STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING





PROSPER





Introduction

College is an exciting, rewarding and transformational time - a chance to acquire new knowledge and skills, stretch yourself academically and make new friends for life. WCS students are very positive on their learning experience with the college, the skills they develop and their job prospects for the future.

The College has developed a Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy to manage its obligations to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all students. It covers the organisation's commitment to student health, the responsibilities of the College community and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues and the range of support available for the maintenance of mental and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

We are partnering with West College Scotland Students' Association to encourage greater student engagement in sport, clubs and societies to foster community building, support teamwork and further strengthen resilience. The active partnership also supports the promotion of the NUS Healthy body, Healthy minds campaign.

This strategy signals our intention to build on past success by broadening and deepening our efforts in health and wellbeing. The student strategy will work collectively with our staff strategy for a better future for our College community.

The Strategy - PROSPER

There are seven pillars to our Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy, demonstrating the breadth of our ambition to nurture the health and wellbeing of our students. These seven pillars are connected to our Staff Health and Wellbeing strategy creating one approach for the whole College

The seven pillars are: -

Promote - Health and wellbeing.

Respond - Appropriately to concerns affecting the health and wellbeing of individuals.

Observe - Signs highlighting health and wellbeing issues, such as trends in absence data.

Support - People in the College community who are experiencing difficulties affecting their health and wellbeing.

Practice - Open and honest discussion around health and wellbeing, especially mental health, to reduce the stigma and encourage preventative action.

Educate - By providing appropriate information and training to improve awareness and enhance responses.

Review - Actions on an annual basis to continuously improve support for health and wellbeing.

The seven pillars are described and illustrated in the following sections:

Promote

Our well-established framework for health promotion at West College Scotland is the Healthy Body, Healthy Mind programme. This programme has a broad spectrum of health and wellbeing promotional activity at WCS from policies and procedures to promotional events, health and lifestyle checks, training and information.

Further Action

We intend to redouble our efforts by:

- Broadening membership of the Healthy Working Lives Steering Group
- Identifying and utilising a wider range of channels of communication
- Involving more people in leading promotional events and activities

Respond

In matters of health and wellbeing, particularly when the matter involves mental ill health, a swift appropriate response will make a significant difference to reducing the time it takes to recover.

The formal support for students can be accessed through our free on Campus Counselling Services - TIME4U. Our key response arrangements are as follows:

TIME4U

Most of the time, for most students, life at college will be enjoyable and fulfilling. However, in all of our lives, there will be times when life is not so easy. Time 4 U provides a space to talk on a one-to-one basis with a Student Counsellor.

Every student is different. If there is something troubling you then simply having an initial chat with a Student Counsellor may help. Listed below are just a few examples:

- Academic Concerns
- Abuse (emotional, physical, mental, sexual)
- Anxiety
- Bereavement
- Depression
- Homesickness
- Mental Health
- Personal or Family Illness
- Pregnancy
- Relationship Difficulties
- Self harm
- Sexual Identity
- Suicidal Thoughts

Student Counsellors work to the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

Gies a break wellbeing cafe

West College Scotland's 'Gies a Break' Wellbeing Café could provide the answers you are looking for to these, and many other, questions.

The café has been introduced to provide a space to meet other like-minded students and chat about life, your course, the challenges you face and, most importantly, the positive things that are happening in life too!

This is your café and your space to discuss topics which are important to you. Topics can include anything from how to deal with anxiety, to confidence building, to healthy eating, to tai chi. The café really is a blank canvas and we want to make it work for you.

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid is an initial response to an individual in a crisis associated with mental health issues (e.g. suicidal thoughts). Mental Health First Aid training does not train people to be mental health workers. It offers basic general information about mental health problems. The knowledge presented and understanding developed in the course helps to remove stigma and fear and to give confidence in approaching a person in distress.

In the same way as the College provides conventional first aid cover, the College aims to have volunteers trained in Mental Health First Aid so that we can provide an appropriate response to anyone, staff or students, who need help in a crisis.

Absence Management

It is important that College staff respond appropriately to sickness absence as this can significantly affect the health, wellbeing and achievement of the individual student. As well as guidance and support from the teaching team, WCS has documented guidance contained within the Student Attendance Management Procedure which requires staff to take specific actions.

The College also recognises that students have 'wobbles' and operate sessions that recognise it's ok to have a 'wobble' and provide sessions and support for students in this situation.

