

Enter

CREATING SUCCESS THROUGH WELLBEING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

CONTENTS

p2	Executive summary
p6	How the project started
p8	What we did and who we worked with
p12	Why wellbeing? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why now?• What does wellbeing cover?• Who is involved with wellbeing?• Are UK HEIs already 'good at wellbeing'?• Aligning with the government agenda
p18	Making the business case for wellbeing
p21	What approaches have been taken? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting started
p25	What topics did we cover? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive attendance management• Sport and physical activity• Mental health and employee support• Employee engagement and surveys
p35	What were the key challenges? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership and management• Tackling perceptions• Communications and engagement
p42	What gaps we have identified?
p44	Where next?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The project was funded (Oct 08-09) by HEFCE to explore the links between staff wellbeing and organisational performance. This has been led by the University of Leeds in partnership with the Universities of Birmingham, Bristol and Derby – supported by the Universities of Liverpool and Newcastle. Through a series of workshops, the aims have been to understand what was being done across the sector to support staff wellbeing, create opportunities for institutions to learn from the experiences of others, identify gaps in practice and find out whether wellbeing is having an impact on measures of success. Institutions were also invited to share their best practice case studies. www.wellbeing.ac.uk

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The project has been received with keen interest from across the sector. Despite increasing places by almost 50%, workshops were fully booked, with large waiting lists. 250 individuals from a variety of professional backgrounds and 96 different institutions have attended these events. Engagement with stakeholders has been a key priority and we have worked closely with a broad range of associations including Unison, Universities HR (UHR), Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) and British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS), to ensure that the work is appropriately aligned to the needs of different areas of the HE community.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY WELLBEING?

Wellbeing has built on a number of other business and health concepts including organisational commitment, discretionary effort and staff engagement. For the purposes of this project, wellbeing is about creating the environment where staff are supported to perform to the best of their abilities. We believe that it is not, what some perceive to be a 'fluffy add-on' activity, it is actually a fundamental principle of good business, which benefits employees, institutions, and our students alike.

Wellbeing means different things, for different institutions, however, the majority of stakeholders viewed wellbeing in very broad terms – encompassing a variety of areas including physical and mental health, management and leadership development, dignity at work, employee communications, health and safety, and occupational health.

“As a beacon of innovation, the tertiary education sector has an excellent opportunity to lead on the health and work agenda. The moral and social implications are important and the added prestige associated with being an employer people want to work for can't be underestimated.”

Dame Carol Black in her letter of support for this project, 2009



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

WHY NOW?

Over the past 2 years, the situation organisations find themselves in has changed drastically. Across the sector, leaders have been recognising the urgent need for transformational change. Faced with the need to deliver more and differently, with potentially less resource, more than ever, institutions need to remember that ‘our people are our greatest asset’. This means adapting the way we work with our people and investing in engagement and wellbeing as a way to support staff and strengthen our institutions. This is not to say that staff wellbeing is only about survival. In fact, investing in these things now will give HEIs the distinctive edge which will allow them to thrive once recovery begins (Working for a Healthier Tomorrow, 2008).

MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE

There is a growing body of evidence, primarily from outside the sector – showing both the negative impact of low levels of employee wellbeing, engagement and health, and the significant business benefits which could be realised if these things were improved. For example, research suggests that disengaged workers cost the UK £44 billion a year in lost productivity (IPA, 2008) and presenteeism leads to an approximate cost of £600 per employee, per year. Initial calculations show that just a 10% increase in performance is worth approximately £598,170,760 per year to the UK HE sector (calculations taken from Robertson Cooper Ltd).

There could also be a large impact on sickness absence levels. For example, improvements in this area enabled Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education to reduce their absence levels from 3.60 days per person (3.6%), per year in 2004/5 to 2.74 days per person (1.18%), per year in 2007/8 and increase the number of staff with no sickness absence from 26% to 46%.

ALIGNING WITH THE GOVERNMENT AGENDA

The project enables UK HE to respond to the government agenda in a number of ways. For example, a recent government commissioned report by Dame Carol Black, was published on the health of Britain’s working age population. ‘Working for a healthier tomorrow’ highlights the clear business case for investment in employee wellbeing. Another report – ‘Engaging for success – enhancing performance through employee engagement’ – commissioned by the Department for Business (BIS) was published in 2009. This emphasizes the importance of engaging employees as a way to ensure Britain’s economic recovery.

KEY FINDINGS

This report includes some of the key topics covered including mental health, physical activity, attendance management and employee engagement. Recognising that as institutions are so diverse in their size and nature, a one-size-fits all approach would not work, it provides examples of some of the different approaches which have been taken. Emphasis is placed on what the enablers and barriers have been, to allow other institutions to learn from practical examples, and choose aspects which will work best for them.

GAP ANALYSIS AND PHASE 2 WORK

Although a high level of engagement has been established through the Phase 1 pilot work, the majority of institutions are in the very early stages of developing their wellbeing work. Further, a number of significant gaps in knowledge, practice and evidence within the HE sector have been identified which are currently forming significant barriers to realising business benefits. These include the absence of a HE-specific business case, the lack of practical guidance, and the lack of opportunities to share information across institutions and professional areas.

Funding for a Phase 2 project has recently been approved under the new HEFCE Leading Transformational Change Fund. This will allow the work to continue for an additional 2 years to address these gaps. This will be led by the Universities of Leeds and Bristol, in partnership with the Universities of Birmingham, Chester, Newcastle, Queen Mary London, and Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education.

“To equip themselves to sustain competitiveness in the future, universities will need to be healthy and resilient organisations. Achieving this without staff engagement focused on high performance and excellent leadership and management skills will be impossible.”

Professor Arthur, Vice-Chancellor, University of Leeds



HOW THE PROJECT STARTED



In 2007, Universitas 21 and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) co-organised a conference themed – ‘Practical Tools for Making Your University a Great Place to Work’. As a result of this event, a number of universities came together to discuss opportunities for improving employee wellbeing in higher education.

A proposal, led by the University of Leeds, in partnership with the Universities of Birmingham, Bristol, Derby and University College Falmouth was made to the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) Leadership, Governance and Management Fund (LGM). This was to carry out a 1 year pilot project (October 2008-2009) to explore the links between staff wellbeing and enhanced organisational performance.

