



Writtle  
University  
College

## Wellbeing Support and Safety Advice for International Students



# CONTENTS

WELCOME	4
REGISTERING WITH A GP (DOCTOR) AND DENTISTRY	5
THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SERVICE (NHS)	6
FEELING UNWELL, WORRIED OR NEED IMMEDIATE HELP?	7
CULTURE SHOCK	8
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN THE UK	9
FURTHER QUESTIONS	10
RESIDENTIAL STUDENT SUPPORT	11
OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT	12
STAYING SAFE IN THE UK	13
USEFUL CONTACTS	14
FURTHER QUESTIONS	15

*We understand that for some of you this may be your first time in the UK so please read through the following guide when you arrive to help you to feel safe and supported during your time at Writtle University College.*



## WELCOME INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**A very warm welcome to all of you from the Wellbeing Team here at Writtle University College.**

We provide our students with a range of specialist wellbeing services, including **Welfare Support, Counselling, Mental Health Advice and Support, Chaplaincy, Sexual Violence Liaison Officer Support and Safeguarding**. The team have links with multiple external agencies and will signpost students to relevant organisations for additional support, when appropriate. We will endeavour to support, help or provide advice related to all wellbeing matters.

You can find us in the Main Building (L28), in the office attached to our new Wellbeing Hub. To find out more about the services we offer and further information about how to book appointments with members of the team, take a look at our Wellbeing Moodle page or email us; [wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk) and we will get back to you as soon as we are able to.

Across the academic year, the wellbeing team will arrange a number of wellbeing focused days and events which we would love you to get involved with. Keep an eye out on your student emails, posters, our social media twitter and instagram pages (@WUC\_Wellbeing) and our Moodle page for further information:

<https://moodle.writtle.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1419>



## REGISTERING WITH A GP (DOCTOR)



Being unwell when you are away from home can be a difficult time. It is important that you register with a GP as soon as possible after arriving in the UK. This means that you will be able to access healthcare quickly should you become ill and need treatment/support or medical advice.

Students living in Halls of Residence or in/around the village can register at the Writtle GP Practice: <https://writtle.gpsurgery.net/>, telephone: **01245 421205**.

The GP is located along Lordship Road, just past Lordship Campus, on the left heading towards the village of Writtle, before the petrol station/garage.

GPs are often the first point of contact for health related matters and can refer you to more specialist care should you need it. The NHS website is a great way to find out more about getting medical care as a student; **www.NHS.uk**

If you are moving from another GP in England, your new GP should have access to your previous health records.

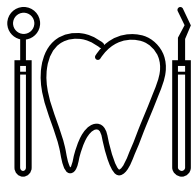
You can choose to register with any local GP. To find one please visit; <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp> or speak to one of our Wellbeing Advisers.

## DENTISTRY

Once you have registered with a GP, you can be treated by a dentist in the UK.

Dental treatment is not usually offered for free in the UK, although NHS practices charge much less than private practices. If you would like to register for a Dental Practice you can find one here;

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>





## THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SERVICE (NHS)

Some NHS treatment are free and available to anyone who needs it. This includes:

- **Emergency treatment in a hospital Accident and Emergency department**
- **Seeing a GP - as an NHS or temporary patient**
- **Family planning services (inc diagnosis and treatment of sexual health)**
- **Treatment for some infectious diseases**
- **Compulsory psychiatric treatment**

Whether you can get other free NHS services depends on the length and purpose of your residence in the UK, not your nationality.

Even if you're entitled to free NHS healthcare, you might be charged for some NHS services, like dental treatment, prescriptions and glasses. Check if you're entitled to free NHS healthcare on the **GOV.UK** website.

You should also read the UK Council for International Student Affairs' ([UKCISA.org.uk](http://UKCISA.org.uk)) information on health and healthcare in the UK to find out more.

The UK government always advises visitors to the UK to take out travel or health insurance that has the necessary healthcare cover for their needs. This is particularly important for those with pre-existing health conditions. Appropriate insurance means visitors may be able to recoup any treatment costs from their insurer.

If during your time in the UK you become unwell and you are not sure what health service you might require, you can download Ask NHS. This app will help to guide you to the best service to help you.

## In an emergency you should call 999.

If you are abroad, you should speak with your doctor or go to the nearest hospital.

## FEELING UNWELL, WORRIED OR NEED IMMEDIATE HELP?

### Choose the right service to help you Live Well in Mid Essex



#### Self Care

We want you to feel empowered to take responsibility for your own health, but also informed about what services are available should you require extra support. Visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) to find what changes you can make in order to take care of yourself and find out what works best for you.

#### Pharmacy

Community pharmacists are experts in the use of medicines and can clinically check, prepare and dispense prescription medicines for you. You don't need an appointment to see a community pharmacist. To find your local pharmacy visit: [www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services](http://www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services).

#### GP

If you have an illness that won't go away and isn't life threatening, contact your GP surgery first to make an appointment. Most GP surgeries offer extended opening hours for a limited range of services. To find your local GP practice visit: [www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/about-us/gp-practices](http://www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/about-us/gp-practices)

#### NHS 111

Call NHS 111 if you need medical help fast but it's not an emergency. Available 24/7, NHS 111 is staffed by a team of fully trained advisors, supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. They will ask questions to assess your symptoms, provide healthcare advice and/or direct you to a local health service that can help you best.

