

**Greater Manchester Universities Student Mental Health Partnership
Conference 2026 - Friday 19 June 09:00 – 16.00 – RNCM
Student Lifestyle and Mental Health**

09.00 - 09.30	Registration and Refreshments
09.30 – 09.45	Welcome and Introduction with Professor Jennie Henley , Director of Programmes – RNCM, Dr Sara Ascenso , Lecturer in Musicians' Health and Wellbeing - RNCM, Dr Tim Alnuamaani , Consultant Psychiatrist and Declan Meehan , Operational Manager – GM Universities Student Mental Health Service
09.45 – 10.30	Session One: An audience with Sir Norman Lamb: from prevention to prescription, past to present, exploring possibilities for our posterity - In an interactive interview with Sir Norman Lamb, Professor Sandeep Ranote will talk with our past health and care minister about his perspectives on mental health and wellbeing from his varifocal lens of Politician, Parent and professional over the last half century, and the importance of BEING HUMAN in a world where "being AI" is growing quickly.... because we are all people!
10.35 – 11.20	Session Two: What it means to be a student in 2026 – UoM Students' Union Officers explore the real lived conditions of student life in 2026 and how these positively and negatively shape students' mental health and wider wellbeing.
11.20 - 11.40	Refreshment Break
11.45 – 12.50	Session Three: Communities and Cultural Perspectives on Student Mental Health: This session explores how targeted initiatives and culturally informed approaches can enhance student wellbeing and sense of belonging. Yolande Zulu , Senior Student Welfare and Communities Advisor at Manchester Metropolitan University, will provide an overview of community-based initiatives designed to foster belonging, encourage cross-cultural learning, and open conversations around mental health within diverse student groups. Andy Tsoi from the University of Manchester Mental Health Support Team will offer a reflective perspective on his work as a bilingual counsellor supporting Chinese students. Drawing on his experience, he will share insights into cultural considerations and the specific mental health needs of this community, highlighting the importance of culturally responsive support.
12.50 – 13.20	Session Four: Opening the Door Sooner: Early Engagement and Effective Treatment for Students Who Use Substances - Many students experiment with drugs or alcohol long before they reach formal support. Addiction psychiatrist & Lifestyle Physician Dr Catherine Muyeba (Change Grow Live) shares practical ways to identify concerns early, have stigma-free conversations, and connect students into evidence-based treatment that supports lasting recovery.
13.20 - 14.10	Lunch Break & Group Photo: For those who would like to join, we will be taking a group photo just before breaking for lunch.
14.15 - 14.45	Session Five: Music and Wellbeing in 1800 seconds – Dr Sara Ascenso and Olivia Hamblyn - The evidence on the positive impact of engagement with music on all dimensions of wellbeing is growing. We will briefly explore some of this evidence and experience music-making together.
14.50 – 15.20	Session Six: Student Mental Wellbeing Exercise Referral and Colleague Wellbeing Exercise Referral Programs - An overview from the Physical Activity team at the University of Salford covering their Student Mental Wellbeing Exercise Referral program, now in its third academic year, alongside an introduction to the Colleague Wellbeing Exercise Referral program which launched in June 2025.
15.25 - 15.55	Session Seven: On the Edge: How Housing Instability Impacts Student Health - Sharon Parry , Senior Early and Extra Help Officer – CentrepoinT , Manchester shares insights into the advice and support for Students living in the Manchester City area who are not at imminent risk of homelessness, but who are experiencing insecure or unstable housing.
15.55 – 16.00	Closing remarks – Dr Simon Merrywest



Session One: Sir Norman Lamb

The Rt Hon Sir Norman Lamb is a distinguished public servant, having served as the Liberal Democrat MP for North Norfolk from 2001 to 2019. During his tenure, he held several key roles, including Minister of State for Care and Support in the Department of Health from 2012 to 2015, where he led efforts to reform the care system, prioritise mental health, and integrate health and social care. As Health Minister, he introduced the first-ever mental health access and waiting standards, ensuring that mental health received equal attention as physical health within the NHS. Sir Norman also held the role of Liberal Democrat Health Spokesperson and Chair of the Science and Technology Select Committee, influencing policy on mental health and health innovation.

