

# **Student Mental Health Agreement End of Year Report 2022**

## **GCU and GCU Students' Association**

This document contains the End of Year Report for 2021 – 2022 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 2020- 2021 Evaluations and Mid-Point 2021 Review can be found in the

- Student Mental Health Agreement 2020 - 2022
- Project Diary which contains the Working Areas and Progress Report in 2020 – 2021 and Mid-Point Review 2021

If you have any queries, please contact GCU Student Wellbeing at [\*\*StudentWellbeing@GCU.ac.uk\*\*](mailto:StudentWellbeing@GCU.ac.uk) or the GCU Students' Association Advice Centre at [\*\*advice@GCUstudents.co.uk\*\*](mailto:advice@GCUstudents.co.uk)

# End of Year Report 2022

Reflection	
Campaigns	<p><b>Exam Stress Campaigns</b></p> <p>The Students' Association offer a campaign around exam stress and how to cope with this on the lead up to and throughout each exam diet. In 2021 and the 21/22 Tri A exam diet, this campaign was online due to remote learning. This involved promotion of an exam stress booklet, which was made available online, which outlined tips for minimising exam stress, how to manage time and plan a study schedule, what to revise and a list of helpful contacts if students were struggling. In addition, several social media posts were scheduled on the week leading up to and during exam time with self-help resources student could access for free and 5 top tips to reduce exam stress. These self-help resources were tailored to include support and advice on how to cope with online exams.</p> <p>With the return to on campus learning, a physical exam stress stall was also set up for 21/22 Tri B Exams. This stall was located outside of the Students' Association computer lab, which usually has high footfall during exam time. At the stall, physical copies of the Exam Stress booklet were available, alongside handouts from Student Minds on how to cope with exam stress and also look after your mental wellbeing during exam time. Colouring pages and pencils were also available as a mindful activity to reduce stress and encourage regular breaks while studying. This was the first time in 2 years that the exam stall was able to be in person, and further increased the reach of the campaign.</p> <p>For the next exam period, we plan to continue with this approach. However, due to there being less students on campus, the computer lab was not as busy as it perhaps would have been pre-COVID. It may also be beneficial to set up an exam stress stall outside of the library to ensure students who study here also have access to the resources available.</p> <p><b>Mental Health Awareness Week Campaign – May 13th-20<sup>th</sup> 2022</b></p> <p>Mental Health Awareness Week occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, and the 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2022.</p> <p>We hosted several activities for this week which were well received by staff and students. The event with the most attendees was a webinar on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 which explored inclusive learning and teaching for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and LGBTQI+ students with 196 staff and students attending from across Scotland. Offering a mixture of practical based</p>

	<p>webinars on wellbeing related practises such as meditation and mindfulness alongside academic webinars and training was noted as a great benefit with large engagement in the sessions from our staff and student bodies. Online delivery of the sessions though essential due to the pandemic also led to engagement with staff and students from across the Glasgow and London campuses; with events being open to both. Having this mixture of different styles of events alongside delivering online and on campus activities is one we're going to continue to offer in future awareness week sessions.</p> <p><b>Here to Help Campaign</b></p> <p>The here to help campaign was launched during mental health awareness week in 2021. The assets are available on the GCU Media Bank for any staff member to access to allow for further distribution – for example in lecture materials. The campaign has produced 56 assets in total [<i>As of June 2022</i>] and focused on raising awareness of the available support for GCU students and staff and is present on the webpages with a dedicated section. Future activities will continue to utilise this resource through online platforms.</p> <p><b>Keep in Touch Campaign</b></p> <p>As part of the additional student engagement activity introduced to support students studying remotely, a Keep in Touch campaign was launched in March 2021. The aims of the campaign were to help promote a sense of belonging and community for our students; to reinforce the message that we are there for them and to remind them of the support services we can offer. The campaign was designed and delivered by Student Life and promoted to students via social media and via a web page.</p>
<b>Strategic Approach</b>	<p><b>UUK Suicide Safer Universities Framework</b></p> <p>GCU in partnership with GCU Students' Association established a task group to engage with the UUK Suicide Safer Universities Framework and produce a draft framework and recommendations for consideration by the Student Wellbeing Advisory Group, Executive Board, and wider GCU staff and student communities. The group had representation from SAMH and Emily Test.</p> <p>GCU's work was included as an example of best practise in student mental health initiatives by Universities Scotland in 2021: <a href="https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/gcu_mh/">https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/gcu_mh/</a> and has since been highlighted in the Universities Scotland publication, Suicide Safer Universities in Scotland also in 2021: <a href="https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Suicide-safer-Universities-in-Scotland.pdf">https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Suicide-safer-Universities-in-Scotland.pdf</a></p>

We plan to continue with this approach by further developing the draft framework, embedding and enacting recommendations further, and consulting our community on areas of work.

### **Engage with Student Minds University Mental Health Charter Pilot**

GCU was one of just three UK universities selected by Student Minds in 2020 to trial the award, an accreditation scheme that recognises and benchmarks best practice in supporting mental health across the country's HE institutions. Following completion of the Charter, in July 2021 GCU [enrolled into the first cohort](#) of Universities to undertake the Charter Programme.

We've found the process invaluable in assisting us to develop our whole university approach. The process involved production of a self-evaluation document across 18 different themes including support services, accommodation and staff wellbeing; 7 focus groups with staff and students from across the GCU community and panel recommendations process. We plan to continue to work with the Charter and enrol into the 2022 cohort.

### **Enhancing the Student Wellbeing Service**

This action was added in our 2021 – 22 review of the Student Mental Health Agreement action areas. The Student Wellbeing Service developed their team to include additional student wellbeing advisers meaning there is now an existing wellbeing adviser for each academic school.

### **Mentally Healthy Universities Coordinator**

The implementation of a dedicated role through a Mentally Healthy Universities Coordinator has been instrumental in the delivery of a number of projects which have supported our whole institutional approach to health and wellbeing. The coordinator is an embedded worker from SAMH, and has worked on numerous projects including delivering training to all GCU staff, developing Suicide Alertness Training, and supporting GCU's Spotlight On Campaign.

### **Enhance the Student Mental Health Action Plan**

Our Student Mental Health Action Plan is aligned to the UUK Mentally Healthy Universities Framework and has been in development since 2017. The plan which is overseen and actioned by the Student Wellbeing Advisory Group provides oversight for the frameworks we are involved with, including the Student Mental Health Agreement, Student Minds University Mental Health Charter, UUK Suicide Safer Framework and more. The plan is currently under development responding to the proposal of an overarching mental health strategy at GCU.

