HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPACT REPORT

2022–23

The health and wellbeing of students, staff and communities is one of our key priorities. We're committed to making sure that the UWE Bristol experience is positive for them, by providing an environment in which they're able to thrive and ask for help when needed.

UWE Bristol's Health and Wellbeing Impact Report 2022–23

Everything that's in this report

Executive Summary

Health and Wellbeing Strategy Objectives

Individual

Community

Health Inequalities

Environment

UWE as Leaders

Data and Research

Our focus for 2023–24

Executive Summary

This report shines a light on the progress of our Health and Wellbeing strategy, a key pillar of **UWE Bristol Strategy 2030: Transforming Futures**.

As a university, we have five key priority areas for Health and Wellbeing at UWE Bristol:

Individual **Community** **Health Inequalities** **Environment** **UWE as Leaders**

Before we go into each priority in detail, let's start with a quick summary of our 2022–23 progress.

Our Living Well programme was recognised by the **Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO)** as one of five projects within HE to identify and use effective practice to support student mental health.	The Centre for Music (CfM) now has over 2,000 registered members. That's up 15% on the previous year, and a 400% increase since 2017.	This year, more than 5,500 students registered for our UWE Bristol Sport MOVE programme.
Feel Good's January media campaign gained over 66,060 total video views. The team also delivered a very successful staff wellbeing programme, with 21 staff groups taking part.	Over 4,000 students engaged with more than 235 Student Life Assistant team activities and events.	318 students and 25 staff members took part in our sustainable period product trial.
Our Student Loneliness research engaged 7 students in interviews, 203 complete responses for our first survey, and 185 responses to our follow-up survey. We'll use the findings to inform our strategy development.	We're developing a Customer First approach to enhance our flexibility and responsiveness when students are experiencing difficulties.	We successfully launched our Health and Wellbeing Innovation scheme for staff. This gives us the foundation we need to create, develop, pilot and evaluate new health and wellbeing initiatives.
We have clear flexible working practices in place for staff, and we're starting to develop toolkits and frameworks to further support managers.		

Here's a look at our five key areas of focus for 2023–24.

Student: More targeted interventions with a focus on male mental health.	**Student:** Developing a university-wide coaching approach and framework.	**Staff:** Reviewing staff health and wellbeing governance.
Staff: Continuing our 'Starting Well' work to deliver a positive experience for all staff groups and new joiners.	**University:** Developing our anti-racist strategy and actioning the recommendations from the University Mental Health Charter.	

Now, let's take a closer look at UWE Bristol's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022–25 priorities.

When it comes to Health and Wellbeing, we take a whole university approach.

Because we want to ensure collaboration and cohesion right across our institution and we want to be sure that we reach everyone and make a positive difference to all.

We developed our **Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2030** with the broad and active involvement of students and staff. We have a clear evidence base and effective evaluation plans which enable us to really develop our understanding of what works and what the key issues are for student and staff mental and physical health.

Let's look at our five Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities, the work we've done, the results we've achieved, and where we'll focus going forward.

Individual

Community

Health Inequalities

Environment

UWE as Leaders

Individual

Joined-up support for students

With our **Wellbeing in the Curriculum (WIC)** project, we looked at how an integrated, programme-specific approach could better support student wellbeing – by better connecting students to existing wellbeing support and resources.

From September 2021 to December 2022, we ran a test-and-learn pilot across four foundation and undergraduate programmes. Four large programmes, with a total of 800 students. It was an invaluable pilot, and we learned a lot.

For one, there's close agreement – among students and staff – and a clear need for us as university to provide wellbeing-focused initiatives. And, specifically, to integrate wellbeing within the curricula, and tailor it to match the needs of each specific programme.

Here are some of the other key findings and takeaways:

Staff and students appreciate and value our wellbeing support and options.

We must continue to look at the workload of staff and students, and how we can better support them. This will be a focus going forward.

We also saw a real need for a common, consistent language on wellbeing. Clarity is so important.

With these learnings front of mind, we're now starting to work with colleagues from across the university to look at how we can purposefully – effectively – build wellbeing into programme design.

Starting as we mean to go on

We designed our **Starting Well** programme to do just that: to make sure that everyone who comes to work with UWE Bristol has a positive, consistent experience from their very first day – from before their first day even.

