

Suicide-Safer Policy

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Head of Student Services 26 August 2021 July 2022 V2 G:\Student Services\Suicide Safer

Suicide-Safer Policy

Introduction

Universities UK (UUK) have released guidance on suicide-safer policies so it is incumbent on all universities to offer consideration to this topic and to address it appropriately. In order to clarify our response and work in this area, and to provide a framework on how to support our students, this policy will provide guidance to all on how we work together to be a Suicide-Safer University.

It is worth noting that this topic can be distressing to engage with and anyone impacted by this are encouraged to seek support from an appropriate individual, University Student Services or the Employee Assistance Programme.

There is no one reason that causes an individual to contemplate suicide. There can be a complex combination of biological and psychological reasons coupled with current life situation. As such, preventing suicide is everybody's business and is an endeavour Brunel would like to commit a whole-institution approach to.

Providing support to the most vulnerable members of our community (those thinking of suicide) is paramount in our aim to preserve life. This policy provides information on the University's response to this area of concern by targeting three key areas; prevention, intervention and, when required, postvention.

Prevention

Student Services at Brunel aim to promote a culture and way of working that reduces suicide attempts and therefore incidents. This policy will be underpinned by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and will offer guidance to staff on reporting structures and how to raise a concern.

To embed a prevention culture at Brunel it is important we have a shared understanding of Brunel's approach to the topic. We know:

- · Suicidal thoughts should never be treated as attention-seeking
- Heightened suicide risk is most often short-term and situation specific
- Asking whether someone is feeling suicidal does not create or increase risk. It may have the opposite effect
- How we talk about suicide is important: use words that do not stigmatise or criminalise

With these guiding principles, we can work to ensure our community is robustly protecting and safeguarding life. This will be achieved by:

- i. **Supporting our students:** Student Services offer and develop a host of welfare and mental wellbeing support. This can be initially accessed via the Student Support and Welfare Team as detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- **ii. Awareness raising for students:** Through the Well@Brunel brand Student Services will continue to embed positive mental health messages in the University community and promote helpful information/services to students in crisis. We will continue to promote a caring community through the 'Look after your mates' initiative which encouraging students to support each other and let them know who can help should they need it. Students can report any concerns they may have for themselves or others' and find out support information via our online tool Report and Support https://reportandsupport.brunel.ac.uk/
- **iii. Emergency Opt-in:** students are encouraged to provide an emergency contact and give consent for Brunel University London to discuss concerns about the student's mental or physical health.
- iv. Analysing the student journey: This will allow resources and information to be targeted at specific times of the academic cycle to maximise impact.
- v. Awareness raising for staff:

- Key front facing staff such as tutors, Taught Programmes Office staff, Student Living staff and Student Services staff will be encouraged to undertake face-to-face and online training in the areas of mental health, suicide awareness and sexual violence.
- Staff are advised of favoured vocabulary when approaching the topic of suicide.
- Staff are also made aware of the Student Support and Welfare Staff site, which is a one-stopshop for guidance on how to support students and includes student support pathways.
- Staff are aware of the mechanisms to raise welfare concerns in a timely and appropriate manner via <u>https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/s/student-welfare-team</u> or Tutor Dashboard.
- vi. **Partnership working:** Student Services will seek to grow and strengthen collaboration with community mental health services.

These five activities, in collaboration with other ongoing work can help reduce the number of students reaching crisis point by educating the community in mental health awareness to deliver support to individuals at the first possible opportunity.

Intervention

Intervention intends to provide an appropriate response to an individual who is thinking of suicide by ensuring they are able to access the right support at the right time. In its simplest form, interventions try to stop the transition from thought to action.

Suicide risk is most often short term and situation specific, therefore it is important everyone acts quickly and appropriately to support an individualthat discloses thoughts of suicide.

Intervention guidance at Brunel is split into three distinct pathways;

- 1. General Staff What to do if you are worried about a student (Appendix 2)
- 2. Student Support and Welfare Team (SSWT) (Appendix 3)
- 3. Counselling and Mental Wellbeing Service (Appendix 4).

IMPORTANT: if a student discloses to you they are experiencing suicidal thoughts and you believe them to be in imminent danger if they leave you, call Security on 01895 255786 or the Emergency Services on 999.

Interventions that originate from the Student Support and Welfare Team or Counselling and Mental Health Service will always include follow-up with the individual and a discussion of the case at the Students at Risk (SAR) meeting to consider onward risk management. However, due to the sensitivity of this topic, the individual or staff member raising the concern will not routinely be informed of the outcome.