	<p><b>Continue meetings of the Student Wellbeing Advisory Group</b></p> <p>The Student Wellbeing Advisory Group has continued to meet and has been a key component to GCU's whole university approach to mental health and wellbeing. The group has representation from GCU Students' Association, GCU Wellbeing Staff, Academic Staff, GCU London &amp; GCU London Students' Association alongside campus services such as the Arc (GCU's Gym). The diversity of the roles of the group has allowed for actions and recommendations for other groups to be cognisant of a whole institutional mind-set, and we intend to continue this in future years.</p>
<b>Events</b>	<p><b>Mindful Mondays</b></p> <p>The Students' Association Full Time Officer led a social media campaign, sharing wellbeing tips and resources every Monday. This was re-launched on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021. Posts included tips on practicing mindfulness, how to de-stress from coursework and how to look after your mental health and wellbeing. These posts were scheduled to tie in with the time in the semester; for example, during the exam period, tips were shared on how to deal with exam stress and during the winter months there was guidance on what to do to beat the holiday blues. Links were included to full articles where students could find out more information and put these into practice in their everyday life.</p> <p><b>Mental Health and Wellbeing Online Events</b></p> <p>The Advice Centre organised six wellbeing events over this academic year. Three of these took place in Trimester A and three in Trimester B. The majority of sessions were delivered by Lifelink, and included sessions such as 'The Art of Relaxation', 'Improving Motivation' and 'Goal Setting'. In addition, a 'Sleep Hygiene' session was delivered in both Trimesters. These were all delivered online via Zoom, Teams and Collaborate Ultra.</p> <p>These activities were chosen to reflect what students may wish for help with at that particular time in the Trimester. Goal Setting was chosen at the beginning of the Trimester to tie into New Year and setting resolutions. The Art of Relaxation and Sleep Hygiene were both scheduled around exam time as a de-stressor and to highlight the importance of maintaining a good work-life balance and sleeping schedule while revising.</p> <p>Going forward, it may be beneficial to take a blended approach when organising wellbeing events. Offering some of the sessions in-person and some online may allow us to cater to more students and therefore increase attendance. In addition, all wellbeing sessions took place on a Wednesday from 2-3pm. This was determined to be the most suitable date and time as students do not have classes at this time. However, in the future, it may be advantageous to ensure that sessions are scheduled on a variety of days and times to allow more students to attend around their schedules and other responsibilities.</p>

**Feel Fab Feb 2022**

An evaluation of Feel Fab Feb in 2021 is available in the Project Diary documentation.

Feel Fab Feb 2022 was a month of free, inclusive activities (both online and in person) organised to encourage students to come together and support each other's mental and physical wellbeing. February was chosen in order to chase away any post-exam New Year blues. This featured a free inclusive programme of events ran by our Full Time Officer, sports clubs, societies and groups. Some events included various society 'come and try' sessions, walks with the FTOs, Paws for Stress and Chair Yoga. In addition, students were offered free access to the ARC's gym/classes for the whole month of February to encourage physical exercise in the promotion of good wellbeing. This was positive as, in the previous year, all activities had to be online due to COVID restrictions.

**World Mental Health Day event – October 10<sup>th</sup> 2021**

For our events on World Mental Health Day, we found that offering both a mix of practical sessions with the wellbeing team (e.g. Mindfulness and Meditation) alongside training sessions, and student focus groups well received by our student and staff community.

In 2021 we offered a staff carer network event, mindfulness sessions, GCU Menopause group, Suicide Alertness Training for Staff and Students, and launched a student peer group to support students with their blended learning experience. An evaluation for World Mental Health Day 2020 is available in the Project Diary.

**University Mental Health Day**

For UMHD we also offered a series of events for staff and students at GCU to engage with. In 2022 with the return to on campus delivery of learning and teaching we were able to offer a blended approach of both online and in person activities. These included a wellbeing drop in, yoga, bird watching, volunteering sessions, a wellbeing walk to Kelvingrove park, mindfulness and a session for students on how to support themselves and others, alongside free passes for students to our on campus gym, The Arc. This was published in a special edition of our Student Wellbeing Newsletter which allowed us to engage students and staff with the variety of events and activities being offered. The newsletter edition is available at this [hyperlink](#).

An evaluation for World Mental Health Day 2021 is available in the Project Diary.

<b>Workshops</b>	<p><b>Continue provision of Scottish Mental Health First Aid training to students via the Student Leadership Programme</b></p> <p>SMHFA training was not available during Trimester A as this was not running due to COVID. However, this was able to restart in Trimester B when the NHS began in-person training again. These sessions were open to all students, and was promoted on social media and GCU Students' Association all student email. Student's completing the Student Leader's Programme (SLP) were emailed directly about the sessions. In addition, an all student email was sent out to students in the School of Health and Life Science (SHLS) promoting the sessions. The training was offered twice; once on 13<sup>th</sup> &amp; 14<sup>th</sup> of April and again on 26<sup>th</sup> &amp; 29<sup>th</sup> of April. These workshops were funded by Santander Universities to support student mental health. Two trainers delivered the training; one for each session.</p> <p>We intend to continue to offer this training, as there was a great deal of student interest.</p> <p><b>Continue to offer free mindfulness course for our Students</b></p> <p>Throughout the 2020-2022 timeline of this Student Mental Health Agreement there have been 130 sign ups across 11 mindfulness taster events, with a further two 8 week courses being offered for GCU Students. Participants have found the courses beneficial; with student quotes being outlined below. We intend to continue to offer the mindfulness courses through GCU Student Wellbeing.</p> <p><b>Continue to offer the Mental Health Matters Workshop, and deliver and develop our Summer Transitions workshops</b></p> <p>Both sessions in 2020 and 2021 were held online with similar student engagement, in both years. The sessions included information on the wider support available in the GCU Community, how to manage mental health at University, what assistive technology was available for students to engage with, alongside presentations from the different services across GCU including the Student Wellbeing, Careers and Learning Development Centres. We will continue to offer these as they are well received by students transitioning into GCU. Students can either self-enrol into the programmes at the GCU Webpages, and those who disclose in their application will also receive an individual invite to the session if they wish to engage with it.</p>

**Introduce Suicide Alertness Training Sessions for students and staff with SAMH**

Throughout 2021 and 2022 there were 4 sessions held for students and staff with 47 individuals registering for the sessions. The sessions were hosted by two trainers from SAMH who are trained in being able to deliver these sessions, with more to be introduced in 2022/23.

