

Student Mental Health Agreement 2020-2021 Project Diary

GCU and GCU Students' Association

Institution:	Glasgow Caledonian University and GCU Students' Association
Lead Contact from Students Association:	Zoe Nicholson (2020-21) and Olivia Hall (2021- 2022) – Vice President SCEBE
Lead Contact from Institution:	Rachel Simpson – Mental Health Project Officer (2020 – 2022)
Other staff working on the project:	<p>GCU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avril Williams – Head of Student Wellbeing (2020 – 2022); • Joanna Radkowska – Student Wellbeing Advisers (2022) <p>GCU Students' Association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirsty McGregor (2021 – 21), Meg MacDonald (2021) and Lauren Scott (2021-2022)– Student Adviser; • Vincent Waters (2020 – 21) – Mental Health and Wellbeing Officer

This document contains the Working Areas and Progress Report for 2020 – 2021 and Mid-Point Review 2021 for the Student Mental Health Agreement and Action Plan for Glasgow Caledonian University and GCU Students' Association.

Additional documents including the full Action Plan, and 2021- 2022 Evaluations can be found in the

- Student Mental Health Agreement 2020 - 2022
- End of Year Report which contains additional evaluation for 2021-2022 and evaluation of additional working areas identified and embedded from the Mid Point Review in 2021.

If you have any queries please contact GCU Student Wellbeing at StudentWellbeing@GCU.ac.uk or the GCU Students' Association Advice Centre at advice@GCUstudents.co.uk

Working Areas and Progress Report in 2020 – 2021

Actions	Progress
Working Area 1 - Campaigns	
Exam Stress Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students' Association will run a campaign around exam stress, how to deal with this and in particular in the current more isolating times during remote learning. This will run prior to/during each exam diet. • Due to pandemic this has had to be online only – link to resources and exam stress information and advertising how to get support.
Mental Health Awareness Week 2021 and 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Awareness Week (the 10th – 16th of May 2021) will focus on the theme of Nature and Environment from the Mental Health Foundation. • There were a range of activities across the week for staff and students, including: Suicide Alertness Training, Climate Change and Mental Health, Compassion and Kindness in Leadership, Mindfulness, Meditation, Mind your Mate and more. https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/webinarsandonlineevents/mentalhealthawarenessweek2021/
Here to Help Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October 2020, on World Mental Health Day a campaign which focused on the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff, Here to Help, was launched. https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/heretohelp/

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The campaign was developed with stakeholders across the GCU Community and is being further developed to include contextualised and tailored messaging for student and staff experiences.
Keep in Touch Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep in touch campaign has been launched in March 2021. https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/keepintouch/
Working Area 2- Strategic Approach	
UUK Suicide Safer Universities Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCU's Student Wellbeing Advisory Group has approved the establishment of a task and finish working group to take forward the Student Mental Health Action Plan strand of work to develop a suicide prevention, intervention and postvention framework. In common with other UK HEIs, this is a priority development area for GCU and an important aspect of our overall approach to safeguarding the wellbeing of our students and staff. The group have established a draft framework and action plan to align GCU's practises and enhance support with the UUK Suicide Safer Universities Framework. https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2018/guidance-for-universities-on-preventing-student-suicides.pdf
Engage with Student Minds University Mental Health Charter Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCU were selected as one of three institutions, and the only in Scotland to work with Student Minds' on the pilot of their University Mental Health Charter. We submitted a self-assessment and undertook various focus groups which were considered by an expert panel at Student Minds. Recommendations have been received, and we are in the process of undertaking enhancement and establishing an action plan in partnership with the GCU Community.

	https://www.studentminds.org.uk/charter.html
Mentally Healthy Universities Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCU appointed a Mentally Healthy University Coordinator who is an embedded worker from SAMH. The role works to enhance provisions available for staff support and delivers a series of training webinars for staff supporting students and are developing a series of Suicide Alertness Training.
Enhance the Student Mental Health Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student Mental Health Action Plan has been further enhanced and developed, including priority areas of work identified in supporting our students in response to Covid-19. The plan has been revised and approved at meetings of the Student Wellbeing Advisory Group on March 2021, and September, June and May 2020. There will be a half-day strategic planning with the group to produce recommendations for a 5-year long action plan for student mental health.
Continue meetings of the Student Wellbeing Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student Wellbeing Advisory Group is ongoing, with several additional meetings throughout 2020 in relation to co-ordinating support for students as a result of Covid-19.
Working Area 3- Events	
Mindful Mondays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing with the Students' Association Full time officer/Mental Health and Wellbeing led social media campaign sharing mental health and wellbeing tips and resources every week (on Mondays). <p>Relaunched on social media (FB and Instagram) in October</p>