Since leaving Parliament, Sir Norman has continued his advocacy for mental health, receiving a knighthood for his campaigning in 2019. He became an advisor to Kooth, the UK's longest-established digital mental health provider, and founded a Norfolk mental health and wellbeing fund to support local charities and community groups focused on children and young people's mental health. From 2020 – 2025, he served as the Chair of the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, where he worked to further improve mental health services. His career has been dedicated to making a lasting impact on mental health policy and support services across the UK.

Sir Norman is the author of *Be More Human: Why Mental Health Care is Broken – and What We Can Do to Fix It* (published 27th August 2026), which explores the systemic challenges facing mental health services, including disparities in life expectancy, fragmentation of care, and the impact of social inequality. Drawing on real patient experiences alongside innovative examples of community-based support, the book calls for a more compassionate, person-centred approach and outlines a vision for transforming mental health systems.

Sir Norman brings a unique perspective shaped by his experience in government, the NHS, and sustained advocacy for a more humane and effective mental health system.



Session One: Professor Sandeep Ranote

Professor Sandeep Ranote is Clinical Director for Mental Health at NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care and Consultant Paediatric Psychiatrist, leading Young People's community eating disorder services. Her published research includes perinatal neuroimaging, eating disorders and medical skin camouflage for self-harm and most recently the impact of Covid 19 on young people. She was part of the ministerial Taskforce, Future in Mind, 2015 developing the national CAMHS transformation blueprint, and clinical expert for NHS England's eating disorder commissioning guidance and workforce curriculum 2015 2016. She is a contributing author to the Royal College of Psychiatrists' book 'The Female Mind' and was awarded a fellowship to The Royal College in 2014.

Sandeep has led the award-winning Greater Manchester Mentally Healthy Schools Programme and the trailblazing pilot University Mental Health service across all Greater Manchester's universities. She is a clinical sponsor for the pioneering Greater Manchester Creative Health strategy which launched in November 2022 and sees this as the first creative health city region in the world. She gave evidence as an expert panel member in Parliament for the Body Image inquiry report in 2022 and in 2024 spoke as a panel member on the global youth mental health crisis at The United Nations General Assembly Global Science Summit.

Sandeep is a Visiting Professor in Mental Health at The University of Salford, and clinical advisor to Edge Hill University's Arts in Health Research Centre. She has been clinical advisor for Kooth, a leading digital mental health provider and is a media spokesperson for national eating disorder charity BEAT, advisor for Mental health Charity, The Prudence Trust and trustee at Castlefield art gallery.

Appointed to The British Beauty Council Advisory Board in 2024 she supports their work on wellness and was appointed as Chair of Higher Health UK in 2025 extending her work internationally to support mental health and well-being in the voluntary and community sector through education and life skills. Follow her on twitter @DrSRanote

Session Two: University of Manchester Students' Union Executive Officers



Amrit Dhillon
Faculty of Science &
Engineering Officer



Rhi Patel
Faculty of Biology, Medicine
& Health



Alec Severs
Faculty of Humanities

Amrit, Alec and Rhi are Executive Officers from the University of Manchester Students' Union. Elected by students, for students, they work with the University to represent and raise the voice of our students. Their remits are for each of the three Faculties at UoM and they have a key focus of highlighting the interlinked nature of students' living conditions on their learning conditions, and how students need stability in both to thrive.

Session Three: Yolande Sumbele and Andy Tsoi



Yolande is passionate about creating spaces where students feel seen, heard, and valued. With experience in student welfare, outreach, project coordination and community engagement, she has supported students with complex needs and led projects focused on belonging and awareness raising. She particularly enjoys working alongside students to share their stories, learn from their experiences, and help create positive change across the student experience.



Andy is an integrative bilingual counsellor at the University of Manchester. He currently provides mental health support to university students, particularly Chinese international students. His work focuses on helping students manage emotional wellbeing, academic pressures and the challenges of studying and living across cultures.



Session Four: Dr Catherine Muyebe

I am an experienced Lead Consultant Psychiatrist with a demonstrated history of working in the hospitals, community & prisons. Skilled in General Adult Psychiatry, Addiction Treatment for all ages, Dual Diagnosis Recovery, Teaching, Clinical Supervision, Mentoring, Medical Appraisal, Clinical Research, & Health Education.

I have a special interest in assessment and management of Adult ADHD and run private clinic sessions at The ADHD Centre, UK

I am a professional & personal life coach graduate from Life Breakthrough Academy. Founder of REAPing Women, teaching them to implement the REAP & RISE Roadmap towards a vibrant and fruitful life. REAPing Women rise to their fullest potential and impact their world!