**Introduce Mind your Mate Workshops and Emotional Resilience Workshops for GCU Students**

The evaluation for these workshops is noted in the Peer Support section below under the heading: Start work towards creating a large scale peer to peer support network

**Offer GRIT workshops for GCU Students and Staff**

GCU were successful in obtaining funding from the National Lottery to also offer GRIT workshops for students and staff to enhance mental health and wellbeing. The GCU Careers Service will roll these workshops out to students and staff. The sessions were positively received by those who attended with:

- 95% of students rated the overall content of the day as good and excellent
- 94% of students have discovered new ways of communicating
- 95% of students said that they would participate in a 3-day workshop if offered

The sessions focused on wellbeing and employability and were communicated to all students with a specialised aim for final year students. Of attendees 58% were fourth year UG students, and 32% were level three.

**Wellbeing Sessions**

Please see the section Mental Health and Wellbeing Online Events for the evaluation for the section above.

**Supporting  
Specific  
Student  
Groups****QAA Scotland Collaborative Cluster on Supporting the Mental Wellbeing of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and LGBTQ+ Student Communities**

GCU led on the development of a Collaborative Cluster with the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland on Inclusive Curriculum for Mental Health and Wellbeing with a focused aim of supporting the mental wellbeing of LGBTQI+ and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student communities.



	<p>A more detailed review of the impact of this project is available below, and also in the project reports at the <a href="#">QAA Scotland's Enhancement Themes website</a>. Overall, aspects of the project which were successful included the four webinars where there were a total of 814 registrants, with 600 attendees at the sessions. The focus group with students provided invaluable insight into the lived experiences of our students across Scotland, and embedding a student as a researcher was also instrumental in the delivery of the project resources.</p> <p><b>Parents and Carers Resources</b></p> <p>In 2020 a new resource was developed and published for Parents and Carers of GCU students to help inform them of the support available for students. This resource consisted of a booklet, live webinars, and webpage information all available at: <a href="https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/parentsandcarersinformation">https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/support/wellbeing/parentsandcarersinformation</a>. The workshops were well received by those who attended as an opportunity to learn more, alongside the published resources. It was also noted that offering this during induction timetabling allowed for the sessions to be embedded amongst other resources and communications to students.</p>
<b>Promotion of Student Services</b>	<p><b>Promotion of GCU Students' Association Advice Centre, Nightline and GCU Wellbeing Team Services and Continue to be involved in Student Services Fairs</b></p> <p>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. There has been a focus on promoting services via social media; using Instagram, Twitter and Facebook in conjunction with each other and using the 'stories' feature on these platforms to ensure the best reach possible. This has also included continued engagement with the student services fairs which are held at GCU annually. The fairs allow for student facing services including the Students' Association, Student Wellbeing, Careers, VISA, Student Events and more to engage with students and raise awareness of the support available.</p> <p>Our Student Advisers have worked with our Communications Coordinator to create 4 targeted digital campaigns. Three of these campaigns, Free Condoms, MITS and RMITS vs Academic Appeals, have been promoted via social media. The final campaign, Complaints, will be promoted in Trimester C. These targeted social media campaigns have focused on providing guidance and advice and raising awareness of the year-round support available from the Advice Centre.</p> <p>Our bi-monthly rolling social media and all student email communications have continued throughout AY 2021/22. These will continue next year.</p>

Nightline was closed until Tri B 20/21, when it re-opened with a scaled down online only remote service. Advertising of this was included in the above.

The Students' Association promoted GCU's Wellbeing Services by referring students who may benefit from the support available. In addition, GCU's Wellbeing Service was promoted during the Exam Stress campaign, Feel Fab Feb and Mindful Mondays. Following participation in one of the Students' Association wellbeing events, students were sent a follow-up email with a link to GCU Wellbeing Services and events that were currently running that they may also be interested in.

### **Continue the Student Wellbeing Newsletter within the GCU Wellbeing Service**

The Student Wellbeing Newsletter has been successful with 688 subscribers. The newsletter has received positive engagement from both staff and students, and has extended its content to include tailored information for staff mental health and wellbeing, alongside student wellbeing, event information, research, and more. All of the published editions are available at the [Mail Chimp past issues list](#)

### **Introduce and continue to develop an online platform for student wellbeing**

An online platform was introduced in April 2020 for students in response to the outbreak of the pandemic. The platform allowed for GCU Staff to continue the delivery of wellbeing workshops through transitioning to online platforms, and for an additional space for wellbeing enhancing support and information to be communicated to GCU students. Furthermore, it helped to enhance the presence of support services on the GCU virtual learning platform, GCU Learn, in which this was hosted under a Student Wellbeing Community. The ability to engage with students on a platform they were comfortable using for academic learning, alongside continuing to offer our traditionally in-person resources through an online platform were both positive outcomes from this project. The platform is still utilised currently, with more information in the sections below.

### **Introduce Togetherall**

In October 2020 we introduced Togetherall for GCU staff and students. Togetherall is an award-winning digital, 24/7 online global community, where individuals can access support from trained professionals. You can use Togetherall as a safe space online to get things off your chest, explore your feelings, get creative and learn how to self-manage your mental health and wellbeing. You are anonymous to other members in the community, and your personal information is kept secure while you are on the site. There is more information at the GCU Togetherall [Webpages](#).

### **Introduce Report and Support**

Report and Support is an online reporting tool for the GCU community and members of the public to submit a report about misconduct they experience on campus. GCU is dedicated to identifying and tackling inappropriate behaviour, whenever it arises. No one in our community should ever be the focus of gender based violence, sexism, racism, discrimination, assault, bullying, harassment or any other offensive conduct. The platform was launched in November 2021, and is currently being extended to staff and the public. More information can be found at: <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/reportandsupport>

### **Staff Support**

#### **Identifying and Supporting Students in Distress Handbook**

Work to further develop this resource is still underway. The current progress includes the further enhancement of a webpage which outlines support for staff who have concerns about a student; in which the handbook, an immediate concerns flowchart, a recorded session from GCU Wellbeing Staff on what to do if you have concerns about a student, and other resources are all highlighted in one centralised place. This information is also shared on the staff wellbeing webpages, alongside in training for all GCU Staff which is being delivered in partnership by GCU and SAMH on mental health and wellbeing. The information is available at: <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/wellbeing/worriedaboutsomene/staffmemberconcernedaboutastudent>

#### **Introduce a Priority Response Team**

This action was added to the Student Mental Health Agreement in 2021. GCU aimed to establish a new team staffed by GCU counsellors, mental health advisers and student wellbeing advisers to offer support and guidance to staff members who are dealing with distressed students or students in crisis. The team can be contacted if a staff member believes that a student would benefit from getting help that day, or the student is in distress. The service is also able to support if:

- student talks of feeling suicidal/self-harm/harming others
- A student is finding it difficult to function
- A student appears to be mentally confused, perhaps delusional or unable to follow a normal conversation
- A student is at risk of homelessness or in a financial crisis
- If you are worried about the student's mental health and wellbeing due to a critical incident
- You need advice about how best to support a student/students you are concerned about.