With active contributions from the Universities of Liverpool and Newcastle, this project has aimed to:

- Understand what is being done across the sector to support staff wellbeing
- Create opportunities for institutions to learn from the experiences of others
- Identify gaps in practice
- Find out how institutions are measuring the success of their wellbeing work
- Prove that staff wellbeing makes a difference

WHAT WE DID AND WHO WE WORKED WITH

WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

A key element of the project was the delivery of workshops around the following themes:

- Getting started
- Positive attendance management
- Physical activity
- Wellbeing 'engagement' via HR strategy and employee surveys
- Mental health and employee support
- Making the business case

Institutions were encouraged to share their best practice case studies, learn from the experiences of others and problem solve together. Despite increasing places by almost 50%, all workshops have been fully booked, with large waiting lists. 250 individuals from a variety of professional backgrounds and 96 different institutions attended one or more workshops. By the end of this project, workshops will also have been run at conferences for the Leadership for Higher Education, British Universities and Colleges Sport, Universities Health and Safety Association, Universities HR, Unison, and UUK.

WEBSITE AND RESOURCES

Another outcome has been the development of a sector specific resource website (www.wellbeing.ac.uk) which provides information about our work, case studies, presentations and links to related projects. Feedback suggests that institutions benefit from a centralized area to access information and network with colleagues from other areas.

“Very well done. The network group will be very important for those who are just starting and need to be able to learn and get tips from those who are well on with wellbeing projects. Thank you.”

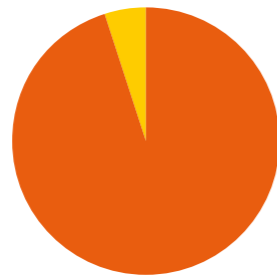
Human Resources Manager, University of Central Lancashire



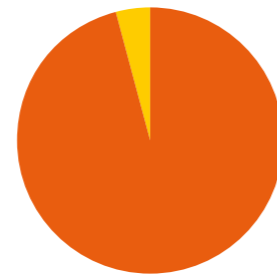
WHAT WE DID AND WHO WE WORKED WITH CONTINUED

DELEGATE FEEDBACK

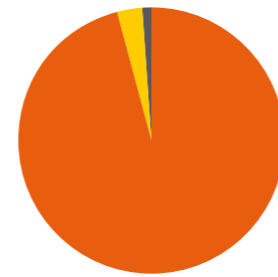
- Strongly agree or agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Strongly disagree or disagree



Gave me ideas for use in my institution.



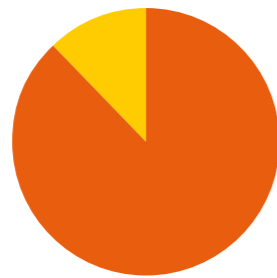
Am interested in learning more about the work of the project.



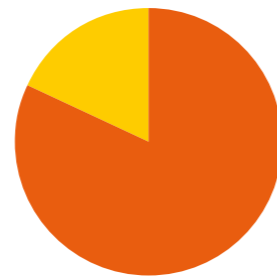
Was time well spent for me.

DELEGATE FEEDBACK

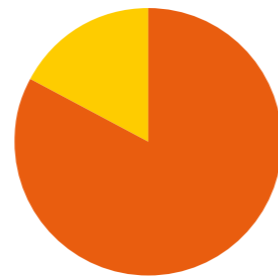
- Yes
- No



Myself or colleagues have done something to improve wellbeing practice following the workshops.



Would be interested in piloting toolkits and interventions.



Would be interested in getting involved with working groups.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with strategic key stakeholders has been a key priority throughout the project. The diversity of the groups involved reflects the interest shown from a broad range of professional areas. Many of the following associations have been closely involved with the development of the project, for example, we carried out a survey of Unite branch representatives and a series of interviews with 15 Universities HR Executive Committee members. This has helped to raise the profile of employee wellbeing, and has ensured that the work has (and continues to be) appropriately aligned to the needs of different areas of the HE community. The following groups have actively supported the project:

- Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA)
- British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS)
- Equality Challenge Unit (ECU)
- Higher Education Occupational Physicians/Practitioners (HEOPS)
- Organisational Development in Higher Education (ODHE)
- Unison
- Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA)
- Universities HR (UHR)
- UUK Mental Health Working Group
- Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA)

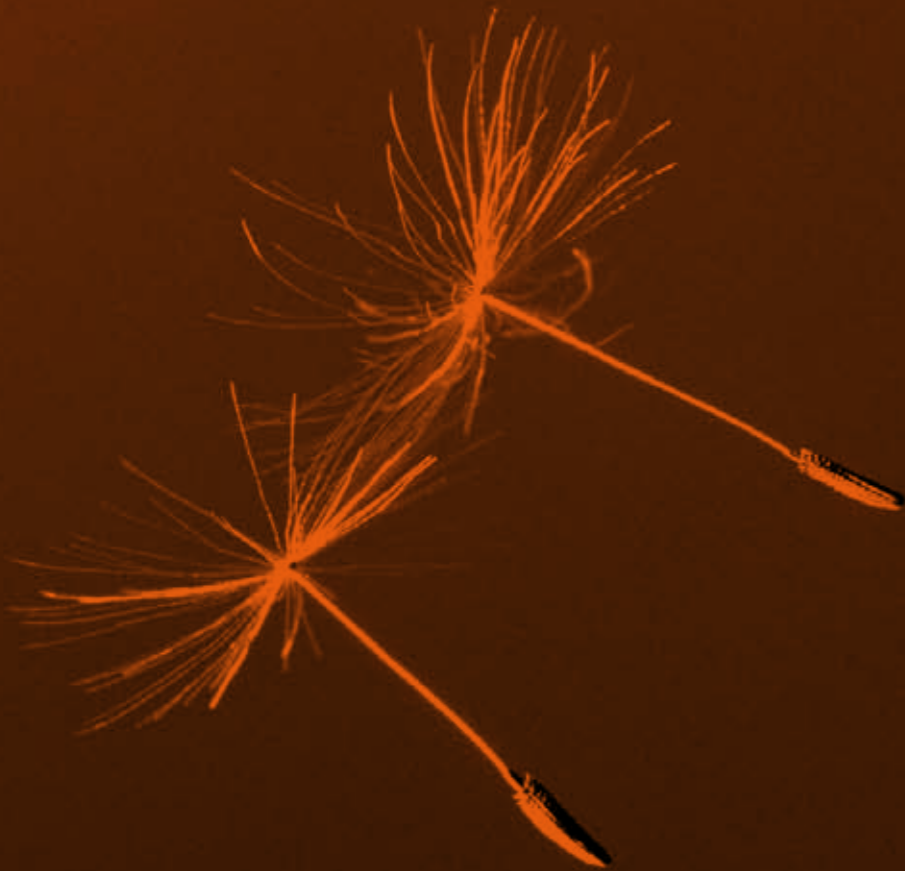
In addition to this, the following organisations have also agreed to support the dissemination of project findings:

- The European Commission (Framework 7 'People' Committee)
- Research Councils UK (RCUK)
- VITAE (Research Staff Career Development Group)

“A very good initiative, it is excellent that people from different functions are coming together. I feel immense progress has been made in raising wellbeing awareness and the co-ordination group should be congratulated so far’.

