

Wellbeing Advisory Group 2023

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Introduction

The University of Manchester uses a wellbeing framework called the 'Six Ways to Wellbeing' that is used to encourage students to engage with and look after their wellbeing while at university. The Six Ways to Wellbeing are: Connect; Give; Take Notice; Be Active; Be Healthy; Learn and Discover. The framework that the university created is based upon research funded by the NHS which resulted in the development of the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing'.

At the university we focus on a way to wellbeing every two months. One of the main two ways we promote the Six Ways to Wellbeing is through events and social media content.

The wellbeing advisory group was created to understand more about how students currently interact with the university's wellbeing framework and what could be done to improve students' experience and wellbeing.

Methodology

Participants:

The advisory group was advertised through a number of channels including our Instagram, our mailing list and through school departments.

We recruited a total of five students but had only three engage with the advisory group. Students from a range over degree levels were recruited in order to gain a clear picture of how students at different levels of study engage with wellbeing while at university. The three students that interacted with advisory group were at studying at an undergraduate, masters and PhD level.

Students were compensated for their time and given a £15 voucher for each of the sessions they attended.

Procedure:

The advisory group was carried out in three separate sessions. Session one was held on Zoom and focused on the current university's wellbeing framework. Session two was held in-person and focused on wellbeing events. Session three was held in-person and focused on wellbeing social media and communications. Each session would start with an icebreaker activity to get students to open up and feel comfortable engaging with other students in the group. The start of session two and three also focused on reporting back to students what feedback has been taken on board from the previous sessions. Questions asked were pre-determined beforehand and were asked in a semi-structured style.

Key Findings

Session 1 – Six Ways to Wellbeing Framework:

Students in the advisory group had heard of the university's Six Ways to Wellbeing framework. Students felt positive towards the framework and that it encompasses the main elements of wellbeing. Students felt the framework was something they in-corporate into their daily lives but did not consciously follow it step by step as a tick sheet activity. Students felt that the framework could be personalised/adapted for particular student groups who have particular needs e.g., those with disabilities/those that come from different cultures. Students also mentioned advertising using particular parts of the wellbeing framework to advertise to different student groups. For example, international students are likely to be more interested with the way 'Connect' whereas students who are interested in sports are more likely to be interested in the 'Be Active' wellbeing component. Students felt the framework could be better advertised through faculties, schools, societies/freshers' fairs, collaborations with different parts of the university, pop up stalls/six ways posters around campus and larger wide scale events. However, one important point students brought up about advertising is that it should not be advertised as something you 'have to' do.

See the appendix for more recommendations on how to improve the Six Ways to Wellbeing framework.

Session 2 – Wellbeing Events:

It was clear that different students had different types of interests when it came to wellbeing events. Some events that one student really liked another student would have an opposite preference to and so it is important that a wide range and variety of events are held to cater to different students likes. It is important to note that where some events may have been received less interest by the students in the current advisory group, all our events have generally been very well received by other students who did attend the events.

During the session we went through a variety of past wellbeing events we have run to see what students thought of them. Students were asked to give each event a rating out of 10. The 'Grow Your Own Plant Event' and 'Guide Dogs' event were the two most highly rated events (rated 15 out of a possible score of 20). With the 'Grow Your Own Plant Event' students liked how at the end of the event they had something to take home and look after. Students all mentioned it would be a great idea to run a similar event as a drop in during freshers' week. With the 'Guide Dogs' event students liked the educational aspect to it, where you could learn more about the training of guide dogs and the charity. The lowest rated event was the mindfulness colouring event (rated 7 out of a possible score of 20). For the mindfulness colouring event, students in the advisory group found the idea if the event too general, not exciting and something they would not go out their way to attend.

See the appendix for more specific recommendations of what events to run for each way to wellbeing.

Session 3 – Wellbeing Social Media & Communications:

Similar to session two, different students had different interests and likes when it came to wellbeing content we have created. However, there were less differences between students' opinions in this session compared to the last session that looked at events.

During the session we went through a variety of past wellbeing content we have created to see what students thought of them. Past content created was put into categories: Informational content; Practical content; Student made content; Physical places content; Awareness content; Diversity/Inclusion content.

