



Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Steering Group

Wednesday 5 June 2019

MINUTES

Present:

Prof Deborah Gill, Rothna Akhtar

Thalia Anagnostopoulou, Karen Bernard, Charlotte Bradley, Prof Anthony David, Wes Durdle, Dr Claire Elliot, Helen Fisher, Prof Peter Fonagy, Laura Gibbon, June Hedges, Max Hill, Natalie Humphrey, Lina Kamenova, Dr Barry Keane, Ayesha Khan, Frederike Lemmel, Zak Liddell, Catherine McAteer, Nick McGhee, Alex McKee, Katy Redfern, Karen Smith, Dr Alex Standen, Mitesh Vagadia

Apologies:

Jane Brett-Jones, Ben Colvill, Katie Price, Dr Mike Rowson, Dr Carl Sayer, Olega Thomas

Key to abbreviations

COP – Community of Practice

DfE – Department for Education

DMHW – Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing

ISOP – International Student Orientation Programme

MHFA – Mental Health First Aid

OfS – Office for Students

PALS – Psychology and Language Sciences

PG – Postgraduate

SG – Steering Group

SHW – Student Health and Wellbeing

SSW – Student Support and Wellbeing

SUUCL – Students' Union UCL

TOPS – Transforming Our Professional Services

UUK – Universities United Kingdom

UCH – University College Hospital

UCL – University College London



Matters for discussion

1. Welcome and introductions, Deborah Gill and Rothna Akhtar

Deborah and Rothna welcomed all to the Steering Group and gave a brief introduction as to how the group will be a platform to inform, review and provide feedback on the Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019-2021).

As the group goes forward, Deborah highlighted the need and importance of student representation, within such meetings, to allow colleagues to align best practice and proposed ideas to the needs of the current student cohort.

Rothna also informed colleagues that her time within the group is limited, but she is confident that her successor, Aatikah Malik, will be just as proactive in continuing the effective working relationship between Students' Union UCL, Student Support and Wellbeing and the wider university.

2. Confirmation of Terms of Reference and membership, Denise Long

Denise informed colleagues of the proposed Terms of Reference in defining the purpose of the Steering Group.

Proposed Terms of Reference:

- Set the direction for a strategic and holistic approach to student health and wellbeing across UCL and SUUCL.
- Foster a learning, working and living environment that is inclusive, caring and supportive. This environment will promote good health and wellbeing and will be the foundation for student academic success and high performance organisational culture.
- Discuss and agree a response to any emerging issues, trends and guidance in the sphere of student health and wellbeing.
- Promote the Strategy wherever possible, acting as local champions to ensure it is well known across UCL and SUUCL. Champion wellbeing-promoting initiatives, campaigns and approaches.
- Oversee the implementation and review of the Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Ensure that UCL and SUUCL work in partnership to deliver the Strategy and that any actions and changes are informed by student voice. Assess and approve the Strategy's action plan.
- Monitor improvement in student satisfaction in line with UCL 2034, Enabler A, and UCL's commitment to giving our students the best support, facilities and opportunities.



- Review and approve the Strategy's progress report, which is to be submitted to Student Experience Committee and Council annually.

Student representation was expressed again as key in delivering the strategy and SUUCL will lead on recruiting students to the group. SUUCL will ensure that students are informed that their health and wellbeing is important to UCL and that progression is being made to ensure support is provided and that the necessary changes are made.

Further actions suggested at the meeting:

- Recruit at least 5 student representatives, each with responsibility for one or more of our different student groups, to be present at the forthcoming Steering Group meetings. Students should be consulted at each stage of the strategy moving forward.
- The group should keep up to date with changing trends of student health and wellbeing, as well as, changes across UCL in delivering the proposed actions.
- Ensure there is an evidence based approach in delivering the different strategy objectives. The terms of reference have been updated accordingly.

3. Objective 1: Establish a whole-university approach to student health and wellbeing, Denise Long

Denise will be co-leading on this objective with Alex McKee, SUUCL.

SUUCL and SSW will collaborate to achieve common goals; working together to make improvements and taking forward priorities to ensure a positive environment is created and shared.

Denise outlined actions to achieve a whole-university approach to student health and wellbeing, which will include defining governance, creating a community of champions and using resources that are both internal and external to UCL.

