Staff & Postgrad Support in the OU School of Physical Sciences

Andrew Norton
Deputy Head of School (Internal Affairs)
About the OU School of Physical Sciences

• 100+ staff & 60+ postgraduate students (FT / PT)
  Academic Staff (~30), Research Staff (~40),
  Support (curriculum, admin, lab) Staff (~30)
  (+60 PT Associate Lecturers / Tutors)

• 5 research disciplines:
  Astronomy, Planetary Science, Physics,
  Space Instrumentation, Physics Education

• Undergraduate Curriculum:
  Physics, Astronomy & Planetary Science

• Masters Curriculum:
  Space Science
Support for Staff in the OU SPS

Mentor

Line manager

School listeners

Staff

The Open University
Support for Postgrads in the OU SPS

Supervisory Team

Third Party Mentor

Postgraduate Tutors

Student Buddy

Postgrad
School Listeners

- Stress and mental health
- Bullying and harassment

School Listeners
School Listeners

• School Listeners are for members of the School who want to talk to someone independent, without invoking informal or formal University procedure.

• All discussions with School Listeners will take place in a safe, confidential environment without the need or expectation that this will lead to direct action.

• A School Listener does not replace the existing support structures, or formal routes to complaint, within the University. Receiving support in this way will not preclude any person from bringing an informal or formal complaint.

• Soon to be rolled out to our School of Environment, Earth and Ecosystem Sciences (EEES)
School Listeners

A School Listener will:

• maintain confidentiality at all times in line with GDPR;

• make themselves available to staff/students who wish to discuss issues relating to, for example, bullying and harassment, stress and mental health;

• be contactable by staff/students during working hours, but they are not expected to be responsive immediately;

• provide a friendly, supportive, independent and safe environment to individuals, listening to concerns in good faith;

• provide information on University and external resources for coping with stress, mental health and other issues.
School Listeners

A School Listener will not:

• make **judgement** or convey opinion on the situation as presented;

• investigate **allegations** or encourage a particular course of action;

• undertake the **duties** of a line manager, mentor or counsellor;

• make **findings** nor decide on the validity of a complaint;

• refer the issues upwards without express permission or unless an individual is considered at risk;

• represent members of staff in any formal proceedings.
Who are the School Listeners?

Roles:

- Curriculum Assistant
- Academic Project Officer
- Administrator
- Laboratory Manager
- Research Fellow

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