



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING WORKING GROUP

Friday 15th January at 10:00, remotely on Teams

PRESENT: Garry Fisher (Chair) (GF), Naomi Taylor (Clerk) (NT), Jacquie Nicholson (JN), Rebekah Walker (RW), Karen Scaife (KS), Debbie Dyker (DD), Abbe Brown (AB), Rick Hughes (RH), Marylee Anderson (MA), David Hutchison (DH), Kerry Harrison (KH), Ceri Trevethan (CeT), Christopher Berry (CB), Nicola Stokes (NS), Timothy Baker (TB), Brian Paterson (BP), Mary Pryor (MP), Christine McGrath (CM), Vice President for Welfare (LoH).

APOLOGIES: Duncan Stuart (DS), Nick Edwards (NE), Tracey White (TW), Janine Chalmers (JC), Clare Trembleau (CT), Max Hope-Stone Bell (MH), Jacqueline Tuckwell (JT), R. Arnold (RA), Gail Cairns (GC), Christina Cameron (CC), Ernesto Compatangelo (EC), Stephen N Davies (SD), Lindsay Hamilton (LH), Alison Jenkinson (AJ), Jenny Killin (JK), Jane MacKenzie (JM), Richard P.K. Wells (RW), Alysia M Reid (AR), Tommy Daly (TD), Sherine Tabsh (ST), Morag Beedie (MB), Student Association President, AUSA Communities Officer, (RM), UCU.

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

GF announced to the group that Lindsay Hamilton will no longer be the HR representative for the group and will be replaced by Tracey White

Action: NT

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16th OCTOBER

The notes of the meeting held on 16th October were approved.

3 MATTERS ARISING

7.2 GF updated the group that he was currently consulting with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) on the Mental Health and Wellbeing policy. The policy went to the committee for discussion in December.

Completed

8.11 GF to liaise with HR on the issues around Stress. He will raise this issue at the upcoming People Management Meeting.

Action: GF

4 STUDENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The group received an update on the Student Partnership Agreement, in particular priority 3 (Accessibility, Inclusion and Wellbeing). This priority focuses on the current impact of COVID-19 on learning and welfare, physical and digital accessibility, mental health communication and race. They continue to signpost to support services through social media.

5 MENTAL HEALTH UPDATES

- 5.1** JN updated the group on the Student Mental Health Agreement and its purpose of setting out the University's commitments in relation to mental health. She noted that it has become a key document in reporting back to the student funding council. Discussions on the Student Mental Health Agreement are ongoing, and a paper will be provided prior to the next meeting.

Action: JN/LoH

- 5.2** JN discussed the mental health training. Additional funding has been made available for the mental health first aid training which cannot be delivered remotely. She noted the high level of interest from staff who wish to attend the training courses.

- 5.3** SAMH suicide prevention training has been made available to priority staff. Courses have proved beneficial in raising awareness of suicide prevention.

- 5.4** Suggestions on members of staff which should be a made priority for mental health first aid training to be sent to Wendy Booth at healthandsafety@abdn.ac.uk

Action: All

- 5.5** While mental health first aid training is still not possible there is still a range of online opportunities which are available to staff from NHS Scotland.

- 5.6** JN announced the upcoming eating disorders workshop and mental health awareness sessions in February which are available to book via course bookings.

- 5.7** AB thanked JN for the training that has been made available. She discussed the options of external training courses available outside the university and welcomed comments on whether staff should be made aware of them.

- 5.8** CT noted the free courses available for staff through the Skills Network.

- 5.9** It was suggested that information on these courses should be made available and circulated to the group.

Action: JN/AB

- 5.10** KS asked for details of upcoming events to be sent through the content submission process. <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/student-life/communicating-with-you-3032.php>

- 5.11** GF told the group he is working with HR to capture information on all available courses.

- 5.12** DD highlighted the importance of communication between teams and asked for this to be made an item on the agenda for the next meeting.