USHA representative

WHY WELLBEING?



WHY WELLBEING?

The term wellbeing is broad, ambiguous and can often be misunderstood. For the purposes of this project, however, wellbeing is about creating an environment where staff are supported and developed, to perform to the best of their abilities. We believe that it is not, what some perceive to be a 'fluffy add-on' activity for the sake of being nice to people – it is actually a fundamental principle of good business, and HR management, which benefits employees, institutions, and our students alike.

WHAT DOES WELLBEING COVER?

The concept of employee wellbeing in higher education has brought together, and built on, a number of other business and health concepts including organisational commitment and loyalty, discretionary effort, staff engagement, employee communications and simply good practice in leadership and management. The term 'wellbeing' itself is not, however, universally accepted and utilised. Whilst none of the workshop delegates or key stakeholder disagreed with it entirely, many were concerned about the misperceptions associated with it which may 'turn people off'. For example, they felt there is a risk of it sounding too 'wishy-washy' and about 'just being nice to people for the sake of it' rather than a business driven concept which can have a real impact on employees and the success of institutions. Other terms used include staff engagement, positive work environment, resilience and quality of working life. Whatever term is used, it appears that those institutions which have progressed furthest are the ones which are able to be clear about what it means for them, what the priorities are within it, and what they want their outcomes to be.

Interestingly, in a number of interviews carried out with 15 Human Resource Directors from UK HE institutions, when asked 'what would be included as part of employee wellbeing' – the answers varied significantly. Notably the individuals who were most enthused by the wellbeing agenda were those who used a very broad definition – encompassing many different organisational aspects and services. Only a small minority of those interviewed considered wellbeing as a more narrow, health based concept focusing on alternative therapies such as massage and aromatherapy.



WHY WELLBEING? CONTINUED

The following list provides a small number of examples given. This is by no means exhaustive.

- Physical health (physical activity and nutrition)
- Mental health (stress, counselling)
- Management and leadership development
- Flexible working/employment
- Staff development/organisational development
- Dignity at work (equality and diversity, bullying and harassment)
- Employee/internal communications
- Health and safety
- Occupational health

WHY NOW?

When this project was first planned, the reality of the changing economic climate had not been realised. Over the past 2 years, however, the situation organisations find themselves in has changed drastically. Across the sector, leaders have been recognising the urgent need for transformational change. Faced with the need to deliver more and differently, with potentially less resource, more than ever, institutions need to remember that 'our people are our greatest asset'.

In a recent government commissioned report it was stated that – 'Only organisations that truly engage and inspire their employees produce world class levels of innovation, productivity and performance' (Mandleson, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills cited in McLeod, 2009). This means adapting the way we work with our people; investing in engagement and wellbeing as a way to support staff and strengthen our institutions. Failure to embrace this approach could have serious consequences in terms of low motivation, presenteeism, ill health, absenteeism and poor performance (CIPD, 2009).

This is not to say that staff wellbeing is only about survival. The aim of this project has been to show that during good times and bad times – this makes good business sense. In fact, investing in these things now will give HEIs the distinctive edge which will allow them to thrive once recovery begins (Working for a Healthier Tomorrow, 2008).

WHO IS INVOLVED WITH WELLBEING?

As we have discovered, there are a number of key stakeholders in the area of employee wellbeing. The institutions which have progressed furthest are the ones which have been able to engage with multiple departments to create a joined up approach. Such collaboration has enabled a holistic view which supports increased 'buy-in', creative problem solving and sharing of resource. Particularly in larger organisations – it also helps to solve the common problem of duplicated effort.

The following are examples of departments which have been taking part in developing and delivering wellbeing activities:

- Health and Safety
- Human Resources and Staff Development
- Occupational Health
- Sport and Physical Activity
- Student Services
- Equality and Diversity Service
- Staff Counselling and coaching
- Academic departments
- Environmental/ sustainability
- Chaplaincy

This list is not exhaustive nor is it hierarchical. Further, the department which takes on the co-ordinating or lead role, varies from institution to institution – often depending on where the 'champions' or resource are located. The most common approach for bringing these diverse groups together has been to convene a wellbeing steering or working group, however, those organisations which have progressed the most are the ones with at least some dedicated resource to 'make things happen'.

In some cases, delegates came to workshops feeling that their institution was doing little or nothing. Many left with a much broader picture of wellbeing – realising that there were in fact a number of pockets of practice across their campus. A good starting point was, therefore, to pull together such disparate activities into more of a co-ordinated approach which could be communicated to staff. From there, a more strategic approach could be taken, developing further the aspects needed to make a significant impact on the institution.



WHY WELLBEING? CONTINUED

ARE UK HEIs ALREADY 'GOOD AT WELLBEING'?

Traditionally, higher education has been associated with excellent employee benefits. For example, in the 2008 report by the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), it was highlighted that as work places, higher education institutions provide excellent benefits such as extended holiday allowances (median for academic staff being 35 days compared to the 25 days across the rest of the UK economy), 94% offering maternity pay above the statutory requirements and continuing to offer final salary pension schemes (whilst in other sectors these have been closed to new members) (UCEA, 2008). In this report, UCEA cite a survey carried out by ICM Research Omnibus 2008 which shows that these aspects are, nationally across all adults in the UK, ranked in amongst the most highly desirable employee benefits. At this stage, however, there does not appear to be any higher education specific research evidencing the relationship to employee wellbeing and ultimately increased performance.

From the perspective of this project, whilst such benefits are valuable, there are many other aspects of wellbeing which cannot be ignored, for example, excellent leadership and management, effective change management and mental health. A major risk is that employers will feel that they are adequately investing in wellbeing through their benefits package – and ignore some of the most crucial aspects of the employee experience.

ALIGNING WITH THE GOVERNMENT AGENDA

In addition to the benefits to individual institutions, this project enables UK higher education as a sector to respond to the government agenda in a number of ways:

Dame Carol Black Report 'Working for a healthier tomorrow' (2008)

In 2008 a government commissioned report by Dame Carol Black was published on the health of Britain's working age population. This included a body of evidence highlighting, amongst other things, the clear business case for investment in employee wellbeing. In particular, Dame Carol emphasized the crucial role that leaders and managers have to play. Dame Carol has been highly supportive of this project and has been a key note speaker at two of the project workshops.

“As a beacon of innovation, the tertiary education sector has an excellent opportunity to lead on the health and work agenda. The moral and social implications are important and the added prestige associated with being an employer people want to work for can't be underestimated.