Students were asked to give each category a rating out of 10. Content that included physical places (e.g., park reels and museum reels) and content that included diversity/inclusion (e.g., Ramadan post) were the two most highly rated categories (rated 30 out of a possible score of 30). With the content that focused on physical places, students found this content to be very interesting. They liked how the videos showcased places to explore around Manchester and felt that seeing such videos motivated them to go themselves. Students really valued the content based around 'Diversity/Inclusion'. Students felt that such content helps students to feel more integrated and connected with the university. The lowest rated category was student made content (e.g., day in the life reels) (rated 24 out of a possible score of 30). While this category was given the lowest rating students in the advisory group still had many positives to say about student made content. Students felt this type of content to be more relatable and that seeing another student look after their wellbeing made them think "I can do it as well." However, it was mentioned that sometimes such videos can appear unrealistic. It is important when putting out this type of content to highlight that not everyday will look like what is shown in the videos and that it is okay if your daily routine does not look like this.

See the appendix for more specific recommendations of what content to create for each way to wellbeing.

Conclusion

Overall, the wellbeing advisory group has allowed us to gain an in-depth understanding of how students, from different degrees of study, feel about the university's approach to wellbeing. The students who took part in the advisory group reported that they enjoyed being a part of the advisory group and that they felt their views were taken on board. It was clear that student in the advisory group knew about the Six Ways to Wellbeing but felt that this could be advertised better throughout the university via faculties, schools, societies/freshers' fairs, collaborations with different parts of the university, pop up stalls/six ways posters around campus and larger wide scale events. It was clear that different student had different likes and dislikes when it came to wellbeing events and the social media content we put out, and so it is important to carry on offering and creating a wide range of events/social media content to meet students' needs.

Appendix

Session 1 – Six Ways to Wellbeing Framework

1. What does wellbeing mean to you?
 - Mental/physical/spiritual – it helps me to better perform in my studies.
 - Things that contribute to health – things that help me get to a good physical health e.g., running
 - Taking a break to focus on yourself and take actions to be happy, not be stressed
2. Have you heard about the 6 ways to wellbeing?
 - Heard of it at freshers.
 - Seen emails from uni/newsletters from departments
 - Mentioned on blackboard – in welcome documents and emails
3. Does the 6 ways to wellbeing match what you thought wellbeing meant?
 - Yes – they are achievable steps divided into chunks
 - Very direct and easy to follow
 - Good how there's a 2 month focus on each way
 - The framework comprises of the wellbeing aspects we discussed earlier on
4. Do you interact with this framework?
 - I do but don't follow it as a tick sheet.
 - Don't follow it step by step but do it unconsciously e.g., joining a society, drinking water – but I don't necessary look at six ways framework to do it.
 - Don't tick of each one – but if I get an email then I would think about it and what I could do this month.
5. do you think this framework is useful to students?
 - 6 very clear things
 - It allows you to find your own personalised version
 - You can find something for you e.g. be active is not just about going to the gym
 - There's an interest but I don't read on it and follow on it
 - It's good if students do it
 - It's Good there's guides/examples to it but there's only so much you can put on a website
 - There's lots of things going on in university life and these kind of things take a back seat – but recognise it needs to be a priority.

6. Do you think encouraging students to engage with this framework will meet students' needs/help them with wellbeing issues?

- It needs to be personalised to different groups – wellbeing will look different for everyone e.g., disabled people/different cultures
- Framework is good but it's not specialised – but it does apply to most people
- E.g., for people who look towards sport - Be Active will fit how they look after their wellbeing more
- New international students will relate more to connect
- People who stress/have deadlines – take notice fits more with that
- Would be good to cater to particular groups – and use this as a way to advertise some particular parts of wellbeing to students more

7. How can we better use the 6 ways to wellbeing framework to meet students' needs while at university?

- Need to personalize it more
- Weekly activities that are advertised through the template are helpful, but are usually repeated each week – have a poll from students
- Do a countryside walk for people who are not interested in sport
- The website is good – but could make it more social e.g., 'come and make new friends at xyz'
- Meditation classes
- Doing water bottle giveaway rewards to promote wellbeing services
- Collaborate/involve more wellbeing activities with the international society.
- Collaborations with societies/sport – run wellbeing themed sessions.