From job application to completion of probation, we want people to have an experience that's in line with our values and our ambition as a great place to work. This will help us to continue attracting, developing, and retaining the very best talent – locally, nationally, globally.

So, how will we measure this?

- Quality of candidates/recruitment decisions.
- Diversity metric realised (from applicant to appointment).
- Improved experience for prospective and current employees.
- Improved retention (as per agreed metric).
- Level of competence/confidence in the role (at probation).
- People Manager fully competent and confident in their role to create a positive and engaging environment.

In Autumn 2022, we piloted the project in the College of Health, Science and Society (CHSS). Following an insight and aims review, and additional scoping, we're aiming to launch Starting Well university-wide in Autumn 2023.

Support when and where it's needed most

This year, we supported 83 UWE Bristol students with mental health and wellbeing barriers through our **Living Well** programme.

Living Well activities help students to support themselves and build valuable friendships and social connections.

In 2022–23, we saw an increase of feelings of belonging and worthwhileness among students who took part. We've also seen an average increase on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale scores. This indicates clinically significant improvements in attendees' mental wellbeing.

We've also expanded Living Well placement opportunities. We're now working with BSc Occupational Therapy and BA English Literature, and providing workplace opportunities for Illustration and Graphic Design students through New Wave, the new UWE Bristol creative agency.

Living Well was recognised by The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) as one of five projects with HE to identify and use effective practice to support student mental health.

We'll continue collaborating with TASO. Through their **Student Mental Health Evidence Hub** which our Living Well programme is part of, we'll continue to share information and resources to support HE providers nationally.

Music for everyone's ears – with the Centre for Music

The Centre for Music (CFM) is an exclusive facility for all UWE Bristol students and staff. Everyone's welcome. You can join any of our playing and singing groups. Take advantage of our rehearsal rooms and studio space. Or just come along to sessions or music lessons. You just need to be a registered member.

In 2022–23, the centre's weekly offer included 50+ hours of access to facilities, 12 different music teaching sessions and 7 professionally led groups, plus events and masterclasses.

The centre saw an average term time occupancy of 85%, with over 1,050 students engaged in music-making activities and 340 students being 'highly engaged' and participating in activities at least fortnightly.

Today, the CFM has over 2,000 registered members – with 1,827 students, 108 staff, and 140 alumni and community members. That's a 400% increase on membership numbers since 2017, and 15% up on the previous academic year. Here are some of the headlines from the 2022–23 CFM member survey:

72%
of respondents 'feel supported' by the CFM

74%
of survey respondents agree they 'feel at home' at the CFM

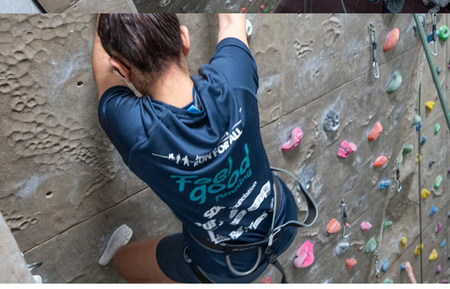
The Head of CFM also carried out a qualitative research project with nine students. They wanted to see how engaging with the CFM helped with a student's emotional wellbeing (mood improvement), social wellbeing (sense of belonging) and self-actualisation (sense of doing something meaningful). Here are some of the responses from students.

"I needed a release... When you're stressed from writing essays all the time it's just what you need. It's just a really good balance in your life basically."

"There is definitely a community around the space. You get students from all corners of the university that want to come and play music."

"It's definitely a key part of my uni experience so far."

The CFM continues to attract a diverse range of students too. Of the 1,827 students who registered in 2022–23, 52% were male students, 43% female and 5% other. 39% were global majority students.



MOVE and get active – with the Centre for Sport

MOVE is UWE Bristol Sport's flagship Health and Wellbeing activity programme, delivered alongside the Students' Union. MOVE is free for all UWE Bristol students, while staff pay a reduced monthly rate, to get them active and feeling good.

In 2022–23, MOVE had over 5,500 registered students, making it the largest physical activity programme here at UWE Bristol.

