Wrapping support around Students securely, quickly and efficiently.

We’re in our third decade of creating single and multi-agency cloud-based community management systems that help you to share information with partners and deliver joined-up interventions.
Giving students a fast, secure and easy way to reach out for help.

Higher Education presents many opportunities for young adults but it can also be a difficult time. Students take on many challenges with increased workload, looming deadlines, financial hardships, living independently and making new friends and, for many, it can have a significant bearing on their mental health and wellbeing. At the same time, they are moving between their homes and university. This means they may slip through the gaps in the health system when they are most vulnerable.

A major difficulty is that students’ health information rarely travels with them when they leave home for the first time. Data on students is rarely shared fully between universities and local health services, which can lead to students accessing treatment and support with incomplete information, or not accessing it at all as they don’t know where to turn.

Mental health support for students needs to understand these transitions and join up care around their needs, provide them with the right support at each step of the pathway and enable them to quickly and easily reach out for help when and where they need it. If not, we could be at risk of failing a generation.
How we help

Research by think tank IPPR (The Institute for Public Policy Research) found that over the past five years, 94% of British universities have experienced a sharp increase in the number of people trying to access support services, with some institutions noticing a threefold increase. It’s a global issue. In Australia, research by leading mental health group Headspace and the National Union of Students found that levels of anxiety in university students are reaching “alarming” levels, with 35 per cent experiencing self-harm or suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months.

For over 20 years, our systems have been helping teams throughout the UK to collaborate for the greater good. Our status as a not-for-profit organisation allows us to offer secure multi-agency solutions without the usual associated license fees. By doing so, it encourages greater participation as practitioners are free to invite everyone they need to.

We provide the means for students, or someone concerned about a student, to raise the alarm and tell someone they need help. We then provide teams and organisations with a secure platform to manage and store this information and involve colleagues in other agencies to provide multi-agency, specialist support to a student they are working with.

We’ve made this process as simple as possible, while also retaining high-grade fully audited security protocols.

By using our solutions, you can help to identify those who are most in need of help, assess their needs and risk factors and manage their journey in a secure multi-agency environment.

Empowering communities through better identification and collaboration.

I started my social enterprise over ten years ago with the vision of empowering victims, families, vulnerable persons, communities and the practitioners that work to help them.

We have worked with many organisations to provide early intervention solutions that make a positive difference to young people’s lives.

Gary Pettengell / CEO and Founder
Case study: student in crisis.

Initial referral and escalation

Sophie has a history of self-harming in her teens as a result of being bullied at school and her parents splitting up. It was a difficult time for her and she felt she had no-one really to talk to about it. She is a shy girl who lacks confidence and finds it hard to open up to people or make friends easily.

On moving to University she finds herself feeling quite isolated and anxious. The only person she has at home to talk to is her sister, but she doesn’t want to worry her and make her feel she is unhappy or not fitting in. She lives in a room on her own and is struggling with the demands of her course and adapting to student life in general, especially as it looks as though everyone around her is enjoying themselves. She feels like an outcast and is desperately sad and having suicidal thoughts.

She has lost all motivation, stopped eating properly and without anyone to talk to and confide in she doesn’t know where to turn to for help. Being so far from home she can’t even go to her GP.

Sophie comes across some information on her University’s website about how to seek help - a secure URL that links to an online self-referral form. The form asks detailed questions about her state of mind and on completing the form, Sophie’s information is sent automatically into the management desk and the University’s Student Support Team are notified.

From here, the team is able to carry out further investigation with Sophie’s tutors and discuss any known concerns with them and approach Sophie to discuss ways they can help. All relevant information is logged securely into the system.

Because of issues from her childhood, the team decide that Sophie should be referred for an in-depth assessment and specialist multi-agency support. Her case is transferred through to E-CINS for advanced case management.

Needs assessment and multi-agency support

The team carries out a needs assessment involving Sophie’s healthcare professionals and her University. Online forms make it easy to capture information from all sources and the resulting data is auto-populated into E-CINS.

Once this exercise has been completed, the team are able to access detailed information and build a picture of Sophie’s needs and risk factors.