#### A&E

Accident & Emergency (A&E) departments provide immediate urgent care. A&E is for serious and life threatening injuries and conditions only. Call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk. If it is not a life threatening emergency and you, or the person you are with, do not need immediate medical attention, consider other options before you dial 999.

If you are ill and require help, please inform the Wellbeing Team by emailing us; [wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk) or if you are a resident and it is outside of core office hours, let one of the Residential Student Support Team know. If you are unwell at any time during your studies, it is your responsibility to inform your course team of your absence.

**Definition:** the feeling of disorientation experiences by someone when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes

5

## TOP TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

1

### FAMILIAR THINGS

Keep familiar things around you like photographs or ornaments



2

### FOOD

Find a supplier of familiar food if possible, your student advisor or a student society should be able to help



3

### EXERCISE

Not only a way to keep fit but a great way to meet people. Why not join a local running club?



4

### MAKE FRIENDS

With international students, whether from your own culture or another. They'll understand how you're feeling. But also look to chat to home students so you can learn about each other's culture



5

### TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HELP OFFERED

Your college or university will have a range of support on offer, including orientation programmes. Attend these if you can, not only will you meet people in the same situation as you, but you'll get to learn about your new home town



Remember, culture shock is entirely normal. It can also be a positive learning experience, making you more aware of aspects of your own culture as well as the new culture you have entered.

**UKCISA** UK Council  
for International  
Student Affairs

For further help and advice please visit:  
[UKCISA.ORG.UK](http://UKCISA.ORG.UK)

While usually temporary, culture shock is common among international students arriving in the UK. You will notice differences in the way things are done here and what you are used to at home. These include the way people dress, speak and behave, teaching and learning styles, and food.

If at any time you find your self struggling, **you can contact a member of the Wellbeing Team**, who will be happy to help, advise and support you.



## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN THE UK

Moving to a new country, learning different methods of studying and forming new friendship groups can be a very exciting time when you study in the UK. However, we know it can also be very scary if you're adapting to a new climate, potentially speaking in a different language and feeling far away from your friends and family.

Starting a new university, school or college is a big change and all students, whether from the UK or elsewhere, may feel overwhelmed at some point. You're not alone.

You may experience feeling isolated, distressed, anxious or lonely. International students can have many concerns, including:

- **Language barriers**
- **Not understanding cultural references**
- **Financial worries**
- **Exam stress**
- **Worrying about proving yourself to your parents**

### **Attitudes to Mental Health in the UK**

Students often say that they don't want to draw attention to any issues because in their home country they don't recognise it as an illness or it is frowned upon.

In the UK, organisations are increasingly creating campaigns to encourage 'time to talk'. This may be different from perceptions of mental health in your home country.

When you arrive in the UK you may experience 'culture shock' as you adjust to a new culture. This is normal, usually temporary and to be expected. However, if you feel like you've been experiencing these feelings for a period of time you may benefit from some additional help.



## WHERE TO GET HELP

There are lots of places that can help you and provide support so please don't just try and struggle on without seeking assistance. Speak to a member of the wellbeing team, a tutor, your GP, a friend or family member. You can also access free help and support through the following:

### STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

As a WUC student, you now have access to **24 hours support** from Health Assured. You can access these experienced, **accredited counsellors by calling 0800 028 3766**. They offer free, help and support in a friendly, non-judgmental way.

All Writtle University College students have access to the **"My Healthy Advantage" app**. The **ID code is MHA171707**. If you decide that speaking to someone isn't for you, you can access the free My Healthy Advantage mobile app with the login details above. This will give all Writtle University College students access to wellbeing fact sheets, videos, self-help programmes, interactive tools and educational resources to help with life's challenges. You can simply go to the app store, search "My Healthy Advantage" and download. The app is free to download and available on iPhone and Android.

### NEED TO TALK?

If you need to talk, the **Samaritans** are a 24 hour listening service who will face whatever you are going through with you:

**Call 116 123 free of charge 24 hours a day**

**The Wellbeing Team Moodle Page** : Feel free to contact the Wellbeing Team or Residential Student Support team!  
Contact information is available on our moodle page:  
**<https://moodle.writtle.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1419>**

## RESIDENT STUDENT SUPPORT

For many students, university means moving away from home and living independently for the first time in their lives. This can be both rewarding and enjoyable, but from time to time we recognise you may need some extra help.

For students in WUC halls of residence, we provide a 24/7 service to assist you when you need it. During the day, should emergencies arise you can contact the Wellbeing Team. After 5.30pm during the week and over the weekends, our resident students have access to a dedicated Residential Support Team made up of Residential Student Support Officers (RSSO), Residential Assistants and Hall Reps who you will meet on moving in day and in your induction week.

### Contact

**Wellbeing support:** [wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk)  
**RSSO Number:** +447880 557796





## OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

If you're staying in the UK for longer than a few months, we would recommend setting up a bank account as **carrying/keeping large sums of money is not safe**.