Objective 1 actions:

- Establish a Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy Steering Groups co-chaired by UCL and SUUCL
- Membership of the group should reflect UCL's whole institution approach to student health and wellbeing



- SHW Strategy Steering Group has oversight of the implementation of the strategy and related activities and developments
- Establish a Student Health and Wellbeing Community of Practice – delivery of 5 projects, aligned to the objectives of the strategy
- Student Success Advisor - progress the discussion about a consistent approach to student welfare enquiries in academic departments via a dedicated advisor – TOPS, Careers Framework and Personal Tutoring
- Making student health and wellbeing a priority and incorporate into programme approval, curriculum design and teaching and learning environments
- Review UCL's regulatory framework and governance that affects student health and wellbeing
- Explore further opportunities to work in partnership with SUUCL e.g. taking forward together any recommendations of the SUUCL Wellbeing Report
- Engage with OforS, UUK and DofE guidance and research relevant to student health and wellbeing
- Ensure the student voice is understood and influences change – project to review, consolidate and share the wealth of data and feedback collected on student health and wellbeing.

In development of the aims set out, colleagues highlighted an opportunity to use research from academics and other health organisations to inform what should be done on campus. This could include working with staff in PALS and the Institute of Mental Health to ensure information regarding student health and wellbeing is up-to-date and evidence based.

Opening hours of buildings such as the Student Centre (24/7) was raised as a concern, for the impact this may be having on student health. It would be important to establish governance when such decisions are being made and to ensure that wellbeing is included as part of the proposal being put forward.

Implementation of certain provisions and communications regarding UCL East will need to be amended. Students studying at the East London campus will need to be informed of their closest health and wellbeing amenities, as well as who they can approach if they find themselves struggling with their health and wellbeing.

Student advisers across UCL will be given the opportunity for further training so that they can better assist students. This may also be extended to staff within Library Services as they are often approached by students with queries.

The Steering Group will need to establish how best to take this approach forward, define what success will look like and what they envision the student experience to be once implemented.



Concerns around staff wellbeing were raised, as the extra responsibility of signposting students to appropriate services etc. may cause discomfort and stress to some colleagues. Staff and students should be supported equally.

Further actions proposed and agreed at the meeting:

- Ensure the strategy is filtered down to students, so that they have a clear understanding of what will be achieved and to encourage participation.
- There should be a strong emphasis on staff wellbeing as part of the strategy. Enhancing student and staff health and wellbeing will be achieved through an approach that encompasses shared responsibility.

4. Objective 2: Support students in their integration into life at UCL, Wes Durdle

Wes will be co-leading on this objective with Guy Stepney, SUUCL.

Wes emphasised that UCL is an institution that hosts students of all different levels and has a majority of postgraduates.

He expressed the need for collaborative communications, giving students a sense of belonging, and emphasising messages for support services available through multimedia channels.

Objective 2 actions:

- Unified student induction communications, emphasising belonging and community
- Engaging multimedia platforms to make health and wellbeing messages stand out
- Welcome events to facilitate building personal support networks.
- Enhanced ISOP with increased capacity
- Enhanced welcome in halls with information about support beyond campus and where residents can access this
- Enhanced campus tours, led by peers and to also include key locations for student health and wellbeing such as UCH A&E, Ridgmount Practice etc.
- Enhanced use of student and staff ambassadors to support and signpost students to available services



- Greater use of student buddy schemes
Welcome guide for all new students
- Suicide prevention and awareness campaign
- GP registration campaign
- Review of induction for groups who may need additional support, e.g. disabled students
- Greater information for parents
- Content on life skills and independent living
- Student services fair

We also suggested that information given to students by departments should be spread out over the first term, instead of just during the first couple of weeks.

Further actions proposed and agreed at the meeting:

- Identify ways to engage more with existing partners and build relationships with new partners.
- Look at DofE work in regards to transitions and use this to inform best practice.
- Suicide prevention work to focus on students and staff.
- Review and improve efforts of information sharing with students over the first term, instead of just during the first couple of weeks. Opportunities should be made for students to attend a second induction later on in the year.

5. Objective 3: Develop resources to encourage personal awareness of health and wellbeing and facilitate peer support, Mitesh Vagadia

Mitesh will be co-leading on this objective with Katie Sykes, SUUCL.

Mitesh explained that this objective will include building a 'Wellbeing for Success' platform and collaborating with other colleagues in the SHW COP.