Various agencies are then invited to join the E-CINS partnership and each of them receive an automated referral.

After making contact with Sophie, they upload any information that could be relevant to the overall case. The partners then meet once a week via a virtual meeting on E-CINS to discuss the case and their individual interventions.

They each set tasks and create individual Action and Support Plans.

MyPortal

Sophie is assigned a support worker responsible for progressing her Action and Support Plan. By using the MyPortal module, the support worker is able to set tasks for Sophie that advise her of any activities and events she should be taking part in and remain in frequent communication to ensure she is feeling supported.

Jenny completes each of these and updates her support worker accordingly via the system.
Adopt our I-REDS methodology and start reducing vulnerability.

Our methodology of Identity, Refer, Engage, Divert and Support (I-REDS) gives Schools, Universities, Local Authorities and their partners a means to take their community engagement and support of vulnerable young people to a new level. The process helps all practitioners and the public to identify those at risk and improve outcomes by enabling support to be wrapped around them quickly and effectively.

Step 1 - Encrypted Referrals
Practitioners, police officers, teachers, tutors or concerned members of the public can complete an encrypted referral form that is securely accessible via a link without the need to log into a system. These encrypted referral forms support existing referral processes and enable richer data set capture at the referral stage.

Step 2 - Referral and Triage Management
The encrypted referral forms auto populate the Referral & Triage Management Desk, saving 100’s of hours in administration time. These totally customisable Desks enable interactions and decisions to be recorded as well as giving practitioners the ability to communicate with their clients via sms.

Step 3 - Case Management
If a vulnerable person requires full single or multi-agency case management, they can have their cases transferred into E-CINS. Integration with existing case management systems is available. Linking the Referral Desks with E-CINS enables positive action to be taken at an earlier stage improving outcomes and early intervention work.

Step 4 - Secure public portal
The Empowering Communities secure module, ‘MyPortal’ gives practitioners a secure way of communicating with their clients. This includes sharing a calendar, documents, Action Plans, tasks and encrypted messages.

We must not fail a generation
"The system of mental health care for students must be improved. Health services aren’t properly designed to help students as they move from home to university. This is too important to ignore and we must not fail a generation by not doing what is required.

"I call on national and local government, schools, colleges, the health service, voluntary organisations and universities to work together. This will give us the best chance of supporting students through the significant transitions they face during their early lives.

"Students must be at the centre of these partnerships and senior leadership within universities and the NHS must sustain the changes."

Professor Steve West, Vice-Chancellor of UWE Bristol and Chair of UUK’s Mental Health in Higher Education Advisory Group
Identify, Refer, Engage, Divert, Support (I-REDS) solution for the management of Student Mental Health
Early referral, identification of needs and joined-up support.

Single point of access (one front door)

The EC Connect Student Support referral and management platforms provide a cost effective solution for organisations needing a secure customer gateway to a range of different services.

Interface with a multi-agency case management system

Each EC Connect Student Support Management Desk has a built-in secure interface with the national multi-agency case management system, E-CINS. This means that anyone in need of multi-agency, or more intensive single agency support, can be passed through to E-CINS for full case management.

Partnership approaches to support students and young adults with anxiety and mental health problems

By giving students a platform to easily and confidentially reach out for help, agencies can ensure that no young person slips through the net. Universities, schools and colleges can quickly, securely and cost effectively manage their data and share information with relevant partners. The multi-agency case management system E-CINS holds data in a secure central space, accessible by anyone who has a need to know.

This means that if a young person moves to a new county, their previous interventions can be made available to professionals in their new location so they can have the full picture and support can be quickly picked up and continued.

Data Visualisation

Every EC Connect Student Support solution comes with a free Data Visualisation Tool. This is worth £500 per annum and is an intuitive, high performance, self-service tool. It makes it possible for system users and analysts to discover new opportunities, make better decisions on a timely basis, and find answers to questions as they arise.

Users are equipped with an end-to-end experience: from data preparation through to data discovery and simple reporting. Now users can easily transform disparate data sources into a single result set for visualisation.

