AMOSSHE

The Student Services Organisation

Spring bulletin 2021

Our National Conference

AMOSSHE is dedicated to the professional development of Student Services leaders in UK higher education. In this academic year Student Services and sector colleagues have responded to unprecedented challenges with energy, creativity and commitment. The **AMOSSHE National Conference 2021** is an opportunity to reflect on this year's good practice, establish strategic connections, and take our achievements forward.

AMOSSHE National Conference

NATIONAL conference 2021

14 - 16 July Online

The conference features sessions from over twenty higher education providers, discussing a wide range of Student Services innovations, research and good practice. Institutions from across the UK are joined by colleagues from the Republic of Ireland, Australia and The Netherlands. The conference also features sessions by sector organisations including IASAS (International Association of Student Affairs and Services), NASMA (National Association of Student Money Advisers), Stand Alone, and Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust, as well as third-party service providers.

Our inspirational line-up of keynote speakers includes Phil Packer MBE, who founded the British Inspiration Trust (BRIT) to support and improve young adult mental health.

The conference takes place online from **Wednesday 14 to Friday 16 July 2021**. You can now check out the packed schedule and book your place to join us for our flagship event of the year!

Find out more and book your place:
www.amosshe.org.uk/events

Xyla Digital Therapies for Higher Education

xyla | digital therapies
Part of Acacium Group

Why Xyla Digital Therapies?

- **Access to a diverse clinical network**
- **Enhance reach:**
  – For students anywhere in the UK
  – Appointments 7 days a week, 7am-11pm
  – 40+ languages
- **Next day appointments available**
- **Take a student-centred approach:**
  – Choice of appointment time and mode of delivery - typing, online audio and secure video

Our digital offering:

Telephone assessment

Guided self-help   CBT   Counselling
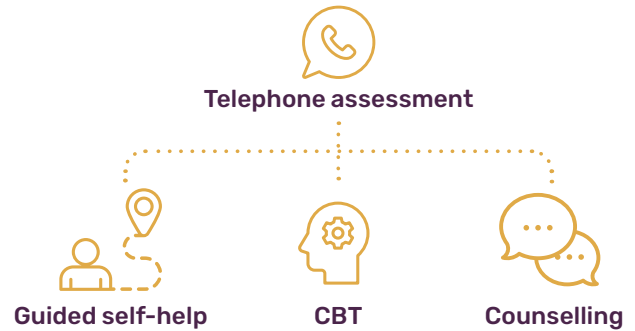
98% felt their therapist took their concerns seriously

97% had confidence in their therapist

92% got the help that mattered to them

Contact us for a conversation about how we can support your institution: **Ariana.Suleyman@xyladigitaltherapies.com**

randstad student support.
flexible counselling and mental health services.

Flexible mental health support can ensure students have a positive experience as they begin returning to university.

We can help support your service:

- Remote and face-to-face support available
- Reduce waiting lists with support at speed
- Alleviate pressure being faced by your team

500+ qualified counsellors and wellbeing mentors are ready to deliver vital support to your students today.
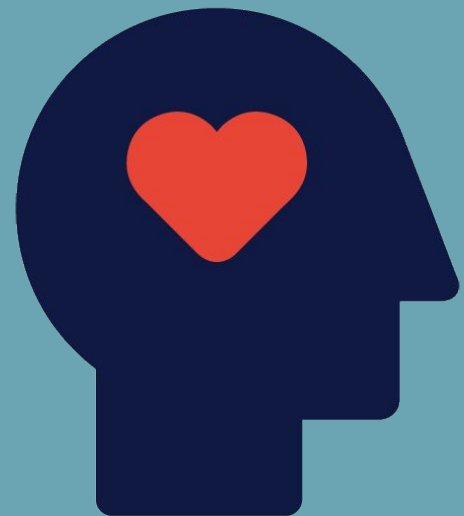
Find out more: randstad.co.uk/ss-mental-health

randstad

Creating an anti-racist culture in HE

Tackling racism and creating an anti-racist culture are key priorities for higher education. In April **AMOSSHE** hosted a conference to explore how Student Services can foster empowering communities that actively champion diversity, and work together to eradicate systemic barriers to equality for black and ethnic minority students and staff.

