

gsu

Check-in⁺

s e r v i c e

student-to-student support and information

Term 2 Overall Summary Report 24/25

reliable



scan to learn more

friendly

helpful

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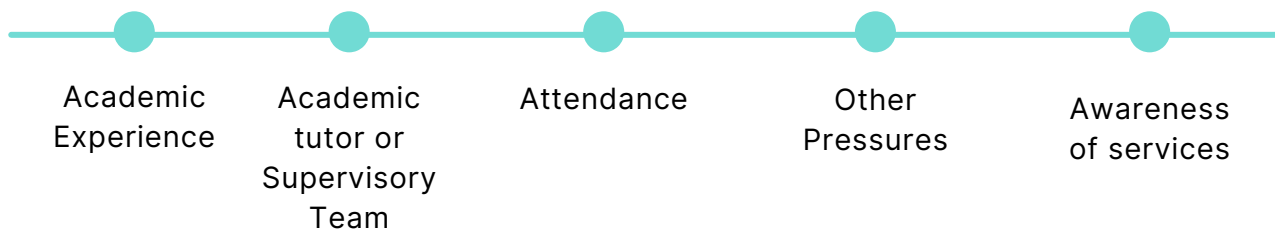
greenwich
students'
union

The Check-in Service

What is the Check-in Service?

The Check-in Service is run by Greenwich Students' Union, previously referred to as The Retention Project. It is a peer-to-peer wellbeing service, which aims to contact students who may be vulnerable to challenges with their studies, which could lead to withdrawal. We aim to provide them with early intervention support to help them to stay at Greenwich and thrive.

Our student-staff reach out, primarily through phone calls at the moment, and lead students through a structured conversation. We make it clear we're calling from the SU, that we hold their confidentiality unless they consent for us to share information, or they disclose anything that breaches our confidentiality or safeguarding policies, and that students can be open with us about issues they are facing. We ask questions about the following things:



If at any stage during the call we identify an additional support need we'll ask the student for permission to refer their case to the relevant service

How do we decide who to call?

We prioritise calling students who are most at risk of being withdrawn due to nonattendance and students at risk of withdrawing or interrupting themselves. This term we called:

- New January Starters
- Students not in attendance
- All other students

This term, the Check-in Service reached over 850 students, supporting 156 with further interventions and helping retain over £170,000 in tuition income. 93% of students contacted remained on their programme. We saw continued high course satisfaction, reduced loneliness, and continuing challenges with financial stress, timetabling and placements.

Brand Refresh

This term we launched our brand refresh for the service, moving away from The Retention Project, as this often caused confusion between the Retention team in the university, and rebranded as The Check-in Service. As well as the name change, we have refreshed the webpages and have new branding for posters, social media and screens around the university. We will be tracking the awareness of the service over the next academic year to see if the refresh has had the intended consequence of raising the profile of the service to students.

Executive Summary

KPI overview



864
Check-ins completed



8,782
Calls Made



156
Students had a follow up with further support

Our Impact



93%
of students continue on their programme



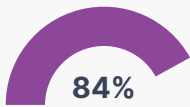
97%
of students said they found the call useful



78%
of students who received follow up support continued into Term 3

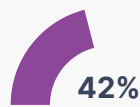
What are students saying?

Course Satisfaction



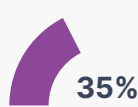
84%
Felt positive about their programme

Personal Tuition



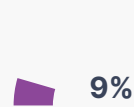
42%
Have met their personal tutor

Pressures



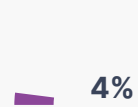
35%
Of students reported difficulties outside of university

