

Be Well

at Bath

Our University-wide approach to mental health and wellbeing



October 2024



Our University
Our Future:
Connected



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

Introduction

At the University of Bath, we understand the importance of mental health and wellbeing and the integral part it plays in achieving not only individual success but the success of our community as a whole.

As senior leaders, we are committed to creating an environment at Bath that prioritises the wellbeing of our students and staff. We are striving to destigmatise conversations around mental health and wellbeing and create a culture that is open and understanding. As part of our University Strategy, we have committed to raising awareness, fostering resilience, and providing support within our community.

Be Well at Bath falls under the **Community pillar** of our University Strategy: **Fostering an outstanding and inclusive community at Bath**. It's important to recognise, however, that this University-wide approach to mental health and wellbeing spans all pillars of the strategy, across all parts of the organisation.

Our aim for Be Well at Bath is to ensure considerations of wellbeing are embedded across all aspects of our University community. It provides a framework to ensure effective and clear leadership for our community to embed good practice across all our activities and functions. It also brings together our work on student and staff wellbeing under one overarching group to ensure a whole University approach.

Promote, Prevent, Support

We follow the Promote, Prevent, Support pathway for wellbeing. Numerous texts and research studies identify the benefits of promotional and preventative strategies to engage with wellbeing at places of work and study. Following a Promote, Prevent, Support methodology for wellbeing supports our aim to embed good practice:

- **Promote;** proactive approach, pre-empt concerns

This is all about looking for opportunities, initiatives and actions that encourage a focus on health and wellbeing and circulating relevant information.

- **Prevent;** be aware, then prepare

The tools, resources and guidance available can assist with exploring ideas, thoughts, challenges and resolving concerns or difficulties.

- **Support;** spot the signs and respond

There are times we might need additional assistance, this area focuses on providing support for both personal and professional concerns that may affect overall health and wellbeing.



Professor Cassie Wilson
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Student Experience)

Working together

The success of Be Well at Bath relies on engagement from our whole community at every level. Good wellbeing is not a task that can be completed or a resource we can provide our students and staff. Everyone has a part to play in their day-to-day lives at Bath, whether you are working, researching or studying.

We recognise that each member of our community has different experiences, needs and perspectives. Your input, feedback and participation are invaluable as we work towards creating an environment that promotes holistic wellbeing.

Be Well is an ongoing journey with our community which will evolve beyond the end of our current University Strategy in 2026. We have made significant strides at Bath since 2014 when we first signed the Time to Change Pledge and our membership of the Student Minds' University Mental Health Charter programme has helped us focus on key areas and develop our university-wide approach.

We are looking forward to progressing this work with colleagues and students over the coming years and continuing to develop our approach.



Professor Jane White
Vice-President
(Community & Inclusion)

Setting the scene at Bath



57

Staff Wellbeing Champions across the University



1,989

students completed the SU and University's 2023 Be Well survey



8

Department Wellbeing Action Plans created in collaboration with 931 colleagues in 2023-24



2,034

students accessed support from our Wellbeing, Mental Health, Therapeutic & Duty services in 2023-24



