

14 January 2025

Hannah Godfrey  
Area Coroner for Berkshire  
Berkshire Coroner Office  
Town Hall  
Blagrove Street  
Reading  
RG1 1QH

Sent by email

**Universities UK PFD response**

Dear Ms Godfrey,

We write further to your Regulation 28 Report dated 9 July 2024. I can confirm receipt of your email requesting a response from Universities UK (UUK) on 7 January 2025. With deep sadness we wanted to acknowledge the tragic circumstances surrounding Ben's passing and extend heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.

We recognise the critical importance of addressing mental health challenges within the sector. UUK has long been committed to supporting member universities in fostering environments that prioritise student well-being. We have read the PFD closely and will take the relevant lessons forward into our ongoing work in this space. We will do this both in our ongoing member engagement, and in our involvement in the below initiatives:

1. **National review of higher education student suicides:** In 2023, the government commissioned a national review to share lessons across the sector around serious mental illness and preventing suicide. The review will also track progress against the usage of UUK's Postvention guidance. The

**Head of Student  
Experience and  
Skills Policy**

**Universities UK**  
Woburn House  
20 Tavistock Square  
London  
WC1H 9HQ

**Telephone**  
+44 (0)20 7419 4111

**Twitter**  
@universitiesuk

**Email**

**Website**  
[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk)

Company limited by  
guarantee and registered  
in England and Wales  
Number 2517018

**Registered charity  
number**  
England and Wales:  
1001127  
Scotland: SC052497

review is expected to report later in 2025, and we will work with the review team on any recommendations.

2. **Higher education mental health implementation taskforce:** UUK has worked closely with the taskforce since its inception. The taskforce oversees work across the mental health space including: identifying students at risk, compassionate communication, service design, the national review of HE suicides and improving HE and NHS partnerships.
3. **University Mental Health Charter:** UUK has been working closely with Student Minds to support engagement with the charter. Currently, 113 universities are covered by the charter with evaluation reports showing that the charter is having a positive impact.
4. **Suicide-safer universities:** Working with PAPYRUS, UUK has produced guidance to implement strategies to prevent student suicides through early intervention, staff training, and fostering a supportive institutional culture.

UUK represents 141 autonomous universities across the United Kingdom. However, it is important to note that our organisation does not represent all higher education providers nor possess the regulatory authority to mandate specific actions by our member institutions. Each university operates independently, with its own governance and procedures.

We have seen the University of Reading's response dated 4 September 2024 addressing the concerns specific to their institution. A copy of this response has also been shared with University of Reading officials. We are not in a position to serve copies of this response on any other Interested Parties but trusts your office will do so as appropriate. We note too that a copy of this response will be sent to the Chief Coroner and that consideration will be given as to its publication. We have no representations to make with respect to its publication.

UUK remains committed to working with universities and stakeholders to strengthen mental health provision and to mitigate risks faced by students experiencing

difficulties. We appreciate you sharing the report with us, and we will continue to share best practices across our membership.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Head of Student Experience and Skills Policy