Information for family and friends

Starting out
Some students settle quickly; they may keep in touch and let you know that things are going well or they may throw themselves into university life and not phone very often. But this is not the case for everyone. Transitions, making friends and adjusting to a course can all raise concerns for new students. There are a few ways in which you can help ease the move into life at university:

Cause for concern
- The student rings you all the time and is clearly upset or crying
- You strongly suspect that something is wrong but the student won't talk to you
- S/he wants to come home each weekend or leave very soon after arriving

*It is hard when you know that someone close to you is unhappy and you feel powerless to help.*

What can you do?
Anxiety is normal
Change is unsettling and while it might seem like they are in the minority, it can help reassure them if they know that many others around them feel this way too.

Be available
Provide contact where practical. Phone and e-mail support and visits home can all offer much needed reassurance. Gradually encourage greater self-sufficiency and a move towards peer relationships.

Expectations
Help the student to have realistic expectations of academic goals and social life, so that they do not feel they always have to be a high achiever.

Offer advice and support
Listen to their concerns and encourage them to think about what might help and to take action themselves. Explore the aspects of their life that are going well, rather than dwelling only on difficulties.

Changing accommodation
It may be possible for students who are particularly unhappy to request a move. Those who are in University accommodation, or would like to be, should contact the Accommodation Service.

Time and talking
Suggest that they may need time to adjust and that talking to someone in the University may help. There is a wide range of support for students at Newcastle.
Support for family and friends
The University will do everything possible to help students in difficulty. It does not, however, have parental responsibility and can only offer support if approached by the student. In cases where the student is thought to be at risk, appropriate action will be taken by those concerned. Note that this is rare.

If you are a parent, family member or friend of a Newcastle University student and are concerned about their mental health, you can contact Student Wellbeing during office hours for advice. Whilst we can’t tell you if the student is attending the service (as students need to feel safe to speak in confidence), we will usually be able to advise you in general terms about possible courses of action and areas of support. Tel: +44 (0) 191 208 3333

Support for students at Newcastle University:

**Personal tutor**: first port of call for advice or direction on academic and pastoral matters. Web: [www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/student/tutoring/studentinfo](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/student/tutoring/studentinfo)

**Student Wellbeing Services**: offering advice, information and support to all students on a range of issues: finance, disability, specific learning difficulties, long-term mental health conditions, counselling and therapeutic support. Tel: **0191 208 3333**
Web: [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing)

**Chaplaincy**: pastoral welfare support available to students of any faith or none
Tel: **0191 208 6341** Web: [www.ncl.ac.uk/chaplaincy](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/chaplaincy)

**Accommodation Service**: staff are on call 24 hours a day and most residences provide on-site support during office hours. Web: [www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation)

**Visa and Immigration Team**: answering visa queries from prospective and registered non-EEA students. Web: [www.ncl.ac.uk/international/visa](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/visa)

**Student Advice Centre**: advice, guidance, information and representation on academic, finance and housing issues, as well as legal information, employment, health and consumer.
Tel: **0191 239 3979** Web: [www.nusu.co.uk/sac](http://www.nusu.co.uk/sac)

**Students’ Union**: includes a team of Sabbatical Officers and Part-time Officers who represent students and offer support on a range of issues. Tel: **0191 239 3917**

**Nightline**: student-run listening service providing emotional support and information, open every night during term time by phone (8pm-8am) and IM (8pm-midnight). Tel: **0191 261 2905**
Web: [www.nusu.co.uk/nightline](http://www.nusu.co.uk/nightline)

**Security**: available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergencies on campus and if worried about your own safety or a fellow student (including physical and mental health concerns). Tel: **0191 208 6817**

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