I am an international speaker on matters relating to mental health education, addictions, ADHD, wellbeing, management of stress & burnout, lifestyle medicine, personal & professional development.

In addition to my role as an Addiction Psychiatrist at Change Grow Live, I assess and treat adults with ADHD through The ADHD Centre I work with professional women to help them live vibrant, sustainable, and meaningful lives using the REAP & RISE Roadmap, a framework I developed that brings together evidence-based, holistic skills for personal and professional wellbeing. Making life worth living, not just manageable.

Specialist Registered at General Medical Council

Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Member of the British Society of Lifestyle Medicine

Member of the Faculty of Medical Leadership & Management

Member of the Royal Society of Medicine

Member of the Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance

Member of the International Society of Substance Misuse Professionals

Member of the European Mentoring & Coaching Council

<https://www.changegrowlive.org>

<https://adhdcentre.co.uk>

<https://drcathymuyebe.com>

<https://youtu.be/5yHN7V6gqCw?si=ZpIChGlzO35V05YP>



Session Five: Dr Sara Ascenso

Dr Sara Ascenso is a Clinical Psychologist with a BMus in piano performance and an MSc and PhD focused on mental health among classical musicians. Her work is centred on the intersection of Positive Psychology and the arts and has spanned clinical, educational, organizational and community contexts. She is a senior lecturer in musicians' health and wellbeing at the RNCM, an honorary lecturer in Psychology at University College London (UCL) and an advisor part of the Learning Enhancement Unit at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Her current research covers both musicians' occupational health and the evaluation of arts & health interventions.

Session Six: Student Mental Wellbeing Exercise Referral and Colleague Wellbeing Exercise Referral Programs



Dr Eddie Caldwell: Lecturer/Researcher in Clinical Exercise Physiology at University of Salford

I am a lecturer on the BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences and MSc Clinical Exercise Physiology programmes at the University of Salford. During my time at the university, I have helped to setup our long-term Cardiovascular Rehabilitation programme alongside Daley O'Neal, which has been running since 2019. I have also worked on the development of the staff and student mental wellbeing exercise referral programme. Prior to academia, I worked in Cardiovascular Rehabilitation in the NHS for 13 years. During this time, I witnessed the positive impact of exercise and activity can have on people living with long-term health conditions.



Heather Millington: Wellbeing Exercise Referral instructor / PGR Student in Weight Management

I have a passion for empowering others to improve their mental health and wellbeing. I helped to develop and currently deliver a successful exercise referral service at the University of Salford supporting both students and colleagues using exercise to support individuals build confidence, resilience and a sense of achievement. I am also in the final stages of preparing my Master of Philosophy thesis exploring the feasibility of a novel weight management programme to be delivered at the University. I have a background in Nutrition and Exercise as Medicine and promoting positive lifestyle change to improve the quality of life of those living with long-term health conditions and my future aspirations would be supporting those individuals through Phase IV cardiac rehabilitation and other evidence based exercise interventions.



Juan Aranda: Clinical Exercise and Physiology Masters Student

Current MSc Clinical Exercise Physiology student at the University of Salford with a passion for exercise as medicine, mental wellbeing, behaviour change and supporting people to build confidence with movement. Prior to the Masters - 10 years of experience in exercise coaching, nutrition education and lifestyle support and First-Class BSc Human Nutrition.



Daley O'Neal: Physical Activity and Wellbeing Operations Manager

I am a Sports Development Graduate with a passion for engaging people in Physical Activity and Sport. As Physical Activity and Wellbeing Operations Manager at the University of Salford Sports Centre, I lead on our Cardiac Rehabilitation Phase 4 Program and help to deliver our Student and Colleague Wellbeing Exercise Referral programs. I am also a mental health first aider and Designated Safeguarding Officer at the University Sports Centre.

Session Seven: Sharon Parry – Centre Point

I have eight years' experience supporting young people facing homelessness, working across both Manchester City Council and Centrepoint. My career has focused on early intervention, trauma-informed practice, and improving the wellbeing of young people at risk of crisis. I now work as a Senior Officer in Centrepoint's Early and Extra Help Service, where I lead prevention-focused support to ensure young people receive compassionate, timely help before their situation escalates.