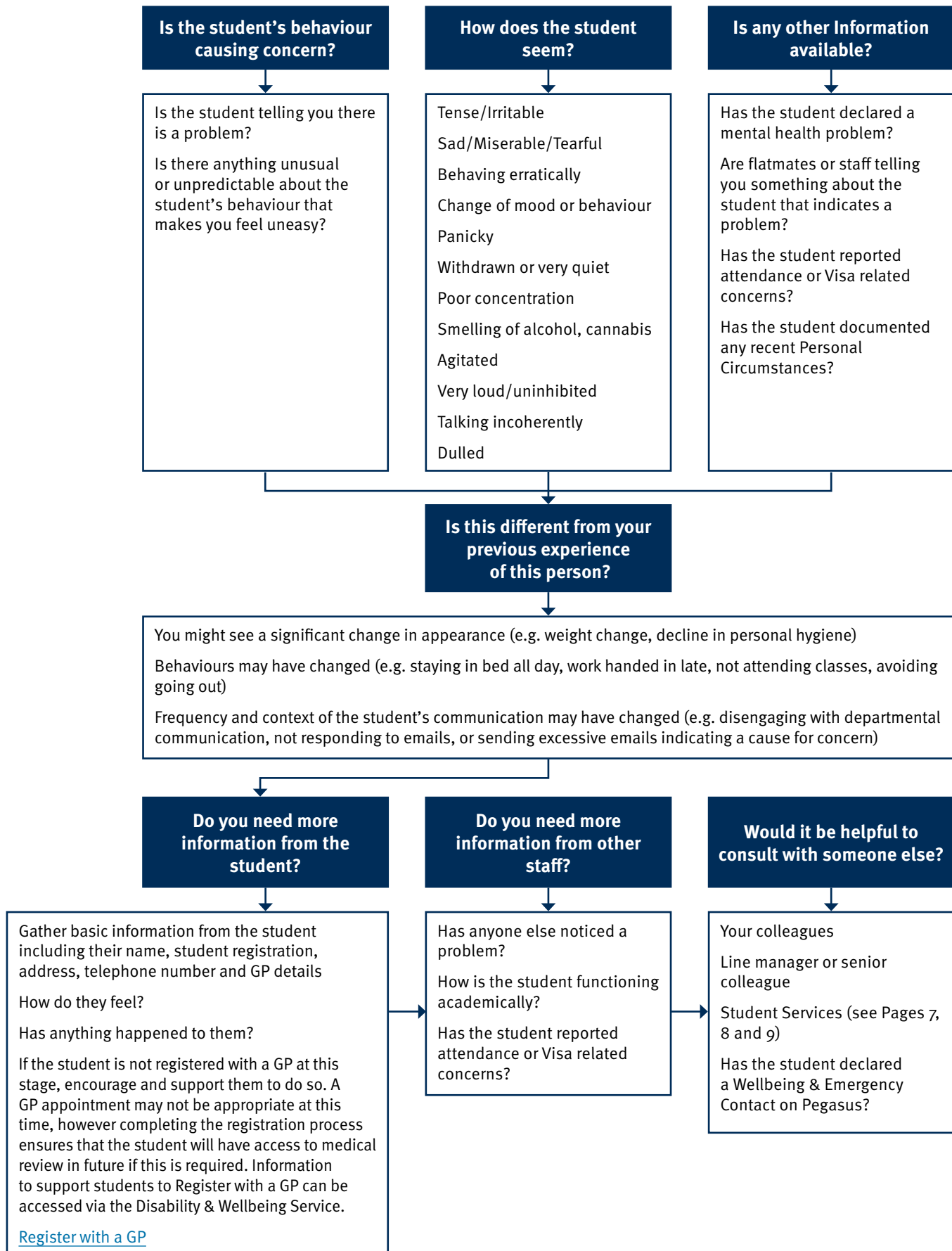
Do not promise absolute confidentiality; advise the student that you may have to consult a colleague or other services.

