

# **Staff and Students** Health and Wellbeing Strategy



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# Our Vision

Our vision is for the University to become an exemplar institution by creating a learning environment and an organisational culture that enhances the health and wellbeing of its community and enables people to be productive and happy at work and study making them more likely to achieve their full potential.

The Durham University Strategy 2017-2027 notes that the core asset of Durham University, “is our people” and “the University is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our staff and students”. This is important as the success of the University depends on the ability of our people to contribute their best and achieve their potential. For this to happen we need to provide an environment for work and study where health and wellbeing is a priority. Health and Wellbeing is already highlighted as a key strategic aim of the People Strategy and is recognised in the Wider Student Experience Strategy as a critical factor in delivering a world-class student experience.





## Strategic Alignment and Interdependencies

The development of the University's first pan-institutional Health and Wellbeing strategy which outlines a new and proactive stance to improving the health and wellbeing of everyone who studies and works at the University together with a comprehensive supporting action plan is aligned to or underpins many institutional strategies and initiatives including;

- Wider Student Experience strategy
- People Strategy
- Health and Safety Strategy.
- Respect Commission
- University's values – specifically “enabling”
- Access and Participation Plan
- A change management project has been commissioned by UEC to review review and propose an optimum model for the future delivery of the student support and wellbeing function across the University.
- Curriculum Reform project
- Faculty and Department Process Review (FDPR) Project

### Duty of Care

It is important that the University sets out the extent, and limits, of its duty of care in relation to health and wellbeing as it is an area of increasing challenge in relation to both students and staff. The University has a duty of care to its staff and students, which is enshrined in Health and Safety, Equality and Employment Legislation.

[durham.ac.uk/wellbeing/dutyofcare](https://durham.ac.uk/wellbeing/dutyofcare)



# Gap Analysis: Health Needs Assessments 2019 (HNA's)

This strategy has been informed by extensive work undertaken across the University to understand the challenges in relation to health and wellbeing, and several analyses and initiatives have been undertaken.

The full findings of the two HNAs can be found on the University Health & Wellbeing website. This approach has identified the health and wellbeing strategic themes to be addressed in this iteration of the strategy and the initial action planning that will underpin the strategy delivery. The HNAs will be repeated during the lifetime of this strategy, most likely after 3 years. There is evidently overlap between the two populations as well as distinct themes:



## Mental Health and Stress

Both populations identified this as a critical issue impacting on their ability to work and study effectively.

Students identified a sub-set of issue that were contributing to their concern in this area which need to be investigated further by the University community to ensure they are better understood and responded to. These included:

- Worries about their academic engagement (including managing time and deadlines, exams and assessments).
- The availability and cost of housing and other financial worries.

For staff, the stigma attached to mental health was an issue, as was the confidence of managers to discuss and support staff with mental health concerns.

## Healthy Lifestyles

Both populations highlighted a range of lifestyle issue that impacted on their health and wellbeing. Key issues for students included:

- Sleep and diet
- Substance use.
- Sexual health provision.

Staff highlighted the need for greater support for staff who:

- Were experiencing symptoms of the menopause.
- Had difficulty and the capacity to undertake more exercise and physical activity.
- Had concerns in relation to sleep, diet and alcohol.

# The 5 Health and Wellbeing Strategic Goals

**Five Strategic Goals** have been identified and are aligned to realise the vision.

These goals have been developed to reinforce the 'Whole University' approach, viewing health and wellbeing holistically and reflecting interdependencies. The strategy will be delivered through these goals, in addition to many core activities that are discharged on a 'business as usual' basis.

Goal 1  
**Communicate with Purpose**



Goal 2  
**Continual Improvements**



Goal 3  
**Embrace Learning and Development**



Goal 4  
**Foster Collaborative Partnerships**



Goal 5  
**Enhance the Staff and Student Experience**







Goal 2

# Continual Improvements

## Our Aim

We will continually review and improve our policies, processes, and approach and will benchmark against exemplars of good practice within the sector and PHE and H&S Executive guidance. We will follow a systematic change management approach that will enhance our health and wellbeing capability.



