

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING WORKING GROUP

Meeting Minutes - Tuesday 17th March 2023 @ 14.35pm Teams meeting

Attendees:

Duncan Stuart (DS), Karen Scaife (KS), Jason Bohan (JB), Garry Fisher (GF), Tim Baker (TB), Marylee Anderson (MA), Janine Chalmers (JC), Jemma Murdoch (JM), Ellie Dick (ED), Anna Goldhawk (AG), Christine Mcgrath (CM), Gail Mckeitch (GM), Dr Derryck Shewan (DS), VP for Welfare (Sai), Dr Mary Pryor (MP), Johanna Pilskog (JP) on minutes.

Apologies:

Graeme Kirkpatrick, VP for Communities (Camilo), Brian Paterson, Rhiannon Thompson, Nick Edwards, Clare Trembleau, Wendy Lowe, Christina Cameron, Anna Shea, Dee McDonald, Jane Mackenzie

1	INTRODUCTIONS Ellie Dick (ED) newly appointed Wellbeing Advisor for the Student Union.
2.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER Approved.
3.	MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING TRAINING AUDIT UPDATE AG provided an overview of audit. She highlighted the time frame for completing and rolling out recommendations. She advised that she is working in collaboration with the Student Mental Health Group to develop student training opportunities. The group were invited to provide any feedback and comments directly to AG.
4.	WELLBEING STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN UPDATE KS provided an overview of progress in the action plan. Current priorities include: Progressing wellbeing in the teaching and learning environment ACTION: KS to liaise with JB to discuss Workload Management Reduction Toolkit which aims to offer advice and guidance for staff across the university. Input required from members of the group to inform content is relevant for all. ACTION: KS to liaise with JB and others Notable current activities: Corporate Games – so far 50+ individual staff signed up to compete for Team UOA. (This is a 50% increase on total participation in 2022). Following the games staff connection will be encouraged through the newly formed UOA Staff BeWell Network which currently has 150+ members and rising, introducing new activity channels based on interest, has been described as “ <i>societies for staff</i> ”.

5.

MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

5.1 Student Mental Health Agreement

Progress is continuing to be made in several areas of the SMHA (Student Mental Health Agreement) action Plan. Many actions from the agreement are continuous rolling pieces of work where progress and contribution continue, some of which are longer term projects.

We continue to raise awareness of the support available through a variety of social media comms, awareness events for example Time to Talk Day most recently, Uni MH Day this week, as well as campaigns such as Be Well, Take A break and MHAWs etc.

We have had a recent meeting with the current VP Welfare Officer with a view to review the project so far and look at next steps. It was also noted that this should also reflect post covid changes and restrictions that may have impacted this work previously.

The agreement document is in place for 2022 – 2024, with the intention of an annual action plan. We will now look to produce an updated action plan for 2023 – 2024, which will reflect our progress to date and refocus our next steps, as well as reviewing leads due to changes in staffing during that time.

We will hope to circulate the updated action plan in due course for feedback/comments.

Some of the main areas we will focus on are:

- Working with schools to develop a more consistent framework for wellbeing and mental health support comms.
- Raising awareness of the signs of poor and deteriorating mental health
- Development of a guide for staff to support students' mental health.
- Review training for staff ensuring it is fit for purpose. (training audit)
- Continuing to link in with the Delivery of Education Group in relation to the extension work that is being undertaken.

5.2 MHFA (Mental Health First Aid) Network update

AG provided an overview of the ongoing review of the MHFA Network and advised that she would seek input from members of the group over the coming months.

She updated the group that new dates for MHFA training have been agreed and are in the course booking system. Promotion has commenced this week.

Of note we will stipulate that a prerequisite of anyone undertaking the training is that on completion of the course they will be automatically added to the University's Mental Health First Aid Network. She advised that she is developing monitoring and reporting systems to support MHFA. GF noted previous challenges of monitoring what the University MHFA Network accomplishes, and how we can prove institutional benefits if it is not measured in any way.

	<p>Discussion took place around specific groups for the training. AG confirmed targeted emails have been sent out to front line staff, those in support roles and those dealing regularly with challenging situations at Uni. ACTION: AG to discuss target groups with GF.</p> <p>To inform the review AG asked for input on who they felt the MHFA are for – students or staff?</p> <p>TB advised that LLMVC have highlighted who their MHFA staff are to students indicating that it was used more frequently by students. He highlighted that students prefer to meet with academics they know rather than support staff they did not know.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding how this sit with the University’s framework for Student Support. AG will consider as part of the review.</p> <p>JC asked about refresher training for staff who completed the foundational 2-day training a long time ago. AG advised that she is looking at developing a suite of additional training/skills boosters and practise for MHFA.</p> <p>AG happy to take comments on the review of the MHFA: anna.goldhawk1@abdn.ac.uk</p>
6.	<p>COST OF LIVING UPDATE</p> <p>Funding Hardship funding available for both UK and international students. Funding also available for Ukranian students – if you identify any students with financial worries, please direct them to Student Support.</p> <p>No notable rise in hardship funding applications from previous sessions.</p> <p>Working with Development Trust to identify further funding opportunities for students.</p> <p>Cost of Living initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grab and Go has been highly successful so far – looking at building further on this to address student budgeting and money worries - Security team have access to meal vouchers for out-of-hours support - Locked cupboards for essential items out of hours - Mindful menus offer students opportunities to have free breakfast and 50p soup <p>See all initiatives on the Cost of Living webpage.</p>
7.	<p>STUDENT SURVEY FEEDBACK – WELLBEING MATTERS</p> <p>The paper provided an overview of areas to develop as a result of student feedback through the ASES (Aberdeen Student Experience Survey). Of note work is ongoing to develop the existing Teams site for Students with Specific Support Needs/Experiences so that it becomes more accessible and useful for students. ACTION: ED and VP Welfare to provide an update on progress at the next meeting.</p>

9.	AOCB Many GPs in Aberdeen are currently not taking new patient registrations. Comms have been scheduled to go out to students on ways to seek support, and updated on the webpage .
10.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 13 th June 2023 at 13:35 via Teams