Postvention

Postvention is necessary to ensure the University responds appropriately following a suspected suicide to ensure that our community receive the appropriate level of support and guidance.

The University has Guidelines for dealing with death of a student or employee **(Appendix 5)** which provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities of appropriate staff should such a situation occur.

Providing support to the living is our priority. It is known that people affected by suicide are at higher risk of thinking of suicide themselves. Suicide will only be confirmed by the coroner which in most cases can take up to six months after death. It is important to ensure consistent communication during this time and refer to 'suspected suicide' to enable conversations.

Any student impacted by the death will be contacted by Student Services and offered support, including rapid referral to community mental health resources. This support will need to be mindful of the possible delay or re-occurrence of trauma related to coroner investigations, outcome or incident anniversaries and the ability this may have to be triggering.

Following a suspected suicide there will be a review meeting (a postvention team will be identified) and Brunel University will evaluate the suicide postvention efforts and response after the incident has occurred.

Conclusion

Whilst not all deaths by suicide are preventable, the above mentioned actions can significantly reduce the likelihood of suicide completion in the Brunel community. This Policy will be reviewed annually to reflect additional sector or NHS guidance.

Appendices

Appendix 1

ACCESSING SUPPORT AT BRUNEL

As a student, if you feel you want to access support, we're here for you. Just follow these three simple steps...

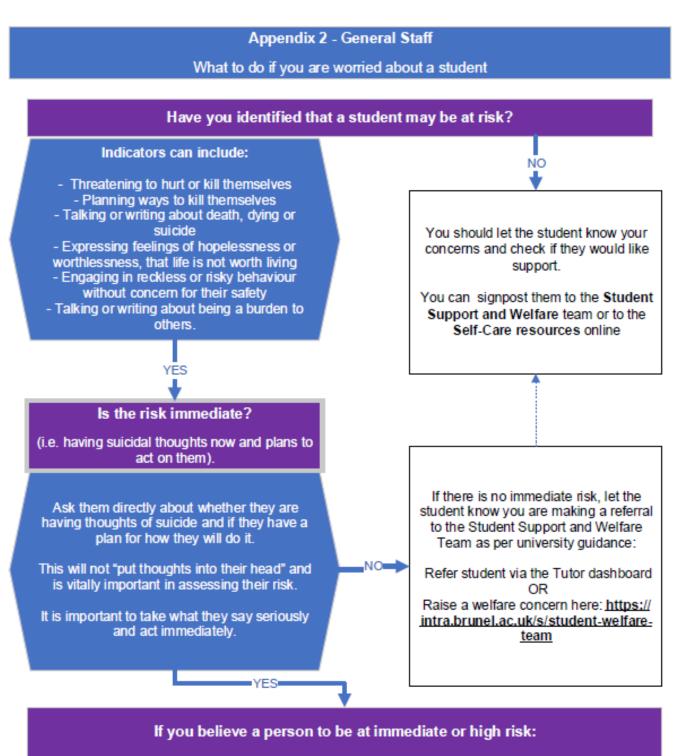




STUDENT SERVICES

supporting you

DPS_6283 0619



Stay with them, or on the call to them, or arrange for an appropriate person to stay with them until you have assistance.

Contact the Security Team immediately, or call 999

You can find information on welfare support for students on the Staff Intranet: https://staff.brunel.ac.uk/directorates/sas/welfare

Remember. dealing with an upsetting incident may have an impact on you. If you need to, consider: - Speaking to a trusted colleague about your experience - Contacting a Wellbeing Champion - Accessing Care First, our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Appendix 3 – Student Support & Welfare: Student at Risk Interventions

Level of risk identified		
Medium (e.g. known background of self-harm without suicidal intention).	Significant (e.g. suicidal thoughts without plans to act). Interventions to be considered	Immediate (i.e. current suicidal thoughts and plans to act).
 Discuss internal support options and book any appropriate appointments. Discuss external support sources and make any appropriate referrals. Encourage student to visit GP. Agree an informal Student Safety plan. Follow up with student to see if further support is required. 	 Request student visits GP for specialist advice. Refer case to SAR Group for risk management. Ask if student has anyone to be with them that night and/or contact them with the student's permission. Consider short-term Security checks if student lives on campus. Manage case in accordance with Senate Regulation 11 Consider options for support under SR11 including referral for assessment with the University Occupational Health Physician and/or a Case Conference to determine appropriate actions and next steps. 	 Refer back to the 'Significant' risk considerations the following day. Refer back to the following day.