Dame Carol Black in her letter of support for this project, 2009



McLeod Report Engaging for success – enhancing performance through employee engagement (2009)

In July 2009 a report commissioned by the Department for Business (BIS) was published. In its introduction, Peter Mandelson (Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills) clearly states that 'Britain's economic recovery and its competitive strengths in a global economy will be built on strong, innovative companies and confident employees, there has never been a more important time to think about employee engagement in Britain'. The report then goes on to highlight clear evidence from across all sectors, showing the benefits of employee engagement.

Boorman Review Interim report (2009)

Following on from recommendations in the Black Report, the Boorman Review was commissioned to gather evidence on the health and wellbeing of National Health Service (NHS) employees, and make recommendations for improvement. The interim report has been published which, again, highlights the business case for investment. One particular area of interest is the emerging evidence showing the links between employee health and wellbeing, and patient outcomes.



MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR WELLBEING

There is a growing body of evidence from outside the sector – showing the business benefits which could be realised through improved staff wellbeing and engagement. The following examples highlight some of the tangible business benefits:

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

In the current economic climate, when employees are facing stressors inside and outside of work and job uncertainty, it is possible that organisations will have to focus their efforts on maintaining performance levels (rather than hoping to increase them). Research by the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) have already reported signs of increased presenteeism, absenteeism and reduced motivation (CIPD, 2009). Unless, efforts are made to support staff through these challenging times, the impact of these things on the success of organisations will be significant. For example:

- Research for the Civil Service estimated that disengaged workers cost the UK £44 billion a year in lost productivity (IPA, 2008).
- Research by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health shows that presenteeism leads to an approximate cost of £600 per employee, per year. Across the UK HE sector, based on 1 in 4 people suffering from a mental health problem, this is a cost of £55,869,000 per year (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2007).

Of course the benefits of investing in employee wellbeing and engagement now, will be much longer term.

“Engaged employees are not only satisfied with their pay and conditions but they also have an understanding of business needs, are committed to their work and are more likely to exert discretionary effort and add value to the organisation.”
IDS, 2009

For example:

- Research by Gallup shows that higher levels of engagement are strongly related to higher levels of innovation. In this report 59% of engaged employees said that their job brings out their most creative ideas against only 3% of disengaged employees (Gallup, 2008)
- If 10% increase in performance is worth a minimum of 5% of salary (£1,606 per employee), potential financial gain to the UK HE sector (372,460 employees) = £598,170,760 per year (calculations taken from Robertson Cooper Ltd).



MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR WELLBEING CONTINUED

IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Research carried out in other organisations has begun to highlight the positive impact which staff engagement and wellbeing can have on the experience of customers. For example, the recent Boorman Review highlighted the impact of employee health and wellbeing on patient satisfaction, MRSA cases and patient mortality rates (Boorman, 2009). Further, research for the Civil Service suggested that:

- 70% of engaged employees indicated they have a good understanding of how to meet customer needs, while only 17% of non-engaged employees said the same (Civil Service – making the case, cited in McLeod Review 2009).
- 78% of highly engaged workers in the UK public sector said they can make an impact on public services delivery or customer service, versus only 29% of disengaged employees (Civil Service – making the case, cited in McLeod Review 2009).

To develop the work of this project further, it may be useful to investigate whether such evidence is transferable to higher education – and student satisfaction.

REDUCING EMPLOYEE TURN-OVER

Whilst, as a sector, employee turn-over is relatively low, and arguably some turn-over is healthy for organisations, it is still important to focus on the retention of high quality individuals. Whilst this may be less of a challenge in the current financial climate – once recovery begins – the global competition for employees will increase.

There is also a significant financial consideration. For example, calculations taken from Robertson Cooper Ltd show that if the average cost per person leaving is £7750, and if the HE national average turn-over is 8.4%, a 10% improvement across the sector (372,460 employees) is worth £24,247,146 per year (Robertson Cooper Ltd).*

*Research commissioned as part of the Dame Carol Black Report (2008) showed that 33% of pilot institutions showed a reduction in turnover of 20-25%.

WHAT APPROACHES HAVE BEEN TAKEN?

This project has helped to confirm that, with an area such as employee wellbeing, a one-size-fits-all approach would not be appropriate. Although, in the main, the core principles are the same, HE institutions are so diverse in their size, nature, culture and mission, that it is important for them to choose aspects which will 'fit' and work best for them.



WHAT APPROACHES HAVE BEEN TAKEN? CONTINUED

One of our key aims has been to explore some of the different approaches which have been taken – what has helped them to be successful and how challenges have been overcome. This way, other institutions can learn, in a practical sense, how different ideas might work in their own context.

Our work has shown that HE institutions across England are at varying stages of development and implementation. The majority of delegates who attended the workshops, however, felt that their organisations were in the very early stages.

The following examples are only illustrative of the work which is being undertaken across the sector. Further details on the work of the partner organisations and additional case studies can be found at www.wellbeing.ac.uk.

GETTING STARTED

One of the key challenges for institutions has been how to get started. It appears that this has happened in a number of different ways:

‘Top down approach’

For a number of institutions, the wellbeing agenda has been driven from the very top. For example, at the Universities of Leeds, Bristol and Derby, the arrival of new Vice-Chancellors, who were passionate about the wellbeing of their staff, acted as a significant catalyst. With their support these institutions were able to build on existing good work, move wellbeing up the agenda, and begin to embed it at a strategic level.

“To equip themselves to sustain competitiveness in the future, universities will need to be healthy and resilient organisations. Achieving this without staff engagement focused on high performance and excellent leadership and management skills will be impossible.”

Professor Arthur, Vice-Chancellor, University of Leeds

Engagement at this most senior level has, for these institutions, had a number of benefits. Participating in high profile wellbeing events, and publically communicating a strong sense of commitment helps to reinforce the message that this is important and must be taken seriously. It also often leads to increased investment in the area of wellbeing. For example, the University of Leeds was the first HEI to employ a dedicated Director of Wellbeing, Safety and Health and Wellbeing Project Manager to drive the agenda forward.

Notably, although getting started with a ‘top down approach’ has been beneficial, in order to evolve this work and make it sustainable, it has been important to ensure that it is not perceived as management enforced. In the longer term, it has been combined with a participative ‘bottom-up approach’ which has encouraged local level engagement and also reduced cynicism.

‘Bottom up approach’

Other institutions have shown that it is possible to make significant progress by starting at a local level. For example, an MOT lifestyle and fitness testing programme at Newcastle University, developed between the Occupational Health Department and the Maintenance and Operations Team, was extremely successful. By working closely with local managers – they made use of peer communications to build engagement amongst an often difficult to reach group. Another example is the work carried out at the Medical Research Council Human Genetics Unit where initiative was taken within the department to hold work-life balance days. Again, this shows what can be achieved by enthusiasts and champions at a local level. It also shows that improvements to wellbeing can be made using relatively little resource.