Stephen Lawrence Day

The event was led by **AMOSSHE** Executive members **Rotimi Akinsete** (University of the Arts, London) and **Jill Stevenson** (University of Stirling). We were delighted and honoured to welcome so many inspiring and moving speakers to the event. It took place on Stephen Lawrence Day, and Stephen's brother **Stuart Lawrence** took time to join us and share his insights as an activist, campaigner and author.

Institutional racism

Other keynote speakers included Professor Emeritus Sir **Geoff Palmer**, who discussed his present involvement in dealing with institutional racism and the legacies of slavery and colonialism. Also, we welcomed Dr **Gurnam Singh** from Coventry University, who looked both at the idea of decolonisation and (in very practical and specific ways) its relevance to Student Services.

Black Students Talk

It was especially inspiring to hear the perspectives of students and their approaches to creating change. We were joined by the Black Students Talk team (**Yannick Yalipende**, **Nkasi Stoll**, **Chinelo Nnadi**, **Sapphire Francis**, **Jhanelle White** and **Jodian Dunkley**), who discussed their peer support network that provides safe, supportive and therapeutic spaces for Black (African, Caribbean, Mixed with Black heritage) students to meet, share, learn, and manage their mental health and wellbeing at university.

The role of leadership

The conference also included a panel discussion about the role of leadership in creating an anti-racist culture, featuring Professor **Randall Whittaker** (Leeds Arts University), Professor Emerita **Rowena Arshad** (University of Edinburgh), Professor **David Richardson** (University of East Anglia) and **Samantha Budd** (National Union of Students).

Sector-wide approaches

We also got updates about innovative sector-wide approaches to tackling racism from **Khadija Mohammed** (University of the West of Scotland), Advance HE, Universities UK and GuildHE.

All in all it was an incredible couple of days!