At risk to and/or from others

Things to consider:

Seek advice from the Security Operations Manager Call 999 – there is a legal duty to do so if an intended victim is named Referral to PREVENT Domestic violence advocacu services Senate Regulation 11

Mild thoughts / ideation	Moderate thoughts / ideation	Severe thoughts / ideation Immediate Risk
	Interventions to be considered	
 Discuss internal support options and book any appropriate appointments. Discuss external support sources and make any appropriate referrals. Encourage student to visit GP. Agree an informal Student Safety plan. Follow up with student to see if further support is required. 	 With student's consent, contact GP to make referral or liaise on support options. Refer case to SAR Group for risk management. Refer case to Student Support team for management in accordance with Senate Regulation 11 Consider options for support under SR11 including referral for assessment with the University Occupational Health Physician and/or a Case Conference to determine appropriate actions and next steps. 	Refer to Duty Adviser, or follow Duty Adviser Protocol and complete risk assessment using CORE form to determine level: Amber Risk: Create and agree a safety plan with student and implement appropriate support. Red Risk: • Call Security on 018956 255786 and request assistance/request they call 999 OR • Call CNWL Single Point of Access (MH) 0800 0234 650 – ideally, staff member can call, explain concerns and handover to the

At risk to and/or from others

Things to consider:

- Seek advice from the Security Operations Manager.
- Call 999 there is a legal duty to do so if an intended victim is named.
- Referral to PREVENT.
- Domestic violence advocacy services.
- Referral under Senate Regulation 11.

 Call 999 (if student is not on campus).

OR

reference)

(Give number to student for

Inform the Student Support and Welfare Team at earliest convenience.

Guidelines for dealing with the death of a student or employee

1. INTRODUCTION

The unfortunate death of a student or employee can be a traumatic experience for fellow students and colleagues that worked with them. The University recognises that handling the death of a student or colleague requires a combination of practicality and sensitivity and these guidelines provide a framework to ensure effective procedures are followed. The University will not seek to replicate the support offered by statutory services (for example the Police) but will use its best endeavours to provide help and guidance in an organised and effective manner. Tact, sensitivity and discretion are key.

A brief summary outlining the initial responses to be taken and by whom in the event of a death of a current student or employee in service is available in a separate document entitled 'What to do in the event of employee or student death'. A copy of this summary can be found in Appendix A. The summary confirms the roles and responsibilities of those involved with dealing with the death of a student or employee.

The death of a student or employee can be distressing for those involved, including for those liaising with the family and co-ordinating the necessary response. Colleagues are encouraged to share any concerns with their line manager and/or with HR and to make use of the support available to them.

2. FIRST ACTIONS WHEN NOTIFICATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED

It is recognised that the circumstances when an employee or student dies are always different and will require individually tailored approaches within the parameters set out below. The timing and location of the death may have a bearing on how best the University can respond and support those affected. For example, a death that occurs on campus will require additional actions to a death that occurs in the family home or in hospital. Similarly, the University will be required to respond differently to deaths that occur in term-time and out of term-time.

In the rare event of a death on campus, the Community Policing and Security Department need to be contacted immediately. Such circumstances will be treated as a critical incident and will be escalated to the Incident Officers. From there, emergency services and the scene, if applicable, will be managed by the team.

As soon as the University is made aware of a death the Head of Student Services / senior HR representative will work with colleagues such as Security and Residences to decide on appropriate immediate actions. Out of hours, and dependent on the timing of the death, it may be appropriate for another senior manager to act as the initial coordinator for the period before the University opens for the next working day. This decision and the specific role of that initial contact will be assigned by the individuals managing the situation.

The Head of Student Services / senior HR representative should be kept updated by colleagues with matters as they progress so that they can continue to coordinate the work effectively. They will liaise with senior management as required, if decisions not ordinarily delegated to them need to be taken. The Head of Student Services can appoint a nominee if required.

Under no circumstances should a representative of the University break the news of a death to the next of kin. The police, who have specially trained officers, will notify the family. Student Services/HR will liaise with emergency services as necessary to provide contact and next of kin details.

If next of kin details (of a student or staff member) are provided to the emergency services, this should be notified to the Data Protection team at the earliest opportunity. Details of the disclosure should be provided along with an explanation of the reasons of the data sharing. This enables appropriate data records to be held.