Mentimeter Responses:

- Better promote it through departments and faculties
- Hold events that are engaging, fun and incorporate examples of the 6 ways of wellbeing
- Personalise them to students
- Focus on single values at a time. Focusing on all values at once can be overwhelming. I think having some kind of team for each value who work to promote it would be good.
- Organise events specific to the needs of student groups
- Connect with students right from their first day at the university

8. Barriers to engaging with the framework/reasons for not engaging with the framework/is there any stigma surrounding wellbeing in the student population?

- Don't advertise it as something you have to do
- When receive emails/see it on the website – it makes it seem like you should be doing it and then it makes you less likely to do it.
- People may not be able to differentiate between mental health and wellbeing
- Holding events for specific societies

- It takes time for international students to ease in
9. Do you feel that someone's personal characteristics such as gender, race, class, and disability influence someone engaging with the framework?
- No

10. Does anything need to be added/changed about the framework?

- Simplify it more – make it seem like you don't have to do it – like Instagram
- Have events where you can meet people
- Connect/give – needs more of a stronger title/to be more specific of what it means in the title.

11. How can we let more students know about this framework/get students to engage with it?

- Societies fairs
- Freshers fairs
- Stalls outside the SU
- Bigger events so people get to know about it e.g. like a silent disco that was held by the SU wellbeing team
- Six ways posters around campus – can include small reminders mentioning to take study breaks in the library

12. Mention structure of our wellbeing team? Is there anyone missing?

Is there anyone missing from our team/ anyone new that needs to be employed?

- Student volunteers
- Students that take over the Instagram
- Take over official uom and su account – doing more student takeovers

13. When you hear the term 'central wellbeing team' what comes to mind/what do you think they do?

- It's the main area to rely on
- We (the wellbeing team) have connections to different departments /societies
- Gives the impression we know all the answers

14. What emails would you send to a university email called studentsupport@manchester.ac.uk

- Everything
- Anything you want

- Exams
- Finance/living queries

15. With the introduction of the new School hubs, we think there might be some confusion among students about who we are and what we do, and we usually get queries that we can't help with (e.g. academic/mt circs that you need to go to your school for).

Does the structure of this seem confusing to you/do you understand this structure?

- Think the above is very distinctive.
- Engineering building has a poster saying what the school support hub does

16. In what scenarios do you think you would go to your school hub or go to our central wellbeing team?

- Wellbeing = wellbeing/not administrative queries
- School support = exams/mt circs / administrative queries

17. How do we sell to students that we do is different/separate to the hubs?

- Carousel poster on the uom website – separate slide stating what each service does
- Advertising them together and grouping it separately so the differences can be seen
- Posters in the seating area when you come in stating the differences
- Posters

18. School hub emails will generally be [soss.wellbeing@](mailto:soss.wellbeing@manchester.ac.uk) or [soss.support@](mailto:soss.support@manchester.ac.uk) while our current email is [studentsupport@](mailto:studentsupport@manchester.ac.uk) >>> do you think this makes it harder to distinguished ourselves? Suggestions of what we should change our email name to?

- [Studentwellbeing@manchester](mailto:Studentwellbeing@manchester.ac.uk) Don't mention 'support' - be specific
- Make sure each school email address has the name that is specific to their school

19. Any Addition comments?

- Little competitions
- Host awareness events
- Stands/popups - ALIG/Library/MECD
- Overtake uom official/ su insta – do it more it

Session 2 – Wellbeing Events

1. What self-care events/activities do you take part in currently if any?

- Baths
- Audiobooks
- Gardening events
- Cooking – relaxes mind
- Organisation
- Cleaning room
- Making bed
- walking

2. Go over the past events we've done and get students opinions –

Take Notice – Grow Your Own Plant

- Would you attend this event: Yes/Yes
- Run it as a drop in during freshers fair
- It helps with wellbeing – something to look after, people have an interest to take plants, involve people through painting
- Not everyone likes/ is comfortable painting – have an option not to paint and just use stickers
- Play music during the event
- 20/25 places are sufficient for the event
- Rating: 8/10 & 7/10