Event resources for AMOSSHE members:
www.amosshe.org.uk/events-resources
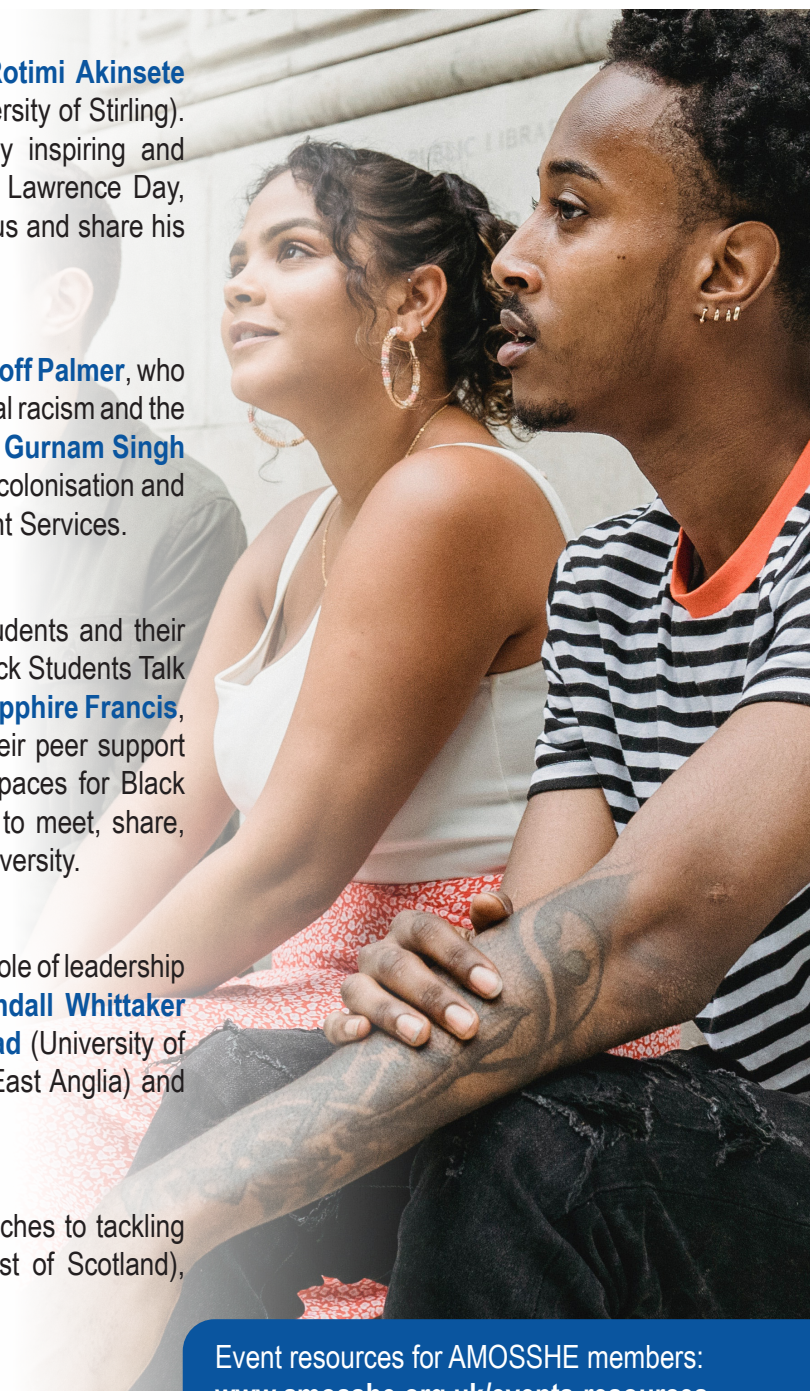
Tackling Harassment: Promoting Cultural Change in Higher Education

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

epigeum

Consisting of a complementary pair of interactive, online courses, *Tackling Harassment* combines evidence-based best practices with expert learning design to enable institutions to raise awareness, counteract barriers to reporting and intervention, and encourage positive cultural change throughout the university community.

Being an active bystander examines harassment and hate, and the associated impact on the individual and wider community, via peer perspectives, scenario-based activities, opportunities for personal reflection, and signposting to external support.

Responding to disclosures will provide those that are likely to be a first-responder to a disclosure, including all student-facing academic and professional staff and student leaders, with the knowledge required to identify harassment and hate, and the skills and confidence to provide an effective first response.

Visit epigeum.com/tackling-harassment to request a free trial or email epigeum@oup.com

Supporting over 175 educational institutions, Togetherall (previously 'Big White Wall') is a unique and safe online mental wellbeing community, available to over 2 million students and staff.

Togetherall is:

- **Accessible 24/7, instantly, all year around.**

- **Moderated and managed by registered mental health practitioners (BACP members or equivalent).**

- **Able to works alongside and integrate with existing counselling and other campus services.**

- **Available to everyone and cost efficient.**

Email at: info@togetherall.com

togetherall

Our community of universities

University of **Kent**

1495 **UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN**

Sheffield Hallam University

University of **BRISTOL**

Post-pandemic disability services

In March **AMOSSHE** hosted an event to take a fresh look at disability services in the context of a post-pandemic world. The event considered the implications of virtual learning for disabled students, what we need to consider for returning to a post-pandemic campus, and how a blended learning approach impacts how we support disabled students.

Positive thinking

AMOSSHE Executive leads **Nic Streatfield** (University of East London) and **Kelsey Coward** (Cardiff University) introduced the event, and led discussions about thinking positively and creatively about the disabled student experience.