A work-related death is a fatality resulting from an incident arising out of, or in connection with, work. There are a number of scenarios that the university would be legally required to report to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and as such the Head of Health, Safety and Environment should be informed of the circumstances surrounding the death of an employee or student in order to determine if the circumstances meet the reporting criteria.

At the appropriate time, it will usually be necessary to notify fellow students/residents/colleagues shortly after the news of a student/employee death so that support can be put in place and to avoid unhelpful rumour. Care must be taken to do this in the most appropriate way possible; with sensitivity, compassion and with understanding that individuals deal with bereavement in different ways. Individuals should be given the time and space to decide for themselves what support they might need.

In the event of a death of a student, the Head of Student Services or Registrar should authorise any notifications or events where people are told about the death of a student. The Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor will, in most cases, be the nominated person to inform students in the immediate vicinity of the residence about such incidents. Student Services will liaise with HR about informing any staff that might have known the student.

For an employee death, the senior HR representative will liaise with the Head of Department about how best to notifying colleagues. HR will also provide help, advice and guidance to those affected about the range of support on offer and how to access it including the Employee Assistance Programme. HR will also take necessary action to process any pension death in service arrangements and to update payroll information.

In these rare events, University employees may be required to undertake additional duties as appropriate to support other colleagues, students and the individual's family. The coordination role undertaken by Student Services/HR will not replace the role of other professional services directorates, Colleges and /or Departments, which is vitally important in such difficult circumstances. It may be appropriate that the coordinator(s) act wholly behind the scenes and support the colleagues who are liaising directly with the family of the deceased, for example, rather than taking on that liaison work themselves. It is important to realise that these additional duties must take priority and delay should be avoided in order to effectively support those involved.

3. ASCERTAINING FACTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEATH

The first task of the Head of Student Services/senior HR representative is to verify that a death has occurred and to be satisfied of the accuracy and source of this information. This may take some time depending on the circumstances but is a matter of priority. The Head of Student Services/senior HR representative will then inform, by email, those University roles that will have or who are likely to have particular responsibilities. The responsibilities of each recipient is listed in the notification list in Appendix B.

4. MANAGING PRESS ENQUIRIES

Depending on the circumstances of the death, there may be press interest and so CMSR should be informed at the earliest opportunity. It is important that all press enquiries are handled by the University's Press Office. If an employee is contacted by a journalist, they should ask them to call the Press Office directly (01895 266867).

5. NOTIFICATION TO COLLEAGUES - WHO CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE CONTACTED AND WHY

A list of roles which will be notified of the death of a student/employee by the Head of Student Services/senior HR representative is included in Appendix B. Colleagues are asked to carry out the duties as listed in this document. Information relayed will be factual and will ordinarily be restricted to material that has been agreed by the external notifying agency (for example the Police) and/or the family. The aim will be to dispel rumours wherever possible and to avoid speculation where matters are still being investigated. The timing is important; if the Police need time to inform the next of kin before members of the University are told then this will be respected.

A holding message may be sent when it has become common knowledge that a student/employee has died but it is not possible to formally confirm this. The message will remind students and colleagues of the support available to them as well as confirming that further information will be made available in due course. All decisions around communication will be made between the Head of Student Services/ HR and the Head of Communications.

The notification will contain the following basic information:

- Name of the deceased.
- If the deceased is a current or past student the student number, programme and year of study.
- If the deceased is an employee, then their post and department.
- Basic facts about the death, as appropriate.
- Name and contact details of the Head of Student Services/senior HR representative where all enquiries should be directed to.
- A request that those receiving the notification will undertake the work outlined in this guidance as soon as possible and will inform the Head of Student Services/ senior HR representative of what has been completed.
- A request that no-one should contact the next of kin without consulting the Head of Student Services/senior HR representative first.
- That advice about how to notify students/colleagues of what has happened is available from the Head of Student Services/senior HR representative before disseminating the news any further.
- A request that all press enquiries should be referred to the Press Office

Previous examples of communications are held by the Student Services and CMSR teams.

6. LIAISON WITH THE NEXT OF KIN (UNIVERSITY CONTACT)

A single point of contact with the family/next of kin is preferable as this will help ensure that information is received and disseminated accurately as well as supporting the family in a sensitive manner. In most cases, the dedicated link person will be the Head of Student Services for student deaths and the Director of Human Resources in the case of the death of an employee. They will act as the University Contact.