Learn and Discover – Valentine's Day/Relationships Talk

- Would you attend this event: Yes – see it as an experience to learn more
- Would you attend this event: No - not wanting to go through difficult things/invasive – there would be a lot of emotions
- It's useful to certain group of people worried about the issue of relationships
- Do different types of talks as well
- Advertise – by showing taster/1 min video of instructor talking about the event
- Rating: 6/10 & 6/10

Guide Dogs

- Would you attend this event: Yes – likes dogs/makes me happy
- Would you attend this event: No – just personal preference
- Like the educational part where people can learn about guide dogs
- Rating: 10/10 & 5/10

Mindfulness Colouring

- Would you attend this event: No – I've coloured before/wouldn't go out to attend it
- Would you attend this event: No – doesn't excite you/too general/ wouldn't go somewhere to colour
- Can't pay attention – would get bored
- It's good for calming/ more relaxing events
- Would be good to also include painting
- Give free colouring packs
- Colour on the wall (mural) as a group
- Have it in the SU – where people can come up and paint on a wall
- Rating: 4/10 & 3/10

Be Healthy Workshop

- Would you attend this event: Yes – because it's delivered by a psychologist, they know what they're talking about, having "health psychologists" mentioned in the advert is good
- Would you attend this event: No – lots of resources already out there
- Event would help with wellbeing
- Mention the activities you will do in the advert so they know more about the event
- Rating: 7/10 & 4/10

Muse Headbands

- Would you attend this event: No – sceptical, getting feedback on brain waves will stress me, prefer to go to an in-person facilitated one
- Would you attend this event: Yes – meditation calms me, if frequently put on it will help me and motivate me
- Would go to weekly sessions
- Rating: 4/10 & 9/10

Learn and Discover – Learn how to Crochet

- Would you attend this event: Yes – it's a hobby to carry on after/would help with wellbeing
- Would you attend this event: No – I'm not a knitting person
- Rating: 10/10 & 2/10

Craft Swap

- Would you attend this event: Yes – to swap, maybe no to craft
- Would you attend this event: Yes – like second part more of swapping
- I'd be worried if not had something good to swap – I'd need to feel more confident about it – cant swap something for the same thing
- Could do a pass the parcel type of swap at the event
- Show a demonstration of what you could make at the event

- Do a plant swap
- Making something and giving it to charity
- When advertising – use real life pics to show what you can make
- Rating: 7/10 & 7/10

Pumpkin Painting

- Would you attend this event: No – because its painting – wouldn't find it comforting
- Would you attend this event: Not sure – not a fan of it due to cultural reasons and wanting to waste food
- But think the event would help with others wellbeing
- Rating: 6/10 & 2/10

As a group place each event into three piles: would attend, wouldn't attend, would maybe attend:

WOULD ATTEND:

- Grow your own plant event
- Guide dogs event
- Be healthy workshop
- Muse headbands
- Learn how to crochet
- Valentine's day/relationships talk

WOULD MAYBE ATTEND:

- Craft swap

WOULD NOT ATTEND:

- Mindful colouring
- Pumkin painting

Individually, are there any events that stand out to you that we should replicate more? / What's your top events?

FAVOURITE:

- Muse headbands
- Valentine's day/relationships talk
- Guide dogs

LEAST FAVOURITE:

- Pumkin painting
- Guide dogs
- Valentine's day/relationships talk

3. Why some events are less attended than others? Anything to do with time of year?

Best time to hold events:

- PhD students – do seasonal events
- Masters – not in Sept/Jan/April yes in – oct/nov/feb/march
- Talk to postgrads students in the summer – make postgrad/masters specific events = speed friending/ networking events/ hike/ day trips

4. How do we let students know about these events? How could we have got better attendance?

- Running weekly events as well as one off events
- Using other social media platforms – Facebook, snapchat
- Work with lecturers
- Announcements in libraries – would definitely hear about it
- Target earlier years who are less busy
- Stalls around campus to stand out
- University mail list
- Manchester News
- Emails by department/faculty/academic advisors
- Displays (e.g., in ALI G)
- Word of mouth
- Interactions/advertising through involvement in other society events

