



Mental Health and Wellbeing

Plan 2021-2024

Introduction/ Foreword:

UWS works in partnership with its students to deliver world-ready graduates who will design, shape and build a new future. We are pioneers in developing effective interactions with global business, industry and the public and voluntary sectors. We work towards this purpose through our learning and teaching, distinctive research and innovation and through shaping our communities and society.

Our organisational truths celebrate that the University “is a great place to work” and that “We are here for our Students”. As part of our shared commitment to these truths we must ensure that we nurture and maintain an environment which supports our diverse student and colleague body in achieving their potential. Aligned to this, we as a University are committed to supporting and promoting wellbeing across the UWS community. This plan supports that aspiration.

We recognise that the mental health and wellbeing of our university community is of fundamental importance. We all have mental health, and it affects not only how we feel, but our ability to work and learn productively, engage with those around us, and reach our individual potential. Promoting mental health

is therefore central to enhancing the student and staff experience, and making the university a supportive environment in which to learn and work. The good work already in place has led to the University securing and retaining an NHS Scotland Healthy Working Lives Gold Award. We are also committed to continued involvement in the NUS Student Mental Health Agreement and the Scottish Student Sport “Health Body, Healthy Mind” award programme, however we cannot be complacent and there is more to be done.

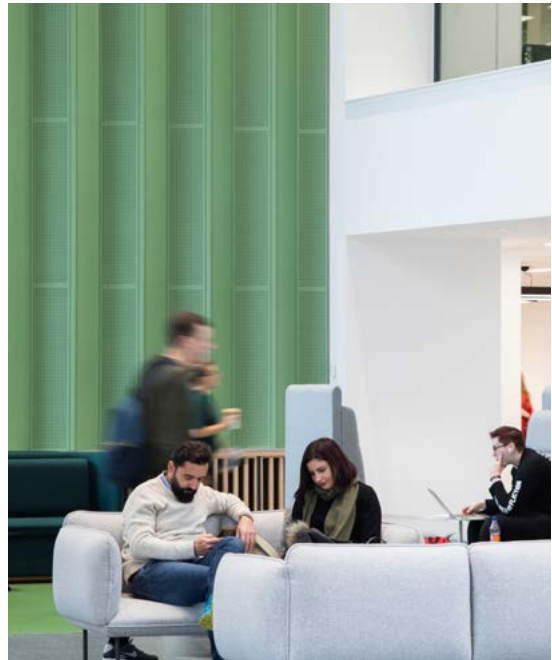


Context:

Every year, approximately one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health difficulty, and research suggests that this figure is higher amongst the student population. Concerns about mental health in universities have been recognised nationally. In 2017 Universities UK (UUK) launched its Stepchange framework to provide guidance on promoting mental health at an individual, institutional, and strategic level. A refreshed framework was published in May 2020, accompanied by a self-assessment tool to support improvement. The principles set out by UUK have informed our work and shaped the development of this plan, as has guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.

An institution-wide approach where the support and promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing are embedded is required. The ongoing development of a whole university approach will continue to be informed by frameworks for health promotion including the Healthy Universities and Stepchange frameworks. The approach aims to develop a culture of compassion and support at UWS and raise awareness of issues surrounding mental health.

To achieve our vision we must build on our existing provision to meet our objectives and to deliver cultural change, continual improvement and activities which support the diversity of our communities. This plan will be reviewed and redrafted annually to reflect internal and external priorities in relation to mental health & wellbeing. Responsibility for delivering actions varies between individual departments and dedicated working groups. Progress reports will be collated by the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing (EDI&W) Coordination group and presented to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) Committee on a regular basis.



VISION AND FRAMEWORK

The UWS Mental Health and Wellbeing vision is to:

“Work together as a whole University to develop an environment which promotes positive mental health and wellbeing, and seeks to ensure that effective support is provided to students and staff to maintain or improve their mental health”

There is already substantial and well established work in place across the University in relation to mental health and wellbeing. We aim to build on this to and further develop our approach in pursuit of this vision.

The 2017 Stepchange Framework was based around the 8 inter related themes of Leadership, Data, Staff, Prevention, Early Intervention, Support, Transitions, Partnership. These themes informed earlier work pertaining to mental health and wellbeing at UWS however this plan has been shaped to reflect the 2020 refresh of the Stepchange framework. The framework proposes a whole university approach to delivery which is formed around 4 key domains and a range of enabling themes. The content of the appended action plan is structured around these to ensure alignment and evaluation in relation to the framework and related guidance. The domains within the Stepchange Framework are summarised as follows:

LEARN “Higher learning involves challenge and new ways of thinking: it can have a positive impact on a person’s mental health and wellbeing over a lifetime.”

SUPPORT “...a wide range of services to support those experiencing mental illness.”

WORK “Good mental health is central to staff engagement, productivity and creativity.”

LIVE “...a whole system perspective”

ENABLERS “(Cross cutting themes to embed a whole university approach: Leadership, Co-production, Information, Inclusivity, Research and Innovation.”

This plan is structured around these domains and enablers. It identifies established practice and provision and defines next steps and priority actions.