Loneliness



9%
76 students feel lonely at least once a month

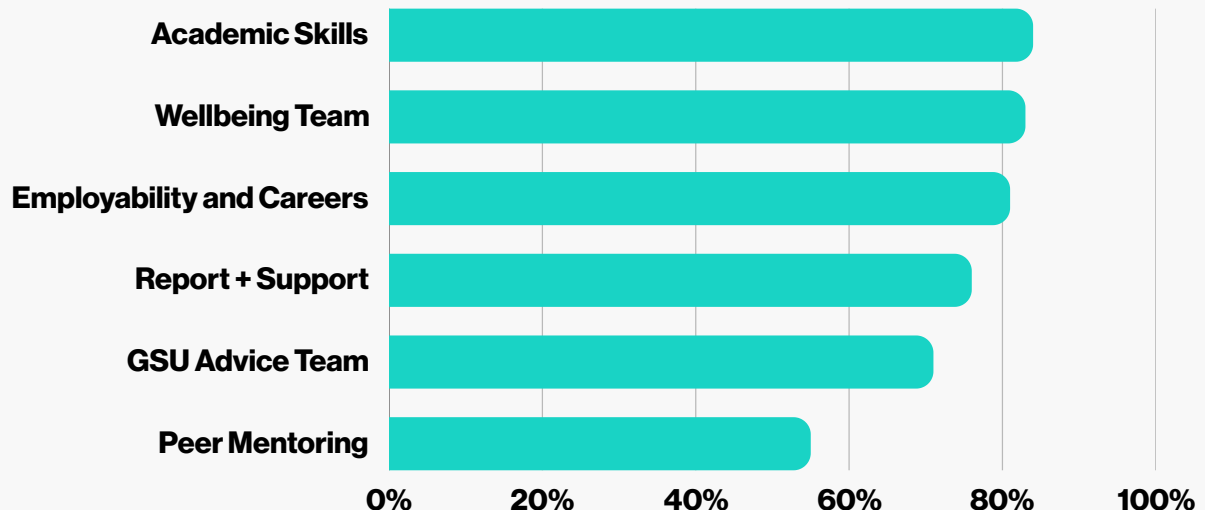
Considering Withdrawing



4%
37 students were considering withdrawing or interrupting

Support Service Awareness

Awareness of Services



Term 2 Overview

This report gives a summary of the key findings, themes and recommendations from the Check-in Service in term 2 of 2024/25.

Who we called this term

- New January Starters
- Students not in attendance
- All other students

These groups are therefore over-represented in the findings below.

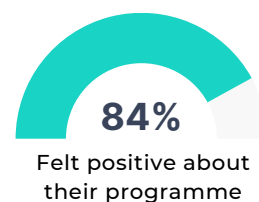
Social Prescribing Spotlight: Avery Connect

We launched our peer-to-peer buddy scheme, Avery Connect, in Term 1 and have so far had 51 sign ups and 46 students successfully matched together. We are in the process of gathering feedback, which has so far been positive, with students saying that it is a “great service” and that it was “great to match with people”.

Analysis of General Check In Calls

Course Satisfaction

84% of students felt positively towards their course and only 2% negatively, with the remaining 14% offering a neutral response.



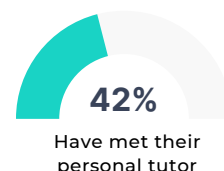
75% of students cited 'quality of teaching' as a positive aspect of their course, and this was the most frequently given response. The area that drew the most negative response was 'timetabling', which is in line with previous reports from other cohorts. As previously, students mentioned big gaps in timetables and a lack of flexibility with the timetabling. Overseas students also ranked greater course satisfaction (92%) than their home counterparts (78%).

The course is amazing, the lecturer is approachable and supportive. Always looking out for their students.

2nd year Health Sciences student

Personal Tutoring

42% of all students know and have met their personal tutor and 34% know, but have not met them. This is lower than previous years, and may be due to the launch of the new framework, and how students understand the delegated responsibilities of the Academic tutors and Faculty Student Advisors.



We also ask those who had met their personal tutors how the experience had been for them. 89% said that meeting their personal tutor had been an overall good experience.

I met [my personal tutor] many times whenever I had any questions about the courses or assignments and they have always been really helpful and supportive.

1st year Business student

Co-Curricular Experience

Loneliness

76 students we spoke to reported feeling lonely in Term 2 equating to 9% of respondents, 1% less than this time last year.

Of these students, the majority (36%) reported feeling lonely sometimes, 22% said often and 29% said all the time. Students reporting loneliness were half overseas and half home students. 39% attributed their loneliness to difficulty making friends, and 16% cited not having enough time alongside studying/working/placements/other commitments.

Cost of Living Concerns

19% of students are concerned about supporting themselves financially or paying their fees. Of those students concerned about their finances and fees, 51% identified financial pressures affecting their studies, such as cost of living or work commitments.

Linking students with support

We aim to link students with the right support at the right time. We believe if we support students with the underlying issues they are facing they will be more likely to continue on their course of study.

This is why we prioritise making contact with students who are likely to be withdrawn because of poor attendance or who we know are more likely to withdraw because of their personal circumstances.