Mental Health and Wellbeing Online Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Advice Centre organised ten wellbeing events over this academic year. Four of these took place during Fresher's Week and they included Reflexology, Resilience and Personal Effectiveness, Improving Motivation and Laughter Yoga. • A further two events: Improving Motivation Workshop and a Mindfulness Taster Session took place during TRI 1. • In Trimester 2 four further wellbeing events were organised, including Reflexology for stress relief during the T1 exam diet, Building Resilience and Personal Effectiveness prior to the start of the new trimester, a session on Covid Anxiety in February and a session on Building Confidence in March. • A total of 75 students attended and participated in the sessions over the year. This was lower than hoped for, particularly as a total of 120 students had registered for the sessions in advance. • Those who attended the sessions left positive feedback and the facilitators feedback was that they felt the participants appreciated the events. For next year we will aim to continue this provision with perhaps 3 events per term and the hope that at least some will be in person events.
Feel Fab Feb 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel Fab Feb 2021 was a month of online activities organised by GCU Students' Association to encourage students to come together and support

	<p>each other's mental and physical wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The month of February featured a free inclusive programme of events ran by our sports clubs, societies and groups. Some events included online fitness classes, virtual social runs, podcasts and live streams. Alongside these, our Vice President also shared well-being tips and videos from our student volunteers to show the positive impact volunteering can have on our mental health. This will continue into activities for 2022.
World Mental Health Day Events - 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This year to celebrate World Mental Health Day Glasgow Caledonian University and GCU Students' Association shared a range of resources for our students and staff to enhance their health and wellbeing. 2020's year's theme was 'Mental Health for All'. <p>An independent webpage was established to host further information on staff and student mental health and wellbeing support, external activities from other organisations in the wellbeing sector on health and wellbeing, and ways for staff and students to co-create and submit ideas on what more we can do to support them. Activities included a live session from GCU Students' Association, and the launch of the Here to Help campaign.</p> <p>https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/webinarsandonlineevents/worldmentalhealthday2020/</p>
University Mental Health Day Events – 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This year to celebrate University Mental Health Day Glasgow Caledonian University and GCU Students' Association worked to host a series of events

to enhance the mental health literacy and accessibility of support for students and staff.

Activities included a launch of a consultation Padlet, Mindfulness, classes with the GCU Gym (The Arc: Health and Wellbeing, and more)

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/webinarsandonlineevents/universitymentalhealthday2021>

- Collaboration between GCU and GCU Students' Association will occur again for the next University Mental Health Day.

Working Area 4- Workshops

Continue provision of Scottish Mental Health First Aid training to students via Student Leadership Programme

- Due to the pandemic, delivery of the Scottish Mental Health First Aid Award was paused throughout 2020 and 2021. An evaluation of the programme when it was reintroduced in 2022 is available in the End of Year Report.

Continue to offer free mindfulness course for our Students

- GCU Students were able to access free mindfulness courses online through collaborate ultra in the first trimester of 20/21, and the second course of mindfulness sessions has been publicised.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gcu-student-introduction-to-mindfulness-tickets-126558859957>

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/webinarsandonlineevents/>

A full review of the provision is available in the end of year 2022 report.

Continue to offer the Mental Health Matters Workshop at inductions

- In response to online working from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Mental Health Matters induction workshops were offered online.

The Disability Team delivered a one-day programme which aims to provide a smoother transition from school/college to university, to address anxieties around starting university and to explore the support available at GCU. We will also look at self-care and how to look after your mental health whilst at university.

Some of the topics that will be covered on the day include:

- Introduction to support available at GCU
- Strategies to help you manage your studies at university
- Introduction to stress management
- Mindfulness taster

The pre and post evaluations for 19/20 are in our offices on campus. For 20/21, our Survey Monkey results host feedback about the session to enhance this for future cohorts. Overall participant feedback was exceedingly positive, with responses such as "This was really useful and reduced my anxieties surrounding moving as I know there is support" and "Really useful information and now know where I am able to get support."

Participant Numbers

- The sessions were piloted during 2019-20 and attendance was:
2019 session – 37 invited, 23 students attended (in person)
- 2020 session – 46 invited, 19 students attended (online sessions)

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/disabilityservice/howtogetsupport/prospectivestudents/mentalhealthmatters/>

The session for 21/22 has been published and will occur in September 2021.

