



2020/22

WELL-BEING AND HEALTH STRATEGY GOLEAGUES AND STUDENTS



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VICE-CHANCELLOR'S FOREWORD

CHANGING LIVES AND OUR WORLD FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



Embedded in our communities and connected globally, the University of South Wales continues to be a place where people, ideas and business are encouraged to grow and realise their full potential in an inclusive, welcoming and inspiring environment.

For over a century, we have played a major part in transforming people's lives, improving our communities and delivering a real benefit for Wales. Our talented academic and engaged professional services colleagues have been at the heart of our success and will continue to change lives in the future. Our culture, behaviours and values - professional, responsive, creative, inspiring and

collaborative - underpin everything that we do.

The University Strategy - USW 2030 - sets out our direction for the next decade; a pathway for the future that is bold and ambitious to ensure our continued success and long-term sustainability. Our vision is clear, we want to change lives and our world for the better. Our world is changing at an intense pace, and it is our job to equip our students with the skills, knowledge and experience required to maximise their potential and future opportunities in work and life. Working in collaboration with industry, our research and innovation will tackle some of the biggest global challenges from energy to health to security and providing answers to real world problems.

We have made a commitment to improving the lives of individuals and communities we serve by taking institutional and collaborative action to support the Welsh Government's well-being goals. This commitment is aligned to the University's vision and core purpose, and the positive impact of our work has been widely recognised, including by Kirsty Williams, the former Welsh Government Minister for Education:

"The University has a long history of actively working to improve health and wellbeing, encouraging active citizenship and adding real value to their communities through social enterprise and innovation. I'm also pleased that its industrial research and innovation engagements are adapting to address the current challenges faced by institutions in Wales."

At USW, we know that the well-being and health of our community is fundamentally important in enabling people to engage, perform and flourish as individuals and collectively within teams in the pursuit of our strategic goals. We are committed, as demonstrated within this strategy, to an inclusive, proactive and values-based approach to well-being and health, integrated across all areas to provide the best possible support, experience and outcomes for our students, colleagues and wider community.

Dr Ben Calvert
Vice-Chancellor



WELL-BEING AND HEALTH STRATEGY

USW students and colleagues come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring a diversity of prior experiences to our community. Located in the cities and valleys of the Cardiff Capital Region, 24,000 students are enrolled on programmes of study and research at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research levels across three faculties at our campuses or within FE partner colleges. A high proportion of these students are from Wales (60-65%) and approximately 10% are from overseas.

In recent years, UK government policy shifted towards an explicit expectation that universities will make student health and well-being a strategic priority. A former Universities Minister, Sam Gyimah, expressed that it is no longer acceptable for universities solely to see their responsibility as the training of the mind, but that they also need to work to adopt a sense of real importance of well-being across the institution.

In Wales, the Welsh Government and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) have been proactive with advice and support to foster healthy and thriving higher education environments:

*"Universities and colleges that invest in the well-being and health of their students are investing in their entire communities, and strengthening the resilience of future generations. The international Okanagan charter for health-promoting universities and colleges recognised that an institution that brings these principles into the core of its operational and academic affairs is a successful one. Furthermore, bringing health and well-being into the mainstream heightens compassion; improves equity and social justice on campus; improves the health of those who learn and work in our institutions; and strengthens the sustainability of our communities and wider society."*¹

It is within these contexts and the development of the USW 2030 Strategy that our attention turned to the development of this Well-being and Health Strategy to ensure the well-being and health of our students, colleagues and the wider community remains at the heart of what we do so they can reach their potential, be successful and enjoy their time at, and engagement with, USW.

In common with USW 2030, our approach to achieving our vision will require sustained effort and a flexible approach (*over three-year implementation horizons*) that evolves in response to new evidence, changing policy conditions and emerging new societal practices arising notably from Covid-19:

A proactive and values-based approach to well-being and health; nurturing a culture of understanding and awareness where everyone is respected and given the opportunity to contribute and thrive within an inclusive and diverse community of learning and discovery.

Guided by UUK's *StepChange framework*, the Well-being and Health Strategy draws upon positive, collective action by colleagues and student representatives across the University and with partners (notably FE Colleges), including the Strategic Equality Plan 2020, Fee and Access Plan, and Safeguarding Policy.



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OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IS AT THE HEART OF WELL-BEING AND HEALTH AT USW

At USW we accept and endorse the importance of co-creation particularly in the area of well-being and health recognising that:

“... in and of itself it has the potential to improve the health outcomes of our University communities ... Collaborative working, where we truly listen and understand the lived experiences of both students and staff, can create innovative and powerful solution to the challenge of improving mental health in our University Communities.”²

Unfortunately due to Covid-19, opportunities for co-creation have been limited, but it is our intention is to recommence engagement during Autumn term 2020 driven by the implementation of the partnership project with Wrexham Glyndwr University on social prescribing.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of well-being and health at USW. We endeavour to create and maintain a learning and working environment, where equality is advanced, diversity is valued, there is equitable access to success and discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. The Strategic Equality Plan sets out how we will put these commitments into practice with our equality objectives for 2020 to 2024, and the actions that we will implement to prevent harassment and discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster greater understanding between different groups of people. This Strategy is embedded in the Plan and the steering group will provide advice and regularly review progress and impact through a range of data sources and qualitative assessments.