- The Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group will work with the Vice Provost (Education) to commission further work to understand the wellbeing challenges arising for students from engagement with their academic studies, including managing time/deadlines, exams/assessments, relationship to supervisor. The work will seek to identify which students are impacted and in what settings, considering variation by student background, programme of study, degree level. Analysis and recommendations will be shared with relevant stakeholders and governance bodies.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Determine the timeframe for any submission for University Mental Health Charter (2019) status. Review sector-wide progress and outcome of the Student Support Review prior to any submission.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Use the University Mental Health Charter to inform the Student Support Review.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Review of staffing resource needed for Charter project: resource and expertise is needed for project-management of benchmarking and any subsequent Charter Action Plan.  
**Expected 2022**



- Apply for University Mental Health Charter status.  
**Expected 2022/23**
- Allocate dedicated HROD resource to support the development and implementation of the staff mental wellbeing training programme and the wider staff health and wellbeing initiatives.  
**Expected 2021**
- Benchmark the University's current offer against the Thriving at Work standards (2017). and the Mental Health Charter criteria to help inform further actions.  
**Expected 2022/23**
- Review of current student support and wellbeing provision with implementation of an enhanced and optimised approach across the University. Review completed by end of 2020/21 academic year, implementation of preferred option for future delivery.  
**Expected 2021/2022**
- Introduce a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for student support, providing a single student record that tracks the various support services provided across Departments, Colleges and professional services.  
**Expected by January 2022**
- Formalising a project to review a series of pan-institutional processes that relate to student progress including the Serious Adverse Circumstances procedure and Academic Progress Notices. Reviewing these processes will offer opportunities to enhance the wellbeing of students as they are widely acknowledged to be inefficient and not sufficiently student focussed.
- Undertake student journey process redesign in areas identified as being notably inefficient and explore the optimal use of online technologies to underpin student support.  
**Expected January 2022**





- Reviewing and extending our range of benefits to promote wellbeing, including access to support for financial wellbeing such as retirement planning and debt counselling. **Completed 2020**
- HR Reward team to continually look for and promote benefits that support colleague health and wellbeing for example, discounted membership to Maiden Castle facilities. **Ongoing**
- Educating our managers, developing appropriate policies and signposting sources of support for colleagues experiencing menopausal symptoms. **Expected by 2021**
- Reviewing our policies on flexible working and family friendly polices to ensure they reflect best practice. Ongoing throughout strategy timeframe commenced 2020 Identify and implement good practice both within and external to the HE sectors specifically relating to flexible working, and family friendly policies. **Expected 2021/2**
- Develop guidance and protocols to ensure that work/life balance can be protected and improved. **Expected 2021/22**
- Embedding wellbeing considerations into University systems and processes, for example when supporting transformational change or developing new ways of working.
- Link Health and Wellbeing to the wider concept of Employee Experience, ensuring all colleagues can Thrive, Perform and be Engaged. For example, by implementing a continuous improvement approach to the provision of a consistent and equitable transformational change programme that can be tailored through the delivery to meet specific departmental requirements. **Expected 2022**
- Ensure HR and reward policies are linked to the outcomes and recommendations of the Respect Commission. Allocate dedicated HROD resource to support the development and implementation of the staff mental wellbeing training programme and the wider staff health and wellbeing initiatives. **Expected 2021**
- Benchmark the University's current offer against the Thriving at Work standards (2017), and the Mental Health Charter criteria to help inform further actions. **Expected 2022/23**





Goal 3

# Embrace Learning and Development

## Our Aim

We will reinforce and strengthen a range of learning and development opportunities enabling staff and students to maximise their health and wellbeing.