- 5.13** KS will provide an overview of communication processes at the next meeting.

Action: KS

6 MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS NETWORK

- 6.1** The mental health first aid network continues to be a beneficial forum. An intern is being appointed to carry out an evaluation of the mental health first aid and mental health champions networks.
- 6.2** The group discussed a process to capture mental health training and skills obtained by members of staff out with the university.

7 HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

- 7.1** The group received the healthy universities network paper. JN discussed the potential for formally joining the network. She welcomes comments from the group.
- 7.2** After discussion it was agreed that an audit be undertaken to document the various groups that the University is currently associated with, consider their purpose and associated workload before making a decision.

Action: KS/GF/JN

8 DRAFT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

- 8.1** The group received the draft mental health and wellbeing policy. GF noted the comments added to the policy following the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee meeting (EDIC). He welcomes all comments on the policy to be sent to him by close of play January 29th.

Action: All

- 8.2** The title for the mental health and wellbeing strategy has yet to be decided and whether 2 separate strategies would be preferred. GF welcomes comments on this matter to be sent to him.

Action: All

- 8.3** The Student Experience Team have been consulting with staff and students for their views of what wellbeing means to them. This has informed a questionnaire which will be issued to key University committees. All of this will be used to inform the development of the strategy.

Action: KS

- 8.4** GF highlighted that the group should keep in mind the wellbeing strategy is being created with a long-term focus.

9 WELLBEING UPDATES

- 9.1** The group received the updated wellbeing plan. RW provided an overview of activity for October to December, including engagement and feedback. It was highlighted that the 16 Days of Action Campaign and Winter Wellbeing Toolkit engagement was high.
- 9.2** The flu vaccinations previously held on campus were held at Baird's Pharmacy which allowed staff in Aberdeen city and shire to attend local branches. This proved very popular with over 200 staff attending appointments.
- 9.3** The BeWell Podcast series focusing on a range of wellbeing topics were launched. RW noted the high levels of engagement. She welcomes members of the group who wish to participate in future podcasts to contact her directly.

KS added the link to the [BeWell Podcast series](#).

- 9.4** The group received the wellbeing events and campaigns calendar. RW briefly discussed the overview of the calendar with the group. She welcomes comments on the calendar to be sent to her.

Action: All

- 9.5** KS highlighted the support made available to students who were isolating has received very positive feedback. A pre recorded presentation highlighting the support services available to new and returning students will be included in orientations for each school.

10 STAFF SURVEY

The group received the link to the staff survey results. GF noted the purpose of this item was to discuss the stress data which is not currently available. Refer to item 12.

11 ABERDEEN STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY (ASES)

The group received the link to the Aberdeen student experience survey results. The purpose of the survey was to identify key areas that students believe require improvement within schools.

- 11.1** KS discussed the ASK sessions with the group. These sessions are an opportunity for students to engage with members of university staff and the students association about topical issues. She welcomes comments on suggested topics for discussion to be sent to her.

KS added the link to the [ASK Sessions](#).

12 WORK RELATED STRESS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- 12.1** GF discussed the purpose of the group would be to review the stress policy, staff survey information on stress and the support available to staff. He welcomes comments and invites members of the group who would like to take part in these reviews to contact him.

Action: All

13 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACTION PLAN 2021

- 13.1** The group received the mental health and wellbeing action plan. GF will circulate the plan following updates from Health & Safety and The Wellbeing Team. He asked for any updates to be added to the plan to be sent to wellbeing@abdn.ac.uk

- 13.2** AB asked the group to be included in future discussions on - Embed mental health support into all monitoring and progression processes for students.

Action: KS

14 ACOB

- 14.1** JN announced to the group that she will be leaving the University in March and wanted to thank the group for their support during her time at the university.

14.2 CeT highlighted the benefit of the new student helpline that was made available in December. The feedback she has received has been very positive.

14.3 RH added that the student helpline had been utilised by students during the winter break.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 April 2021. Date to be advised.