156

Students had a follow up with further support

Referrals to other services

62 students were sent personalised follow up support based on their specific circumstance. Some of this support includes direct referrals to other services, as well as more complex signposting and ensuring students have the information about support that they need. Of the students who had indicated that they were considering withdrawing or interrupting, 40% continued with their studies and 22% chose an interruption over withdrawing.



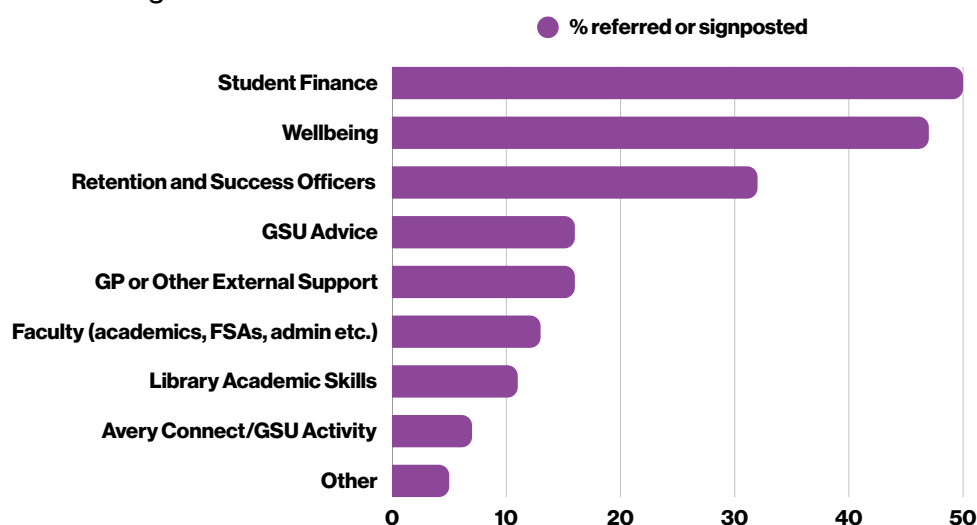
62

Students were sent personalised follow up support



78%

of students who received follow up support continued with their studies into Term 3



In addition to those students who were directly referred for support, 146 students told us about financial concerns, social support, and course issues. We send these students additional information in support packs. 101 students received a finance support pack, 37 students received a social support pack and 42 received a course support pack.

Wellbeing Service

Of the 841 students spoken to 57 had used the Wellbeing services. Many students commented on how helpful, supportive and responsive the team had been when they used the service. However, this term there were a small number of students who felt that the service was not equipped to support them, as they had more complex mental health challenges. This left these students feeling unsupported and dismissed. There were also a few suggestions to offer more appointments, and an understanding that the team are understaffed. One student suggested more face to face appointments, as this would have helped them to feel more comfortable as opposed to online.

Of students who had heard of the Wellbeing Service but had not used it, the vast majority said they had not used the service because they had not needed to. Some students told us that they were waiting for their medical documents to be able to share with the team, and others mentioned that they felt too busy or unable to concentrate on anything other than their studies.

Final Year Students

306 students that we spoke to were in their final year of their studies. 190 were feeling overall positive about life after graduation, 21 felt overall negative and 95 felt neutral. 150 students mentioned being worried about employment after they graduate, and 38 spoke about being worried about their finances.

Programme Reps

50% of students knew who their programme reps were. Of those who knew who they were, 92% rated them a 4 or 5/5 for supporting students on their course. Students commented that issues have been resolved, the reps were proactive, helpful and good at reaching out to check in and get feedback via WhatsApp groups.

Follow Up Calls

62 students were called following a previous escalation, to check on the progress of their case and to see if any further support was needed. 23 of those calls were completed and of these 16 students were fully or partially satisfied with how their situation had been dealt with. 5 students were re-escalated to try and find a further solution to their issue.

During the term it was flagged that students were saying they had not received any contact from the team despite emails being sent with information relating to their circumstances. In response to this, we are now gaining consent to text students after escalation contact has been made, to signpost them to check their university emails. This is an important change, which may result in more students finding solutions to their challenges faster and more easily.

Student Follow Up Case Study

We supported a student who had applied for a bursary which was rejected. They were upset and confused, as they did not know why their application was not accepted. They told us that they were considering withdrawing from the university, as they felt that no-one cared about their situation. When we followed up to see how the situation had changed, the student was very happy with the support that the Check-in Service had provided, and they had received a positive outcome. This student has remained enrolled and has happily continued with their studies.