Further Action

Despite a robust platform of response arrangements, the College continues to have a significant level of student absence. Therefore, we would propose the following:

- Convene a working group to consider how to strengthen the Student Attendance Management Procedure
- Prepare a statistical analysis of attendance data to identify specific areas with high levels of absence and develop appropriate responses
- Review recruitment activity to ensure students are selecting the correct course for them
- Overhaul the College induction process to fully support students through their journey, recognising induction should be a continual process
- Share successful interventions to help student continue their studies and achieve while at College



Observe

The College reports weekly on student absence, shares successful responses, identifies appropriate solutions for complex cases and monitors data. This approach has been instrumental in many areas ensuring students receive the best guidance and support we can offer.

With improvements in our reporting and student support offered, we now have an opportunity to produce improved monitoring reports with a greater level of granularity. This should enable us to pinpoint areas of concern, giving us a clearer picture of the most serious problems, and the areas these affect. This in turn will allow us to target our efforts most effectively.

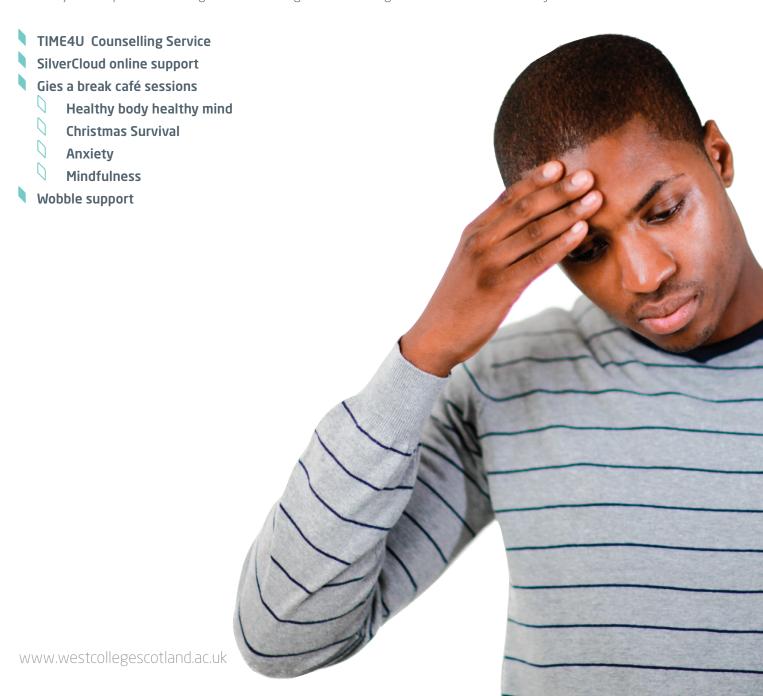
Another valuable mechanism by which we can gain insights into student health and wellbeing is through a student survey.

Further Action

- Develop and improved range of metrics for monitoring student absence.
- Continue with the College continuous improvement activity to support retention and attainment
- Further develop our reporting practice to ensure data is understood and acted upon in a timely fashion

Support

Some of our support structures have already been described under the heading "respond" (such as the counselling service TIME4U). it is important to recognise the offering from the College to our student community:



Supportive practice, policies and procedures

The College has an array of supportive practice, policies and procedures which, either directly or indirectly, have a positive influence on health and wellbeing. Examples include:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Mindfulness and anxiety support
- Online mental health tool, covering resilience, body image, anxiety and depression
- Alcohol, Drugs and Other Substances Procedure
- Gambling support
- Gender based violence support
- Connections with other supportive agencies across the region

All this positive practice serves to underpin the College commitment to supporting our students as a responsible community college.

We have taken steps to ensure ready access to the support activities, policies and procedures by providing a convenient links and promotional material student intranet and advertised on our student Myday portal.

Further Action

- Review our range of supportive practices to determine where improvements or additions may be made.
- Consider strategies to enhance and promote our support for all groups of students
- Continue to build connections with third party organisations to enhance our support for students
- Further develop our counselling and mental health support
- Continue to train all staff members in supporting our student body

Practice

Mainstreaming health and wellbeing issues, particularly mental ill health issues, is extremely important in ensuring that students take up the support mechanisms that are available. A community college like West College Scotland aims to provide the right supports but getting people to come forward and use those supports can be a challenge. This is often to do with stigma or fear of the being labelled as a problem or potentially unreliable which could affect access to study.

We believe that by working in partnership with our Students' Association and third sector providers we can go some way to breaking down the barriers and encouraging people to come forward when they need help.

We believe that we can provide a platform for initiative such as "See Me" and "Mental Health Awareness Week". Joint initiatives with the student body would give even more visibility in this area.