In most circumstances you should not disclose personal information about a student's problems to anyone outside the University, including parents, without the student's consent. However, if there are serious concerns about the student's wellbeing, or they are a risk to themselves or others, it is appropriate to share information with relevant individuals and services.

If parents wish to contact a student, you can offer to forward a communication or tell the student they have been in touch.

The Disability and Wellbeing Service offers a confidential consultation service to all staff who may wish to discuss their concerns about students in difficulty or distress.

How do you know there is a problem? Trusting your own judgement – check the following

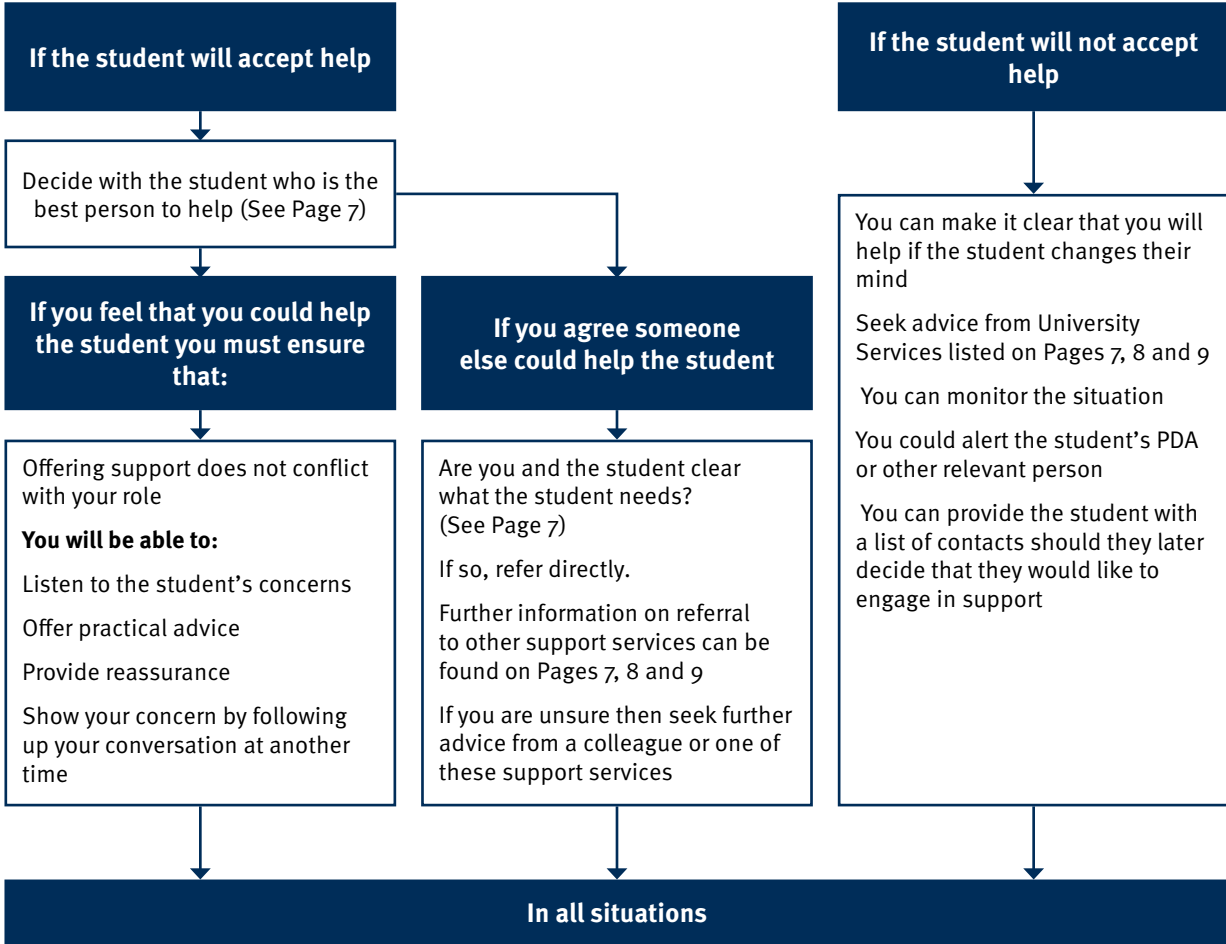


What to do if the situation does NOT require immediate action

The student may be displaying signs of emotional distress due to some of the following situations:

- Depressed, anxious generally stressed
- Homesick, lonely and isolated
- Having problems with relationships
- Having health issues
- Suffering from low self-esteem
- Having unexplained study or money problems
- Bereaved

However, these situations should NOT be deemed urgent if you perceive no immediate risk to the student or others.



Make sure that you get support by talking the situation through with a colleague or one of the services on Pages 7, 8 and 9

Make a record of the conversation and your concerns and store this in a secure way in line with University and GDPR guidelines. Inform your line manager/Head of Department

Record incident on Report and Support
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/strathlife/reportsupport/>

If the student resides out-with the United Kingdom, it is important to recognise that our capacity to intervene may be more limited. In this case you can seek guidance from one of the services on Pages 7, 8 and 9

What to do if the situation is urgent

It is URGENT if:

You believe the student may be at risk of harming themselves or others. You are concerned for one or more of the following reasons. The student:

- May be at risk of serious self-harm
- Is violent or threatening violence to people or property
- Has completely stopped functioning
- Seems very disorientated and out of touch with reality
- Expresses suicidal thoughts/plans

Whether the student will accept help or not, in all situations of medical emergency where there is an immediate risk to the student's life, i.e. overdose of drugs, serious self-harm, physical emergency: Contact Security Services on 0141 548 2222 for help in contacting emergency services.

If the student resides out-with the United Kingdom, it is important to recognise that our capacity to intervene may be more limited. In this case you can seek guidance from one of the services on Pages 7, 8 and 9.

If the student will accept help

In office hours:

If the student is registered with a Community Mental Health Team and presents in psychological distress:

Help the student to make contact with their Community Mental Health Team to request an emergency appointment. Where appropriate, the student should attend the appointment independently.

If the student is registered with a GP:

Help the student to make contact with their GP to request an emergency appointment. Where appropriate, the student should attend the GP appointment independently.

If the student is not registered with a GP, or their GP is closed:

Contact NHS 24 on 111 for advice or

Contact Security Services on 0141 548 2222 for help in contacting emergency services.

Out of hours:

Contact Security Services on 0141 548 2222 for help in contacting emergency services.

If the student will not accept help

Both within and out with office hours:

If the student presents at risk of harming themselves or others, and will not accept help, this is an urgent situation.

Contact Security Services on 0141 548 2222 for help in contacting Emergency Services.

It can be helpful to take a physical description of the student, alongside basic details (i.e. Name, Student Registration, Address, Telephone Number, GP details) to pass onto Security Services and/or Emergency Services.

Inform your line manager.

If the student resides on campus within University accommodation, contact the Accommodation Services and Security for Assistance (Page 9). Contact the Student's GP.

In all situations

Try to stay calm

Engage with the student if possible, but put safety first

Keep an accurate written record

Record incident on Report and Support
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/strathlife/reportsupport/>

Prioritise your own safety and that of others at the scene

Whenever possible, make sure that you have back-up available

Make sure that you get support by talking the situation through with your line manager, a colleague or one of the Support Services on Pages 7, 8 and 9