Absences

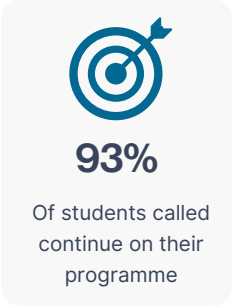
516 students who completed the survey were called due to non-engagement across the faculties. This is, proportionally, a larger number of our calls than in previous years. In response to reduced staffing and call hours, we took a more targeted approach, prioritising those most at risk of disengaging from their studies. These students often face complex challenges, which may explain a slightly lower continuation rate overall this term. Notably, the Faculty of Engineering and Science (FES) consistently referred students for contact and so we spoke to more FES students than any other faculty. This may also be reflected in their continuation outcomes.

The most frequent reason for non attendance cited was due to illness (38%). Other significant and reoccurring reasons are personal or family circumstances, such as bereavement or childcare (31%) and issues with being attendance but not registering it, due to QR code or other issues.

Continuation Rate

93% of all students called continued on their programme.

This was fairly consistent across faculties with the highest continuation in FEHHS and the lowest in FES.



Faculty	Continuation %
Faculty of Education, Health and Human Science	96%
Greenwich Business School	94%
Faculty of Engineering and Science	90%
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science	92%

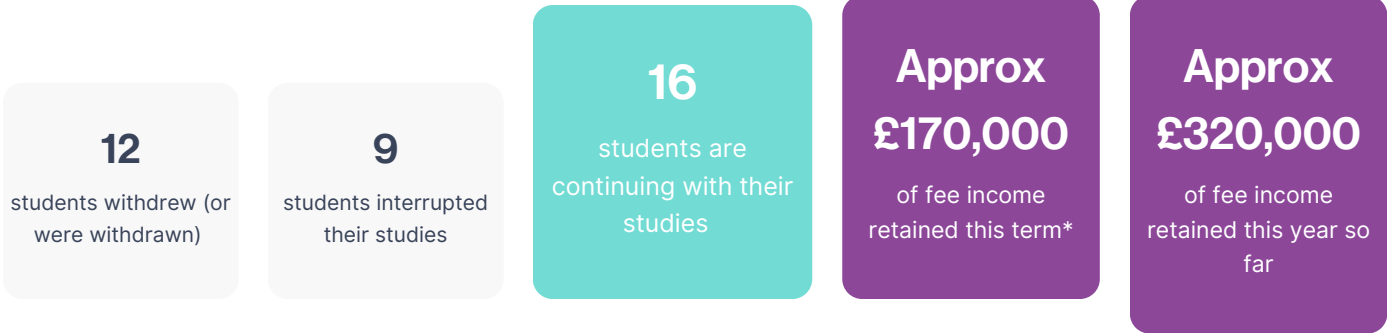
Those considering withdrawing

37 students told us they were considering withdrawing or interrupting this term. 35 were home students, 2 were international students. 36 were UG students, 1 was a PGT student.

All students who are considering withdrawing or interrupting receive follow-up support including signposting to Retention and Success Officers, their personal tutors and to any other additional support tailored to their situation.



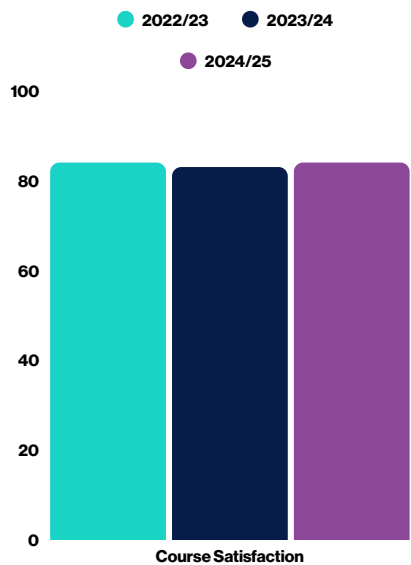
Of those who suggested that they were considering it, 12 students withdrew or were withdrawn and 9 interrupted their studies. The remaining 16 have continued on their programmes. Of those who interrupted, at least 2 of these students initially considered withdrawing and changed to an interruption.