2,947

responses submitted by staff to our three Work & Wellbeing Surveys in 2023-24



845

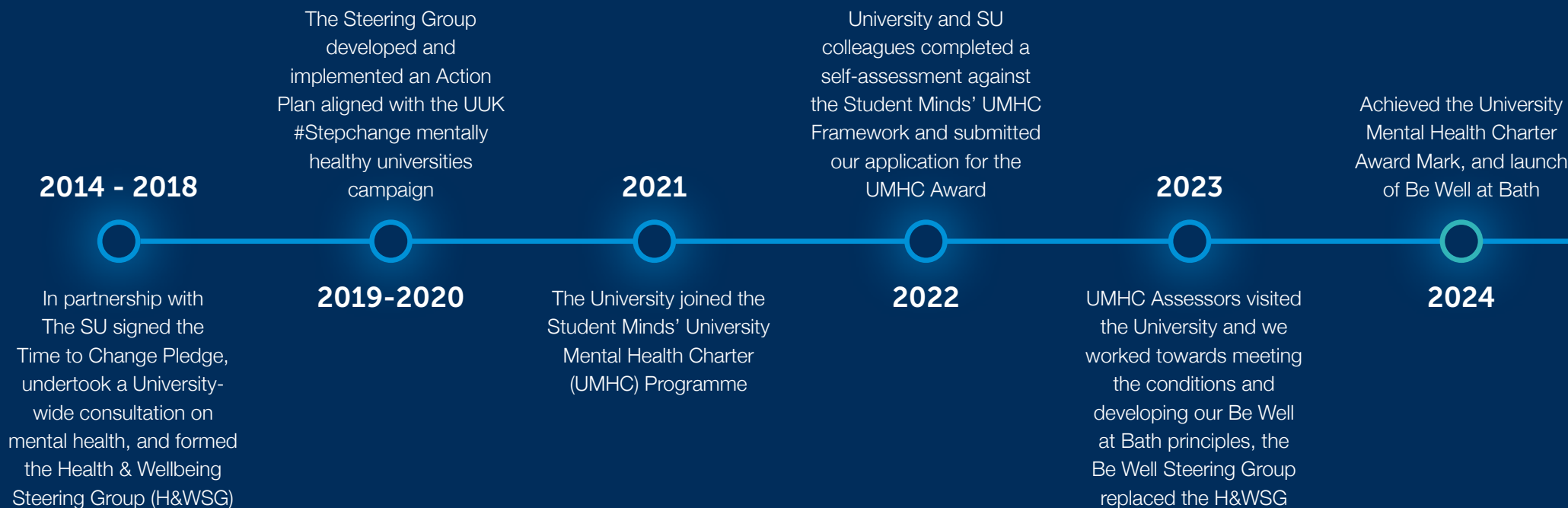
colleagues have completed Student Support & Safeguarding's Pastoral Support training



87.6%

of Bath students who completed the National Student Survey 2024 were aware of our University mental health services

Our journey so far



In October 2024 we achieved the [University Mental Health Charter Award](#). The UMHC Award is an accreditation scheme run by the charity Student Minds to recognise good practice and support ongoing development within universities. This Award Mark recognises that Bath has shown commitment to continuous improvement in mental health and wellbeing, which is progressing through Be Well at Bath.



Our Be Well at Bath principles

Five core principles summarise our overarching ambitions for Be Well at Bath:

1

Together with staff and students, we aspire to create an organisational culture of care that enhances mental health and wellbeing across our diverse community.

2

Deliver a rich learning experience that supports wellbeing at every stage of the student's progression into, through, and on from their studies.

3

Ensure our physical and virtual spaces and activities promote an inclusive community where everyone can thrive and feels they belong.

4

Create a thriving, sustainable, safe and supportive workplace that proactively enables staff to protect their health and wellbeing.

5

Promote and support good health and wellbeing for all and empower our community to access high-quality services when they need them.

How we are delivering and monitoring Be Well

The Be Well Steering Group is responsible for setting and monitoring our priorities and success indicators, and monitoring risks to delivery for each area. The Group provide annual progress reports, internally to the respective boards for Student and Staff Experience as well as the University Executive Board and externally to Student Minds in line with our UMHC programme membership.

The Group is co-chaired by Professor Cassie Wilson and Professor Jane White who lead Be Well at Bath. The group includes Institutional Leads for each of the four supporting Be Well principles, as well as key stakeholders from The SU, Communications and EDI.

Each Institutional Lead oversees the strategic plans for their area, collaborating with senior leaders, colleagues, student leaders and representatives, committees and departments. Alongside Cassie and Jane, they provide University-wide leadership to embed good practices relating to wellbeing across our community.