- Development of an enhanced Mental Health training offer across the institution for all staff who interact with students and/or staff, and expansion of peer support with training and supervision for the student and staff groups involved.
- Review Mental Health awareness training and implement additional evidence-based options eg Connect 5 for staff who support students and/or staff.  
**Expected 2022/23**
- Provide Mental Health First Aid training for staff who support students and/or staff when identified by risk assessment.  
**Expected by 2022/23**
- Counselling Service to promote and offer debrief sessions for welfare and Nightline reps where their work causes distress.  
**Ongoing**
- Counselling Service to deliver facilitated support sessions for peer groups adversely affected by a friend or housemate's mental health or substance misuse difficulties.  
**Ongoing**
- MHAs to continue to provide DSU peer support training to Common Room /welfare reps.  
**Ongoing**



- Counselling Service to develop facilitated support groups bringing together students facing similar issues and/or life experiences. Scope for these groups to develop into peer-led resources.  
**Expected by October 2020 and ongoing**
- Establish Counselling Service link with Student Minds peer support group to ascertain current and future provision.  
**Expected by January 2021**
- Counselling Service to be available to provide appropriate training for student led groups if/when required.
- To assess the need for this and explore appropriate funding to cover the loss of availability of staff if necessary.  
**Expected by March 2021**
- Establishment of staff resource to meet training delivery need an additional MHA focused primarily on delivery of mental health training both online and face-to-face. An active practitioner engaged in DU mental health provision who can respond to staff questions and development needs with specific experience of DU mental health work. Will lead work on future application for Mental Health Charter status.  
**Expected by September 2021**
- Health and Wellbeing implementation group to review all mental health training on offer and determine which level of training is required for which group of staff and if certain courses should be mandated for certain groups of staff.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Enhance staff onboarding to ensure health and wellbeing support, resources and training is embedded as part of the wider Employee Experience.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Identify a staff lead for peer support for the Mental Health first aiders.  
**Expected by January 2022/23**
- Establish supervision and support sessions for staff peer support groups and Mental Health First Aiders via the University Counselling service.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Reviewing our leadership and managerial training programmes to ensure health and well-being is embedded, promoting the importance of positive and approachable leaders with insight into the behaviours that can impact on well-being at work.
- Revisit and launch the in-house 'Essentials' leadership programme inclusive of Health and Wellbeing module highlighting the support available for a range of health and wellbeing issues including menopause and mental health.  
**Expected December 2020**
- In addition to the Core ILM leadership Modules, Managers to complete Staff Support Modules within the Mental Health Training Modules online.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Development program aligned to the Durham Leadership Attributes, Resilient leadership for Senior Leaders, and inclusive of learning circles.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Working with Managers and Leaders to explore and where appropriate introduce different ways of working to reflect the changes to the working environment triggered by the Covid pandemic.  
**Expected 2021/22**



Goal 4

# Foster Collaborative Partnerships

## Our Aim

We will foster a culture of collaboration and cocreation. Building relationships and partnerships to deliver health and wellbeing support and resources that benefit the University and the local community as a whole.



- Developing formal strategic and sustained engagement with Public Health and NHS services to review the University's health and well-being initiatives and campaigns to ensure they are evidence-based and national best practice. Exploratory work with these partners to determine whether the University may rapidly enable enhanced services for the Durham University community in particular areas of need highlighted by our HNAs such as alcohol and substance misuse, lack of sleep, sexual health, stress, and healthy eating.
- Secondment from DCC of Public Health Advanced Practitioner for a fixed term of two years.  
**Expected by September 2021**
- Development of sector leading initiatives and campaigns.  
**Expected by September 2022/23**
- Recruitment and appointment of an Occupational Health Nurse for students.  
**Expected by September 2021**
- The University will work effectively with the NHS and other services to deliver integrated mental health care and improved risk management for students.
- Establish direct dialogue with local NHS Commissioners to influence the provision of improved out of hours mental health support.  
**Ongoing**



