Introductions

A warm welcome to all new Welfare Officers!

A few quick introductions before the serious stuff. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the Welfare Officer role or if you are unsure about a welfare issue in your club.

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The Role

The Welfare Officer’s role is primarily to distribute welfare-related resources to their team whilst being a familiar face that athletes can go to should they need any advice about how to seek additional help or support. The Welfare Officer can give advice on how to manage sporting and academic commitments effectively, drawing on personal experience and experience from teammates. If you are made aware of a dispute within your club, please signpost the member to inform the club president in order to seek resolution. In cases where the president is not an appropriate point of contact or where additional support is needed, please refer the member to the Sports Federation.

The exact role of the Welfare Officer will vary between clubs. The main regular task of the role is to make yourself visible to your club members as a first point of contact. As each club is different, it is at your discretion how best to do so. Examples of how some Welfare Officers make themselves known to club members are: introducing yourself widely at training sessions, posting on your club’s Facebook pages or advertising drop-in hours when you will be available in a café or college for club members to come and have a chat. However you choose to make yourself visible, the aim is to create a space for club members to approach you. From there, you can offer informal support and, when necessary, signpost them to relevant help, using the ‘Useful Welfare Resources’ section of this handbook as a guide.

It is important to remember that you, as Welfare Officer, are not trained to give advice to your friends/peers about issues relating to their mental health. If you are concerned about an individual’s mental well-being, try to open up a conversation with that person or reach out to a trained professional who will be able to give you advice about how you can best support that person. It is vital that you look after your own mental well-being whilst trying to support others. You cannot successfully support friends and teammates if you do not support yourself.
Suggested Welfare Officer Remit

We have put together a suggestion for the Constitutional Role for Welfare Officers within Sports Clubs. Please feel free to use these as a basis for writing constitutions for your own clubs.

1. The Welfare Officer(s) should be a point of contact for individuals within their relevant sports clubs to bring personal, domestic or work-related problems as well as issues relating to their sport or sports club and should aid to offer signposting advice or assistance to these individuals by exploring the issues presented to them.

2. The Welfare Officer(s) should respect that the problems presented to them can be sensitive and therefore should ensure the confidentiality of club members who wish to approach them with issues. It should be noted that in circumstances where an individual is believed to pose a threat to themselves or others, a Welfare Officer may breach confidentiality, escalate matters as they deem appropriate and inform relevant bodies/individuals in order to maintain the safety of the ‘at-risk’ individual.

3. The Welfare Officer(s) should aim to attain some level of Welfare/Peer Support Training and Bystander Intervention Training offered by the University, and Mental Health in Sport Workshops run by the Sports Federation. Welfare Officer(s) should be aware of resources and services offered both by the University and in Oxford to assist with promoting good Student Welfare.

4. The Welfare Officer(s) should offer assistance to individuals to the limits of their capabilities or training and should signpost individuals to more specialist services if it is believed that this would be a more appropriate course of action. Welfare Officers are not counsellors and should recognise that they have limits. It is important that Welfare Officers only take on what they can themselves handle and look after their own Welfare whilst assisting others.

5. The Welfare Officer(s) should represent and advocate for issues of student/member welfare, equality and diversity within the club committee and hold the committee accountable to issues of student welfare and equality opportunity.
Dos and Don’ts:

**Do:**

- **Attend welfare training**
  There are many different forms of training such as: Mental Health in Sport Workshops, Bystander Intervention Training, Peer Supporter Training

- **Make yourself known**
  Be present and a familiar face to those around you

- **Share resources**
  This could be posters, workshop slides or contact details for welfare-related services such as the Oxford Counselling Service

- **Check-in**
  With your friends, teammates and, most importantly, yourself. Be aware about how someone is behaving and speak to them if you notice any changes in their behaviour

- **Reach out**
  Contact College Welfare Officers or Peer Supporters if you are concerned about a teammate

**Don’t:**

- **Take on too much**
  Reflect on how much you can handle whilst juggling your sporting and academic commitments

- **Be afraid to ask for help**
  Remember that you won’t have all the answers. If you feel out of your depth, reach out to professionals who will be able to advise you on the best course of action

- **Neglect your own welfare**
  It is crucial to understand your own emotions so that you are in the best position to support your team
Draft Letters for Athletes

As a Welfare Officer within your sports team, you might be the first point of contact for an individual who is in need of support. Whilst we know that you will do everything you can to be approachable and welcoming to those within your club, reaching out for help can still be an extremely daunting task. We have constructed some short template emails/letters which aim to take out some of the stress of asking for assistance from either yourselves as Sports Welfare Officers, or from the individuals within your Club Committee involved in decisions regarding financial assistance for sport.

These are designed to be send out to all club members in advance of issues arising, for example at the beginning of the year or termly. Please feel free to send these out to your club members in an email, and please also feel free to make any changes to these that you see fit.

**Welfare Support:**

Dear [Welfare Officer],

I hope you’re well and that term is treating you well so far.