As a result of COVID19 and the move to online teaching and learning, we have adapted the programme to enable us to deliver it remotely this year. There will be three sessions, and we will run these on Zoom and Collaborate Ultra. We will deliver a mix of live and pre-recorded sessions, as well as links to resources for you to engage with in your own time

Continue to develop and deliver our Summer Transitions workshops

The GCU Summer Transition Programme is a well-established programme, in place at GCU since 2010, which seeks to support new students in making the transition to higher education from college or school. We recognise that autistic students typically experience higher levels of anxiety about starting university, and have difficulty imaging what university is going to be like. Students may also have difficulty socially interacting and making friends. The programme is designed to address these concerns, effectively providing an enhanced induction, with the opportunity to meet key members of staff and other new students in a relaxed environment.

The programme runs over 2 afternoons and 1 full day, over a 3-week period prior to induction week (August – September). The format is a mixture of informal presentations, group discussions, games, campus tours etc.

Any applicant who has accepted an offer of a place at GCU who has disclosed autism or autistic type difficulties (social communication, coping with change, self-advocacy etc) on their self-assessment questionnaire is invited and encouraged to attend. The majority of new students will attend - 18 out of 26 in 2018.

The itinerary has been modified since its inception, to make it more interactive and engaging, with less formal presentation. Attendees on the programme are invited to complete a series of evaluations, using confidence rating scales, at the start and end of each day. These are used to both evaluate the programme and inform the student's needs assessment – identifying areas in which the student lacks confidence and requires additional support or advice.

It was recognised as a model of good practice by the Scottish Funding Council in 2010, who provided a grant to fund dissemination of the model by a series of regional workshops in Scotland. The model, and research findings, have also been disseminated in presentations at various conferences in Scotland and overseas. We have also received visits and queries regarding the programme from universities in the UK.

Participant Numbers:

STP numbers	attended	invited*
2010	2	
2011	4	
2012	8	
2013	12	
2014	13	
2015	14	
2016	12	29
2017	18	25
2018	18	26

*all known autistic applicants with a firmly accepted conditional or unconditional offer

Working Area 5- Supporting Specific Student Groups

QAA Scotland Collaborative Cluster on Supporting the Mental Wellbeing of our BAME and LGBTQ+ Student Communities

In December 2020 GCU were successful in their application to lead a QAA Scotland Collaborative Cluster on Supporting the Mental Wellbeing of our BAME and LGBTQ+ Student Communities. As of January 2020, initial planning meetings have occurred, and an article on the GCU Webpages has been published.

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/theuniversity/universitynews/2021-bameandlgbtqstudentmentalhealth/>

Parents and Carers Resources

To enhance support for parents and carers and build upon the booklet launched in 2020, the student wellbeing team developed and launched an online webpage which outlines support available to parents, carers and GCU students, and delivered a series of online webinars as part of the GCU induction programme for the parents and carers of GCU Students.

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/>

Working Area 6- Promotion of Student Services

Promotion of GCU Students' Association Advice Centre, Nightline and GCU Wellbeing Team Services and Continue to be involved in Student Services Fairs

- To ensure a high awareness of mental health, advice and wellbeing services amongst staff and students we undertake ongoing promotion of GCU Students' Association services and events.
- focus on promoting on Instagram in addition to FB and Twitter and using stories on insta/facebook to ensure more reach.
- The SA and Communications Coordinator Refreshed the Advice Centre communications plan with new images and messages, including Facebook and Instagram stories to attract more students to the service.
- Over 2020/21 this has included 4 targeted digital campaigns in addition to our bi monthly rolling social media and all student email communications.
- These targeted social media campaigns focussed on mental health and suicide support and resources; plagiarism support; accommodation (particularly the changes in legislation due to covid -19) and promoting the Advice Centre to raise awareness of the year round support available.
- Nightline was closed until Trimester B when it re-opened with a scaled down online only remote service.
- Advertising of this was included in the above.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally, this year, GCU Wellbeing Services alongside GCUSA Nightline have been printed on the back of Student ID Cards • The GCU Wellbeing service have expanded their presence on social media to include Instagram and will continue to advertise through existing channels – including the GCU Student Wellbeing Service newsletter
Continue the Student Wellbeing Newsletter within the GCU Wellbeing Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The weekly wellbeing newsletter has been issued to students throughout the academic year. The newsletter has highlighted resources and campaigns which can be accessed remotely and has received positive feedback from students and staff.
Introduce and continue to develop an online platform for student wellbeing	<p>A platform on our VLE has been published for Student Wellbeing. This is reported and evaluated in the 2022 End of Year Report.</p> <p>https://bit.ly/GCUWellbeingModuleInfo</p>
Introduce Togetherall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October GCU introduced Togetherall for GCU staff and students. Regularly communications about the service have been undertaken by the GCU wellbeing team and GCU student communications team. <p>https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/togetherall/</p>
Working Area 7- Staff Support	
Identifying and Supporting Students in Distress Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Identifying and Supporting Students in Distress Handbook is being updated for GCU Staff in light of remote working during the pandemic. This is currently under consultation with our clinical staff members and will be finalised, approved, and published on the GCU Webpages.