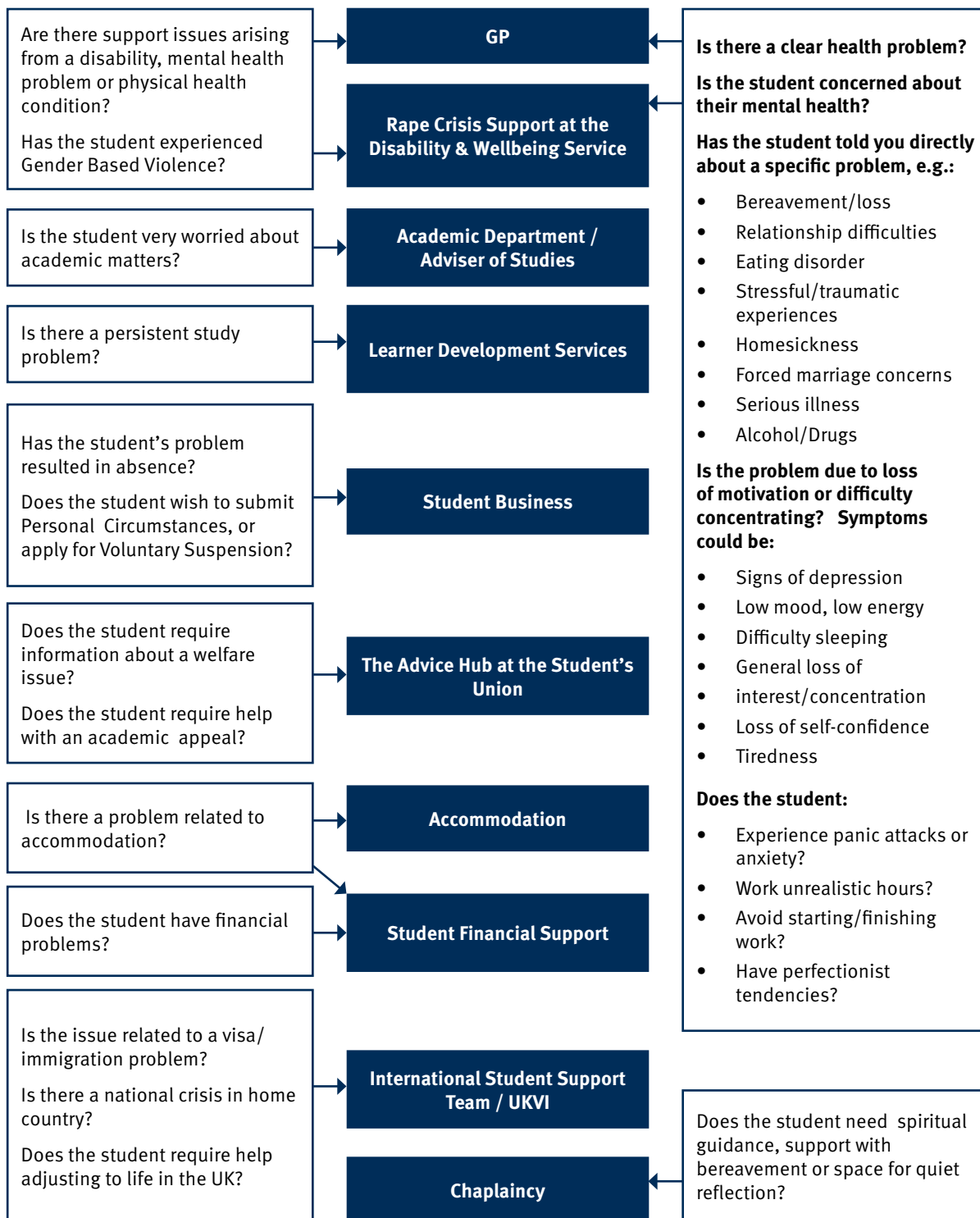
When dealing with urgent situations, it is important that any referrals or agreed action plans are followed up, preferably with the student directly

Make a record of the conversation and your concerns and store this in a secure way in line with University and GDPR guidelines. Inform your line manager/Head of Department.

What support may benefit the student?

You may wish to show this page to the student to help them to identify any issues that they are experiencing, and decide which service could best support them.