Objective 3 actions:

- The 'Wellbeing for Success' web-based platform will be themed around the NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing (connect, be active, keep learning, give to others and be mindful). Content curated by a student editorial board
- Student Health and Wellbeing Communities of Practice Projects - five agreed projects - *PG students' project, School of Life and Wellbeing, Triage and Referral Tool, Departmental Wellbeing toolkit, Evaluation and Surveys*



- Mapping existing peer support programmes – providing SSW training
- Development of the Student Residence Advisers peer support for UCL halls to effect a culture of care and respect for other residents
- Ready for University - a dedicated online web resource which will aim to help students prepare and deal with university life
- Review of current student led networks and identify networks that need to be developed for student with specific characteristics
- Activity tracker programme so that students can log their activity on their phones and then use this to redeem SUUCL merchandise or free coffees etc.
- Platform whereby students can share exciting opportunities they have undertaken such as the Study Abroad programme, Duke of Edinburgh, volunteering etc. and talents they have
- 'Little things matter' leaflet/booklet will be a collaboration of student submissions about the little things in life that make them smile
- Umii app – an innovative app that will allow student to meet at university. Students will be connected based on their selected interests

Further actions proposed and agreed at the meeting:

- Include commuter-student groups in the strategy as there has been a proven attainment gap.
- Use departmental contacts with alumni to deliver content for the 'School of Life and Wellbeing' project.
- Colleagues from UCL Careers to help with delivering content for the 'School of Life and Wellbeing' project.
- A supportive approach will be implemented in setting up the student 'sharing platform'.

6. Objective 4: Establish effective links between UCL, the NHS and other services to deliver integrated mental health care and improved risk management, Barry Keane

Barry will be co-leading on this objective with Simon To, SUUCL.

Objective 4 actions:

- Continue to build upon strong links between UCL, the NHS and other agencies
- Establish suicide prevention, intervention and post intervention strategies



- A priority for the 19/20 academic year is the implementation of Step 1 and 2 of the Step Care Model which will establish further links between UCL and the NHS. Steps 3, 4, and 5 will follow over future years
- Embed current partnerships with other agencies while also developing new ones
- Work with the NHS and Voluntary Sector partners to develop a joint suicide risk strategy
- Work on how we can identify students who may be at risk, what we do once they have been identified and how we can aim to reduce the number of student deaths.
- Establish an approach in managing the risk and ensuring students who are affected are given the support they need to progress in their professional, personal and academic lives.

7. Objective 5: Ensure support for disabled students or those affected by health and wellbeing difficulties is personalised and the adjustments are effective, Natalie Humphrey

Natalie will be co-leading on this objective with Sinéad Booth, SUUCL.

Natalie emphasised the importance of focusing on disabled students to ensure they are given the appropriate support.

UCL will aim to normalise difference in ensuring all facilities are accessible, remove stigma and have one consistent set of terminology.

It's important to give students ownership of the support they receive and how it is received.

Objective 5 actions:

- Make sure that disabled students can thrive at UCL
- Offer a sensitive, personalised and empowering approach to student support
- Embed an inclusive learning and living environment for all
- Make a range of interventions available
- Clear, quick and appropriate follow-ups
- Expand our network of partner and affiliated external organisations
- Consistent and co-ordinated support in both learning and living environments

Throughout the year 2019-20, Natalie will look to focus on improving actions that are already being undertaken:



- Using consistent terminology that is empowering and avoids deficit and medicalised language
- Reviewing and strengthening the relationships we have and increase referrals and usage
- Ensuring students know what is available and how to access it
- Consistency amongst the team and student experience
- Promote external support organisations to students more to ensure they are aware of the support available to them both on and off campus.
- Aim to remove barriers to learning for disabled students in innovative ways.
- Impact will be measured across all above objective actions so that data can be publicised on feedback.
- More guidance to be conveyed to students on declaring their disability, how this information will be used and how it may/may not affect their future.

8. Objective 6: Align student and staff wellbeing policies and initiatives to foster an inclusive and supportive community, Lina Kamenova

Lina will be co-leading on this objective with Danielle Swanson, SUUCL.

Throughout the meeting it was raised that support should be put in place for staff and students.

This objective identifies that staff and students work and study in an environment that affects us all.

It was noted that changes will need to be implemented to make UCL a much more positive environment.

Objective 6 actions:

- Commitment to staff and student health and wellbeing in UCL 2034
- The health and wellbeing of both students and staff are equally important to UCL
- Greater understanding of the dependencies between student and staff health and wellbeing
- Working, learning and living environment that promotes and strengthens student and staff health and wellbeing
- Easy access to MHFA and suicide prevention training for staff
- MHFA for postgraduate research students, research supervisors and as part of leadership and management training programmes
- Information, resources training and guidance on boundaries for staff working with/supporting students



-
- Co-ordinated approach and shared protocols for responding to complex student cases
 - Shared health and wellbeing resources and facilities for students and staff
 - Better overall wellbeing is linked to better institutional performance.
 - Guidance to be drawn from Universities UK regarding staff engagement and collaboration between staff and students to build a framework for this objective.

9. AOB

Deborah and Rothna thanked all for their input and the actions drafted to implement the Strategy.

A SharePoint site will be set up to keep members updated between meetings.

Date of the meetings in 2019/20 are confirmed and have been sent as a diary invitations.