5. Go over each of six ways and discuss what events the wellbeing team can put on for each way.

- CONNECT
 - For meeting people
 - Postgrad networking events
 - Formal chatting not as fast paced (as international society is fast paced)
 - Weekly group walks
 - Events with animals/birds
- GIVE
 - Food swap events
 - Community eating events
- TAKE NOTICE
 - Bird watching
- BE ACTIVE
 - Marathon/park runs
 - Cycling/renting bikes

- Step goal challenge event – can do with a small group of students or all together as a university
- BE HEALTHY
 - Cooking demonstrations – teaching students and letting them practice
 - Series talks with dietitian/nutritionist
 - Sleep – tailor it to students living in accommodations that are noisy
 - Easy cooking recipes – have recipe cards to hand out
 - Collabs with cafes/food on campus
- LEARN AND DISCOVER
 - More talks
 - Documentaries
 - Make learning fun and unique – e.g., like the Valentine’s relationship talk
 - Learning new skills/hobbies -e.g., Origami

Session 3 – Wellbeing Social Media & Communications

1. What positive social media/wellbeing-based accounts do you follow if any?
 - Things to do for wellbeing
 - Meditation channels
 - Therapy based accounts
2. What social media platform do you use most? E.g., Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Tiktok
 - Instagram (x2)
 - LinkedIn
3. Are you aware of our wellbeing Instagram account?
 - Yes (all participants were aware of the Instagram account)
4. Go over the past social media content we’ve put out and get students opinions –

(<https://www.instagram.com/uomwellbeing/>)

Informational Content – Relationship Reels/Eco – Anxiety post/Blue Monday Post

- It's useful
- Information overload in blue Monday post, keep it concise, like the graphics and colours
- Do a point a slide rather than 5 points on a slide
- Nice that there's videos and posts
- Like subtitles – simple headings in relationship videos are good – do different people for each video of part 1 and 2
- Make some animated videos
- Content is helpful for wellbeing
- Signpost at the end to where you can get more resources
- Rating: 7/10, 8/10 and 10/10

Practical Content – Stress Techniques Video/Recipe Reels

- Find this type of content more interesting
- Depends on time of posting – don't post when in exams
- Recipe reels – make more easy ones with easier ingredients
- The ingredients are hard in the current recipe reels are complex
- Enjoy watching food reels
- Run events where you can actually make the food
- Add link to where you can get the ingredients – separate webpage/comments

- Found the stress reel more useful
- Found the stress techniques useful
- Both reels helpful for wellbeing
- Rating: 9/10, 8/10 and 10/10

Student Made Content – Day in the Life Reels

- Like student videos – they're more relatable
- 'If a student can do it, I can do it as well'
- But might not be too realistic – it takes time and everyday won't look this this – don't want students to feel bad for not doing it
- Some are unrealistic – mention that it's okay if your routine isn't like this

- This content would encourage me to look after my wellbeing
- It wouldn't encourage me – because I have my own day/way – but would motivate me to take some tips
- Particular points in video that were good: writing a to do list, going to the park – shows students you can do this too
- For future vids - focus on one topic instead
- Rating: 7/10, 9/10 and 8/10

Physical Places Content – Park Reels/ Museum Reels

- Definitely interesting
- Best category
- Locations should be within Manchester
- Good that it shows you things you can do
- Videos look nice – it encourages you to go there
- Like how the videos are calm
- Nice that it shows you can also do things by yourself/alone
- Like how their short
- Would help me with my wellbeing and make me want to go
- Do student takeover – e.g., of volunteer days
- Explain how to get there – explain transport links in comments
- Rating: 10/10, 10/10 and 10/10

Awareness Content – Men’s Health/International Women’s Day/Meet the University Services

- Very informative and good
- Helps you to find out right away which services to use
- Good to have videos that explain what the services are for so people know what’s on offer
- Like the resources at the end
- Its good creating content for specific awareness days/weeks
- For specific awareness days/weeks – add link to further resources
- This content is helpful for wellbeing because you’ll know where to access help
- Like the use of celeb quotes
- Add personal experiences of students - can be anonymous (video or written)
- For topics such as Black lives matter – also add how to look after yourself
- Rating: 8/10, 10/10 and 9/10