Opening an account will make it easier to pay bills, keep your money safe, and avoid foreign currency charges you'd otherwise be paying if you used a non-UK bank account to pay for things in the UK.

Chelmsford Town Centre offers a variety of banks along and off of the High Street which allow International Students the opportunity to open an account. Pop in to make an appointment and find out what proof of identity is required when your appointment is secured.

Do not share your bank or account information with anyone and keep it safe. Shred and destroy any documents with personal details that you do not need. Keep your PIN number safe, do not respond to fake emails or telephone calls or share your personal details with them. **Your bank/UKVI will not ask for payments over phone.**



### Withdrawing cash

Do not keep all your valuables in one place and do not carry large amounts of cash around with you. When withdrawing cash from an ATM, cover the keyboard to make sure that others do not see your PIN. If possible, try to use cash machines during the daytime.

Further support, advice and guidance can all be found on the UKCISA website (including safety, adjusting to the UK culture, registering with the police & much more) please visit: **[www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)**

## STAYING SAFE IN THE UK

The Wellbeing Team will email the latest 'British Council Staying Safe in the UK' guide to all international students in the first few weeks of arriving so please keep an eye out for this and read the full guide to ensure you are up to date with crucial information about remaining safe during your time here.

### Protect yourself

We wouldn't recommend walking around alone in the dark off campus, even if it's only a short distance. However, if you do, there are steps you can take to help keep yourself safe:

- **Stick to open, well lit areas and walk with purpose**
- **Walk on the oncoming traffic side of the pavement so you're fully aware if a car stops near you**
- **Call and chat to a friend while you're walking home alone**
- **Carry a personal attack alarm for emergencies**

If you think you might be being followed, cross the road safely and see if they do the same. Try and stop at a busy area like a petrol station, pub or takeaway, and phone the police calling 999.

Stay vigilant when using your mobile phones and keep all of your valuables hidden.



## **Public transport is a great way to get around Chelmsford and surrounding areas.**

When taking a bus or train, consider the following advice:

- **Plan your route before you set off**
- **Keep a timetable readily available, on your phone or person**
- **Stay in a well-lit area if you're waiting at night**
- **Keep your valuables close to you and secure in a bag, purse or deep in your pockets**
- **If you can, travel with a friend**
- **If you're wearing headphones, keep the volume low so you can hear announcements**
- **Know where you can ask for help - either a driver, guard or emergency phone**
- **Move to where the driver is, if someone is making you uncomfortable or unsafe, and let them know**
- **Notify staff if you see something that is suspicious, out of place or unattended**
- **Time your arrival at a stop or station a couple minutes ahead of the bus or train, so you aren't waiting too long**

## **Taxi Safety; In the UK, taxis must:**

- Display a council licence plate with a date of expiry
- Have a taxi roof sign
- Not start the fare meter before the journey starts
- Display a fare tariff card

## **When using a taxi remember:**

- Only use designated taxi ranks, or hail a taxi when roof lights are lit up
- Check the taxi has a council plate on the back
- Check the driver is wearing his / her council licence photo badge
- Always ensure you have sufficient funds to pay
- Make sure that the vehicle is displaying rear licence plate and door stickers before you get in - if you can't see any - don't get in!

## Keeping your valuables safe

In London and the UK, thieves frequently operate at tube and train stations, at cash machines, in car parks, around bus stations and in crowded areas, especially during busy periods.

When you are out and about, do not leave your bags unattended anywhere. As well as attracting pickpockets, you could also create a security alert.

In restaurants, bars or theatres, keep your bags where you can see them, not on the floor or over the back of your chair. In crowded areas, such as a bus or underground train, try wearing them in front of you, not over your shoulder and keep your hand over any zips. Do not be distracted by your surroundings, and be aware that criminals may try to divert your attention.

## Reporting a crime

If you want to report anything to the police when it is not an emergency, call 101, report a crime online on the Essex Police website or visit a police station. In an emergency, remember to always dial 999 straight away.

## Criminal offences

To ensure that you are obeying the laws of the United Kingdom, here are a few key points to remember:

- It is a criminal offence to carry weapons in the UK, even if carried for personal protection (this includes knives).
- It is a criminal offence to be in possession of any illegal substance, for example cannabis.
- Unlike in some other European countries, it is illegal to carry CS or pepper spray (Mace) in the UK.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Library

[Library@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:Library@writtle.ac.uk)



### Accommodation

[accommodation@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@writtle.ac.uk)

### HE Disability Team

[HEDisability@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:HEDisability@writtle.ac.uk)



### Wellbeing support:

[wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk)

**UKCISA Student Advice Line on +4420 7788 9214 is open at the following times:**

Monday to Friday (except for public holidays): 1.00pm to 4.00pm (UK time)

You may be charged by your service provider.





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# FURTHER QUESTIONS?

If you would like to discuss any of the above information or have any further questions, please do not hesitate to email the wellbeing team; **[wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@writtle.ac.uk)**.

We hope you enjoy your time at Writtle University College!





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