‘Momentum building approach’

Another approach used by institutions has been to build momentum through internal champions.

Examples of this include the University of Birmingham, University of Brighton and Leeds Metropolitan University where they have succeeded in bringing together different areas of the University – including academic departments – to build engagement levels:

“Collaboration with senior staff across the University creating a shared vision has been extremely beneficial, and it has really helped having a Senior Management Team who are engaged.”

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Consultant, Leeds Metropolitan University

Again, this has the advantage of helping to create a collaborative and cohesive approach.



WHAT APPROACHES HAVE BEEN TAKEN? CONTINUED

SPECIFIC NEED FOR ACTION OR LEGAL COMPLIANCE

In other institutions the wellbeing and health agenda has been driven by the need to address specific issues. One example of this is the University of Bolton. With sickness absence levels peaking at 16 days per person in 2004, 24 % of which were stress related, significant investments were made to increase physical activity and encourage healthier lifestyles. Their efforts to address this enabled them to reduce levels to 8.38 days, per person, per year.

Another influence has been the need for legal compliance in line with the Health and Safety Executive stress management standards. For example, the University of Leeds invested heavily in the 'revitalisation of health and safety', which included developing a strong partnership approach with the trade unions, restructuring of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service and a highly visible communications campaign. This led to them winning the 'best achievement in the Local Authority/ Education sectors' at the national Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Awards 2008. Whilst enforcement is not necessary the most positive means to gain influence within the organisation, in the majority of cases it has led to increased resourcing.

WHAT TOPICS DID WE COVER?

The project, through the delivery of workshops, has focused its activity around a number of key topics. The aim has been to explore different approaches within institutions including what has worked well and how challenges have been overcome. The workshops have also been an opportunity for individuals to network across different professional groups and institutions, and solve problems together.



POSITIVE ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

Sickness absence

There is clear evidence of the relationship between employee wellbeing and sickness levels. For example, research carried out by Gallup showed that 'engaged employees in the UK take an average of 2.69 sick days per year whereas disengaged employees take 6.19' (Gallup, 2003). Investment in employee wellbeing, therefore, could lead to significant savings. Conservative estimates show that the potential value of a 10% reduction in sickness absence, to the UK HE sector (372,460 employees) is £16,850,090 per year (calculations taken from Robertson Cooper Ltd, 2008).

Whilst there are few HE examples of this, those which have invested in these areas have begun to realise such benefits:

- Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education reduced their absence levels from 3.60 days per person (3.6%), per year in 2004/5 to 2.74 days per person (1.18%), per year in 2007/8 and increased the number of staff with no sickness absence from 26% to 46%. These low levels of absence have since been maintained – showing the importance of developing a sustainable solution.
- The University of Liverpool reduced their absence rates from 4.7 to 2.3% in 5 years – saving approximately £2.5m per year.

Such results have been delivered by focusing on the following key areas:

1. Consultation

Although a time consuming process – consultation across the institution, including close partnership working with the campus trade unions, helps to ensure that stakeholders are engaged with the process and the final result is fit for purpose.

2. Policy development and review

Following consultation, development of a clear policy which works for the institution and is properly communicated, means that expectations are clear. It is then important to review the policy regularly to ensure it remains current.

3. Investment in rehabilitation and 'back to work' programmes

Close working between Human Resources, Occupational Health and individual line managers can help individuals to return to work more quickly. For example, many institutions have begun to use a case conferencing system to facilitate communications. This builds on the key point raised in the Dame Carol Black Report – challenging the misperceptions that people have to be 100% fit to be in work, and being in work impedes recovery (Working for a Healthier Tomorrow, 2008).

4. Effective measuring and monitoring of absence

Whilst, on average, institutions do not report high levels of sickness absence, anecdotal feedback suggests that often poor recording and data collection means that this does not provide an accurate picture. One of the greatest challenges is monitoring the absence of academic staff, who often work flexible hours, sometimes from home, and also operate in a loose line management structure. Addressing this problem often involves some sort of re-education. Both managers and individuals need to understand that monitoring absence is not due to a lack of trust. Further, institutions have a duty of care to know when staff are ill, so that they are able to provide the appropriate support.

5. Support for line managers

The management of sickness absence is highly dependent upon individual line managers. Feedback, however, suggests that many do not currently have the appropriate skills and support to be able to do this effectively. For many, therefore, the task can seem daunting. Institutions which have been most effective in this area have invested in targeted communications and training, so that individuals know 'how best to regularly contact absent staff to stay in touch, offer support, and suggest back-to-work plans [and] feel equipped and confident about approaching sensitive or difficult areas of conversation' (Working for a Healthier Tomorrow, 2008).

“Employers have significant scope to facilitate an employee's early return from sickness absence. Early, regular and sensitive contact with employees during sickness absences can be a key factor in enabling an early return to work. It ensures absent employees feel valued and do not become isolated from the workplace, and it assists line managers in understanding the consequences of the health problem and how to enable a return to work.”

Working for a Healthier Tomorrow, 2008



WHAT TOPICS DID WE COVER? CONTINUED

SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

6. Ensuring that staff understand the role of Occupational Health

Feedback suggests that many individuals have a fear of Occupational Health. Misperceptions that it is about 'forcing individuals out' or some sort of punishment need to be addressed through re-education and open communication. Both staff and manager need to see the service as being able to help. In many institutions this has been facilitated by developing a proactive approach to Occupational Health eg. through increased involvement in health promotion activities.

Although a number of institutions provide facilities for staff to participate in sport and physical activity, and/or have taken a number of steps to improve the health of their employees, this is often still perceived as a 'nice to have' fringe benefit which has no real impact on the success of the organisation. Research shows, however, that there can be large business benefits to improving the health of employees. For example, reports by Medibank in 2005 estimated that unhealthy employees take on average nine days more sick leave per year. Further, that healthy employees are three times more productive than their unhealthy colleagues (Medibank Private, 2005).

Tackling the barriers to participation

Institutions which have been most successful in increasing participation levels have worked hard to understand their audience and what the barriers have been to taking part.

1. Changing perceptions of time

Institutions reported that many staff felt they did not have enough time to participate in physical activity. Efforts have therefore been made to change perceptions eg. encouraging staff to take a lunch break. Changes have also been made to class timetables eg. shorting them or fitting them around working hours.

2. Offering different activities

Moving away from traditional competitive sport activities and offering alternative classes such as dance, rock climbing, archery and pilates, has helped many universities to attract more staff. Again, emphasis has been placed on changing perceptions – overcoming fears that exercise is scary, difficult or boring.

3. Moving away from student oriented facilities

One barrier to participation has been the concerns about taking part alongside students. This has been tackled by setting up staff-only classes.

