

## University of Leicester



### Summary

Make Every Contact Count (MECC) is a simple way for staff to flag concerns such as mental health, drug and alcohol consumption, and sexual health. Rather than relying on a time-consuming form, which often creates barriers rather than breaks them, MECC cards are accessible, postcard-sized referral forms that act as a gateway to University support and services. All employees, from porters and cleaners to managers and directors, use the cards to ensure that we Make Every Contact Count when engaging with our residents. It is an embodiment of the fact that all our staff are part of the Residence Life Team.

### Objectives

- Ensure that every interaction with students is meaningful
- Embed Residence Life and student support across the entire Residences Team, not just Residential Advisers or Hall Managers
- Flag areas of concern across the residential campus
- Have increased of mental health and well being issues
- Record data to help us develop our service
- Be empowered and have a sense of belonging to a larger team

### Success through cultural change

We created the MECC card to make the reporting of issues among our 4,700 residents accessible to all staff, including those who do not have regular access to a computer.

We ensured that the process was easy and in the hands of those who could respond quickly to the concerns raised. Staff fill in a simple card to get all the necessary details to the relevant person for quick escalation or signposting. We wanted to record information and analyse where improvements can be made, and show that everyone can have an impact on student experience.

All staff, including the Head of Residences completed MECC training. This included training on how to fill in the cards, a broader awareness of support services and issues students may face.

To top up this training, everyone also completed mental health first aid training. We found that staff really engaged and the training had a positive effect on the way staff were thinking about mental health – of their co-workers as well as students.

The training brought teams together that often work at different times of day or in different locations, reiterating the fact they are all part of the larger Residence Life team.

## Tangible results

125 staff have successfully completed mental health first aid training.

Since the scheme was rolled out in September 2017, our staff have submitted 76 MECC cards, including a wide range of observations and concerns. The majority of these submissions have come from housekeeping and portering colleagues. The team is then able to quickly take action, which has resulted in increased numbers of student visits and signposting to support services.

Examples of the impact of MECC from the last month include:

- A porter noticed an empty car's engine was running and instead of just dealing with the car, he also filled in a MECC form. The resident concerned is suffering from significant mental health issues and was surprised and grateful that he was asked about his health when no one else seemed to notice. Signposting and support was provided.
- A domestic assistant noticed a significant increase in empty alcohol bottles in a shared kitchen that enabled proactive follow-up with resident.
- A domestic assistant noticed laundry washing items in a washroom and it transpired that the resident needed support on how to use our laundry facilities.
- A porter found a note with concerning content, including suicidal thoughts outside a residential block. The note didn't contain a name but due to the information from the MECC card, the team were able to identify the student concerned and offer support and guidance to the welfare services.

