Dear

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 31 December 2019 reference J/19/537.

Your request read:

“1. Do you have an opt-in scheme to gain consent at registration from new or returning students in the event of the University having serious concerns about that student’s health, physical or mental? Yes/No

2. In the last term has your support services/ wellbeing team asked students registering with support for permission to involve friends or family or trusted others in the care of that student Yes/No

3. If you answered No to question 1 are you considering the introduction of such a scheme? Yes/No/ N/A

4. If you answered NO to question 3 please could you provide brief comments as to why? (Please select as many as apply) Is it -
   a) Too bureaucratic
   b) Too expensive
   c) Too time consuming
   d) Not considered as part of duty of care of the university
   e) Not considered appropriate
   f) Other”

The University of Leeds holds some of this information. For your convenience we have responded to each of your questions in turn below.

1. Do you have an opt-in scheme to gain consent at registration from new or returning students in the event of the University having serious concerns about that student’s health, physical or mental? Yes/No

No. The University of Leeds does not have an ‘opt-in’ scheme as described, however we do collect Emergency Contact information which is used when it is in a student’s vital interests to do so.

2. In the last term has your support services/ wellbeing team asked students registering with support for permission to involve friends or family or trusted others in the care of that student? Yes/No.

No. This would be done on a case by case basis in discussion with the student, if appropriate.

3. If you answered No to question 1 are you considering the introduction of such a scheme? Yes/No/ N/A

4. If you answered NO to question 3 please could you provide brief comments as to why? (Please select as many as apply) Is it -
a) Too bureaucratic
b) Too expensive
c) Too time consuming
d) Not considered as part of duty of care of the university
e) Not considered appropriate
f) Other

We address these questions together. The FOI Act gives you a right of access to recorded information held by public authorities. Where no recorded information is held on a subject, the authority is not obligated to create any. We consider that these elements of your request are not for recorded information, but instead seek an opinion or judgement. Accordingly, the University of Leeds does not hold any recorded information in relation to these parts of your enquiry.

However, we can provide the following general information in relation to the University of Leeds Student Emergency Contact Procedure.

At Leeds we collect emergency contact information from all students at the point of registration, this information is used when it is in a student’s ‘vital interests’ for us to do so, for example contacting medical or emergency services at a time of crisis. When supporting students experiencing personal difficulties, including where more general wellbeing concerns may be present, staff facilitate and encourage contact with both University and external services and, where appropriate, family support networks. The University of Leeds does not operate a general ‘opt-in’ system whereby emergency contacts would be notified in relation to general wellbeing concerns and does not share personal information relating to students without their explicit consent.

All teaching and pastoral support at Leeds is based on the principles of empowerment, engagement and integration to build the resilience and autonomy of students as young adults. Alongside this underpinning ethos of empowerment we recognise that adapting to life at University can be challenging in a myriad of ways, subsequently students are actively encouraged from pre-arrival to share concerns and speak to staff about how they are feeling; staff then signpost to the available support:

- Personal tutors, programme leads and academic advisors
- Pastoral student support officers in academic schools
- Wardens and sub-wardens in University residences
- Leeds University Union Help and Support Team and Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors
- Leeds University Union Clubs and Societies
- Student Counselling and Wellbeing support (daily drop in provision, groups, workshops and individual appointments)
- Disability Service support
- Chaplaincy (for students of all faith or none)
- International Student Office and Global Community Programme
- Skills@Library study skills support team
- Educational Engagement, Lifelong Learning and Plus Programme teams
- Leeds Student Medical Practice (including Mental Health Advisor team)
• Big White Wall, 24/7 online, anonymous, digital support available to all students.

In our experience students communicate regularly and openly with their families, particularly at times of difficulty or distress. In situations where a student may have initial reservations about speaking to family about an area of difficulty, staff provide support in line with student wishes.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about this email, however, please do not hesitate to contact us on foi@leeds.ac.uk

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you can request an Internal Review. Requests for Internal Review should be made in writing using the following contact information:

Post: Mr D Wardle
Deputy Secretary
The University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT

Email: foi@leeds.ac.uk

Requests for Internal Review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the University’s response to your request. Further information about how the University manages Freedom of Information requests and about our complaints procedure is also available on our website (www.leeds.ac.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review/complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Sincerely

Chloe Wilkins
Freedom of Information Officer

University of Leeds