4. Communicating the benefits

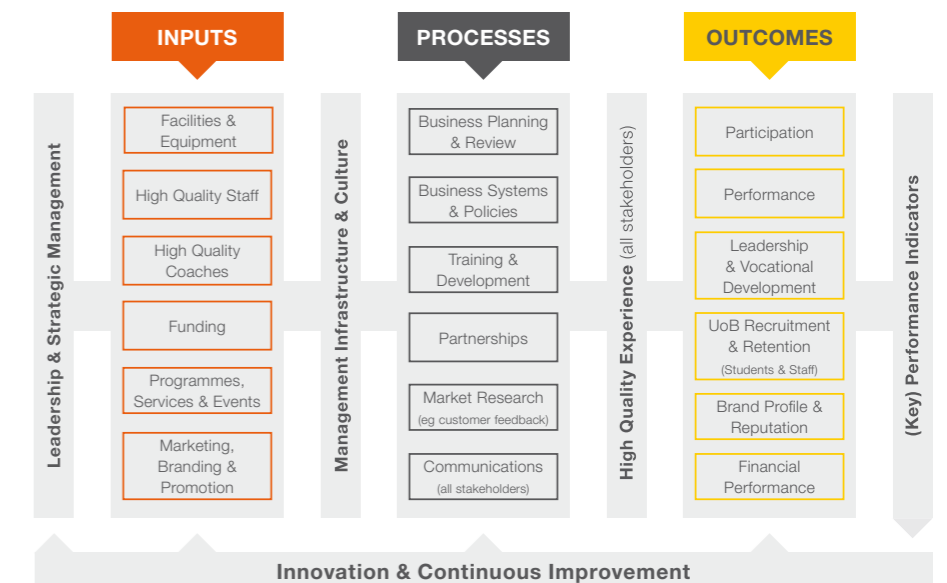
Feedback shows that many staff did not understand the health risks associated with physical inactivity. Campaigns to raise awareness of key facts such as, a sedentary lifestyle is among the 10 leading causes of death or disability in the world (World Health Organisation, 2003) or regular exercise can reduce the incidence of heart disease by as much as 50% can help individuals to change their behaviour (Sykes, 2008).

Other successful enablers have included:

Linking to strategy and making the business case

A number of successful institutions have managed to achieve the buy-in of senior managers by positioning their work at a strategic level. As discussed there is evidence from outside the sector which can be usefully used to make the business case for investment. Further, showing how such activities link to the institutional and HR strategies can be particularly influential.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM SPORT BUSINESS MODEL



Hosting events

Hosting healthy events has been popular in several universities. These vary from smaller health promotion days to week or month-long programmes where individuals can enjoy taster sessions. For many places this has helped to reach individuals who had not even considered physical activity or were lacking the motivation to participate. Other innovative approaches such as tackling perceptions of no time and putting on 'no sweat' lunch time sessions have also proven to be popular. Again, collaboration across departments has helped such events to be successful. For example, at Birmingham City University, their wellbeing event was a joint effort between Student Services and Human Resources.

Linking with external partners

One way institutions have found to enhance their activities and increase resources has been to work in partnership with external organisations. For example, Leeds Metropolitan University have been joining-up with the Leeds City Transport Strategy to encourage use of public transport and cycling or walking to work. Another example is the University of Derby who have joined with businesses across Derby to form a local Healthy Workplace Network group led by the local Primary Care Trust.

The impact of mental health problems

Mental health problems including stress, anxiety and depression, have been shown to have a serious impact on both individual employees and employers. For example:

- Research by the Department for Work and Pensions highlights that chronic health problems lead to over 70% of sickness absence and 42% of these are due to mental health problems (DWP, 2009).
- Sickness absence due to mental health problems account for 25% of short absence (< 7 days) but 47% of longer absences (Royal College of Psychiatrists 2008).
- Research by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health in 2007 estimated that the overall cost of mental health problems is equivalent to £1035 per employee, per year.

Despite the fact that 1 in 4 people suffer from mental health problems at some point in their lives, it continues to be surrounded by stigma, lack of awareness and lack of support. This is illustrated by nationwide research (across all sectors) by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, showing that although 5.5 million people of working age are experiencing mental health problems, only 1.3 million are being treated (Royal College of Psychiatrists 2008).

In the context of higher education – mental health problems have most commonly been approached as part of stress management. One of the reasons for this is the requirement of legal compliance with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) stress management standards. 'At the time [that these were established], the HSE recommended that at least 85% of employees should state that they are able to cope with the demands of their work; [however] only 38% of university employees that responded indicated that they were able to do this' (Mackay, Cousins, Kelly, Lee & McCaig, 2004). In more recent reports, the Health and Safety Executive [in 2008] (...) express serious concern about the levels of stress [highlighting that] anecdotally, academic staff have reported 'weariness, disillusionment and even illness (...)' (Trawler, 114). These issues have been backed up by the University and Colleges Union – which reported in a survey on 'Tackling stress in higher education', that 'nearly half the HE respondents said that their general or average level of stress was high or very high [further that] nearly one third of HE respondents said that they often experienced stress they found unacceptable (...)' (Court & Kinman, 2008).

Approaches to addressing mental health problems

Feedback shows that this is the topic which requires most significant work in the sector - particularly in terms of educating staff and managers. The following are examples of some of the approaches being taken:

1. 'Calm and Beating the Blues'

The Universities of Newcastle and Teeside have been using the online packages - CALM and Beating the Blues. These are free computer- aided lifestyle management packages which staff can self-access online. CALM is an interactive self-help tool to help the individual identify issues such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, stress and substance misuse. Beating the Blues is accessed via clinical assessment and is currently the only computerised cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) treatment for depression recommended by the National Centre for Clinical Excellence (NICE) for use in the National Health and Occupational Health Services. The packages are often used in conjunction with counselling services.