The service is available from 9am to 4pm Monday to Thursday and from 9am to 3pm on Fridays, and more information can be found online at the staff member concerned about a student [webpage](#).

## Peer Support

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

The Students' Association secured a National Lottery Award of £6,400 from the National Lottery Community Fund. The bid was put in to offer all GCU students access to high quality, student-focused training sessions in mental health. Research (including that undertaken in 2018 by Alterline) shows that peer support is something that many students feel more comfortable using as a first step to getting help. This money was used to work with Two Roads Charity to deliver Mind Your Mate (suicide prevention) and Emotional Resilience workshops to students during the academic year 2021/22 with the hopes of creating a peer to peer network.

In Trimester A, 3 Mind your Mate and 1 Emotional Resilience session took place. The same was planned for Trimester B, however, sign-up for the Tri A Emotional Resilience session was significantly higher. As a result, we made the decision to change all 4 sessions in Trimester B to Emotional Resilience sessions.

We intended to scope the Train the Trainers model, where students could in future deliver the training sessions, thus making it a more sustainable model. However, Two Roads Charity were advised initially to withhold their application for a Train the Trainers bid as another University nearby put one in at a similar time. Two Roads got in touch recently to advise that they have since put their bid in, and this was unfortunately unsuccessful.

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

Trimester A 21/22 marked the first operational Trimester of the newly merged Glasgow Students' Nightline from the previously separate Strathclyde, Caledonian and Glasgow University Nightline services. Nightline is student-led, accessible via various methods and it fills the overnight gap where there is limited available in-person support targeted to students.

Nightline provides value to all three Universities' student communities in its provision of a high-quality volunteering opportunity incorporating extensive training and skills development, access to staff support and practical experience of delivering a service. Glasgow Students' Nightline is run operationally by a volunteer committee, led by a volunteer Director and Deputy Director.

After the second new volunteer training intake of the year in early February, there was an increase from 39 to 56 total volunteers; 10 of these are GCU volunteers.

In Tri A, Nightline operated from 7pm-12am Monday-Friday during term times. Due to working remotely, with volunteers working from home on shift, the service continued to be Instant Messaging Service only. In Tri B, the Nightline committee did a lot of work preparing for re-opening in person, phone line and online listening over night shifts. This was a big change after almost 2 years being a remote online service only.

### **Re-Introduce Look After your Mate workshops**

For the look after your mate workshops the success measures have been partially met. We have trained staff from both the GCU Wellbeing team and GCU Students' Association, but are yet to deliver sessions to students due to the training taking part in Trimester B 2022. We are planning to roll out a schedule in partnership for the 2022/23 academic year.

## **Outcomes/Impact**

### **Campaigns**

#### **Exam Stress Campaigns**

The exam stress stall appeared to be well received, as several of the handouts had to be restocked throughout the exam period. The exam stress booklet and colouring materials were engaged with most. As a result of this, we hope that students felt more able to cope with exam period and were well signposted to where to go if they needed support.

One of the success measures for the online aspect of the exam stress campaign was reach on social media. A number of exam stress posts were shared across Facebook & Instagram. These combined posts received a reach of 2440 on Facebook and 1025 on Instagram. Therefore, there were 3465 total impressions via social media.

#### **Mental Health Awareness Week Campaign – May 13th-20<sup>th</sup> 2022**

All success measures were met for these campaigns, with the activities being outlined above. All sessions were open to staff and students, and individual engagement numbers were not recorded.

#### **Here to Help Campaign**

The here to help campaign was launched during mental health awareness week in 2021. The assets are available on the GCU Media Bank for any staff member to access to allow for further distribution – for example in lecture materials. The campaign has produced 56 assets in total [*As of June 2022*] and focused on raising awareness of the available support for GCU students and staff and is present on the webpages with a dedicated section. Future activities will continue to utilise this resource through online platforms. The aims of having the designs produced, consulted with the wider GCU Community, and tailored messages have all been met.

	<p><b>Keep in Touch Campaign</b></p> <p>The campaign has now run over three separate occasions, AY 2020/21 Tri B, AY 2021/22 Tri A and B. The campaign involved Student Ambassadors contacting all UG and PG students by telephone. In total over the three separate campaigns, 38,073 calls were made. Student Ambassadors were recruited to call the students. All Ambassadors were required to attend a training session which covered key services to highlight to students, such as Wellbeing, Disability, Student Funding, Finance and LDCs. The training also covered where calls should be referred or escalated to, as well as examples of potential issues that may arise and how to deal with these. In total, across the three separate campaigns 16,126 (42%) calls were answered. When a call was unanswered Ambassadors were instructed to leave a standard message, including the student support inbox email address.</p> <p>Overall, students were extremely appreciative that they had been called and a number of positive thank you emails were received. Feedback from the evaluations completed by Ambassadors working on the campaign included;</p> <p><i>"I had 2 I believe calls that took 15-20mins and a few ones which were 5-10 and when people were willing to have a chat (whether they needed help or not) people were appreciative of getting a call and liked that it was other students doing it since we are in a similar/the same situation."</i></p> <p><i>"Easier than I expected, most students were very grateful for the call which made the 'cold calling' experience easier. I also think students talking to students is easier as we all are experiencing the same thing right now."</i></p> <p>We are in the process of working to progress the Keep in Touch Campaign for future development with students at GCU</p>
<p><b>Strategic Approach</b></p>	<p><b>UUK Suicide Safer Universities Framework</b></p> <p>The success measures we have set which were to map our current provisions to the UUK framework and to develop an action plan have been completed. The current progress is to continue consultation on the proposed policy and action plan throughout 2022 and 2023. The documents are an outcome from a task group for consideration by the Student Wellbeing Advisory Group, Executive Board, and wider GCU staff and student communities. The group had representation from SAMH and Emily Test.</p> <p>GCU's work was included as an example of best practise in student mental health initiatives by Universities Scotland in 2021: <a href="https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/gcu_mh/">https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/gcu_mh/</a></p>

and has since been highlighted in the Universities Scotland publication, Suicide Safer Universities in Scotland also in 2021: <https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Suicide-safer-Universities-in-Scotland.pdf>

### **Engage with Student Minds University Mental Health Charter Pilot**

In 2020 GCU Successfully applied to pilot the Student Minds University Mental Health Charter, and as such undertook a self-evaluation document and series of focus groups across the UMHC charter principles. Since 2020, we have enrolled into the first cohort in 2021-22 in which we have been working to enhance a series of practises. Outcomes have included expanding our Wellbeing Service staffing, reviewing our clinical governance and introducing the priority response team to name a few.