I wanted to reach out to you as I’ve been having some problems recently and was wondering if I could arrange a time to talk through them with you, and possibly get your advice? I understand that you might be busy at the moment, but I really would appreciate it if you could spare the time for a quick chat?

Please let me know if we could arrange something.

Best Wishes,

[Person]
Dear [President/Captain/Treasurer],

I hope you are well and that term is treating you well so far.

I wanted to reach out to you about a somewhat personal matter. I have really enjoyed [playing/participating in] [sport name] this [term/year] and am very keen to continue. However, I am struggling with some of the financial costs of [either playing/participating in general or specific part of sport (e.g. tour, subs, competition fees)].

I was hoping that we could perhaps meet to discuss this further, and try to work out a solution [perhaps paying in instalments/looking at grants, awards or bursaries].

Best Wishes,

[Person]
Useful Welfare Resources

**Sports Fed**

Sports Federation is a resource available for Welfare Officers, either to use on a personal level or when assistance is required for Welfare related matters. Members of staff (such as Andrew Taylor and Daniel Tibbitt) are currently qualified with Mental Health in Sport, and Mental First Aid training.

Email: daniel.tibbitt@sport.ox.ac.uk or andrew.taylor@sport.ox.ac.uk

**University Counselling Service**

The Counselling Service offer individual/group counselling and run workshops throughout the term on topics including: Mindfulness, Perfectionism and Sleep Difficulties.

Phone number: 01865 270300
Email: counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk
Address: 3 Worcester Street, OX1 2BX

**Peer Supporters/College Welfare Officers/College Welfare Deans**

Every college has trained peer supporters and members of staff who are equipped to deal with welfare related issues. It is worth investigating what your college has to offer and making yourself known to the relevant students/members of staff.

**Student Union Student Advice Service**

Student Advice is a free and confidential service offering advice and information on topics such as money, academics, wellbeing and accommodation. Student Advice can be accessed through a drop-in session (times are on the SU website below) or by confirming an appointment via email.

Website: [https://www.oxfordsu.org/wellbeing/student-advice/](https://www.oxfordsu.org/wellbeing/student-advice/)
Email: advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
**Student Union VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities**

The role aims to advocate for student mental health and can direct Welfare Officers to resources such as Bystander Intervention Training and events on themes such as men’s mental health.

Email: vpweo@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

**Disability Advisory Service**

This service provides information and guidance on how to organise disability-related study support.

Phone number: 01865 280459  
Email: disability@admin.ox.ac.uk  
Address: 3 Worcester Street, OX1 2BX

**Harassment Advisory Network**

Information for student/staff on the Universities response to Harassment and Bullying.

Phone number: 01865 270760  
Email: harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk

**Sexual Violence and Harassment Support Service**

Free support and advice for any student who has been affected by sexual harassment and violence, whether at the university or elsewhere, based at the University Counselling Service.

Email: supportservice@admin.ox.ac.uk

**Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre**

An organisation committed to supporting survivors of sexual abuse, rape and harassment.

Phone number: 0800 783 6294 (free) or 01865 726295
**Nightline**

A confidential listening service run by students, for students.

Phone number: 01865 270270 (open between 8pm-8am from 0th-9th week)

**Samaritans**

Provides free 24-hour support on welfare-related issues.

Phone number: 116 123 or 01865 722122 for The Oxford Samaritans
Address: 60 Magdalen Road, OX4 1RB (open 8am-10pm)

**Peers of Colour**

A scheme operated by Peer Supporters to offer support to any student of colour across the University.

Email Address: peersofcolour@admin.ox.ac.uk

**Rainbow Peers**

A support scheme run by Peer Supporters to offer advice and guidance to any LGBTQ+ students across the University.

Email Address: rainbowpeers@admin.ox.ac.uk

**Beat**

Provides online support to people with an eating disorder.

Website: https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/
Phone number: 0808 801 0677 (open 12pm-8pm weekdays and 4pm-8pm on weekends)
**MIND**

An organisation that provides advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Website: https://www.mind.org.uk/
Phone number: 0300 123 3393

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**Headway**

A brain-injury charity offering advice and support for injuries such as concussion.

Website: [www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk)
Phone number: 0808 800 2244 (free – open 9am-5pm weekdays)
Email: [helpline@headway.org.uk](mailto:helpline@headway.org.uk)
A Final Note

A huge thank you on behalf of your respective clubs for signing up to be a Welfare Officer. We believe that it is an extremely important role and one that should not be overlooked.

Sports Fed will be running Mental Health in Sport Workshops regularly. These will be advertised on the mailout and an email will be sent directly to those designated as club Welfare Officers. They will give you the tools you need to open up a conversation about mental well-being and help you to signpost teammates so that they can seek the relevant help.

The SU also offer a variety of welfare-related training sessions, including Bystander Intervention Training. This is particularly valuable so that you feel confident in knowing what to do should a difficult situation arise within your club.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us via our email addresses on page two. We would be more than happy to chat through any problems that may arise.

Once again, make sure you are looking after yourself. It is easy to neglect your own mental well-being when supporting others. Please remember that the support is also there for you too.