- Develop a shared pathway with Talking Changes to facilitate direct referral processes into this service for students accessing the Counselling Service.  
**Expected by - First stage: use of same assessment tools by November 2020. Final stage: direct referral into Talking Changes from Counselling Service by April 2021**
- Continue the co-ordinated work with the RSACC provision of specialist voluntary section service. Review the uptake of this service and waiting times for students.
- Explore further resource to be invested in this specialist service to further support students and the work of the SMV Team. The wait can sometimes be to the detriment of the student, and currently if a final year student is referred, depending on the time of year, they may not be seen before the end of the academic year.  
**Expected to be ongoing with exploration of extension of service with SMV Team and RSACC by October 2021**
- MHAs to liaise with other NHS services via regular network meetings to explore opportunities for streamlined student mental health pathways. Priority areas are options for an NHS out-of-hours walk-in mental health service in Durham City and developing a shared student care pathway with the Crisis and Access services.  
**Ongoing**
- Develop specific suicide/postvention strategy drawing on HE sectoral guidance and guidance on suicide clusters.  
**During 2021/22 academic year**
- Introduction of a clear protocol for College, Academic and PSS staff on the management of mental health risk.  
**Expected completion by end of 2020/21 academic year**



Goal 5

# Enhancing the Staff and Student Experience

## Our Aim

Responsive Health and Wellbeing initiatives facilitating the opportunity for our staff and students to thrive, perform and engage at Durham University whatever the circumstances. Allied to this is the timely response to the Covid-19 pandemic, prioritising, identifying and implementing targeted campaigns.



- Exploring the use of space on campus to facilitate the delivery of health and well-being services including external specialists.
- Establish a Task and Finish Group to explore, in depth, provision of space on campus dedicated for health and wellbeing activities. **Expected by September 2023**
- Accessible health services on site, including vaccination clinics, sexual health services, drug and alcohol advice service, and GP provision. **Expected by September 2025**
- Identifying and implementing Health and Wellbeing initiatives and promotion events that are evidence based and are focussed on both intervention and, to a greater degree, prevention.
- Establish a termly Catering Consultative Group with membership from staff and students of diverse backgrounds. **Expected by September 2021**
- Work with our Catering Team to review the range and cultural diversity of healthy food options available on campus. **Expected 2022**
- Enhancing support for students and staff to manage their concerns regarding debt, budgeting and long- term financial challenges.



- Delivery of financial advice, workshops and campaigns. **Expected by September 2021**
- Review of financial support available from the University. **Expected by July 2022**
- Appointment of a Financial Adviser for Students who is a member of the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA) and can provide advice including debt management, budgeting, housing issues and long-term financial challenges. **Expected by July 2021**
- Addressing the cost, availability and quality of housing and accommodation as mental health stressors. Work with the Students' Union and local partners, including Durham County Council, to explore the development and operationalisation of a housing accreditation scheme appropriate for the benefit of student tenants: benchmarking of models from comparator institutions; **Expected by July 2021 development and implementation. Expected 2021/22**
- Review of the advice and support available for students with housing issues followed by the implementation of an enhanced partnership approach across the University and the Students' Union.
- Delivering an enhanced policy framework and approach in relation to substance use amongst students and staff. Develop a common, pan-university, peer-led cultural norms campaign on alcohol. **Expected by September 2022**
- Review and renew the Code of Practice on Controlled Drugs. Establish a Task and Finish Group which includes students and external stakeholders/specialists. **Expected completion 2021/22 academic year**
- Establish clear governance and responsibility for implementation and review of the new code/statement. **Expected by September 2022**
- Develop a drugs education programme for students. **Expected by September 2022**
- Refresh the Student Alcohol Awareness and Use Policy including clear governance and responsibility for implementation. **Expected by September 2022**
- Enabling co-produced and peer led campaigns in: sexual health, alcohol/drugs, infectious diseases (including vaccinations) healthy eating, sleep and housing Students and Staff Coordinated Sleep Well Campaign (to include noise) and information across the University. **Expected by September 2022**