### **Enhancing the Student Wellbeing Service**

All of the success measures have been completed for this area as the additional roles were approved, advertised and are filled. This has allowed for a number of additional and contextualised support within the Student Wellbeing Service including additional events, the development of a Summer Wellbeing Session program, and regular Yoga sessions, to name a few. More information on the offering of the Student Wellbeing Advisers can be found at <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/wellbeing/studentwellbeingadvice>

Moreover, the service has also expanded as a result of the funding from the Scottish Government in which 2.6FTE additional counsellors have been appointed as an outcome of the funding (until the end of 22/23).

### **Mentally Healthy Universities Coordinator**

The implementation of a dedicated role through a Mentally Healthy Universities Coordinator has been instrumental in the delivery of a number of projects which have supported our whole institutional approach to health and wellbeing. The coordinator is an embedded worker from SAMH, and has worked on numerous projects including delivering training to all GCU staff, developing Suicide Alertness Training, and supporting GCU's Spotlight On Campaign.

### **Enhance the Student Mental Health Action Plan and Continue meetings of the Student Wellbeing Advisory Group**

As noted above the SMHAP and Student Wellbeing Advisory Group have continued to progress, with all success measures being met.

## Events

### Mindful Mondays

Posts were made on social media on 01/11/21, 08/11/21, 15/11/21, 22/11/21, 29/11/21, 06/12/21, 24/01/22 and 31/01/22. As a result of this, we hope that students have a better understanding of how to look after their own mental health and wellbeing. Tips were shared on how to cope, how to practice mindfulness and sources of support to equip students with the knowledge necessary to look after themselves and their fellow students.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing Online Events

In Tri A, 29 people signed up across the 3 events. However, actual attendance was lower, with only 9 students attending the sessions. A similar pattern was found in Tri B, with 21 sign ups across the 3 events and only 4 attending.

Both sign-up and actual attendance for all sessions was lower than we would have hoped. From discussion with other University departments, it's evident that there has been difficulty raising attendance at online events. There appears to be an element of "zoom fatigue" in which students are feeling exhaustion or burnout due to overuse of virtual platforms. This may explain, in part, why students are not choosing to take part in online events after participating in several online classes.

These events were advertised well on social and promoted in the all student emails ahead of time. Due to low uptake in Tri A, we also looked into additional avenues of advertising. In Tri B, the sessions were also promoted via the Wellbeing Team newsletter, Student Life newsletter, and to Student Leaders and Societies via the staff leads on these.

Those students who did attend the sessions were asked to complete a feedback form following the session. The feedback gathered was positive, and facilitators reported that students who attended were engaged and appeared to enjoy the sessions. Positive feedback was recorded following sessions, with students reporting that the session met their expectations and that they would recommend friends to attend.

We hope that these sessions highlighted the importance of good wellbeing and protecting your mental health. Students received information and advice on a number of different topics and sources of support. In addition, these sessions allowed students to share their experiences with others who may feel similar.

### Feel Fab Feb 2021

The society and sports club 'come and try' sessions were particularly popular during the Feel Fab February calendar. Examples included Choir Taster Session 02/02/22 (14 sign-ups) and Badminton Taster Session on 03/02/22 (30 sign-ups).



	<p>There were a range of different societies and sports clubs; we hope that this allowed students to try something new and meet other students with similar interests. We hope that this would therefore reduce isolation and, particularly with sports clubs, encourage physical exercise to boost mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>In addition, we ran 8 'Paws for Stress' Therapets sessions in conjunction with Canine Concern Scotland. The majority of these sessions were fully booked and appeared to be well received. These sessions allowed students to leave behind the stress of handing in assignments and exam revision while meeting some canine friends. It is hoped that these sessions helped to alleviate student stress and boost wellbeing.</p> <p><b>World Mental Health Day and University Mental Health Day events 2020 - 2022</b></p> <p>Both of the world mental health day and university mental health day events shared similar success measures which were all achieved. These included planning the events together, hosting a range of events which focused on the holistic nature of mental health and wellbeing and providing tailored support for specific lived experiences of our staff and students, alongside raising awareness of support provisions which are available to students and staff.</p> <p>In particular, we noted positive informal feedback from students and staff in relation to the hybrid delivery approach of offering both online and in person events in 2022. This is something we're going to continue in future mental health events. Furthermore, the diversity of activities offered (training, self-care techniques, consultations) also seemed to engage staff and students from across the GCU Community. We are currently in the process of developing</p>
<b>Workshops</b>	<p><b>Continue provision of Scottish Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) training to students via Student Leadership Programme (SLP)</b></p> <p>There was a great deal of interest in the SMHFA training courses; both sessions were fully booked. For the session on 13<sup>th</sup> &amp; 14<sup>th</sup>, 13 signed up and 9 were on the reserve list. On 26<sup>th</sup> &amp; 29<sup>th</sup>, 15 signed up and 10 were on the reserve list. 68 students contacted the SLP inbox regarding the workshops. There was a significant spike in interest after the all student email was sent to SHLS students. In total, 28 students completed the SMHFA training in Trimester B. As a result of this, we hope that these students have developed a knowledge and understanding of mental health problems, thus increasing their confidence in approaching a person in distress (e.g. another student).</p>

**Continue to offer free mindfulness course for our Students**

Our success measures for the provision of the courses to continue across both academic trimesters and at least 30 students engaging with the courses were completed; with a total of 130 students taking part in the taster sessions offered across 2021 and 2022. Students who attended the workshop found the course helpful and engaging with evaluations reporting:

*"It has helped me to be present with my studies and be able to manage my stress a little more"*

*"It put the reminder in my head to check on myself once in a while to examine the current state of mind, pause, breathe and relax. It stops the storm of worries before they become a hurricane of stress."*

*"The techniques learned help to manage the stress that comes with the studying, it is easier to allow myself to have a break to relax. It is also easier to appreciate things in life, however big or small they might be. The course was also a good incentive to continue exploring the areas of meditation and mindfulness further"*

