**Date: 09/03/2021**

**Request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) – Opt-in Scheme**

Dear Gilian Green

Your request was handled under the provision of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The Act). The request is copied below for your reference.

**Your Request**

Sent: 08 March 2021 12:37

To: Data Requests <[datarequests@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:datarequests@uwl.ac.uk)>

Subject: Freedom of Information request - Statistics of number of parents / nominated persons contacted by university regarding student mental wellbeing.

Dear University of West London,

Following a spate of sudden student deaths in 2018, an ‘opt-in scheme’ was pioneered by the University of Bristol as part of a set of measures aimed at preventing suicide. In 2019, a coroner wrote to the Department for Education and Minister for Suicide Prevention suggesting that these measures might be shared throughout the sector. I am now seeking to establish the extent to which ‘opt-in’ has been subsequently adopted and/or utilised.

The ‘opt-in’ or ‘consent at registration’ scheme implemented by Bristol University comprises an additional personal information sharing agreement that supplements when information might be shared. It gains consent at annual registration for the university to contact a ’safe and nominated’ parent, guardian or friend in situations that are not emergencies, but where staff have serious concerns that something bad might happen to an enrolled student, and/or where their health, wellbeing or welfare could be affected. Essentially it involves lowering the bar at which parents or nominated others could be contacted by a designated professional at the university, from ‘vital interests’ to ‘serious or significant concerns’. It could for example apply in cases of trauma or distress associated with suspension / expulsion / non-attendance / mental health issues etc.

To qualify as ‘opt-in’ a scheme must be optional and additional to the regular emergency contact protocol. The latter is compulsory and typically restricted to serious incidents and/or emergency situations, that may present an imminent threat to a student’s vital interests. Further particulars can be found at:

<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bristol.ac.uk%2Fcontacting-people%2Fparent%2F&amp;data=04%7C01%7Cdatarequests%40uwl.ac.uk%7C1629c23443c54f3b037708d8e22ef3c1%7Cb0abd1ed496642749f1959dd663e81f5%7C0%7C0%7C637508040513575334%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&amp;sdata=Mz96%2BmOzGmZfXsqIrVOJYk1dj1WAHzKkYhhQ1KxzYpc%3D&amp;reserved=0>

<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fthetab.com%2Fuk%2F2018%2F09%2F20%2Fthese-are-the-unis-with-policies-to-tell-parents-if-students-are-suicidal-81552&amp;data=04%7C01%7Cdatarequests%40uwl.ac.uk%7C1629c23443c54f3b037708d8e22ef3c1%7Cb0abd1ed496642749f1959dd663e81f5%7C0%7C0%7C637508040513575334%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&amp;sdata=jdssqG%2BVwVHvgALEMG4SzodYl2fHcNb8E3XieLXJ1sA%3D&amp;reserved=0>

<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fthetab.com%2Fuk%2Fbristol%2F2019%2F10%2F31%2F93-of-new-bristol-students-opt-in-to-mental-health-scheme-37916&amp;data=04%7C01%7Cdatarequests%40uwl.ac.uk%7C1629c23443c54f3b037708d8e22ef3c1%7Cb0abd1ed496642749f1959dd663e81f5%7C0%7C0%7C637508040513575334%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&amp;sdata=zfAMeK6%2FuxSKGIMm%2Fe66WHUy2ycU%2Bk6ihONMU7SFSk0%3D&amp;reserved=0>

This important scheme has been implemented at a number of universities, and perhaps at your institution as well. If so, please provide me with the following information as absolute numbers and percentages.

For each academic period (2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21) and year-of-study (e.g. 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year) sub-division:

• How many students opted-in at registration?

• How many students subsequently rescinded their consent?

• How many times was the opt-in consent used to contact somebody?

• How many times was use of the opt-in consent considered, but with you deliberately choosing not to contact a parent or nominated individual?

Yours faithfully,

Gillian Green

**Response:**

I can confirm that the University holds the following information relevant to your request.

This important scheme has been implemented at a number of universities, and perhaps at your institution as well. If so, please provide me with the following information as absolute numbers and percentages.

For each academic period (2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21) and year-of-study (e.g. 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year) sub-division:

How many students opted-in at registration?

How many students subsequently rescinded their consent?

How many times was the opt-in consent used to contact somebody?

How many times was use of the opt-in consent considered, but with you deliberately choosing not to contact a parent or nominated individual?

The University has not adopted the ‘opt-in scheme’.

**Internal Review**

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review in accordance with the complaints mechanism set out in the following link: <http://www.uwl.ac.uk/about-us/how-university-works/governance/public-information>. Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

**Information Commissioner's Office**

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>

Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the University's internal review process has been completed.

Yours sincerely,

**Liga Kurpa**

Appeals and Compliance Officer

University of West London,

St Mary's Rd, Ealing, London W5 5RF

[datarequests@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:datarequests@uwl.ac.uk)