- Develop a common, pan-university, peer-led cultural norms campaign on alcohol.  
**Expected by September 2022**
- Embed regular training on alcohol for students and staff.  
**Expected by September 2022**
- Develop a pan-university and peer led campaign with advice on house hunting.  
**Expected by September 2021**
- Sleep clearly integrated into study and revision skills training.  
**Expected by January 2022**
- Sexual health campaigns across the University developed in partnership with the NHS Sexual Health Improvement and Protection Service and student representatives.  
**Expected by September 2022**
- Develop a drugs education programme for students.  
**Expected by September 2022**
- Improve pre-arrival information on infectious diseases and vaccination for International arrivals.  
**Expected by September 2022**
- Develop campaigns throughout the academic year on infectious diseases and vaccinations including materials particularly appropriate for International students.  
**Expected by September 2022**
- Provide cookery classes and nutritional advice to promote behavioural change.  
**Expected by September 2022**
- Put in place sector-leading provision in Chaplaincy and Faith Support, including through new worship facilities and through ensuring understanding throughout student and staff support services of the varying needs of different faith communities.
- Collaboration of the Chaplaincy Network with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Unit, student support services and others to strengthen faith inclusion.  
**Expected by September 2021**



- Benchmarking and external peer review of Chaplaincy provision.  
**Expected by September 2022**
- Increase the number and diversity of Chaplains working across the University, particularly the appointment of an Imam to lead Friday Prayers in the University's Islamic Prayer Rooms.  
**Expected by September 2021**
- Develop the post of the Coordinating Chaplain, exploring the possibility of making it a full-time role.  
**Expected by September 2021**
- Provide central Chaplaincy and Faith space particularly for the Pan-University Non-Contractual Chaplains (NCCs).  
**Expected by September 2022**
- New worship facilities for our Muslim students and staff.  
**Expected by September 2025**
- Continuing to implement our inclusive teaching and learning projects, sport and activity initiatives, extra-curricular activities, the Durham Inspired Award and collegiate community projects and ensuring that significant resource with a health and wellbeing focus is deliberately provided, with subsequent impact measurement, within these projects.
- Develop processes through the Health and Wellbeing Advisory group to ensure that health and wellbeing is resourced, and the impact appropriately measured.  
**Expected 2021/22**
- Implementing an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to ensure all our employees have access to timely support, advice, guidance and resources to assist employees throughout the university with personal and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, health, and mental or emotional well-being. Staff Procure and launch an EAP.  
**Completed July 2020**
- Include EAP resources within the Wellbeing Hub and training resources. Expected 2021 Link EAP to University wide staff initiatives.  
**Expected 2022**
- Develop the post of the Coordinating Chaplain, exploring the possibility of making it a full-time role.  
**Expected by September 2021**
- Provide central Chaplaincy and Faith space particularly for the Pan-University Non-Contractual Chaplains (NCCs).  
**Expected by September 2022**