The current version is available at:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/worriedaboutsomene/staffmemberconcernedaboutastudent/>

Working Area 8- Peer Support

Start work towards creating a large scale peer to peer support network

- Scope out lottery funding for a roll out over several years of Mind Your Mate training in order to create a large-scale P2P support network of students at GCU.
- Lottery funding bid for roll out of externally provided Emotional Resilience and Suicide Prevention training session has been submitted.
- If successful, project should start in June – roll out to student body 2021-22.
- Aim is to apply for further funding after year 1 to enable student trainers to be trained to roll out training sessions in house as a sustainable rolling programme with SA staff support.

Continue to provide Nightline peer listening and info service 7am-7pm Mon-Friday during term time.

- Nightline was temporarily suspended due to issues with safety for volunteers during covid (who work in pairs from the Nightline office in overnight shifts) during trimester A.
- Nightline re-opened in trimester B providing a reduced 3 night per week service remotely from volunteer's homes via online instant messaging service only.

Mid-point Review 2021

What has worked well and what have you done well? What have been the highlights?

- Feel Fab February – Good engagement from clubs and societies who were still keen to do something even though we were online. The focus on mental health was a driver for many clubs, they really wanted to support this initiative.
- Mental Health Online events – some were very well attended, and feedback was positive. This was a new provision piloted in response to the pandemic.
- Providing wellbeing events from the SA/Advice centre over the year is a new area.
- Undertaking the University Mental Health Charter pilot with Student Minds was extremely impactful for our support provisions this year. The process enabled us to enhance our resource in the Wellbeing Team, explore further holistic support provisions including through the introduction of additional support services through Togetherall, and begin to engage with different sector frameworks including the UUK Suicide Safer Universities Framework.
- We have also found the introduction of the Mentally Healthy University Coordinator and training for staff and students from this role invaluable in enhancing the awareness of support provisions and mental health literacy of our staff and student communities.

What challenges have you faced and is there anything you will do differently?

- Covid and the pandemic has caused an alteration in how deliver a number of these provisions and services. Challenges have included balancing engagement with activities such as training and mental health events and screen fatigue experienced by students.

- Externally timed Mental Health events/campaigns are not always at the best time for students – May - exam time, October – just after Freshers
- We hope to be able to do more in person events
- We have learnt not to overload students with activities/events during freshers week and we will have 1 wellbeing event during freshers 2021, rather than 4.

Are there any changes you want to make to your current working areas? Why? And are there any new pieces of work you want to take forward?

We are going to add a new working area, Peer Support, and additional actions in other sections of the plan in response to additional areas of work highlighted in student feedback, and published resources. These include:

- peer support network launch,
- Student Minds Look After Your Mate workshops
- Nightline
- GRIT workshops as the result of funding awarding
- A priority response team for staff
- Report and Support Platform to be introduced

We anticipate that this will be complimented by additional changes to the plan throughout the 2022/23 academic year.

Small Grant recipients: how do you feel your project is progressing so far? What's gone well?

GCU Students' Association were awarded the Small Grant funds in 2019/20. It was our intention that this should be spent on a Mental Health First Responder scheme pilot. The idea was that the money would be used to purchase yellow lanyards which Mental Health First Responders could wear in order to be easily identifiable on campus. However, due to COVID, this

was shelved. We agreed that the funds would be better spent on helping cover the costs of wellbeing events designed to promote mental health while learning was still online.

End of Year Report 2022

We have included this section of the report in the separate End of Year Report template from Think Positive.

Outcomes/Impact

*(What success measure did you apply to this working area? What has happened or do you expect to happen as a result of this work?
How many students and/or staff have been impacted by this work and how do you know this?)*

See end of year report

Case studies

(Please submit any case studies you have which demonstrate the impact or outcome of your work. This could be a case study about the impact your work has had on your students or staff, it could be an example of an event or campaign which was very successful, or a quote or case study from a partnership you've developed during this work)

See end of year report

Your overall experience of taking part in the project:

See end of year report

What can Think Positive do to further support you with this work:

See end of year report

Any other comments:

See end of year report

Did you take part in the Small Grants Scheme? If so, how do you feel this process went? Please provide your feedback here:

See end of year report