*15 x UG home, 1 x PGT overseas

3 Year Comparison of Check In Calls in Term 2

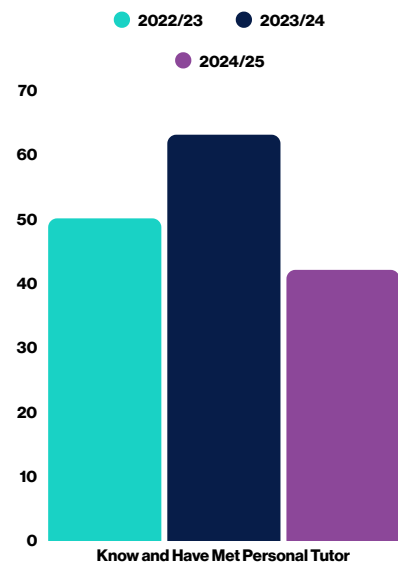
Over the years that the calling service has been running, the questions being asked have changed and adapted to the needs of students and the perceived pressures they may be facing. However, we do now have enough similar data to compare trends over three years in certain areas.



Academic life

Course satisfaction in Term 2 has stayed at almost the exact same level over the last 3 years.

In Term 1 we saw that students having known and met personal tutor had fallen, and this has continued in Term 2. As the new Tutoring framework continues its roll out we will look to ask this question in a way that includes both FSAs and Academic Tutors.

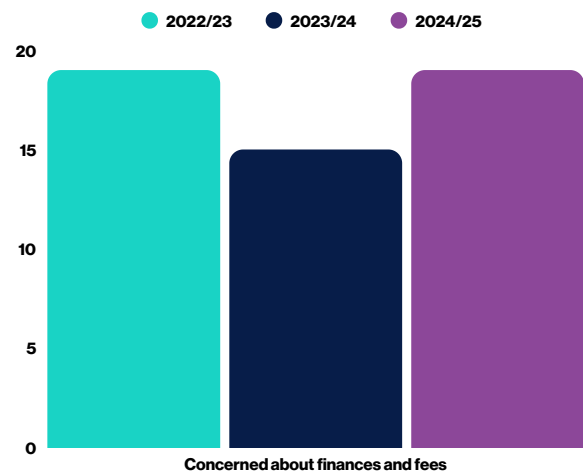
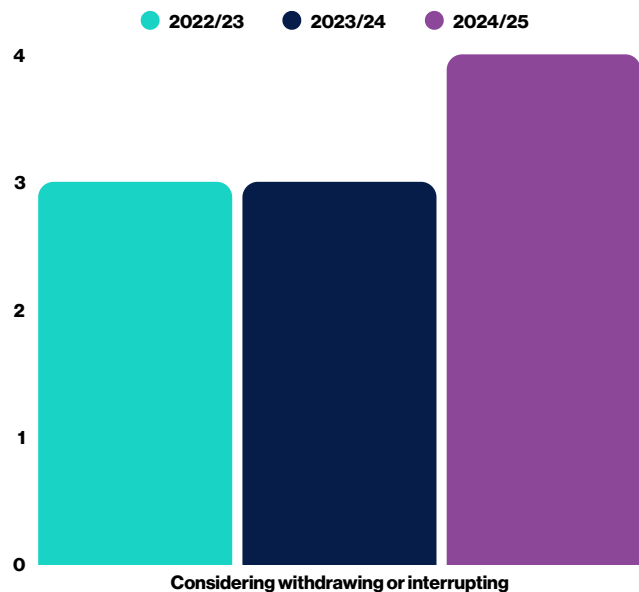
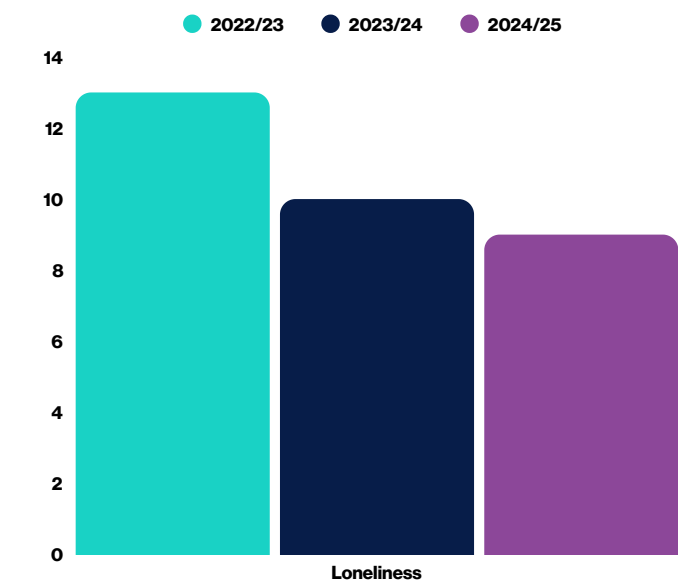


Co-curricular student experiences

Concerns about finances and fees are matching reported levels in 2022/23, at almost 20% of students being concerned about their finances. This reflects the current economic situation that our students find themselves in, but may also reflect that cost of living support has become less of a university focus as this has become normalised.