*"I have learned to become more aware of my thoughts and be present with them. If I feel stress coming on about future deadlines or exams I come back to the present moment. If I feel I can't concentrate on studying I learn to accept noise around me"*

**Continue to offer the Mental Health Matters Workshop and develop and deliver our Summer Transitions workshops**

For both of the mental health matters and summer transitions workshops the success measures of developing, offering and evaluating the workshops were met. There was an increase in student participation for each workshop, with the Summer Transitions programme going from 19 participants in 2020 to 25 in 2021 and the mental health matters going from 25 in 2020 to 26 in 2021

**Introduce Suicide Alertness Training Sessions for students and staff with SAMH**

Throughout 2021 and 2022 there were 4 sessions held for students and staff with 47 individuals registering for the sessions. The sessions were hosted by two trainers from SAMH who are trained in being able to deliver these sessions, with more to be introduced in 2022/23. There was a short evaluation circulated for the sessions in which those who responded indicating that the sessions did increase their confidence in asking someone directly about suicide, and their

	<p>confidence in signposting to appropriate support. All evaluations answered they would recommend the training to others, and comment-based feedback included:</p> <p><i>"This course should be made compulsory!"</i></p> <p><i>"I would be keen to take part in future training sessions to develop on this initial training."</i></p> <p><i>"It is a really upsetting difficult subject but the facilitators made everyone feel it was a safe environment."</i></p> <p><b>Introduce Mind your Mate Workshops and Emotional Resilience Workshops for GCU Students</b></p> <p>The evaluation for these workshops is noted in the Peer Support section below under the heading: Start work towards creating a large-scale peer to peer support network</p> <p><b>Offer GRIT workshops for GCU Students and Staff</b></p> <p>The success measures of obtaining the funding and rolling out the workshops to students and staff were completed. Evaluations showed that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 95% of students rated the overall content of the day as good and excellent</li><li>○ 94% of students have discovered new ways of communicating</li><li>○ 95% of students said that they would participate in a 3-day workshop if offered</li></ul> <p>The sessions focused on wellbeing and employability and were communicated to all students with a specialised aim for final year students. Of attendees 58% were fourth year UG students, and 32% were level three.</p> <p><b>Wellbeing Sessions</b></p> <p>Please see the section Mental Health and Wellbeing Online Events for the evaluation for the section above.</p>
<b>Supporting Specific Student Groups</b>	<p><b>QAA Scotland Collaborative Cluster on Supporting the Mental Wellbeing of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and LGBTQ+ Student Communities</b></p> <p>GCU led on the development of a Collaborative Cluster with the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland on Inclusive Curriculum for Mental Health and Wellbeing with a focused aim of supporting the mental wellbeing of LGBTQI+ and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student communities.</p> <p>The project offered four free webinars. between March to June 2021 hosted using QAA Scotland's Zoom licence. Across all four webinars, there was a total of 814 registrants, with around 200 (range 196-210) per webinar. There were 600</p>

attendees that joined the webinars live, with the remainder, presumably, accessing the recordings asynchronously later. Across the four events there were seven presentations from eight presenters covering a wide variety of factors that can impact upon student mental wellbeing for students, such as: inclusivity in STEM subjects; undertaking a whole institutional approach for the student learning experience and curricula; the mental health impacts on students of teaching practices and curricula; and practical recommendations on how to meaningfully engage specific learner communities, with a focus on inclusivity for Trans students.

A short Microsoft Forms evaluation questionnaire was sent to all webinar registrants after the final webinar in which they were asked to respond to questions on: a) their understanding of mental wellbeing within BAME/LGBTQ+ student communities following the webinar(s); and b) their confidence in taking some positive change action(s). There were only 26 respondents to the questionnaire, representing a very low (4.3%) response rate; therefore, results should be considered with caution but when asked to respond to the question "How much do you feel the session(s) increased your understanding of mental wellbeing within BAME/LGBTQ+ student communities? (Rate 1-5 stars)" 72% rated their response between 4-5, indicating that they felt they had attained knowledge and understanding of the topic area, and when asked "How confident do you feel in taking some positive action(s) that will enhance the mental wellbeing within BAME/LGBTQ+ student communities? (Rate 1-5 stars)", 68% rated their response between 4-5. This indicated that the majority felt that they would be confident to take some positive actions following the webinar(s).

All webinar recordings, with accompanying presentation slides, are freely available on QAA Scotland's Enhancement Themes website

When exploring the impacts of curricula on student experience and wellbeing, it is essential to consult those with lived experiences of these to ensure that students are at the heart of co-creating any recommendations for making curricula more inclusive. Therefore, the cluster also involved students through a focus group which utilised a nominal group technique (a consensus development methodology) to explore lived experience of students and produced recommendations for higher education staff.

Research ethics approval was attained from GCU's Academic Quality and Development Research Ethics Committee to carry out the NGT with students who self-identify within, and/or represent those from, LGBTQ+ or Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic student communities. Recruitment invitation communications were circulated via sparqs, QAAS and NUS Scotland, alongside other networks to engage students from across the HE sector in Scotland. There were 22 students who expressed interest in participating via the Microsoft Forms survey and were sent information about the date/time of the group meeting. However, on the day of the nominal group only six students from three Scottish HEIs were able to attend.

The nominal group was conducted online, during which participants had the ability to remain anonymous, should they wish to. Participants were asked to generate as many responses as they could to two set questions and type them in a shared Google spreadsheet, after which the items generated were clarified and similar responses were amalgamated. The two questions students to which participants generated responses were:

1.“What factors have you experienced within the academic curriculum that have impacted negatively upon your/other students’ mental wellbeing?”

2.“What key suggestions do you have for academic staff to consider when developing inclusive curricula?”

From the lists of generated responses each participant selected and ranked their top five most important items from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important). Data was analysed using Microsoft Excel to establish the items that were top ranked by the most participants

To ensure there was involvement from student cocreation throughout the process of the project a cluster membership place was reserved for a current student who were paid through a research capacity. This ensured the student voice was at the heart of the project, and proved invaluable in the process of the project.

This project also collated a number of resources from across the sector which focus on inclusive curriculum for our student communities. These, alongside All the presentation slides, resources and recordings from the professional development events are openly available on [QAA Scotland’s Enhancement Themes website.](#)

### **Parents and Carers Resources**

A new section on the GCU Wellbeing webpages has been established for the Parents, Carers and Family of Students with information on what the network of support is for students in the GCU community. This includes an information booklet resource which has been published, alongside dedicated webinars during induction for the parents, carers and families of students in 2020 and 2021. Although the webinars had low attendance for both years, these were well received by attendees.

