



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING WORKING GROUP

Tuesday 12th October at 15:00, remotely on Teams

PRESENT: Duncan Stuart (DS) (Chair) Naomi Taylor (Clerk) (NT), Garry Fisher (GF), Rebekah Walker (RW), Ceri Trevethan (CeT), Anna Goldhawk (AG), Debbie Dyker (DD), Nick Edwards (NE), Clare Trembleau (CT), Brian Paterson (BP), Timothy Baker (TB), Marylee Anderson (MA), Morag Beedie (MB), Janine Chalmers (JC), Jacqueline Tuckwell (JT), Mary Pryor (MP), Christopher Berry (CB), Kerry Harrison (KH), Vice President for Welfare (ID).

APOLOGIES: Karen Scaife (KS), Abbe Brown (AB), David Hutchison (DH), Tracey White (TW), Christine McGrath (CM), Anna Shea (AS), Christina Cameron (CC), Nicola Stokes (NS), Richard P.K. Wells (RW), R. Arnold (RA), Ernesto Compatangelo (EC), Stephen N Davies (SD), Alison Jenkinson (AJ), Jenny Killin (JK), Jane MacKenzie (JM), Alysia M Reid (AR), Tommy Daly (TD), Sherine Tabsh (ST), Gail Mckeitch (GM), Student Association President (AK), AUSA Communities Officer, (CTB), UCU.

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY

The notes from the meeting held on July 1st were approved.

3 MATTERS ARISING

All items were noted as completed or highlighted under items in the agenda.

4 MENTAL HEALTH UPDATES

4.1 AG updated the group on the progress with the Student Mental health Agreement (SMHA). A current provision mapping exercise has been carried out focusing on the services available to students experiencing mental ill health which identified 5 keys areas that could form the basis of the SHMA. Over the coming months further consultation will take place with students to inform the development of the SHMA, with a view to launching the finalised agreement in January 2022. An update on this matter will be provided at the next meeting.

Action: AG

4.2 RW provided a verbal update on the mental health first aid network (MHFA). A cheat sheet is being developed to help support the MHFAs when dealing with staff or student interactions. The main issues highlighted from the last meeting relate to staff returning to work and increased anxiety.

- 4.3 The group received the MHFA evaluation paper. CeT gave an overview of the evaluation, highlighting key findings and recommendations to help improve the support for MHFAs in their role and for university staff mental health.
- 4.4 NE discussed the roles of the mental health policy advisor and student support advisor for mental health which will include looking at the approach to supporting students and staff in crisis.
- 4.5 The Counselling Service will be offering a debriefing service to all members of staff who are supporting others experiencing a mental health crisis. More information to follow.

Action: NE/AS

- 4.6 RW added a link, she welcomes and encourages any comments on the information displayed on the web page and asked for them to be sent to wellbeing@abdn.ac.uk
- [Supporting Student Wellbeing: A Guide for Staff](#)

Action: All

5 TRAINING

- 5.1 CT discussed the plans to offer mental health training to all new and current managers at the university. Upcoming pilot training is due to be carried out at the Business School before rolling out the finalised training programme. An update will be provided on this matter at the next meeting.

Action: CT/GF

- 5.2 MHFA training is currently on hold until the revised NHS course has been approved.
- 5.3 Gaps have been identified within schools and departments where more MHFAs are needed in order to provide adequate representation throughout the university. These departments will be given priority when training is approved.
- 5.4 Training on Suicide and Self Harm were made available to staff as part of the MHFA network, these courses were very well received, and similar courses and bite size training will be offered in the future.
- 5.5 The group was asked for suggestions on ways to encourage staff who normally wouldn't be interested in mental health training to participate in future. All suggestions to be sent to wellbeing@abdn.ac.uk

Action: All

- 5.6 The group discussed further wellbeing initiatives to help encourage normality of discussing mental health and to prioritise wellbeing. Wellbeing reminders and wellbeing welcomes were discussed. It was suggested this should be adopted in teaching and team meetings. Plasma images could also display wellbeing messages across campus. DD and RW will meet to discuss this matter.

Action: DD/RW

6 UPDATE ON THE POLICY AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

6.1 The wellbeing strategy, mental health and wellbeing policy, and the management of work-related stress policy were agreed by PARC in September.

6.2 GF added the link to the policy zone web page where the mental health and wellbeing policy and the management of work-related stress policy can be found.

[Search Policy Zone | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](#)

6.3 The wellbeing strategy will be launched during BeWell and Inclusion Week, week commencing 25th October.

6.4 DD passed on thanks from the policies and resources committee for the policy and strategy presentation given by KS/GF.

7 WELLBEING UPDATES

The group received papers on the recent wellbeing activity, BeWell and Inclusion Week and series 2 of the BeWell podcasts. There were no questions from the group on this matter.

7.1 The full schedule for BeWell and Inclusion Week can be found on the staff web pages.

[Events & Activities | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](#)

7.2 RW invites members of the group to take part in series 2 of the BeWell podcasts and ask for them to contact her directly.

8 STUDENTS EXPERIENCING TRAUMA

8.1 NE provided the group with an update on plans to support students experiencing trauma. The Scottish funding council has agreed funding with the counselling service to create more specialist trauma focused roles within the university.

8.2 The role of the new student support intern will focus on good practice across the sector, including signposting and looking at the resources available to those experiencing trauma in and around Scotland.

9 UPDATE ON THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACTION PLANS

9.1 The group received the mental health and wellbeing action plan. GF provided an update on any changes made to the plan since the group met in July. The wellbeing strategy action plan will take over from this document going forward.

9.2 The group received the wellbeing strategy action plan. The year 1 action plan has been drafted focusing on the strategic objectives of the strategy. RW welcomes comments on the plan and asks for them to be sent to her directly.

Action: All

9.3 A discussion was had on recent negative feedback given on the University's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and Occupational Health Service (OHS). RW

and GF will meet with HR and Care first to discuss this matter. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Action: RW/GF

- 9.4 The group was asked to send any feedback on the university support services to wellbeing@abdn.ac.uk

Action: All

10 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

11 AOCB

- 11.1 There were no other matter of competent business raised for discussion.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 Tuesday 25th January 2022 at 15:00, remotely, via Teams