WHAT TOPICS DID WE COVER? CONTINUED

2. Citizens Advice Bureau

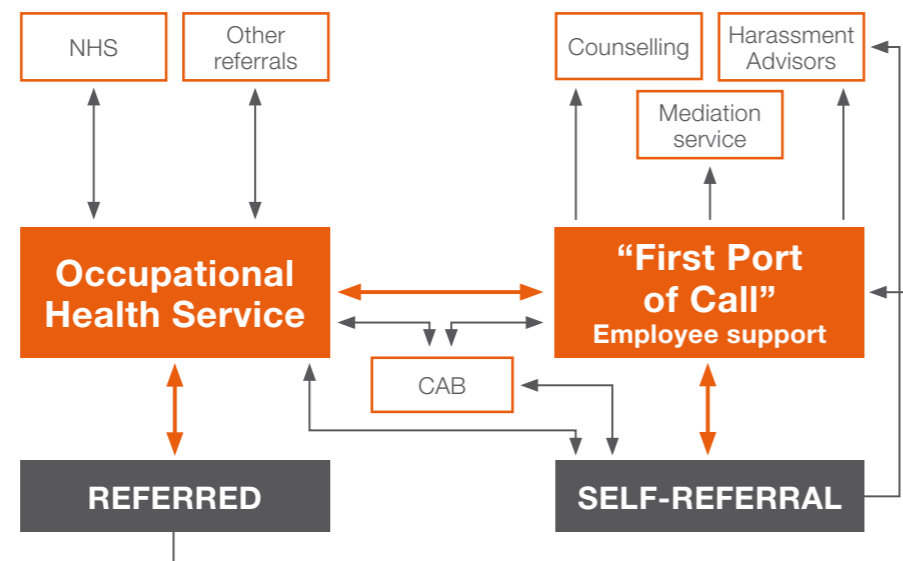
The Universities of Leeds and Birmingham have arranged priority access to the Citizens Advice Bureau for their staff.

3. Mental First Aid

Newcastle University has trained a number of its key managers in Mental First Aid. This is a two day course to train personnel to support staff experiencing mental health problems before professional help is obtained. The programme is funded by National Institute for Mental Health in England www.mentalhealthfirstaid.csip.org.uk.

4. Model for employee support

The University of Birmingham has developed a model of employee support which includes a spectrum of services to answer various needs. This has enabled them to tailor services to the needs of staff and provide mediation at early stages. The diagram shows the interrelationship between the services and the 2 main routes into support namely, staff self-referring and referral by managers or HR. A key feature is the 'first port of call' where support is provided to identify the issues and match any additional support to the needs. Better co-ordination of services also allows for feedback (appropriately anonymised) to the institution of common issues or areas presenting as 'hotspots'.



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND SURVEYS

Results show that the majority of institutions have carried out one or more employee surveys to measure staff perceptions. This, however, is only one aspect of employee engagement and should be considered within a much broader context. Feedback suggests that many institutions would benefit from further development in this area.

A variety of tools

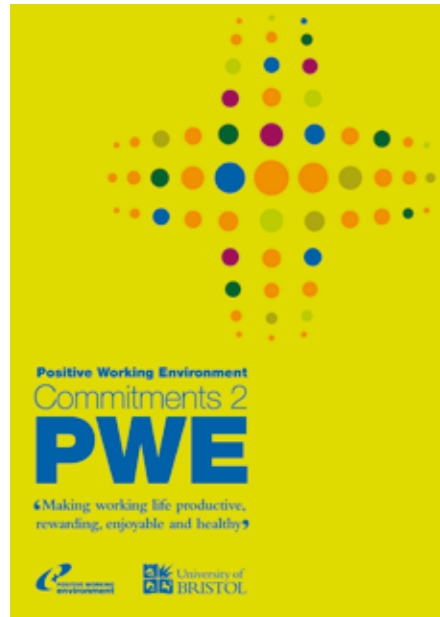
There are a huge number of different surveys which have been used across a number of different institutions. Feedback shows that there are two major challenges with this variety – firstly that organisations do not know which tool to use (that is, which is best in the higher education context) and secondly, that without a common question set, it is not currently possible to carry out sector benchmarking.

Examples of the tools used include Robertson Cooper ASSET tool used by the University of Brighton, the Quality of Working Life (QoWL) Survey developed by the University of Portsmouth and used by the University of Huddersfield, and the Capita Survey adapted to include the HSE stress survey, used by Newcastle University.

Encouraging participation

Issues such as low levels of engagement, cynicism, and previous failure to act on survey results have often led to the challenge of low participation levels. To meet such challenges, the Universities of Derby and Leeds, for example, have focused on extensive consultation and detailed communications planning. Emphasis has been placed on creating local ownership through localised communications, and targeting the hard-to-reach groups such as operational staff without easy access to computers, using localised face-to-face engagement survey sessions. Both universities have seen a marked increase in participation, for example, at Leeds, these efforts led to an improved response rate from 22% to 53% and an increased response rate for operational staff from 4% to 44%.





University of Bristol's Positive Work Environment (PWE) Survey

Making the most of the results

One of the risks of carrying out a survey, or any such consultation, is that unless acted upon – it can leave staff feeling that it has been a pointless 'tick box' exercise. Several institutions have found that investing in a staff survey is only worthwhile if the institution is committed to acting on the results. This helps to demonstrate to staff that their opinions are valued, listened to and acted upon.

Different institutions have taken slightly different approaches. For example, The University of Derby has developed a fully inclusive approach to engagement surveys. These have been undertaken since 2005 on a twice yearly basis, to a rotating 50% of employees, which has helped them to take the 'pulse of institution' regularly. This has led to an annual response rate of over 60%. Crucially the survey doesn't stand alone – with findings analysed and communicated, and focused action plans drawn up. The findings are also utilised when looking at other data strands such as absence levels and National Student Survey results, and data from the employee assistance programme, Occupational Health service and exit interviews. This approach to engaging staff led to Derby achieving the UPA Award for HR Excellence in Higher Education (2009).

A similar approach has been taken at the University of Bristol. Their Positive Work Environment (PWE) Survey has included detailed analysis of results, acting upon them, and clearly communicating the changes through their 'PWE Commitments'. This led to them winning a number of awards including the 2009 Global Human Resource Development Award in performance management, from the International Federation of Training and Development Organisations Ltd (IFTDO).

Other examples include the Universities of Cranfield and Newcastle which have built on the survey results using localised focus groups and action plans. This has helped to create departmental ownership.

WHAT WERE THE KEY CHALLENGES?

“ Good management can lead to good health, wellbeing and improved performance. The reverse can be true of bad management. Good health equals good business and the line manager is a key agent of change

Working for a Healthier Tomorrow, 2008



WHAT WERE THE KEY CHALLENGES? CONTINUED

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management was the most commonly discussed theme at all of the project workshops. In almost all examples, when working well it was the single biggest enabler for success and, conversely, management resistance, lack of engagement and lack of skills proved to be the biggest barrier to overcome.

Roles, responsibilities and expectations

For many institutions, particularly the large and more traditional ones, the fundamental challenges are often the lack of management structures and acceptance of management responsibilities in the academic setting. In many examples cited, managers did not know or accept that supporting the wellbeing of their staff was part of their role.

A number of institutions, however, have been working to establish clear expectations of managers. For example, the University of Derby has developed a suite of management attributes and the University of Leeds has set out some clear leadership and management standards.

The University of Leeds produced a brochure on leadership and management standards.

In other institutions, recognising that managers may need further guidance in some of these areas, briefings, workshops and road shows have been run. For example, the University of Brighton held training events for managers on stress management, and Newcastle University offered a course on stress management and self-hypnosis.



