



UMHAN Strategic Priorities

2021-2024

Working together to maintain high standards of mental health professional support in education.



About us

UMHAN is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which aims to:

- Influence policy development in the fields of Education, Mental Health, Disability, and beyond, to proportionately and accurately represent the needs and interests of people with mental health conditions.
- Ensure mental health support staff working in education are equipped with the tools, support, and empowerment to best support students, and ensure national representation to influence the sector for good.
- Remove the barriers to the full participation of people with mental health conditions in higher education and beyond, encouraging the development of a culture in which people with mental health conditions studying in higher education is a mainstream notion.

We are a membership organisation with approximately 400 members from over 120 different organisations. We empower Mental Health professionals working in education to develop their skills and expertise, and practice safely by providing networks, training and resources.

Our work focuses on members, students and the wider community of education professionals.

Vision

For students with Mental Health Conditions to be supported by well-trained, knowledgeable and professional practitioners - to reduce risk and increase safety for them as they study.

For students with Mental Health Conditions to know their rights and how to access available support.

For the sector and general population to have a better understanding of Mental Health Conditions – including both the potential impact on study, but how people with Mental Health Conditions can and do live meaningful, positive and productive lives.

For UMHAN to be the primary membership organisation for multidisciplinary Mental Health Practitioners working in education and to be recognised for promoting and enabling effective, high quality and varied support provision.

Values

Our values help to shape our interactions with our members, students, volunteers, staff, trustees and stakeholders. They define our strategy and day-to-day operations.

Equality

UMHAN believes that mental health conditions should not be a barrier to accessing higher education, experiencing it positively or to benefitting from the opportunities that it creates. We actively work to address inequalities for students with mental health conditions.

Together

We believe in collaboration and innovation to achieve sustained change for people working in education within the field of mental health and for student mental health.

Trust

We are committed to transparent decision-making and practices, and continual improvement through challenge and debate.

Principles and public benefit

We seek to follow the [Nolan Principles of Public Life](#)

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

We follow relevant legal frameworks and best practice guidance for charities.

We advance the inclusion of people with mental health conditions working and studying in education, positively affecting health outcomes and life-time opportunities.

Positive representation and respect

We recognise the positive contributions people with mental health conditions make to education and wider society. We believe in creating a whole person and inclusive approach where people with Mental Health Conditions can thrive and their contributions are valued and respected.

How We Work

Our values inform the way we work. We respect and value individuality, utilising, enhancing and developing the skills of our staff, volunteers, trustees and members and recognising the contribution of a variety of ways of working and thinking. We believe in the cornerstones of trust, respect and flexibility within the workplace to promote wellbeing.

We strive to use our influence – whether strategic or financial – to make choices which are ethical and help address inequalities.



Our Members

Our strength is in the broad experience and expertise of our members. We have 416 Accredited Practitioner members, either working as Mental Health Advisers or Specialist Mental Health Mentors. They all have either professional or postgraduate qualifications in a mental health related field, or extensive experience and have undertaken specialised mentoring accreditation.

Around half of our members retain professional registration with another regulatory body, such as Social Work England, Nursing & Midwifery Council or British Association of Counselling Professionals.

We have also recently developed membership plans for Managers and Associate members, with 29 Manager and 19 Associate members.



Our standards

We believe that all people with Mental Health Conditions deserve the highest quality support provision.

All UMHAN members agree to abide by our Capability and Conduct Framework. This framework broadly encompasses the skills, knowledge and attitudes required by mental health practitioners working in the education sector and the conduct expected of UMHAN members. These are based on the 10 Essential Shared Capabilities for the Mental Health Workforce, which enables this framework to reflect a wide range of member qualifications and experience, but modified to focus more on the specific context-based approach of supporting students with Mental Health Conditions in Higher Education, and UMHAN's aims (in particular the practical approach to citizenship, the disability agenda, and participation in society).

Our priorities 2021-2024

During the upcoming period, UMHAN will be celebrating it's 20th year.

As well as reflection, there will be opportunities to consider how we continue to develop to meet new demands for both ourselves as a charity, our members, and students with Mental Health Conditions.

Student Mental Health continues to be a key focus for many organisations in the sector, including universities, colleges, schools and students themselves.

Formal disclosure of Mental Health Conditions by students continues to increase year on year, however within many education providers staffing has not increased proportionately. This is at a time of increased scrutiny and focus on value for money and providing an evidence base for "what works".

Additionally, the sector faces many challenges over the coming years: responding to the pandemic, Brexit, Disabled Students' Allowances reform and more.

During the next few years our priorities will be adapted to respond to the current landscape and will also be updated on a yearly basis and in response to feedback from our members and other stakeholders.

- To use our mission and values to develop and maintain policies and procedures.
- To provide transparent accountability to our members, students/people with mental health conditions and all stakeholders.
- To develop and grow our membership to provide an active forum of support across the UK.
- To facilitate online and in person opportunities for the sharing of best practice, collaboration and peer education.
- To ensure that members of UMHAN are kept up to date with key information about current policy and disability rights and equipped to apply this knowledge in their work.
- To support the recruitment and retention of experienced staff in the sector to best support students.
- To advocate for people with Mental Health Conditions across the Education, Mental Health and Disability sectors through our collaborative work.