²Rosie Tressler, CEO Student Minds



VISION, PURPOSE, AIMS

VISION

A proactive and values-based approach to well-being and health; nurturing a culture of understanding and awareness where everyone is respected and given the opportunity to contribute and thrive within an inclusive and supportive community of learning and discovery.

PURPOSE

Enhance our inclusive and supportive community by positively promoting good well-being and health (social, physical and mental) as the foundation for academic success and a great student and colleague experience.

AIMS

We will:

- Deliver a whole-university approach to well-being and health, prioritising co-creation with students and colleagues.
- Embed well-being and health in the curriculum at all levels.
- Develop resources to encourage personal awareness of well-being and health and facilitate relevant peer support.
- Support students throughout their educational journey, reviewing and improving delivery, based on smart data collection and analysis.
- Establish effective links between USW, the NHS and other agencies to deliver integrated mental health care and improved risk management.
- Align student and colleague well-being and health policies and initiatives with other internal drivers for change to foster an inclusive and supportive community.





LEARN

Curriculum and pedagogy/build student confidence:

The long-term aspirations of USW 2030 include a curricular that creates a deep sense of belonging, engagement, networking and pride. In addition, USW 2030 aims for an inclusive student voice with a focus on co-creation in the curricular. The third of our six equality objectives set out in the Strategic Equality Plan pledges to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into the design and delivery of our curriculum, courses and assessment methods.

In the short term we aim to review our approach to curriculum design to embed the principles of challenge/problem-based learning and partnership-based learning in the strategy, centred around USW graduate attributes.

Learning communities:

Long-term aspirations of USW 2030 also includes alumni engagement embedded in student life, notably mentoring and supporting graduate success.

In the short term we aim to review capability, capacity and confidence in delivering blended learning and digitally enhanced learning across the USW portfolio, including the impact on well-being and health.

We will seek to integrate the work of the Creating the Culture Strategy group, which is responding to the UUK Changing the Culture agenda, to maximise influence on the organisational culture, further promote and embed USW core values, and facilitate open conversations around mental health and inclusivity.

Academic Colleagues:

Our aim is to align learning and teaching development to the new curriculum design principles of the USW 2030 strategy, including well-being in the curriculum so they are fully embedded and colleagues are confident in delivering challenge and partnership focused learning.

Assessment:

Our commitment to well-being and health will be seen in the review of current activity and growth opportunities where we will define USW flexible learning provision which will meet the needs of colleagues and students.

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**FLEXIBLE LEARNING MEANS
OFFERING STUDENTS A CHOICE IN
WHEN, HOW AND WHERE THEY
STUDY, TO FIT LEARNING AROUND
OTHER COMMITMENTS.**

UUK



STEPCHANGE DOMAINS

SUPPORT AND WORK

USW has an established record and culture of comprehensive support for students and colleagues covering a variety of subjects including financial health, physical health and mental health, with digital links and resources easily accessible. We intend to build on this strength, integrating the well-being and health agenda with Safeguarding, and Equality and Diversity.

USW is excited to be part of the HEFCW funded project in partnership with Wrexham- Glyndwr University to design and implement a model of social prescribing to enhance wellbeing. The project is set within a whole University approach, combining research in the form of realist evaluation methodology to engage colleagues and students in the co-production of interventions. Furthermore, the project seeks to implement emerging good practice in innovative services and use of technology.

USW aims to expand upon provision relating to mental health and crisis management in partnership with local NHS, in collaboration with Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University, through the second HEFCW funded project. The outputs of work will include common referral pathways, risk management and information sharing agreements. This work will inform the development of a USW suicide safer strategy.

LIVE

In the execution of the USW 2030 Strategy, we aim to consider the further development of an "Open Campus" model; facilitating open, vibrant and inclusive campuses and connecting our expertise with the needs of partners and communities.

We aim to work with the USW Students Union and private residential accommodation providers, to develop plans to actively support the social integration of students, and encourage healthy behaviours including physical activity programmes.

We will commit to being creative in using our physical campus spaces to promote well-being and healthy behaviours, including in the design and availability of bespoke areas for relaxation, physical activity, access to nature and community cohesion, taking the example of the USW Meeting House as a model of good practice.