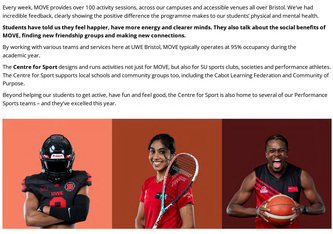
Every week, MOVE provides over 100 activity sessions, across our campuses and accessible venues all over Bristol. We've had incredible feedback, clearly showing the positive difference the programme makes to our students' physical and mental health.

Students have told us they feel happier, have more energy and clearer minds. They also talk about the social benefits of MOVE, finding new friendship groups and making new connections.

By working with various teams and services here at UWE Bristol, MOVE typically operates at 95% occupancy during the academic year.

The **Centre for Sport** designs and runs activities not just for MOVE, but also for SU sports clubs, societies and performance athletes. The Centre for Sport supports local schools and community groups too, including the Cabot Learning Federation and Community of Purpose.

Beyond helping our students to get active, have fun and feel good, the Centre for Sport is also home to several of our Performance Sports teams – and they've excelled this year.



In 2022–23, our American Football, Men's and Women's Squash and Men's Basketball teams all won their respective British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) leagues.

Our American Football team was also crowned National Champions for the second year in a row, and nominated for the prestigious BUCS national team of the year award.

Our Performance programme now supports over 100 performance athletes, with over 40 having international honours and representation.

Community

A UWE Bristol experience that's *everything* they want it to be

We believe in doing everything we can to help students successfully transition into – and through – UWE Bristol. To help them get everything they want from their university experience. Our Student Life framework supports all students in their individual journey. It helps them to build connections with their peers and the wider UWE Bristol community.

So far, more than 4,000 students have engaged with over 235 Student Life activities and events. We've expanded the framework too. Working with our Student Communications team, we've implemented a new communications strategy complete with a very useful **Student Life Instagram page**, which quickly gained over 2,500 new followers.

Student Life is also working to develop students' resourcefulness – by using Fika mental fitness. We initially rolled out Fika to support Midwifery students who were going into professional placements in January 2023. Since then, following very positive feedback, we've plans in place to roll out Fika to all our Nursing students in academic year 2023–24.

For student life, it's the student voice that matters most. It's front and centre of everything. We've held workshops focused on better connecting peer-to-peer student support initiatives, sharing good practice, ensuring good functional systems, and incorporating the student voice.

We're identifying the information we need to deliver our vision, and that's why we're developing a Student Community Dashboard to explore how we can best use all available data to build and inform practice.

Feel Good done better

The **Feel Good** programme is a campaign focusing on healthy behaviours at UWE Bristol. We believe in empowering everyone to make healthy choices. We run events throughout the year to help students and staff relax, try something new, get active and eat well.

Following last year's programme evaluation, we've implemented changes to help us engage more students and staff more effectively. This year, our understanding of the need for conversation led to more thoughtful discussions, particularly around belongingness and the cost of living.

We've also focused on digital engagement to highlight and encourage attendance at **Feel Good** events.

In January, we saw our highest engagement to date, with:

66,060	1,698	103,820	54,427
total video views across all platforms	**video engagements (reactions, comments, shares and saves)**	**accounts reached across all platforms**	**video views of Instagram Reels**

Healthy Headspace

As part of our Feel Good programme, and to boost our offering to all our staff, we partnered with Headspace, a mental health support app. We asked staff to form teams and sign up to gain access to the app to participate in the healthy university-wide competition – with a prize for the winning team. The UWE Bristol team with the highest engagement in Headspace won a year's free subscription.

Not only did 21 teams take part but, through regular feedback sessions, we found that the challenge benefitted participants' mental health and mindfulness. It also highlighted the impact – and benefit – of running a mindfulness challenge during high stress periods.

Through qualitative feedback sessions, we saw that taking part in the challenge led to individual and team benefits. Because the challenge was app-based, it gave teams real flexibility. They could use it when it worked for them and when they'd get most benefit from it, e.g. periods of high stress or team meetings.

The Headspace challenge also gave teams a positive reason to come together, creating new relationships and deepening existing ones. Practicing meditation as a team improved feelings of trust and solidarity.

Signposting support

Our **Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub** is an online resource which points people to all the support that's available to them.