Further Action

- Invite our third sector partners to provide material and promotional events in order to practice having open and honest conversations about health and wellbeing, alongside our existing Mental Health and Wellbeing team and Students' Association
- Consider more active involvement in campaigns such as "See Me" and Mental Health Awareness Week
- Collaborate with the student body to develop campaigns which include the whole College community.

Educate

This is an area of the strategy where we have already made good progress with supporting staff to understand the mental health and wellbeing. Within the 2018-19 staff CPD Programme we have included:

- Mental Health Awareness
- Mental Health First Aid
- Mindfulness
- Epilepsy Awareness

These programmes were popular, and we intend to add to them with other awareness raising courses.

We have also seen developments within curriculum design around additional resilience and mindfulness support.

Further Action

- Identify additional training to raise awareness and support health and wellbeing amongst the College community
- Ensure that sufficient health related training is available, either face-to-face or online, to allow all staff to have a health and wellbeing related training course as part of their personal development plan
- Further develop curriculum design to include resilience and mindfulness activity as standard

Review

Our knowledge of how best to support the health and wellbeing of students is constantly changing, as are the issues which are most pressing for them. We have therefore built "review" into the strategy. We will review our action plan on an annual basis, to assess the success of the previous plan, and then develop a plan for the forthcoming academic year.

Further Action

Continue to develop a Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for future years.



Links to the Student Body

The Students Association signed up to the Healthy Body Healthy Mind Awards (a NUS Scotland and Scottish Student Sport initiative) at the end of 2017. This year the aim is for three stars (the highest is five) and some of the key areas of activity will be around:

- Mental health
- Physical Activities
- Smoking cessation
- Gambling awareness
- Gender Based Violence

Our aim with the Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to dovetail with the efforts on the employee support side such that the College's complete efforts to support student and employee health and wellbeing are complementary. So, for example, a Student's Association office bearer will join the Health and Wellbeing working group for both staff and student to be invited to attend and carry out joint awareness raising initiatives.



2019 - 22 Action Plan

PROMOTE				
Act	Timeframe			
1	Broaden the membership of the Healthy and Wellbeing Steering Group	March 2020		
2	Identify and utilise a wider range of channels of communication.	March 2020		
3	Involve more volunteers in leading promotional events and activities.	December 2019		
RESPOND				
Act	ion	Timeframe		
4	Review recruitment activity to ensure students are selecting the correct course for them	January 2020		
5	Prepare a statistical analysis of attendance data to identify specific areas with high levels of absence and develop appropriate responses	February 2020		
6	Convene a working group to consider how to strengthen the Attendance Management Procedure	February 2020		
7	Continue with interventions to help student continue their studies and achieve while at College	March 2020		
8	Overhaul the College induction process to fully support students through their journey, recognising induction should be a continual process	May 2020		
OB	SERVE			
Act	ion	Timeframe		
9	Develop and improved range of metrics for monitoring	April 2020		
10	Continue with the College continuous improvement activity to support retention and attainment	Ongoing 2022		
11	Further develop our reporting practice to ensure data is understood and acted upon in a timely fashion	September 2020		
SUPPORT				
Act		Timeframe		
	Review our range of supportive policies to determine where	April 2020		
	Consider strategies to enhance and promote our support for all groups of students	April 2020		
	Continue to build connections with third party organisations to enhance our support for students	Ongoing 2022		
15	Continue to train all staff members in supporting our student body	Ongoing 2022		
PRACTICE				
Act	ion	Timeframe		
16	Invite our third sector partners to provide material and promotional events in order to practice having open and honest conversations about health and wellbeing, alongside our existing Mental Health and Wellbeing team and Students' Association	Ongoing 2022		
	Consider more active involvement in campaigns such as "See Me" and	March 2020 and ongoing 2022		
18	Collaborate with the student body to develop campaigns which include the whole College community.	March 2020 and ongoing 2022		

2019 - 22 Action Plan

EDUCATE

Action		Timeframe
19	Identify additional training to raise awareness and support health and wellbeing amongst the College community	May 2020 and ongoing 2022
20	Ensure that sufficient health related training is available, either face-to-face or online, to allow all staff to have a health and wellbeing related training course as part of their personal development plan	From August 2019
21	Further develop curriculum design to include resilience and mindfulness activity as standard	From August 2019 and ongoing 2022

REVIEW

Action		Timeframe
22	Continue to develop a Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for future years.	Annual Review

Ongoing 2022





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