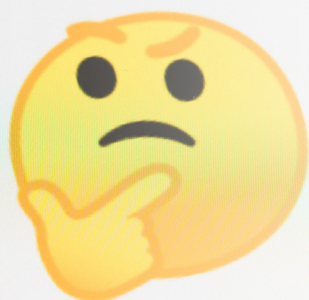### Inclusive online learning

Amy Low and **Adam Tweed** from AbilityNet discussed the pros and cons of blended / online learning and support for disabled students, and shared practical tips on running inclusive online sessions.

The post-pandemic campus

Then **Pete Quinn** (Pete Quinn Consulting) explored what a post-pandemic campus might look like for disabled students, considering the challenges for students of social distancing, access restrictions, one way systems, limited space in venues, increased – and often confusing – use of signage, and wearing of face coverings.

Blended learning

The event also included a panel session about the intersection of online and on-campus support for disabled students. **Jenny Anderton** (Higher York Access Centre), **Anna Pylypczuk** (Randstad Student Support) and **Gerard Norris** (Clear Links) discussed impact assessments for Disabled Students' Allowances, and the role of the support worker for working across three modes of learning.

Event resources for AMOSSHE members:
www.amosshe.org.uk/events-resources

✳blackbullion

Streamline the entire financial support process

The Blackbullion Funds Management System digitises the entire financial support process, providing staff and applicants with a streamlined experience. Now everything is in one place – in a user-friendly, fully accessible and GDPR-compliant environment.

- 48h average application processing time, reduced from 2-4 weeks
- Less than 25% of applications require additional evidence
- Over £2 million awarded from the FMS to students since October 2020

We're adding an Instant Payments feature to our Funds Management System, to enable our partners to deliver secure payments of students in seconds without compromising on security or privacy.

> "If you're a student in hardship needing funds, you need them quickly. The Instant Payments innovation ticks all the boxes: quick, secure and a big admin saver. It's a perfect example of using smart tech to support student success and wellbeing."
>
> Mary Curnock Cook CBE, non-executive director in education and edtech and former CEO of UCAS

Get in touch at **hello@blackbullion.com** or join us for a live demo of the system, with colleagues on hand to answer any questions you may have:

bit.ly/blackbullion-fms
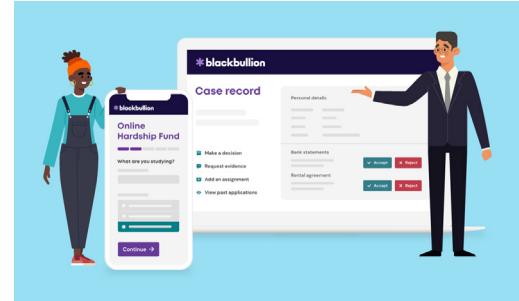
JS GROUP
Delivering Better Student Outcomes

Partnering with universities to implement effective digital access initiatives.

JS Group is passionate about supporting student success and today, many of the schemes we are developing with universities are addressing digital poverty, inclusion and access.

Colleagues will be aware that a lack of digital access and inclusion has a wide range of impacts. Key digital kit covers a wide range including appropriate devices that are up to date enough to use university platforms and systems, sufficient access to broadband/data plans, noise cancelling headphones and peripheral devices such as second screens. Without the right access, students can find the ability to study effectively a significant challenge.

Whilst cash awards can be helpful to address this, for many students there are competing needs. Similarly the experience of many HEIs in distributing laptops is that one size does not fit all and it is important to address individual needs. This is something reflected in the recent OfS Gravity Assist report.

Working with universities we have developed a simple way of enabling the provision of digital devices which gives students choice, offers them guidance regarding appropriate devices and reduces institutional administration.

Once a university determines the funding and student cohort, we adapt our online student engagement platform to fit requirements and enable students to purchase the relevant resources that will support them. This can all be done in a short timeframe.

Addressing digital poverty, inclusion and access is just one element of the engagement and resource scheme framework that we offer to universities. If you'd like to know more, contact Julie.

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julie.walkling@jsgroup.co.uk

or visit our website
www.jsgroup.co.uk