	<p>Resources are available at:  <a href="https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/wellbeing/worriedaboutsomene/parentscarersandfamilyofstudentsinformation">https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/wellbeing/worriedaboutsomene/parentscarersandfamilyofstudentsinformation</a></p>
<b>Promotion of Student Services</b>	<p><b>Promotion of GCU Students' Association Advice Centre, Nightline and GCU Wellbeing Team Services</b></p> <p>All regular communications were completed for the Advice Centre, Nightline and wellbeing services. The all-student email communications continued throughout AY 21/22, in addition to regular social media posts. Posters were also placed around the Students' Association to advertise Nightline services.</p> <p>Statistics show that the Advice Centre dealt with 962 quick queries and enquiries in AY 21/22 throughout Tri A &amp; B; this is up 326 enquiries from the previous year. In addition, there were 263 new cases opened during Tri A &amp; B, which is up significantly since the previous year (up 104 cases). This increase in numbers accessing services may be due, in part, to the promotion of the Advice Centre and support available.</p> <p>The digital campaigns, designed in conjunction with the Communications Coordinator, appeared to perform well on social media. The 'MITS - Wait' campaign went live on 21/03/22. An animated video was created and shared a number of times on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, with over 350 views across the three platforms. This was also included in the all student email on 30/03 and 13/04.</p> <p>The 'Free Condom Promotion' campaign aimed to increase awareness that students could collect a variety of free condoms on campus again from the Advice Centre as take up had been slow in Trimester A. First shared on social media, the images have since been shared on Facebook (x3), Instagram (x3) and Twitter (x1). There does seem to have been an increase in uptake in Tri B since this campaign; there have been 42 visits for free condoms, compared to only 13 visits in Tri A.</p> <p>The 'Academic Appeal vs RMITS' campaign is currently ongoing, and the final 'Complaints' campaign will run in Tri C (likely July-August). A RMITS video has been shared on TikTok and is currently doing well, with 1729 views as of 14/06/22.</p> <p>Finally, the Advice Centre was featured in 2 campaigns by the GCU Student Life Team in Tri B. In February, for Time to Talk Day, both the Advice Centre and Student Wellbeing were featured in a social media campaign encouraging students to reach out for support. In March, GCU Student Life shared a post promoting the Advice Centre and the support available.</p>

**Continue the Student Wellbeing Newsletter within the GCU Wellbeing Service**

The GCU Student Wellbeing Newsletter has 688 subscribers, and 843 contacts. This has grown from 510 subscribers in June 2021, with an average unsubscribe rate of 0.1%. In terms of content, we see the most engagement with campaigns in the middle of academic trimesters e.g. the two highest campaigns were seen in November 2021 and March 2022, with content which explored keeping well during assessments, events and workshops. The success measures have all been achieved with us exceeding the target of 100 additional subscribers and 15 newsletter issues (of which between the academic year in 2021 and 2022 alone there have been 21). These included special editions for the launch of new projects including Volunteering for Wellbeing Projects, and mental health days like University Mental Health Day.

**Introduce and continue to develop an online platform for student wellbeing**

The online platform for GCU Wellbeing was launched during the pandemic in April 2020. Since then all success measures of the platform being launched, students being able to self-enrol and events being held in the platform have been met. Currently the platform hosts resources for Togetherall, Self-Care, Online Courses, Podcast and more, and hosted the pre-entry resources for students engaging in the aforementioned workshops. Numerous webinars have been held including Mindfulness, Workshops on Procrastination and more. Currently we have 63 students enrolled onto the platform, however in July 2020 we shifted our focus to allowing access to the resources and workshops to any student and removed the need to enrol to attend workshops by establishing sharable content links. We hoped this would help remove an additional online process the students would need to engage to access these. All of the resources and workshops were also made available on our webpages too.

**Introduce Togetherall**

The success measure of introducing the service for students and staff was met with the service being launched in October 2020. Since its launch there have been 451 registrations to the service from GCU staff and students, in which the highest number of registrations occurred during September 2022. The top way in which individuals had learned about the service was through the webpages, followed by staff referral, and then newsletter content. There have been a total of 1488 log ins to the site to access content which included community posts, brick content, self-evaluation questionnaires and courses.

**Introduce Report and Support**

Report and Support is an online reporting tool for the GCU community and members of the public to submit a report about misconduct they experience on campus. GCU is dedicated to identifying and tackling inappropriate behaviour, whenever it arises. No one in our community should ever be the focus of gender based violence, sexism, racism,

	<p>discrimination, assault, bullying, harassment or any other offensive conduct. The platform was launched in November 2021, and is currently being extended to staff and the public. More information can be found at: <a href="https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/reportandsupport">https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/support/reportandsupport</a></p>
<b>Staff Support</b>	<p><b>Identifying and Supporting Students in Distress Handbook</b></p> <p>The flowchart and documents have been combined into one handbook which is available online – this was the first evaluation measure we had set for the development of these resources. We have aimed to enhance awareness of the resource through Caledonian connected articles and by including the resource in a mental health training session which is provided to all GCU Staff.</p> <p><b>Introduce a Priority Response Team</b></p> <p>Since the teams launch in November 2021, there have been 14 referrals to the service. Of these 14 referrals, the team were able to support the students in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 went on to have counselling</li> <li>• 6 went on to have Student Wellbeing Adviser support</li> <li>• 1 was referred to MHA team</li> <li>• 1 did not go on to have further support.</li> </ul> <p>The service provision has also received supportive comments from GCU staff who have been informed about the service through all staff newsletter communications, intranet articles, and through awareness raising in mental health training.</p>
<b>Peer Support</b>	<p><b>Start work towards creating a large scale peer to peer support network</b></p> <p>Application for the National Lottery Award from the National Lottery Community Fund was successful. Worked with Two Roads Charity to deliver session to staff first. Staff then provided feedback and sessions were altered in response to this to ensure it was suitable and most relevant to GCU Students.</p> <p>In Tri A, 55 students signed up across the 4 sessions (3 Mind your Mate and 1 Emotional Resilience). 21 students actually attended the sessions. In Tri B, 50 students signed up across the 4 sessions (all Emotional Resilience). Less than half of these students attended the sessions; 21 students attended across the 4 sessions.</p>



As was the case with the wellbeing events, sign up and actual attendance was significantly lower than we hoped. The maximum number of participants in each session was 30, which we did not reach. There may be a number of reasons that uptake was not as high as expected, including "zoom fatigue" as mentioned above as all sessions were online.

