



## Queen Alexandra's House

### Mental Health and Escalation Policy 2024 / 2025

Mental health within the context of this policy, refers to a state of well-being in which each resident at QAH can realise their own potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and contribute to community. It encompasses emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing and overall is a vital component in overall health.

At QAH our policy recognises that mental health is a multifaceted, dynamic, and individualised continuum that is different from person to person. It encompasses the ability to manage stress, make informed decisions, build positive relationships, and specifically navigate the challenges and transitions of college life among living in independent living accommodation.

In QAH, we are a community that is committed to fostering an environment that promotes holistic mental well-being, respects individual difference, and aims to provide support for those facing the mental health challenges. Our approach is to be inclusive, to recognise the diverse backgrounds of experiences and the ongoing needs of our residents. We aim to create a supportive and nurturing living and learning environment.

#### Mental Health: A Policy Statement

##### **1 Introduction – aims of the policy.**

- 1.1 The central aim of the QAH's policy on mental health is to ensure the importance of the wellbeing for all residents in compliance with the legal and ethical standards related to mental health and privacy. These standards are always being updated to reflect changing regulations or community needs in QAH.
- 1.2 The goal of the policy is to provide support and intervention in situations where a residents may be experiencing mental health challenges.
- 1.3 It is a requirement of QAH residents to observe and read the terms of the policy in which will constitute the protocol the licence agreement.

##### **2 Identifying Mental Health Concerns**

- 2.1 Everyone's experience with mental health is unique, and the presence of the below signs do not necessarily confirm a specific mental health condition – however, early recognition and invention is important in providing appropriate support and recourses specific to the individual.

If you feel you are experiencing any of these common signs and symptoms, then following the policy accordingly is important:

- i) Changes in behaviour such as isolation or erratic behaviour
- ii) Emotional distress such as persistent sadness or irritability
- iii) Academic changes such as deteriorating performances or a lack of concentration

- iv) Physical symptoms such as changes in sleeping pattern and appetite changes.
- v) Self-harm or Risky behaviour such as self-harm or engaging in risky activities out of the ordinary.
- vi) Substance use such as an increase in use or dependency.
- vii) Changes in appearance such as neglect of personal hygiene
- viii) Unexplained physical complaints such as frequent aches and pains
- ix) Disrupted sleep patterns such as insomnia or hypersomnia
- x) Excessive worry or anxiety such as panic attacks or constant worry

### **3 Communication Channel**

- 3.1 Any resident who experiences, labels or defines themselves with experiencing any type of mental health challenges or barriers needs to inform QAH staff and management for all consideration.
- 3.2 A resident's own mental health is their sole responsibility if it is not communicated at the very start of their application. There will be medical forms in which the residents can disclose the information they wish to share.

### **4 Initial Response Protocol**

- 4.1 The initial response of any mental health incident at QAH will be subject to the situation and will change depending on the individual, incident and circumstances surrounding the event.
- 4.2 At the time of the event staff will do their best in the specific circumstances to:
  - i) Stay calm, actively listen and de-escalate the situation.
  - ii) Do an assessment of the safety of the resident, anyone involved or around and themselves.
  - iii) Provide immediate support through understanding or refer the resident to supporting external references or networks relevant.
  - iv) When necessary, involve the Mental Health Coordinator or professionals.
  - v) Maintain confidentiality to the resident's privacy unless it is appropriately to share information due to them being risk to themselves or the safety of others.
  - vi) Encourage self-help and coping strategies.
  - vii) Involve support networks such as family or friends if appropriate.
  - viii) Document of the interaction or event if the situation is appropriate to do so.
  - ix) Provide a follow-up and educational initiatives and suggestions depending on the situation.

### **5 Mental Health Coordinator**

- 5.1 QAH has both a General Manager and an Assistant Manager to Resident Life and Wellbeing who are appointed as mental health coordinators. They are responsible for overseeing de-escalation and all efforts surrounding any mental health concerns
- 5.2 The Assistant Manager to Resident Life and Wellbeing has specialised training in mental health support.

### **6 Collaboration with Services**

- 6.1 The mental health escalating policy and procedures of QAH where any resident is experiencing mental health challenges or concerns have external resources available to them. As a resident:
- i) Contact Your institution: Reach out to your college or university support services; they will have housing departments, counselling services and mental health facilitators.
  - ii) Speak with Mental health Services: Your college will have mental health services and counselling centres in which they can provide insight into the de-escalating police and procedures for students experiencing mental health challenges
  - iii) Student Handbook: Check the student handbook or any materials provided during enrolments – there are important policies relevant to mental health support outlining all your resources available to you
  - iv) Community Resources: There will be local mental health organisation, community health services or government health departments who will have information on mental health policies for you in your area.

## **7 Involvement with Support Networks**

- 7.1 QAH respects privacy while also seeking to involve external support appropriately when handling all mental health.
- 7.2 QAH guidelines for involving the residents support network including friends and family will be on the basis of the severity of the welfare.
- 7.3 If a resident has disclosed mental health information to us, we will only involve their support networks where we find it necessary.

## **8 Documentation and Reporting**

- 8.1 All documentation and reporting of mental health concerns at QAH are followed by our institutional protocol at the time of intake and any decided ongoing reporting.
- 8.2 At QAH we maintain confidentiality including relevant details of any agreed upon next steps unless it is at our discretion that there is any risk to the resident, or anyone else's safety involved. Then this will be reported to external sources to assistant and support as quickly as possible.

## **9 Follow up and Continued/ Ongoing Support**

- 9.1 Where necessary; follow-up catch ups, meetings and check ins for a resident's well-being and the effectiveness of the support can be provided. Both the residents need to express interest and is on the discretion of the management.

9.2 If applicable, working collaboratively with external mental health professionals that are involved to further monitor the resident’s wellbeing and progress can be arranged.

## **10 Community Engagement**

10.1 QAH will always provide residents with the space to raise, speak or discuss any mental health issues that indirectly and directly impact them.

10.2 Residents are encouraged actively to participate in community building activities throughout the term that foster an environment that promotes mutual support, beneficial outcomes and understanding.

## **11 Policy Review and improvement**

11.1 There are regular reviews of this mental health policy.

11.2 The gathering of feedback from staff, residents and any involved mental health professionals over the terms will be considered to enhance continually the effectiveness of the policy.