LEARN

Already in place

- SafeTALK made available to all staff in all schools to improve awareness of and alertness to warning signs indicating risk of suicide and to help to overcome the barriers in talking about suicide.
- Provision of an academic skills team who support students to develop the skills they need to succeed at University and beyond.
- Adoption of varied approaches to assessment to ensure that these test learning appropriately, without creating undue stress.
- The development of a broad and multi-faceted approach to appraising student engagement to replace a previous more rigid student attendance policy.

We will

- Embed mental health and wellbeing support throughout the student journey
- Ensure that key transition points are identified and appropriate activities and support delivered to have a positive impact on student and staff mental health and wellbeing, helping to promote student and staff retention.
- Identify and utilise learning opportunities embedded within the curriculum which develop capacity to manage wellbeing.



SUPPORT

Already in place

- Development, delivery and review of the NUS Think Positive Student Mental Health Agreement on an 18-month basis in partnership with the Student Association
- Provision of a Student Counselling Service on all campuses delivering direct support and contributing to awareness-raising activities, plus access to Silvercloud – an online cognitive behavioural therapy tool.
- Support via Student Disability Service for students with diagnosed mental health condition.
- Provision of a 24/7 365 day student assistance telephone line

We will

- Create campus specific partnership links with NHS functions, local authority provision and third sector organisations, as a foundation for more effective signposting and the development of local strategies where appropriate.
- Ensure that the availability of information, support and resources is clearly understood so that effective internal/ external signposting can take place in a timely, effective and consistent manner.
- Develop approaches to support students and staff at key transition points.
- Define and implement a suicide prevention plan, to include training, prevention activity and referral to crisis support.



WORK

Already in place

- Provision of Occupational Health and Lifestyle Screening services plus a recently enhanced online Employee Assistance Programme for staff.
- Progressive roll out of staff training including Mental Health Awareness, SafeTALK and Dementia Awareness training to equip staff in supporting and/or signposting colleagues and students in need of support.
- Engagement with external organisations to access and/or develop relevant training and resources for staff and students.

We will:

- Embed mental health and wellbeing throughout the staff journey.
- Deliver a Staff Wellbeing Fair to raise awareness and promote the range of different support that is available.
- Promote subsidised gym membership for staff.
- Promote the Student in Distress procedure to ensure that staff feel confident and comfortable in signposting



LIVE

Already in place

- The broad programme of student centred work carried out by Sabbatical Officers and the activities and campaigns led by the Union collectively promote and contribute to enhanced mental health and wellbeing
- Encouragement of physical activity via free Gym/Fitness access for students and subsidised rates for staff. Support for students and staff to develop and maintain a habit of physical activity through gym access, fitness classes, activity campaigns, work with external partners and through Team UWS recreational and competitive sport.
- Provision of Brodie's Bikes project –at Paisley, Ayr and Lanarkshire campuses.

We will

- Build on existing work to plan, deliver and evaluate a programme of outcome focussed campaigns and activities as part of a proactive approach to creating an environment and a culture which is conducive to positive mental health.
- Campaigns and activities will address a range of related topics including tackling stigma and discrimination and promoting open discussion around mental health, and promoting physically and mentally healthy practices.
- Build on existing provision by developing and implementing a suicide safer plan in line with the Suicide Safer Universities Framework



ENABLERS

Already in place

- Institutional oversight for mental health and wellbeing by the EDI Committee, with operational planning and reporting supported through the EDI&W Coordination Group and associated workstreams.
- Executive lead for Wellbeing
- On-going monitoring and review of support provision to make best use of resources (e.g. introduction of one at a Time service delivery model within the counselling service to reduce waiting time and better meet student expectations).
- Improved links between key areas of the university such as Student Support and Residences.
- Make use of quantitative and qualitative data, research evidence, feedback, sector best practice and all learning opportunities to evaluate and improve our service provision and actions. This includes the regular review of our mental health and wellbeing support provision to ensure best use of the available resources to maximise impact, taking into account the varied needs across our diverse student and staff populations.
- Inform, train and support leaders and managers to promote understanding of how they can support colleagues and students through listening, signposting and development opportunities
- Further develop an approach to the triangulation of information across staff teams, to enhance our ability to identify students and staff in need of support, which once provided will potentially reduce the negative impacts of mental ill health.

We will

- Embrace a whole University approach to mental health through engaging staff and student communities and integrating into planning, policy development and operational processes. This will have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing across the University community, and contribute to enhanced retention and progression of students and staff.



Governance and Review

Operation and Governance

The draft UWS Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan has been endorsed by the Vice Chancellors Executive Group (VCEG) and is subject to approval by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Coordination Group responsible for monitoring progress against the action plan and will provide an update to each meeting of the EDI Committee.

Review

The timeframe for this UWS Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan is academic year 2021-2022. The document will be reviewed and refreshed annually to ensure that any emerging priorities and operational changes are reflected in new/updated objectives, and that the actions within the implementation section lead to appropriate progress through effective management and process.

Appendix –

- *Action Plan 2020/21 and tracker*
- *Action Plan 2021/22*





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