**Whether the student will accept help or not, in all situations of medical emergency where there is an immediate risk to the student's life, i.e. overdose of drugs, serious self-harm, physical emergency:
Contact Security Services on 0141 548 2222 for help in contacting emergency services.**



See the contact list on Pages 8 and 9 for details of other sources of support in the University and externally. Remember - friends and family are a source of support.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Careers

t: 0141 574 5090
e: yourcareer@strath.ac.uk
www.strath.ac.uk/careers/

Chaplaincy

t: 0141 548 4144
e: chaplaincy@strath.ac.uk
www.strath.ac.uk/chaplaincy

Data protection

[www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/
dataprotection/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/dataprotection/)

Disability and Wellbeing Service

t: 0141 548 3402
e: disability-wellbeing@strath.ac.uk
www.strath.ac.uk/disabilityandwellbeing

International Student Support

t: 0141 548 4273
e: infoandadvice@strath.ac.uk
www.strath.ac.uk/sees/infoint/

Law Clinic

t: 0141 548 5995
e: lawclinic@strath.ac.uk
www.lawclinic.org.uk

Learner Development Services

t: 0141 548 4062
e: learner-development@strath.ac.uk
[www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/strathlife/
academicsupport/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/strathlife/academicsupport/)

Safe360°

www.strath.ac.uk/whystrathclyde/safe360/

Security Services:

General Enquiries t: 0141 548 3333
Emergency t: 0141 548 2222
Emergency services
(ambulance, police, fire brigade)
t: 999
(note that Security Services staff have
responsibility for summoning emergency services.)

Strathclyde Sport

t: 0141 548 2446
e: strathclydesport@strath.ac.uk
www.strath.ac.uk/strathclydesport/

Student Accommodation Office

t: 0141 548 3454
e: student.accommodation@strath.ac.uk
[www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/
accommodation/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/accommodation/)

Student Business

www.strath.ac.uk/studentlifecycle/

Student Financial Support

t: 0141 548 2753
e: financial-support@strath.ac.uk
www.strath.ac.uk/studentfinancialsupport/

Widening Access

t: 0141 548 3799
e: wideningaccess@strath.ac.uk
[www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/
wideningaccess/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/wideningaccess/)

Rape Crisis Support

hosted by Disability & Wellbeing Service

t: 0141 548 3402
e: disability-wellbeing@strath.ac.uk
[www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/
disabilityandwellbeing/rapecrisissupport/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/disabilityandwellbeing/rapecrisissupport/)

USEFUL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

USEFUL NUMBERS

Security (General Enquiries)	0141 548 3333
Security (Emergency)	0141 548 2222
NHS 24	111
Breathing Space (Helpline)	0800 83 85 87
Samaritans (Helpline)	0141 248 4488
Glasgow Royal Infirmary	0141 211 4000
Glasgow Students Nightline.....	0141 334 9516
Advice Hub	0141 567 5040
Rape Crisis.....	+44 (0)770 609 2545

SpectrumLife

SpectrumLife offers access to a confidential in the moment support service that provides support to university students.

The service is available 24/7, 365 days a year covering numerous topics such as: Stress, Anxiety, Low mood, Financial worries, Loss & Grief, Relationship problems, Substance abuse issues and much more.

You can access through a confidential, freephone telephone line, an online chat function through the platform or by requesting a callback.

The SpectrumLife online app provides students with access to fitness plans, recipes, and eLearning content related to remote working, sleep and mental health among other topics.

If you are interested in learning more about SpectrumLife, please visit the website:

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/disabilityandwellbeing/mentalhealthwellbeingsupport/spectrumlife/>

SilverCloud

Silvercloud offers secure, immediate access to online CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) programmes, free to all students and staff members at the University of Strathclyde. These programmes are tailored to your own specific needs, and have demonstrated high improvement rates for depression and anxiety.

The programmes consist of seven to eight modules, you can complete these at your own pace and in your own time. The goal of each module is for you to take the information and techniques learned, and to start applying them in your day-to-day life.

It's flexible - you can access it anywhere, on your computer, tablet or mobile phone. It's easy to use – interactive tools and activities make your experience interesting and motivational.



SilverCloud

If you are interested in learning more about Silvercloud, please visit the website at : strathclydeuni.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/



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For further copies and feedback on the usefulness of this document,
please contact: disability-wellbeing@strath.ac.uk

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