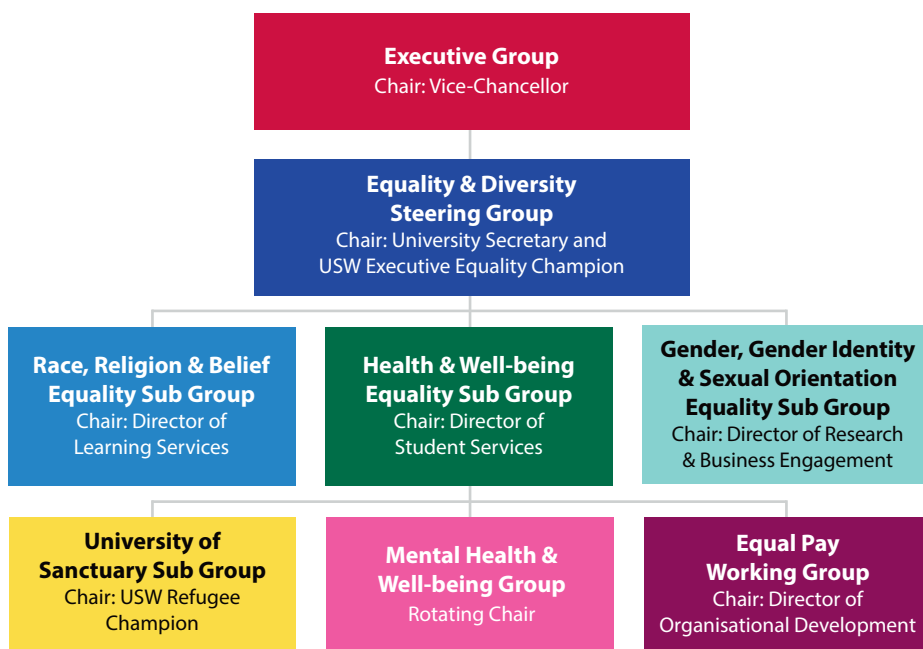




LEADERSHIP

We recognise that achieving our vision of a culture of understanding and awareness, where everyone is respected and given the opportunity thrive, requires strong and visible strategic leadership. We take pride in our supportive culture, but we acknowledge that this is not enough, and therefore have committed to make well-being and health a strategic imperative.

Implementation of the well-being and health strategy will be driven by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and Sub-Groups as outlined below, striking a balance between governance to steer change and facilitate stake-holder contribution. Groups meet termly and have wide-ranging cross-institution senior membership, including student and trade union representation.



INFORMATION

We aim to continue to embed data analysis and business intelligence into the quality cycle to facilitate insight, and impact on learner outcomes and experience, that reflect the high-quality education that is provided.

INCLUSIVITY

The first of our six equality objectives commits to continue to build a fair and respectful university community where diversity is perceived as a strength and where our students, colleagues and partners feel valued and can reach their potential whatever their unique background or characteristics. The governance structure of the Equality and Diversity steering group facilitates the integration of inclusivity with well-being and health.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Our intention is to build on our research excellence and impact in selected accelerated development areas, one of which is Health and Well-being, to contribute to advancing knowledge and innovation, particularly in respect of addressing challenges faced by our society and the economy.



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership working is in the institutional DNA of the University. Our predecessor institutions were created by industry partnering with academia to enhance the higher technical skills of their employees and the generations that followed. By way of example, our strategic partnership with NHS Wales has delivered thousands of qualified nurses to hospitals across the length and breadth of South Wales.

A USW 2030 long-term aspiration is to deepen and broaden our regional, national and international strategic partnerships for mutual benefit, including development of models to accommodate partnership requirements. In addition, we aim to enhance engagement with our alumni to sustain an advocacy and support network for life.

TRANSITION

We recognise that transition points through the education journey for learners may increase vulnerability and impact on well-being and health. USW has a dedicated team of specialist progression advisers to proactively engage vulnerable student groups offering support and guidance, working in partnership with the well-being, health, disability and money teams for cohesive early intervention.

Long term aspirations of USW 2030 include engagement with partners to improve educational attainment and promote access to, and participation in, higher education. We will continue to strengthen the collaborative working between Student Services, USWSU and the School Liaison team to promote the support for students in transition into higher education, and deliver creative solutions, such as the pre-entry activities for students with autism, to help familiarise them with the HE environment and build a sense of community. Well-being and health will be integral to the review of HE in FE activities and development of a new plan in line with USW 2030.

Similarly, through the Careers and Employability team, and focus on graduate attributes, we will progress with supporting students in readiness for transition into the next phase of their career.

NHS

USW 2030 aspirations include working in partnership as integral parts of sector teams to create greater levels of productivity, innovation and economic impact. In the short term, we will map out targeted strategic partners, specifically in the context of Well-being and Health, and develop a targeted three-year development plan.

In the short term we aim to deliver on the two HEFCW funded well-being and health projects within which partnership with the NHS is fundamental. At the well-being end of the continuum, the social prescribing project, in partnership with Wrexham-Glyndwr University, aims to adopt a social prescribing framework endorsed by the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and other community service providers.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Cardiff Partnership seeks to work with local NHS providers to establish common referral pathways, risk management frameworks and data sharing agreements to optimise support for students in mental health crisis.



USW HAS A DEDICATED TEAM OF SPECIALIST PROGRESSION ADVISERS TO PROACTIVELY ENGAGE VULNERABLE STUDENT GROUPS OFFERING SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE, WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WELL-BEING, HEALTH, DISABILITY AND MONEY TEAMS FOR COHESIVE EARLY INTERVENTION.

Emotional

Physical

Social

Financial