Once the result set is complete, an intuitive canvas interface, that includes drag-and-drop features, allows users to create, modify, and drill down on data visualisations which are displayed on a dashboard. As trends, outliers, and information are revealed in the data, users can easily drag dashboards into a chat window for immediate collaboration with others about strategy, opportunity, and undiscovered revelations.
Build your own risk assessments

Practitioners can design, build and save their own scoring and non-scoring risk assessments on E-CINS. Custom questions, which are mobile-ready, can be created, viewed and reassessed at a future date. And because the fields are pre-populated with the data from the previous assessment, there’s an efficiency saving each time an assessment is carried out.

Scores can be compared with previous assessments, along with priority needs too, so practitioners can quickly get students the support they need.

Access information on mobile

Taking a large stack of paperwork to a meeting about vulnerable people is neither practical or secure. Gone are the days where you need to compare notes stored manually in paper folders.

Our platforms are designed to be accessible when away from your desk, so users can receive the latest updates in real time from every relevant partner. Our hosting environment is secure and accredited to alleviate any concerns around data sharing.

Create a healthy culture of collaboration

Once an organisation can see the benefits to collaborating across borders, it begins to improve its attitude towards data sharing. We’re creating a movement across the public sector that’s moving beyond silo mentality.

Linking up professionals for joined up solutions

“We use E-CINS very successfully to help us manage the Pupil Referral Service. It has allowed us to link the schools with all the agencies that need to be involved and give the Police access on occasions.

I feel very much in control of the implementation of the scheme on E-CINS, it has been absolutely central to the success of the scheme. It really is an amazing tool that has allowed us to carry out our work in a secure and efficient way and help us deliver joined up support.”

Andy Craighead / Peterborough Pupil Referral Service
Benefits

• Cost beneficial - financial savings and positive social benefits far outweigh the cost of the solution.
• Provides huge Social Return On Investment opportunities.
• Save money with automated processes and by reducing duplication of effort and resources.
• Proven time and efficiency savings
• Automatically populates Referral and Management desk in real time, saving 100’s hours of administration time.
• Encrypted Referral Form accessible via a link - no logging in.
• Richer data set capture at the referral stage.
• Encrypted end to end process.
• Supports and enhances existing referral processes.
• Create clear referral pathways.
• Replace several spreadsheets with one holistic automated process.
• Encrypted self and third party referral options. Empower support workers, teachers, victims, vulnerable people and their families.
• Transfer cases into E-CINS for enhanced single or multi-agency case management. Integration into your existing case management system option available.
• Enables positive action to be taken at an earlier stage improving early intervention work.
• Wrap support around victims and vulnerable people quickly and effectively in a single or multi-agency environment.
• Identify those at greatest risk and Identify repeat victims and vulnerable persons.
• Share information securely across all your partners in compliance with the new GDPR regulations.
• Link to shared risk assessments and support plans.
• Expedite information sharing and make swift decisions to safeguard the vulnerable.
• Enable practitioners to understand how their work fits together with professionals at other agencies.
• Create a larger multi-agency vision and overcome a silo mentality.
• Reduce the need for multi-agency meetings.
• Enhance co-located teams and virtual agencies.
• Enable cross-border working.
• Remove the barriers to information sharing.
• Co-ordinate multi-agency responses.
• Full implementation process and support from an experienced team of experts.
• Fully hosted ISO27001 solution - No strain on your systems. No hardware required, no software to download and no additional work for your IT Departments.
• Avoids the need to buy costly hardware or software.
• Run an array of reports and analyse how services are being used.
• Automatic data backups.
• Access data on mobiles, tablets and desktops.
• Save money by avoiding costly user licenses.

Empowering-Communities is an accredited not for profit social enterprise.

We've been helping organisations large and small for almost 20 years and we've achieved several accreditations. These include:

• ISO 27001, for the design, development, hosting and processing of multi-agency systems
• ISO 9001
• Cyber Essentials
• Cyber Essentials Plus

We are also on the UK's G-Cloud Framework and Digital Marketplace.
The Empowering Communities Group is committed to helping practitioners and organisations establish a solid foundation to support those most at risk and in need within their community.

Do get in touch if you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss your requirements.

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Thank You.

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