In some cases, the family may already have a strong relationship with another senior colleague at the University, in which case it may be appropriate for them to continue to liaise with the family. If these circumstances, the Head of Student Services/Director of HR should be kept informed as they will continue to coordinate the University's response in accordance with these guidelines.

No contact will be made to the next of kin until the Police have confirmed that they have been notified of the death.

The University Contact will make appropriate arrangements if the next of kin wishes to visit the University. This may involve offering to find suitable accommodation if they need to travel to Brunel.

In conjunction with the Head of Student Life (if applicable)/line manager, appropriate arrangements will be made for collection of the deceased's belongings.

7. LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE

A letter of condolence to the employee's/student's family will be written by the Vice Chancellor. The timing of the letter will depend on the circumstances, and may in some cases be sent after the funeral so that comments from colleagues may be reflected in the letter(s).

The Head of Student Services/senior HR representative will provide the next of kin information to the Vice Chancellor for the letter to be appropriately addressed.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF CLOSE CONTACTS OF THE DECEASED

In cases of a student death, the Head of Student Services will work with colleagues within the appropriate College to identify groups that the student was engaged with. This would include lectures, seminars and project work.

The Student Union will provide the Head of Student Services with a list of clubs and societies that the deceased was a member of.

In conjunction with the Head of Communications, a decision will be made on how these groups of students should be informed of the death.

In cases of the death of an employee, the senior HR representative will work with the manager of the deceased to identify key groups of employees and students that may need to be informed of the death.

9. LIAISON WITH STATUTORY SERVICES

The Head of Student Services/senior HR representative will act as the point of contact for relevant statutory services, i.e. the Coroner.

10. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

The University Contact will liaise with the next of kin about funeral arrangements. If the next of kin wishes, it may be appropriate to share details of the funeral, so colleagues can attend. It may also be appropriate for a representative of the University to attend in an official capacity. Requests for time off to attend the funeral should be dealt with tactfully and sensitively.

If appropriate, transport for the funeral will be arranged.

11. MEMORIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Memorial services will be arranged by the Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor.

In cases of student death, a memorial will be arranged if requested by the family, close contacts of the deceased or by the College.

In cases of the death of an employee, a memorial will usually be arranged subject to the family's wishes.

Memorials are, in most cases, arranged 3-6 months after the death.

12. DEATH OF A FORMER STUDENT

In cases of a notification of a death of a former student, the Head of Student Services will send a notification to all relevant parties to update their records. The Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor will liaise with the next of kin as appropriate.

13. DEATH OF A FORMER EMPLOYEE

In cases of a notification of a death of a former employee, HR will send a notification to all relevant parties to update their records. The Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor will liaise with the next of kin as appropriate.

14. RESPONDING TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

The University will keep records of deaths of students where possible and where notification is received. The cause of death is not recorded, and often not confirmed to the University. Therefore any requests for data on student death numbers and causes of deaths will be responded to with the following statement:

'Brunel University London is unable to provide data on the cause of death of students as these records are not guaranteed to be complete. The cause of death is a matter for a coroner, and for the family to determine if they want the university to know. Data on the number of deaths can be provided, but will only represent data on student deaths that we are informed about.'

The University records incidents of death in service for employees but does not record the cause of death and, as above, the cause of death might not always be known. Responses to FOIs in relation to employee deaths will be limited to the data held centrally and will not include any personal and confidential information.

What to do in the event of an employee or student death

This brief document explains the initial actions required in the event of the death of a student or employee. Full operational detail of the actions that should be taken by the University in order to manage a death is contained in the Guidelines for dealing with the death of a student or employee.

It is expected that this arrangement will operate year round including on closure days. Security will act as the first point of contact and they are open 24 hours.

The University's response will be managed by the Head of Student Services (for students) and a senior HR representative (for employees), who will also provide further advice if needed.

1. Initial response in the case of an emergency

- 1.1 In the event of a medical emergency, or if you are in any way unsure if the person is deceased, telephone 999 for an ambulance and then Security on 01895 255786 (or internal 66943).
- 1.2 In the event of a body being found, telephone 999 for an Ambulance and then Security on 01895 255786 (or internal 66943).

2. Initial response when notification received

2.1 The University can be notified of a death in a number of ways. It is most common for a member of the deceased's family to contact a member of staff, or for news to reach students or staff via social media. It is important that death-related information is verified before any further action is taken. To ensure that this happens, and to ensure that the University's death protocol is enacted, any member of the University community who is made aware of a death or suspected death should contact the Head of Student Services/Senior HR representative in the case of an employee.

