

STUDENT VOICES

Developing an emergency contact scheme for student wellbeing.

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Concerns have grown over wellbeing and mental health issues experienced by university students (Auerbach et al., 2018; HESA, 2022), especially after the COVID-19 lockdown (Sahu 2020; Kafka 2020). The literature suggests that the majority of students approve of a university emergency contact scheme being used if necessary (Neves and Hillman, 2019; Linton et al., 2022).

Aims: To explore student perspectives on the introduction of an emergency contact scheme, and how this could be most effectively implemented and engaged with.

Methods: One hundred and thirteen students from various Applied Social Studies' undergraduate and postgraduate courses were recruited via opportunistic sampling and completed an online JISC survey.

Results: The majority of students (96%) were in favour of the proposed scheme. Of those opposed there appeared to be concerns over a loss of agency, worries about their potential contact or the contact worsening the situation. They determined that either a parent/guardian (49%) or partner (35%) would be the best individual to contact, and this should be done by the student's personal tutor (67%) via telephone call (42%). Finally, the preferred term for the contact scheme was found to be 'named trusted person' (59%) opposed to 'Emergency Contact' (27%).

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