Diversity/Inclusion Content – Ramadan Post

- It’s good and inclusive
- Students might be able to find something specific to them
- Students feel more integrated and a part of the uni
- It helps students to more feel connected
- It shows the importance of EDI - it links with the importance of being respectful and heard
- Branch out to different religions/cultures – how does it help them with their own wellbeing?
- Rating: 10/10, 10/10 and 10/10

5. Do you prefer content as posts or reels?

- Posts = informative/awareness day content
- Reels = day in the life/places to go content
- Stories = advertisements

Overall prefer posts of reels (2/3 students)

6. Is there any content type of content that stands out to you that we should replicate more? / What's your top type of social media content?

FAVOURITES:

- Ramadan/EDI Post
 - Physical location reels
 - Informative content
 - Awareness days content
 - Day in the life reels
 - Cooking reels
 - Places to go reels
 - Information about different services at the university (reels)
 - Things to do in Manchester
 - Stress reel
7. Why is some content less well received than others? Anything to do with time of year? What makes you scroll past and not engage?
- If there's lots of writing then more likely to scroll past – important to get right amount of balance with writing.
 - People stay away from phones during exam – post content 1-2 weeks before
 - Post stuff relevant to the time of year – e.g., when exam season post exam related stuff and not physical places to go
 - Post cute animals
8. How do we let students know about our social media content? How could we have more engagement and reach more students?
- Engagement through social media handles (official university pages)
 - Tag @uom on stories/posts to feature on their Instagram
 - Through faculties
 - Collaborate with different societies and promote on their pages /advertise on other social media accounts
 - Advertise on business cards during freshers week
 - Events where you follow the account and get entered into a draw
 - Best to post between 5-7pm
9. Go over each of six ways and discuss what social media content the wellbeing team can put out for each way.
- CONNECT
 - Get people to share their experiences of joining societies
 - Advertise easy to get into societies (e.g., where you go for coffee) rather than sports

- GIVE
 - Informative posts about charities
 - Ways to get more involved with charities
 - Small actions you can do daily – (posted as stories)
- TAKE NOTICE
 - Encourage students to take notice of something different (create as reels and stories)
- BE ACTIVE
 - Collaborations with sport
 - Walking/step challenges e.g., do this many steps and win a prize
 - Walking for charity
 - Videos of places to walk (trails/hiking)
- BE HEALTHY
 - Food recipes – quick and easy ones
 - Different types of foods
 - Advertise good foods on campus and around Manchester
 - Information about what foods are good for you
 - Repost from dietitian accounts
 - Reels = to motivate students to do something
 - Posts = for informational content
 - When advertising – show what happens in the workshop, what activities will take place and how it will help you
- LEARN AND DISCOVER
 - Advertise talks/lectures
 - Showcase new places that have opened up – activities to do in Manchester
 - New things they haven't heard of – create as reels to motivate people
 - Advertise different societies (e.g., climbing society) – things you wouldn't think of doing/didn't know existed.

10. Are you aware of the weekly events template?

- 1/3 students know about the weekly events template

11. Show weekly template and get opinions of this.

- Find it very helpful
- I usually write it down in my schedule
- But sometimes other societies already advertise it – so it becomes repetitive
- It's helpful – you can compare with your own timetable
- Prefer original template how it currently is – 1 student
- It's a bit boring – to improve it make graphics of each event

- Change format to calendar type boxes (makes it easier to read) – and then link each to wellbeing calendar for more information about each event
- Daily stories reminder of each event on the weekly template

12. Any other thoughts on what we can do to improve the social media aspect? Anything we should put out during exam season?

- Preparing for exams
- Revision tip videos
- Things to do outside of revision/things to do in Manchester for a break
- New different ways to take breaks during revision
- Motivational posts/ daily positive quotes
- Reminder of negative effects of drinking/bad diet/not getting enough sleep
- Collaborate with my learning essentials – video from staff in the library.