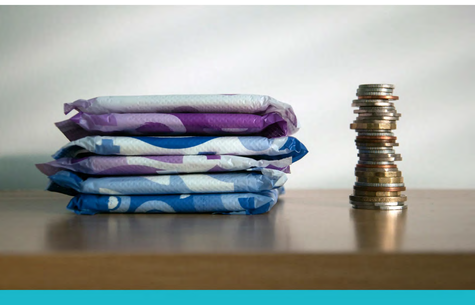
We have a review group in place that's working with key stakeholders to make sure that the hub is relevant, accurate and up to date. Their initial recommendations, which we're now actioning, are for us to work with the People Directorate to further establish how staff might become more familiar with the hub.

Talking health promotion

We continue to talk about and promote relevant health and wellbeing national days and campaigns. We always share resources that we believe to be useful and beneficial to staff and students.

For International Stress Awareness Week, we shared links in the weekly news to our healthy working environment policies. We also shared tips from colleagues on managing stress, plus a free trial of MOVE.

We also encourage staff to share their own tips and thoughts, and to know that they can talk to their managers – or other team members – about anything. Conversation is so important for our wellbeing, so let's keep talking!



Period Poverty programme

Period poverty is a global problem. Today, millions of women and girls cannot afford basic menstrual care. The UWE Bristol Students' Union is committed to addressing period poverty – by providing free, organic, plastic-free menstrual products in all their toilets. The SU partners with UWE Bristol to provide free products across toilets at all our campus sites.

The SU also ran an important behaviour change campaign to promote sustainable period products to our UWE Bristol community. Students and staff could sign up to a free trial of a sustainable period product of their choice (period pants, menstrual cup, reusable pads, reusable tampon applicator).

318 students and 25 staff members took part in the sustainable period product trial. A take-up increase of 209% compared to last academic year.

The aim was to spread awareness of more sustainable period products. It gave students and staff a cost-free opportunity to try a new product.

Health Inequalities

Developing new personalisation approaches

To make sure that we're here for students when they need us, before they need us, we're developing a 'personalisation' agenda. We want our support services to be able to anticipate and understand student vulnerability at the earliest possible point.

This way, we can make sure that applicants and students are heard and understood. We can partner with them, with their supporters, to stop harm from happening and to help them succeed at university, in life.

This is how we're doing it:

- We're investing in our pre-entry work, enhancing our capacity to proactively reach out and explore situations with applicants.
- We're ensuring that effective wraparound plans are made and agreed with applicants prior to enrolment.
- We're working hard to be more flexible, more responsive to students when they're going through difficulties. We've invested in our triage capability, and developing common triage, risk assessment and referral pathways across key departments and teams.
- We're developing flexible and faster ways to provide information, advice, guidance and therapeutic support to applicants and students.

Helping our students through the cost of living crisis

The cost of living crisis is not going away. It's still affecting people across the UK, in all kinds of ways. We recently ran an awareness campaign to highlight the services, support and information available to staff and students.

Examples of student support include:

- **Students can apply for financial help from our student support fund**
- **Free access to Blackbullion financial education resource**
- **Employment opportunities for students**
- **Free MOVE Programme membership for all students.**

We, alongside the Students' Union at UWE Bristol, are offering additional support to students and staff:

- **Free hot 'bring your own bowl' meals**
- **Free sanitary products**
- **Clothing swap shops**
- **Discounted food boxes**
- **Food bank on-site.**

As well as opening some of our buildings for longer, providing warm, safe spaces, all students and staff can now use our shower facilities.

We're offering free tea and coffee (you just need to bring your own mug) at our main catering outlets. We've also frozen the cost of food in our catering outlets and launched our Eat Well for Less initiative. Eat Well for Less means that you can buy a sustainable meal for a reduced price.

We pay the Real Living wage and we've temporarily suspended car parking charges.

Environment

Our campuses:

Special places, alive with life

We have a vision for all UWE Bristol campuses:

To consider how our campuses can showcase and celebrate who we are, what we do and what we stand for. They should be alive with all things UWE Bristol and make students, staff and visitors feel like they are part of something very special.

