

Shockout Arts

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

2025–2026

1. Policy Statement

Shockout Arts is committed to fostering an environment where all members of our community can study, work, teach and create while maintaining good mental health and wellbeing. We recognise that mental health is integral to academic, artistic and professional success, and that individuals may face challenges at any point during their time with us.

Shockout Arts will:

- Promote a culture of openness, care, respect and early support
- Reduce stigma around mental health
- Provide accessible support pathways and trained wellbeing leads
- Ensure procedures for responding to concerns are clear, safe and compassionate
- Support individuals to access internal and external specialist services when needed

The organisation adopts a **zero-tolerance approach** to behaviour that undermines the wellbeing of others, including harassment, bullying or discrimination.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students

- All staff (teaching, administrative, creative, technical, and management)
- Contractors, volunteers, visiting artists and external partners involved in Shockout Arts activity

It covers all settings connected to the organisation, including:

- On-campus teaching, rehearsals and studio work
- Off-site or partner venues
- Placements, performances, outreach, assessments and fieldwork
- Online platforms, virtual learning spaces and digital communication channels

3. Core Principles

a) **Wellbeing is everyone's responsibility.**

The whole community contributes to a safe, supportive environment.

b) **Mental health challenges are common and should be met with empathy, not stigma.**

c) **Early intervention is crucial.**

Concerns should be raised and addressed promptly.

d) **Support pathways must be accessible, confidential, inclusive and clearly communicated.**

e) **Shockout Arts has a duty of care** to take reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all community members.

f) **The mental health needs of students and staff are equally important.**

g) **No one will face disadvantage for seeking help or supporting someone else to do so.**

4. Definitions

- **Mental health:**

A state of emotional, psychological and social wellbeing that affects how individuals think, feel and act.

- **Wellbeing:**
A broader concept including physical health, emotional stability, life satisfaction, safety, social belonging, purpose and ability to cope with challenges.
- **Mental health concern:**
Any issue causing distress or affecting daily functioning — including anxiety, stress, burnout, depression, bereavement, trauma, performance pressure, or personal circumstances.
- **Mental health crisis / emergency:**
A situation where someone is at immediate risk of harming themselves, others, or is unable to keep themselves safe. This requires urgent escalation.

5. Responsibilities

All Members of the Shockout Arts Community

- Treat others with empathy, respect and understanding
- Be aware of, and contribute to, a mentally healthy environment
- Know how to access support for themselves or others
- Raise concerns where safe and appropriate

Students

- Seek help early when experiencing difficulties
- Engage with support processes where appropriate
- Inform tutors or Wellbeing Leads of issues affecting study

Staff

- Create a supportive learning/work environment
- Recognise signs of distress and respond sensitively
- Make referrals to designated leads where needed
- Maintain appropriate boundaries and confidentiality

Leadership / Management

- Provide adequate training, policies and resources
- Ensure designated wellbeing roles are filled and visible
- Oversee safe processes for crisis situations

- Promote an organisational culture that prioritises wellbeing

6. Designated Mental Health & Wellbeing Leads

Shockout Arts will appoint **trained Mental Health & Wellbeing Leads** who are responsible for:

- Receiving wellbeing concerns
- Offering initial guidance and support
- Making internal or external referrals
- Coordinating reasonable adjustments (students)
- Liaising with HR on wellbeing matters (staff)
- Maintaining confidential records in line with GDPR
- Identifying higher-risk situations and escalating appropriately

Leads may include:

- Head of Student Support / Student Wellbeing Lead
- Safeguarding Lead (where safeguarding concerns overlap)
- Designated Mental Health First Aiders
- Staff Wellbeing Lead / HR Representative

Contact details should be clearly publicised in student and staff handbooks, on notice boards, and on the Shockout Arts website.

7. Reporting Concerns & Referral Pathways

a) Self-Referral

- Any student or staff member may contact a Wellbeing Lead directly.

b) Concern About Someone Else

Individuals can raise concerns if they believe someone is:

- struggling emotionally
- showing signs of distress
- experiencing crisis

Concerns can be raised confidentially.

c) Tutor or Staff Referral

Tutors, supervisors or line managers may refer individuals if they observe worrying behaviour or the person discloses difficulties.

d) Anonymous Information

Anonymous concerns may be submitted, although responses may be limited.

8. Support Options

Shockout Arts may provide or signpost to:

- One-to-one wellbeing discussions
- Mental Health First Aid support
- Pastoral or academic support
- Adjustments to study/assessments under the Extenuating Circumstances or Disability Support frameworks
- Fitness-to-Study review where necessary
- Crisis support (internal and external)
- External clinical services (GP, NHS Talking Therapies, crisis teams)
- Referrals to specialist organisations (e.g., Mind, Samaritans, Young Minds)

9. Crisis, Emergency or High-Risk Situations

If someone is at immediate risk of harm:

- Dial **999** (police or ambulance)
- Contact the **Emergency Safeguarding Lead**
- Ensure senior staff are notified as soon as possible
- Keep the person safe until help arrives (where safe to do so)

Shockout Arts will ensure crisis procedures are known, rehearsed and accessible.

10. Confidentiality & Data Protection

- Information shared will be kept confidential except where there is **risk of significant harm**, or a legal requirement to disclose.
- Records will be held securely and retained in line with Shockout Arts' **Data Protection Policy (GDPR compliant)**.
- Only relevant staff involved in support or referrals will access personal data.

11. Training, Awareness & Communication

Shockout Arts will provide:

- Mental Health First Aid training for designated leads
- Staff development sessions on mental health awareness, boundaries and crisis response
- Student induction modules on wellbeing, self-care and support pathways
- Regular campaigns promoting positive mental health
- Clear signposting across campus and digital platforms

12. Monitoring, Review and Governance

- Anonymised data on wellbeing referrals, crisis incidents and support uptake will be monitored (with strict confidentiality).
- Trends will inform improvement activities and training.
- The Senior Leadership Team will review this policy every **12 months**, or sooner if legislation, OfS conditions or best practice guidance change.
- Consultation with staff and students will be part of the review cycle.

Review Date: September 2026