The Steering Group has agreed on a set of priorities developed from feedback in the UMHC Assessors' Report alongside insights from student and staff surveys, ongoing self-evaluation of our activities and interventions, external best practice guidance, and statutory requirements. We will review our approach regularly and the end of the current University Strategy will provide an opportunity to re-evaluate our achievements and approach to ensure these align with the University's new strategy beyond 2026.

Each Be Well principle has a series of key areas that we are working towards improving. You can read more about these priorities and our community achievements and successes so far in the following pages.



1

Together with staff and students, we aspire to create an organisational culture of care that enhances mental health and wellbeing across our diverse community.

Some of our community achievements

- Wellbeing forms part of the University Strategy and Student Experience strategic plan
- Regular engagement of the senior leadership team with campaigns to normalise discussions around mental health and wellbeing
- Consideration of the UMHC Framework as part of the 'Community & Inclusion' section of Governance and Executive board papers, as standard
- The University and SU's strong working relationship enables the SU to take a proactive role in influencing student policies and advocating for student needs, including wellbeing
- Our strong reputation and ongoing support for research around health and wellbeing

Current priority areas

- Ensure that the University takes a strategic approach to wellbeing, that this is a visible commitment, identified as a priority, and that appropriate resources are allocated
- The University's approach to mental health and wellbeing will respond flexibly to new evidence, research, evaluation, and understanding, to ensure the ongoing development of a healthy environment, interventions, culture and support
- Our approach to embedding mental health and wellbeing across the whole University is evident in other strategies, policies, procedures and practice
- Our approach to mental health and wellbeing is co-produced with staff and students and seeks to mobilise the whole community

2

Deliver a rich learning experience that supports wellbeing at every stage of the student's progression into, through, and on from their studies.

Some of our community achievements

- Central induction for all undergraduate students organised around the 5 Senses Model, emphasising connectedness, capability, resourcefulness, purpose, culture and belonging
- Rich pre-arrival support and Disability Access Plans established
- Provision of tailored induction support for students from diverse backgrounds to meet their unique needs and promote integration
- Improvements to the consistency of pastoral support provided by personal tutors (now academic advisors) and the introduction of mandatory pastoral care training for all academic colleagues who are academic advisors or doctoral supervisors
- All new Moodle pages are designed to meet accessibility requirements
- Substantial programme to support the wellbeing of students on placement
- Integration of annual re-induction for all students at the start of each new year of study
- Whole-institution curriculum transformation designed with inclusivity and programme-level approach as central principles. These are strong factors in supporting learner wellbeing.
- Clear unit and course-level learning objectives are shared with all students so they understand the objectives of their learning
- Student engagement is monitored throughout the year and students who may be disengaging are contacted directly to offer support

Current priority areas

- Ensure all groups of students have a positive transition experience to the University
- Ongoing evaluation of curriculum-transformed courses and their impact on supporting student wellbeing
- Understanding the impact taking a placement or study abroad opportunity has on the wellbeing of all groups of students
- Continuing our work towards a more inclusive curriculum that includes a consistent approach to reasonable adjustments and mitigation practices
- Ensure we are effectively tracking student engagement and using this data to inform wellbeing support

3

Ensure our physical and virtual spaces and activities promote an inclusive community where everyone can thrive and feels they belong.

Some of our community achievements

- Variety of student wellbeing campaigns throughout the year, in collaboration with the SU
- Collaborative social prescribing offer for students, including Get Active, Green Minds, Yoga, and Art
- Increased activations and bookings as part of the Free Sports Pass offer by the STV for students
- Support for students seeking accommodation in the private sector
- Established approach for the training of different student-facing staff in student accommodation
- Inclusivity options provided in our student accommodation offer, e.g. same-sex, mature, accessible, quiet/alcohol-free, LGBTQ+ halls
- Work to support students of different backgrounds to feel integrated and supported at times of wider political and social hardship
- Establishment of staff and student networks to encourage social support and integration for individuals from various backgrounds and experiences
- Accreditations to recognise efforts to foster a safe and diverse environment, including Disability Confident accreditation; Secured Environments award for security; Athena Swan Silver; University of Sanctuary and NNECL
- Design features in our more recent University accommodation to promote social integration, while also respecting student autonomy and need for space
- The Access Able campus app to help students and visitors find accessible routes and accessible facilities on campus