That's the big idea. Everything we're now working towards. And through our new **Campus Life** workstream, we've identified six themes that we believe will make our vision a reality and enhance the campus experience for everyone:

1. Belonging

2. Campus vibrancy

3. Welcoming

4. Choice

5. Connectivity

6. Green spaces

In January 2023, as part of our campus vision, we approved the Student Centre brief. This brief, the workstream's first capital project, is designed to enhance these six Campus Life themes.

We now have a monthly Campus Vibrancy Group meeting, with members from across UWE Bristol. Already, the Group is enhancing the vibrancy of our September 2023 registration and welcome events. Plus:

- supporting the production of a Frenchay campus mural, starting in November 2023. This boundary-pushing project will highlight disabled artists and their contributions to society. We're collaborating with UWE Bristol Indonesian students, disabled students and International Disabled Artists from Bristol and Indonesia.
- working with the appointed Student Centre design team, the Group's exploring how we can make sure that our campuses become a 'home' for student life – empowering and facilitating exciting opportunities for events, activities, pop-ups, performances and more.

Flexible working practices:

People first, always

Our UWE Bristol Chief People Officer is now the project sponsor for the flexible working practices review. Through this review, we've now agreed a set of principles and an approach that clearly – effectively – aligns with our equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions, and will enable us to:

- create a supportive, high-performing culture
- reflect our ambition to be an employer of choice and attract talent in a competitive marketplace
- deliver our strategic and operational objectives
- embrace enhanced work/life balance and flexibility
- be employee-led and evidence based
- create a strong sense of belonging
- account for how the model and practice is experienced by different groups.

We'll have new guidance and toolkits available to all in autumn 2023. Plus, a framework for manager support and training. And as part of the roll-out, we'll make sure that teams and managers know how to have sensitive conversations and look at exceptional circumstances. Our approach, as always, is test-and-learn. We'll collect feedback and use it to improve.

Health and Wellbeing Innovation Scheme:

By staff, for staff

Launched in August 2023, our **Health and Wellbeing Innovation Scheme (HWIS)** kickstarted the creation, development, piloting and evaluation of UWE Bristol health and wellbeing initiatives. HWIS gives out small pots of money, up to £500, to initiatives developed by the staff community for the staff community.

We've already supported 10 new projects, focused on everything from protecting your hearing to mindfulness to conversations about the menopause.

Next, the HWIS panel will produce an evaluation report and agree the future of the scheme.

You can find out more about our Health and Wellbeing Innovation Scheme in this report's **data section**.

UWE as Leaders

University Mental Health Charter

Established in 2019 by the student charity, **Student Minds**, the **University Mental Health Charter** (UMHC) is a voluntary accreditation for universities.

It calls for all universities to adopt a whole–university approach to mental health, and become places that promote the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the university community.

As a Charter signatory, we're committed to UMHC's key aims and objectives. We continue to work collaboratively to deliver a whole university approach and to streamline Health and Wellbeing throughout UWE Bristol.

In August 2022, we submitted the UMHC award application. In our application, we clearly defined our approach and model of Student Mental Health and personalisation approaches. Then, a few months later in October 2022, we had our visit from the UMHC and Student Minds assessors. They spent time with staff and students from across our community.

The assessors were extremely impressed with some excellent practice. They noted our whole institution approach. They also saw clear evidence of strong collaborative working towards a shared ambition to put wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

We're now working on addressing the recommendations that came from our submission. One recommendation is helping us to develop a student outcome framework for our student services – by routinely gathering data to demonstrate that our services are safe and effective.

We already have our first pilot data through our Living Well programme. Plus an agreed project plan to implement the validated measures across student services.

Student Liaison Service NHS project

Last year, along with the University of Bristol, we were awarded £500k over two years. The money is to develop and evaluate a pilot Student Liaison Service with the NHS.

The aim here is to address the "threshold gap" for students with complex mental health issues. Students who need a greater level of support than universities alone can provide – but are not able to be seen urgently by secondary NHS services.

While putting in place governance and funding arrangements between the universities and NHS has been a slow, complex process, we've now agreed a governance structure under the Bristol Community Mental Health Programme Board. We've also agreed principles for a clinical service model with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership. We're aiming to launch the pilot service in autumn 2023.

Alcohol and Drugs Accreditation plan

In 2022, UWE Bristol and the Students' Union (SU) at UWE Bristol were the first university partnership to receive a national Drug and Alcohol Impact Accreditation.