Financial pressures may also impact the increased proportion of students who are considering withdrawing or interrupting. We have seen finances becoming more of an issue this term, where personal circumstances were more prevalent previously.

Reported loneliness has steadily decreased over the last three years in Term 2.



Themes, Recommendations and GSU Actions

This section is changing this term! We will now be highlighting overall themes alongside our more specific recommendations for the university. This will allow us to see where interventions affect the trends that are coming through the calls.

We are also including an actions section which will track the actions of the Check-in Service team. This will demonstrate the practical actions taken by the team to support students and the university to seek resolutions to issues that are being raised.

Themes

Timetabling

As has been the case for many years, timetabling is often an area that students highlight as causing them difficulty. This includes large gaps in timetables, last minute changes and incorrect information on moodle. These issues particularly affect student parents, commuter students and students who are working alongside their studies.



We are aware that there will be a new member of staff joining the university soon who will take responsibility for timetabling on a university-wide scale. We are interested to see how this will filter through to the calls, and will report back on whether we see a decrease in timetabling issues over the next academic year.

Disruption in lectures

This term we have seen more students reporting disruption within their lectures from other students. This isn't something we've seen widely reported in the past and we will be keeping an eye on reports of disruption, to see if this theme continues and if it is specific to one faculty.



Requests for more interactive learning

Another theme we have seen this term is students asking that their learning is more interactive, including more interaction within lectures, more interactive sections on moodle to support revision and better online resources in general.



Increased requests for financial support

This term we have seen an increase in students requesting more scholarships and bursaries, talking about difficulties balancing studying and working, asking for online classes due to commuting costs and talking about the expense of commuting in general. The cost of living has continued to increase and this is having an impact on our student community. It is important for us to be aware of this and to factor it into the ways that students are supported and plans for upcoming cohorts.



Recommendations

Placement support

The issue: Students across faculties have fed back that they are experiencing difficulties with their placements.



Students said: that they needed more support with finding placements, or they were not able to get the support they needed when things went wrong on their placements, or if the placement became unsuitable.

The Check-in Service recommends: Ensure that students know who to contact for support with finding placements (if needed) and are given enough support to find them. Strengthen the processes for students reporting difficulties on placements so that they can be supported through any issues.

Communication issues

The issue: Students are saying that communication issues between different university departments and to students are impacting their studies.



Students said: there were issues in delayed communications, departments not sharing correct information and delays in registration.

The Check-in Service recommends: The university prioritise ensuring that they are working together to support students, deliver prompt responses and to use consistent terminology when referring to different processes or policies (e.g. deferral, resubmission, repeat etc.).

Actions for us

Temporary illness signposting

The issue: It is unclear where students should go to get support for shorter term illness which lasts under 12 months, such as a planned surgery, broken bone or illness lasting a few weeks/months.



The Check-in Service will: Find out the support that is available to students through speaking with the university Wellbeing team and FSAs, and ensure this information about this is included on the GSU website.

Diversifying Check-in comms channels

The issue: Some students are not seeing our follow up emails, are unable to answer the phone when called or do not answer calls from unknown numbers



The Check-in Service will: Diversify our methods of following up with students, including texting to direct to email support sent and move to the next stage of our WhatsApp outreach.

Term 3 2024/25

In the coming term we have lots of exciting developments regarding our strategy and objectives. In Term 3 our priority order will be:

1. New April Starters
2. PGT students
3. Students not in attendance
4. Students on interruption

We will be calling between 22nd April to 26 June.

We will also be moving forward with our research into WhatsApp outreach, which will reach many more students and give us a new angle for speaking to students.

As before, we will be reactive to any local or global events that may make students vulnerable to disengagement from their studies and will prioritise checking in with them where needed.

Want to make a referral?

We will also check in with any students that staff have concerns for. Staff can refer a student for a check in call via email at gsu-retention@greenwich.ac.uk.