## Strategic Context

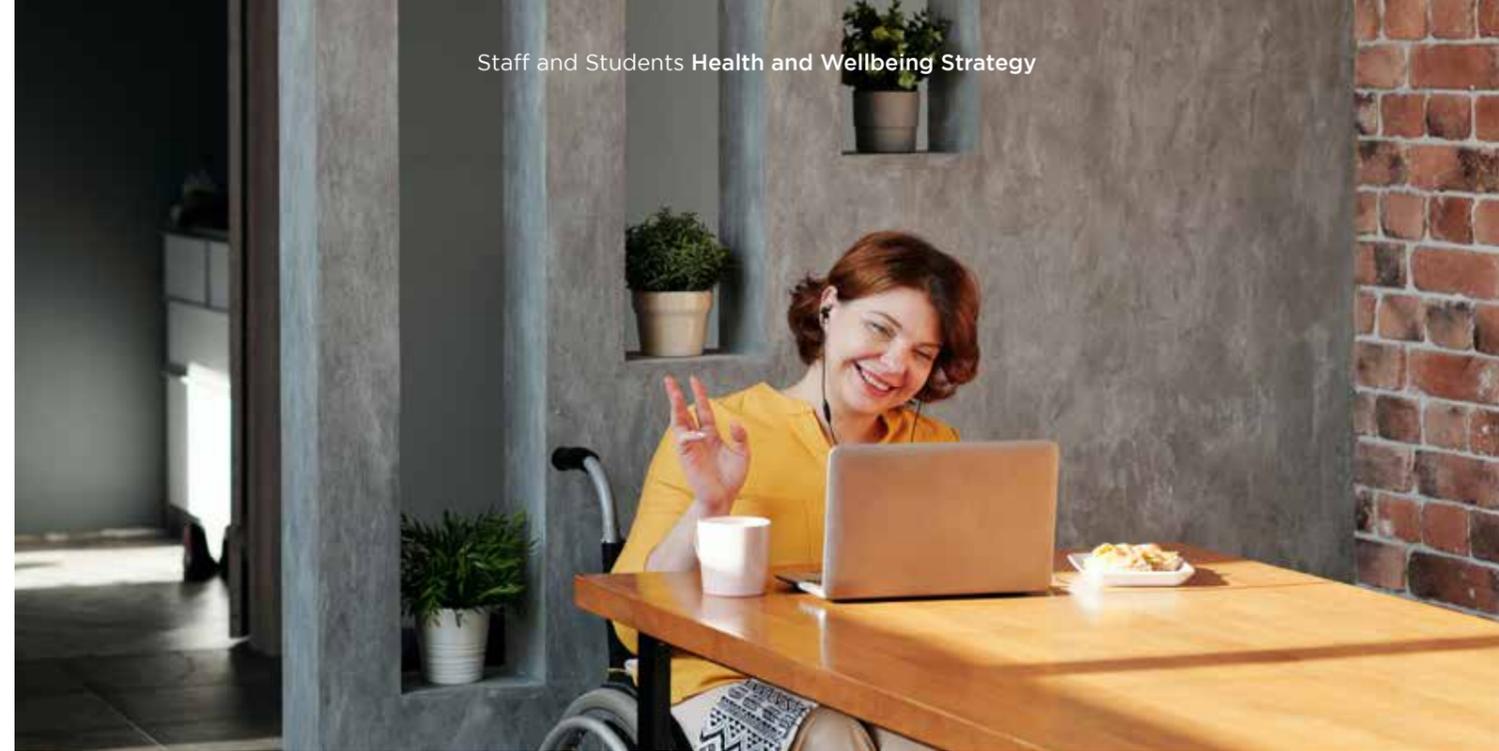
A Student and Staff Health and Wellbeing Implementation Group has been established and is joint chaired by the Director of HR and Organisation Development and the Director of Student Support and Wellbeing. The Group will report to the Executive Sponsors and through to UEC, Senate and Council.



The Group will be advised by the Wider Student Experience Committee and the HR Senior Management Team and will include student representation. It is also recognised that there is considerable expertise available within Academic Departments and Professional Support Services across the University that will be utilised to inform the continued development of the action plan.

The Group will also collaborate with relevant advisory groups, composed of key stakeholders from staff groups such as Occupational Health, Health and Safety, HR-OD, EDI, Faculty Officers, Professional Support Services, Colleges, Experience Durham, Trade Unions, BAME, Disability, MAMS, Women @DU, LGBTQ+ networks and student groups, (Students' Union and Common Rooms) and external partners (GPs, NHS, DCC PH, PHE).

The Health & Wellbeing Implementation Group will monitor progress against agreed KPI's, and provide regular updates on progress to UEC, Senate and Council.



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