Working together with external agencies, we've embedded social norms of responsible drinking on all our university campus sites. And we've worked hard to refocus the conversation on drugs towards reducing harm, and building healthier, safer, more productive student communities.

We've also recently employed a Drugs and Alcohol Practitioner who'll work alongside the SU to maintain this important accreditation and review our policy.

As part of the recent Westminster Higher Education Forum, the SU's Vice-President of Community and Welfare took part in a conference focused on tackling drug use in HE. They presented our partnership approach to building inclusive campus communities.

The SU at UWE Bristol partners with agencies across the city, including University of Bristol, Bristol City Council and Bristol Drugs Project. They share resources, expertise and ideas – with the aim of co-creating impactful city-wide behaviour change campaigns.

For the second year now, we're an active part of the **Drink Rethink programme**, showing our commitment to leading the conversation on responsible drinking.

Students' Union Welfare Committee

The Students' Union's Welfare Committee represents UWE Bristol students on issues around welfare, equality, diversity and inclusivity. It reports into the wider Student Council.

For 2023–24, the committee has agreed to:

- Support the President's team in lobbying UWE Bristol to reduce the rise in accommodation fees
- Run a welfare stall at a Networking for Healthcare Students event at Glenside Campus to offer wellbeing goodies such as fruit, face masks and lunch boxes
- Run a guided meditation session (with an external therapist) to provide students with the tools to reduce and manage stress
- Support the planning and execution of the Welfare Awards, honouring students and staff that enhance student welfare provisions.

Wellbeing at Work Action Plans

Across all UWE Bristol Colleges and Professional Services, we now have 'Wellbeing at Work Action Plans' in place. And through twice-yearly reporting to our Health and Safety Executive Committee, we're now able to effectively escalate health and wellbeing risks, leading to university-wide action as and when necessary.

For example, this year we identified an area of concern relating to recruitment and retention. As a result, members of our People Directorate worked with several areas and teams across the university to really understand the issues.

We identified several actions to foster and support better wellbeing – for people who already work with us and people we'd like to work with us. These included simplifying the application process, improved workforce planning, and an increased focus on market factor pay.

Data and Research

Student Loneliness Research Project

During the 2022–23 academic year, our EDI team carried out a research project to better understand the experiences of loneliness among our students. While we're still analysing the data, we've already identified some key actions and recommendations.

We already know that we must improve our student communications. To make sure that they're aware of the support that's available to them – and how they can access it.

Here are some of our other early findings:

Loneliness is generally quite widespread among students.

63% of LGBT+ respondents, 65% of disabled respondents and 70% of Black and Asian respondents experienced loneliness – compared to 60% overall. These groups are less likely to feel connected to the people around them.

International students, young students and placement students were also more likely to experience loneliness.

Fairly high proportions of respondents struggle with anxiety and depression (70%), stress (79%) and lack of confidence (63%).

Generally, students felt that UWE Bristol has a lot of support on offer but it's hard to find out about this support.

Using student data to inform decision-making

Every academic year, we carry out a pre-arrival (Sep-Oct) and follow-up (Jun-Jul) survey with new undergraduate and postgraduate students. This gives us an invaluable (and up to date) insight into their perceptions, habits and concerns relating to health and wellbeing.

We ask the same questions each time, which means we can easily compare responses. Our follow-up survey's still running, but initial findings from the pre-arrival survey informed in-year changes.

For example, the second most common worry when starting university was managing finances (13%). Also, 40% of students said that a healthy diet was very important to them, and 20% would be interested in affordable catering options.

We found that body image was also very important to respondents, with 34% worrying about the way they look all or most of the time. As a result, we're reviewing the inclusivity of our imagery on academic and promotional materials. We're also building better collaboration between our Centre for Sport and Centre for Appearance Research.

Access and Participation Plan (APP)

Working with partners in our region, we're committed to making sure that all can benefit from Higher Education.

This year, we've focused on developing our Access and Participation Plan (APP) for academic years 2024–25 to 2027–28. We're analysing key data from previous years to identify areas of focus going forward.

Already, our analysis has highlighted a small gap in degree completion between students with a declared mental health condition and students with no declared disabilities.