After the first session was poorly attended in Tri A, efforts were made to change and improve the ways in which these sessions were advertised. The sessions were promoted in every Students' Association all student email and advertised on social media the week and day before each session. In addition, the sessions were promoted to Societies and Student Leaders via the staff leads on these. A promotional video was made and advertised on social media and a slider was added to the website. In addition, the sessions were advertised by GCU Wellbeing (including via their newsletters) and GCU Student Life in their fortnightly all student communications as well as social media.

A follow-up email was sent to students one week after each session. For those students who attended, the email thanked them for their participation, offered them the chance to provide any additional feedback and linked to the Help Sheet again with a list of support services, both within the University and externally. Those who signed up but did not attend were also sent a copy of the Help Sheet and advised they could sign up for another date if they were still interested in the session.

Those who attended the sessions left very positive feedback. It appears from the trainers reports that the students who attended the sessions found them beneficial. Feedback from participants can be found in the below section.

The students who attended these sessions should now have a much better understanding of suicide prevention and how to look after their own emotional wellbeing/how to increase emotional resilience. This will hopefully mean that they are better equipped to support other students who may be struggling with their mental health or poor wellbeing. This therefore increases peer support, which has been found to be fundamental in increasing student wellbeing. Feedback from students suggested that they felt much more confident and able to support someone struggling after attending the sessions in comparison to before the sessions.

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

In Tri A, Nightline only had one night of unexpected closure. Volunteers completed 64 shifts – shift coverage of over 98% greatly exceeded our target of achieving 75% coverage for service.

The service re-opened during Tri B for the first overnight, phone and online listening posts on 7th February. Since then, there have been 52 shifts covered in the Nightline office out of the planned 61 – 85% shift coverage.

Over Tri A & B taken together, this means shift coverage was at 92% (or 116 shifts covered out of a possible 126) - a great improvement on previous years (both pandemic years and pre-pandemic).

In Tri A, Nightline had 68 IM contacts. This compares with 60 contacts (via phone, text, and IM) in Tri A AY 19/20. In Tri B, Nightline received 80 contacts in total: 28 IM contacts and 33 phone calls. In total, over Tri A & B there were 148 contacts during Nightline shifts, consisting of 96 IM contacts and 33 phone calls. Of these, 34 were immediate hang-ups, and 114 were contacts where a volunteer had interaction with a caller.

The top 5 primary reasons for contacting Nightline in Tri A were mental health related, academic stress, friendship issues, relationship issues, suicide and loneliness and family issues. The top 5 reasons in Tri B were academic stress, mental health related, friend and family issues and anxiety.

Nightline volunteers helped to bridge the gap in services overnight that are aimed to students. This ensured that students who needed somewhere to turn to always had this available. In addition, students may find it easier to speak to a fellow student, rather than a professional at another service, thus providing a more informal method of support and encouraging people to come forward. Students were supported with a number of concerns, as can be seen above.

### **Re-Introduce Look After your Mate workshops**

Look After Your Mate is a programme by Student Minds in which trained university staff deliver a workshop. The workshop empowers students to support friends experiencing mental health difficulties, whilst looking after their own wellbeing. For the look after your mate workshops the success measures have been partially met. We have trained staff from both the GCU Wellbeing team and GCU Students' Association, but are yet to deliver sessions to students due to the training taking part in Trimester B 2022. We are planning to roll out a schedule in partnership for the 2022/23 academic year.

## Feedback – Case Studies of Wellbeing Wednesdays and Yoga; and the Peer Support Project.

### Wellbeing Wednesdays and Yoga

GCU Wellbeing Service introduced wellbeing activities during Trimester B (January – April 2022) to help student to reduce stress and anxiety. The aim of the workshops was to engage students in mindful activities and create a sense of community. After an extended period of being off campus due to COVID 19, there has been an increase of students, who reported loneliness and difficulty with mental health. GCU Wellbeing Service organised sessions such as weekly yoga classes, sessions on volunteering with Cancer Support Scotland, training sessions for staff and students about being trans allies, yoga nidra, mindfulness, nature walks and creative workshop on mindful painting.

The response to workshops has been positive and students were happy to engage with activities. Students feedback included:  
*'This was one of the most relaxing things I have done in a while' (Creative Workshop)*

*'It reminded me of how much I enjoy painting, I've got paints and brushes out at home but it's hard to motivate myself to do it on my own' (Creative Workshop)*

*'Feel really good today after yoga, enjoyed that and would love to do it again' (Yoga)*

*'I've had stress and anxiety for a long time, and the symptoms have become worse since starting university. People had recommended that I try Yoga because it benefits both the body and the mind, but I had always been sceptical and hence had never considered it as an option. I was reluctant at first, but as the class began, I felt as though everything was so natural and effortless that even my discomfort about yoga positions that I couldn't hold for lengthy periods of time vanished. I felt at ease and relaxed, as if nothing could have affected my mood in that hour, and I was quite proud of myself for being a part of it. In fact, I've made another appointment and will be there in a few day' (Yoga)*

### Peer Support Project: Mind your Mate/Emotional Resilience Sessions

GCU Students' Association held sessions throughout the academic years in 2020-2022 which looked at engaging peer support and enhancing mental health literacy and skills within GCU's students. The sessions were well received by the students who engaged with the resources, with feedback including:

*"Wonderful presentation. I have learned a lot from it"*

*"Good breakdown and explanation on how resilience is linked to poor mental health. Liked sharing ideas/thoughts in the chat"*

*"I found the session really useful - I liked how it gave you the tools to go away and work with"*

*"I think the information given was very useful, and the presentation was very easy to understand. I think the speaker was very good, and overall, the webinar was very good"*

*"I found the part about active listening and how to build personal capital the most useful. I really enjoyed the workshop, and I wouldn't change anything."*

### **Small Grant Scheme**

GCU Students' Association were granted an award of £277.70 following our successful application to the Small Grant Scheme in AY 21/22. We chose to use this money to offer a pottery painting event, delivered by Craft Pottery. We had run this session during the previous Fresher's; we had offered calm events like this to fit the COVID-19 restrictions and it was incredibly popular, with the session being fully booked. We believe that it is important to offer non-alcohol related activities to allow students who do not drink to socialise and feel included. Students fed back that these sessions were an opportunity to practice something mindful and also encouraged good wellbeing. This gave students a chance to make friends and speak to others in a relaxed setting. Receiving the SGS funding meant that we were able to offer this session more than once, and therefore reach more students.