Current priority areas

- Students and Staff know about the support and preventative interventions to support their health and wellbeing and are confident to use them
- Creating a community where no one feels lonely
- Create an environment in which everyone feels welcomed and respected
- University Student Accommodation supports wellbeing and belonging
- University buildings and design are accessible, support wellbeing and reduce risk

4

Create a thriving, sustainable, safe and supportive workplace that proactively enables staff to protect their health and wellbeing.

Some of our community achievements

- Developed the University's Work-Related Stress and Wellbeing Policy which sets out our commitment to securing the wellbeing of our workforce, the roles and responsibilities we each have and the arrangements that we will put in place to achieve the policy aims and objectives
- The development and implementation of Departmental Wellbeing Action Plans in all academic departments and professional services work areas
- Developed, signposted and implemented wellbeing tools such as Workplace Wellbeing Wheel and Individual Wellbeing Action Plans
- Provided a programme of employee and line manager mental health and wellbeing training, development, and events
- Recruited and trained a network of Staff Wellbeing Champions from across the organisation to signpost both internal and external sources of support. In 2024 they won two Staff Recognition Awards including for Community & Inclusion
- Encouraging and supporting the development of more staff-led wellbeing groups to address the needs of our community
- Informed and implemented the work-related aspects of the Suicide Safer Community Action Plan
- Organising a diary of engagement events and communications throughout the year
- Assessed and implemented an enhanced provision of staff counselling and wellbeing support
- Sourced (internally/externally) and promoted a suite of resources and initiatives, including self-help to assist staff to develop their wellbeing and resilience

Current priority areas

- Embed health, safety, and wellbeing into all aspects of the employee experience to influence change and focus on wellbeing culture
- Enhance employee engagement with wellbeing initiatives to build literacy and confidence at all levels of the organisation
- Enable effective and resilient employee support, to include key staff groups and emergency support
- Encourage a healthy work culture and environment where staff are able to adopt healthy behaviours and sustainable lifestyles
- Evaluate our initiatives to ensure that we continuously develop

5

Promote and support good health and wellbeing for all and empower our community to access high-quality services when they need them.

Some of our community achievements

- Good practice in communicating available support to students from the beginning of their University journey and beyond, and a high percentage of students aware of support services
- Use of the Student Be Well Survey as a benchmarking tool to help shape student services and resources
- Improving financial wellbeing for our students through our online Blackbullion financial education system
- Supportive and professional 24/7 Security Services working closely with other support services
- Investment in new, more visible and welcoming Roper Centre student support space
- Embedded the annual review and updating of our Suicide Safer Community Action Plan within Student and Staff Experience structures
- The Staff Advice Line 4321 so staff can access specialist advice when worried about students
- Our collaboration with external therapeutic services for students
- Publication of the Student Trusted Contact Policy
- Good collaboration across Mental Health, Therapeutic, Wellbeing and Disability services, as well as positive working with security, accommodation and academic staff
- Social prescribing offer for students by Student Support & Safeguarding

Current priority areas

- Students with a disability, long-term health condition and SpLD, are supported to study and research free from barriers to achieve their full potential
- Services delivering interventions are consistently safe and effective, and appropriately resourced
- Students can access personalised advice and support when they need it so that they can stay well and thrive at University
- All risks of harm to self or others are managed and mitigated to enable student success

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Find out more about our approach to mental health and wellbeing, who to contact, and how you can get involved at: go.bath.ac.uk/be-well



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