We've also found slightly lower completion rates for male students compared to female students. And, from our own internal evaluations as well as external research, we know that male students are less likely to access support for mental health issues.

That's why one of our five intervention strategies in the APP is now focused on building a mentally healthy university to address these gaps.

Staff Health and Wellbeing Innovation Scheme

Our Health and Wellbeing Innovation Scheme (HWIS) is an exciting pilot project for 2022–23. Through HWIS, we're able to explore new approaches to developing and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing among staff – physically, mentally, emotionally.

We surveyed project participants after the completion of the scheme, with 88% of respondents seeing a positive impact on their wellbeing. It was also great to hear that all respondents would recommend the scheme to their colleagues.

Here's a closer look at just three of the projects that ran as part of HWIS.

Creative Collective

We saw strong positive feedback from staff who came along to creative workshops – and, importantly, improvements in their wellbeing. We now plan to use our findings to develop a permanent, fit-for-purpose art space on our Frenchay Campus. We're also keen to incorporate creative sessions into team away days.

Talking About Menopause

A highly successful event with over 177 attendees. 88% percent of survey respondents rated the event as 'very good'. And following the event, UWE Bristol's Menochat, a supportive space for staff going through the menopause, saw a 29% increase in membership.

We Mind, We Care

With more than 50 staff attending these mindfulness sessions – plus a long waiting list – we're already planning to run more. We're also looking to carry out research into the impact of music on mental health and wellbeing. We're also keen to explore the relationship between mindfulness and dietary practice.

Better data, better decisions, better outcomes

Recently, our Staff Health and Wellbeing Group implemented a quarterly and annual review of staff health and wellbeing data. The aim is to identify trends and put in place plans for proactive interventions. The data available to us includes staff sickness reports, Occupational Health (OH) reports, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) information, People and Organisation Development case work, and reasonable adjustment reports.

We're now able to provide quarterly reports, as well as an improved staff dashboard. This means we can quickly and effectively spot early trends and emerging risks.

For example, we've seen the proportion of all mental health absences against all sickness absence decrease from 37.6% in 2021-21 to 26.8% in 2021–22. The figure goes down again to 26.3% in 2022–23.

However, overall we have seen a significant increase in sickness incidents and days lost and we know that stress now accounts for 38.1% of incidents and 51.0% of all days lost in all mental health absences.

Clearly, emotional/mental health is a key area for us to address and keep working at. It's also worth noting that a significant percentage of the reports relate to a combination of mental health impacts, not solely work-related. Again this year, the other top theme to emerge was musculoskeletal conditions attributed to hybrid working.

Our focus for 2023–24

Now let's look at where we're focusing our energy in 2023–24

Students

Staff

Whole University

Students

- We'll continue to develop and strengthen our student outcome framework. We're developing a mental health-focused student outcomes framework for our Student Services to ensure that our services are safe and effective.
- We're developing a university-wide coaching approach and framework.
- We're carrying out a research project to look at male students' experiences of studying here. With a focus on their experiences of mental health support.
- We're developing targeted interventions, with a focus on male mental health.
- We're developing the Student Life community dashboard, so that we can identify further insights into students' health and wellbeing.

Staff

- We will continue our work on Starting Well to deliver a positive experience for all – new joiners and current staff – with a clear focus on health and wellbeing.
- We're establishing processes to look closely at the number of days lost due to accidents. This will help us to better understand and implement improved interventions and support for managers and staff.
- As we continue to develop and improve our People Strategy, we'll keep reviewing staff health and wellbeing governance during 2023–24.
- While we continue to review and spot trends and patterns, we'll introduce preventative measures to mitigate and improve staff health and wellbeing as necessary. For example, we're developing a campaign focused on musculoskeletal conditions and postural/back awareness. This is in response to hybrid working and our use of PCs and laptops at home.
- We'll further review our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to improve the overall staff experience and the support we offer.

Whole University

- We'll action the recommendations from University Mental Health Charter.
- We'll continue to develop our anti-racism strategy.

But our work doesn't end here...

By working alongside the Students' Union at UWE Bristol, partners, stakeholders and external agencies, through constant conversation and decisive action, we'll continue to put health and wellbeing at the heart of our university community. And we'll do more. We'll always do what's needed, what's best, for the benefit of students, staff and society as a whole.