3. What happens next

- 3.1 The Head of Student Services/ Senior HR representative will notify relevant colleagues.
- 3.2 The Head of Health, Safety and Environment will lead on any HSE requirements.
- 3.3 The Head of Student Services/Senior HR representative will liaise with the Head of Communications to ensure appropriate communications in relation to the incident.
- 3.4 In most cases, the Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor will act as the University Contact with the deceased's family as needed.

Senior Management

Vice Chancellor and President	For information
	To write a letter of condolence when appropriate
Provost	For information
Vice-Provost (Students, Staff and	For information
Civic Engagement)	
Chief Student and Staff Services	For information
Officer	
Chief Finance Officer	For information

Professional Services

Customer Services Manager in Information Services	Disable network accounts
Head of Library Services	Update Library records
Student Finance (stufin@brunel.ac.uk)	To ensure no automatic notifications are sent to the deceased
Director of Finance	For information
Director of Professional Development Centre	To update records

Academic staff outside of the College of the student who has died

Associate Dean (Student	To forewarn in case students approach Senior Tutors or any other employees
Experience)	in academic departments seeking support

Human Resources

Director of Human Resources and Associate Directors of HR	 In the case of death of a student: For information, considering any employee support needs. In the case of death of an employee: To ensure any HR, payroll and pension processes are completed as appropriate. To consider support needs for colleagues

Estates

Director of Estates	In case of any impact on the University Estate (for deaths on campus only)
Switchboard	For information
(Switchboard.ipt-	
support@brunel.ac.uk)	

Student and Academic Services Directorate

Registrar	To inform the University Solicitors if required.
Student Records	To update records

(<u>records@brunel.ac.uk</u> and Operations Manager/Team Leader)	
Deputy Head of Student Centre	To update records
Timetabling/Graduation	To remove the deceased from any forthcoming examination sittings; for information in case of posthumous award being made
Student Wellbeing	For information and to update any local records if the deceased was a client of that service
Student Support and Welfare	For information and to update any local records if the deceased was a client of
Team	that service
Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor	• To set up Friends and Family centre to provide immediate support to those effected, if required.
	• Provide pastoral support for next of kin, close contacts and other members of the University as required.
	Offer to and arrange if requested, a memorial service of a religious or non- religious manner. See memorials (section 11).
OSCCA Administrator	• To check if student is involved in any current cases and close as necessary.

Commercial Services

Director of Commercial Services	For information
Head of Security and Emergency	If the death occurred on campus, to work with the Head of Student Services to
Planning	coordinate first actions.
Head of Health, Safety and Environment	• To lead on any health and safety investigation following death or serious injury or sustained on University premises or in relation to a University
	activity.
	Represent the University in any official investigations, if these prove
	necessary
Head of Student Living	To manage an accommodation fee refund (if appropriate)
	 For information and to update any local records if the deceased was a client of that service
	• If the death occurred in a residence on campus, to work with the Head of
	Student Services to coordinate first actions.
Assistant Director (Sport, Retail,	For information and to update any local records if the deceased was a client of
Grounds, Science Park, Hotel)	that service

Union of Brunel Students

Chief Executive Officer	Overall management of the Union of Brunel Student response
Union President	 To ensure that the clubs and societies of which the deceased was a member are informed and their mailing lists are updated as required. A list of which clubs and societies they are a member of should be passed to the Head of Student Services Liaise with the Head of Student Services about communicating the death Take necessary follow-up action if death occurred during Students' Union organised trip or activity Email all Students' Union employees and elected officers to ensure all media enquiries are referred to the University's Press Office

College of the student who died

Vice Provost & Dean of College	 Advise colleagues in their College as to the death of the student Make appropriate arrangements to have departmental representation at
	the funeral

Head of Department	•	Provide information to the Head of Student Services which can be used in a formal notification on IntraBrunel Arrange the amendment of all departmental records and halt all future administrative procedures in respect of the deceased
Director of College Operations	٠	Advise colleagues in their College as to the death of the student
Associate Dean (Student	•	Be available to support students affected by the death
Experience)	•	Contribute to departmental involvement/contribution to funeral if appropriate

Department of the employee member who died

Director/Vice Provost & Dean of department/College	 Advise colleagues in the department/College about the death of the employee (in conjunction with the Director of CMSR) Advise colleagues of support services available to them Make arrangements with the Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor for a memorial (as required)
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