TACKLING PERCEPTIONS

'Wellbeing is too difficult to tackle'

In 2007 the Involvement and Participation Association (IPA) found that whilst 'most organisations were aware of the need for employee engagement, less than half knew how to implement it (IPA 2007 cited by MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). Whilst this survey reflected the views on employee engagement – it is arguable that the issue applies in the same way to employee wellbeing. This highlights one possible reason why employee wellbeing has not been taken further in higher education institutions. Whilst instinctively, most institutions are likely to answer that investment in wellbeing is a 'good thing to do', the difficulty deciding exactly what to do makes it easier to 'brush it under the carpet' in favour of more tangible work with clear deliverables and impact.

In an interview with one HR Director one barrier which was suggested was that 'the managers are concerned about the practical implications and the Executive are concerned about opening a Pandora's Box'. They added that 'there's a danger that this all looks too difficult to deal with but in my own experience... it isn't'.

Again, institutions are beginning to overcome this through a programme of communications, development and re-education. Managers need to see it as doing things differently, rather than doing more things which add to their workload.

Perceptions of 'fluffiness'

Possibly as there is currently no specific definition of wellbeing (or clear higher education-specific evidence proving its benefits), there are wide spread negative perceptions leading to its credibility and significance being questioned. This means that some institutions still perceive wellbeing to be a 'nice to have' benefit rather than something which is fundamental to good employment practice.

One HR Director interviewed stated that 'The term can be problematic as people perceive it as fluffy but it's much more than that'. Another agreed with the term in principle but emphasized that they would not be able to use it in the context of their organisation (particularly as part of strategic documents) because 'it needs to be put into business terms'. They continued that 'wellbeing is seen as wishy washy, fluffy and soft, it needs to be more about employee effectiveness – more hard-nosed' if it is to convince the university decision makers.



WHAT WERE THE KEY CHALLENGES? CONTINUED

Whilst there is currently a body of evidence showing that wellbeing can lead to significant business benefits, this is not necessarily taken seriously in the higher education context with individuals arguing that ‘it wouldn’t work like that here’. This highlights the need for HE specific evidence showing which interventions and activities should be an essential part of good management and can have a real impact. This needs to be robust and credible to convince the academic audience in particular.

Resourcing

Notably none of the delegates or interviewees personally felt that the wellbeing of staff should become less of a priority during the challenging economic period, where cost savings were being made. A number, in fact, explicitly stated that ‘wellbeing should not just be seen as something for good times only’ and that ‘resources may be scarce but people still need to feel valued’. The majority did, however, point to the fact that due to the perceptions of others (including senior managers within their organisations) there was a serious risk of it being de-prioritised. This was felt to be particularly likely in the institutions which had only just begun to consider staff wellbeing, whereas those with more established practice and activities, wellbeing was more embedded and less easy to ‘slice off’.

Case studies, however, show that there are a number of ways of making large improvements with little resource.

“You don’t need much money, it is more about doing things differently than new things. Many things are relatively modest.”
HR Director

1. Sourcing external funding

A number of institutions have been able to supplement their budgets using external funding. For example, the University of Bolton were awarded £50,000 from the Sport England £1 Million Challenge Fund. Others have sought sponsorship from external organisations to run specific events.

2. Avoiding ‘reinventing the wheel’

One of the significant benefits of attending the wellbeing workshops has been that individuals and institutions have been able to learn from the experiences of others. Feedback has suggested that it has been particularly useful to hear about what aspects have worked well and how challenges have been overcome. This has also been helped through the development of case studies (see www.wellbeing.ac.uk). Individuals have also suggested that examples and case studies from non-HE organisations (including international) would be beneficial.

3. Maximising resource through cross-team working

Case studies show that it is possible to reduce duplication and share resource by collaborating across teams. For example, some institutions have found that services originally set up to support the wellbeing of students can be tailored and utilised for staff.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Clarifying responsibilities

As discussed, it is possible for employers to have a huge impact on the wellbeing and health of individuals. It is, however, important to note that many aspects require a high level of individual responsibility. This can be challenging for institutions as, they may offer a broad range of facilities and services, but the take-up may be relatively low.

Some institutions have suggested that high levels of cynicism can be problematic as staff are concerned about why such investments are being made. This can only be overcome through open communications – being transparent about the fact that this is in fact a mutually beneficial agenda.

Engaging diverse audiences

As with all forms of communication, particularly in large, diverse organisations, messages, language and methods must be tailored according to the audience. For example, often operational staff do not have easy access to computers, and academic audiences can be ‘turned off’ by business jargon.

In an environment where people are bombarded with information, institutions have to think creatively. Innovative examples include using pay-slips, intranet ‘pop-ups’, postcards, stickers and balloons. Again, localized communication can be very important – particularly in larger institutions or those with multiple sites. The University of the Arts, London, for example, which has 6 colleges spread over 17 different sites, worked hard to build engagement through a network of champions and also, by targeting communication at under-represented groups such as hourly paid staff.



WHAT WERE THE KEY CHALLENGES? CONTINUED

Creating the 'wellbeing package'

Robertson Cooper Ltd – leading experts in the area of wellbeing and business psychology have highlighted the importance of developing a strong wellbeing 'brand'.

“ Unless you can bring it all together under a single 'umbrella' and communicate this effectively to staff it's very difficult to build the kind of momentum required to move towards a wellbeing culture. Over time your wellbeing strategy can become a valued and respected part of working life for staff, but this is very unlikely to happen if you implement a series of disconnected wellbeing initiatives with no cohesive brand identity to hold them together. Wellbeing is a cross-cutting issue – (...) – so it's critical that we give it a strong brand identity if it is to thrive when we send it out into the organisation!!

www.robertsoncooper.com/pages/todays-challenges/Creating-Wellbeing-Brand



This message has been reinforced in a number of the institutional case studies. For example, City University, London invested in recognisable visual identify for their wellbeing activities:

“ We've found that a professional feel pays dividends and people can tell when you've approached something seriously. People like it, it's easy to understand, and it brings all the separate wellbeing initiatives together.

Bill Thompson, Head of Leisure Services, City University, London

A similar approach was taken at the University of Derby where the 'Better Together' campaign created a linkage between new and existing support services and initiatives in order to raise staff awareness. An event in 2008 was held to launch the campaign which will now be an annual event with a calendar of monthly topics www.derby.ac.uk/bettertogether

Celebrating success and valuing staff

Feedback suggests that an important part of improving staff wellbeing and engagement is ensuring that individuals feel valued and part of a wider community. Although celebratory events often require institutions to overcome high levels of cynicism, case studies show that they can be extremely positive.

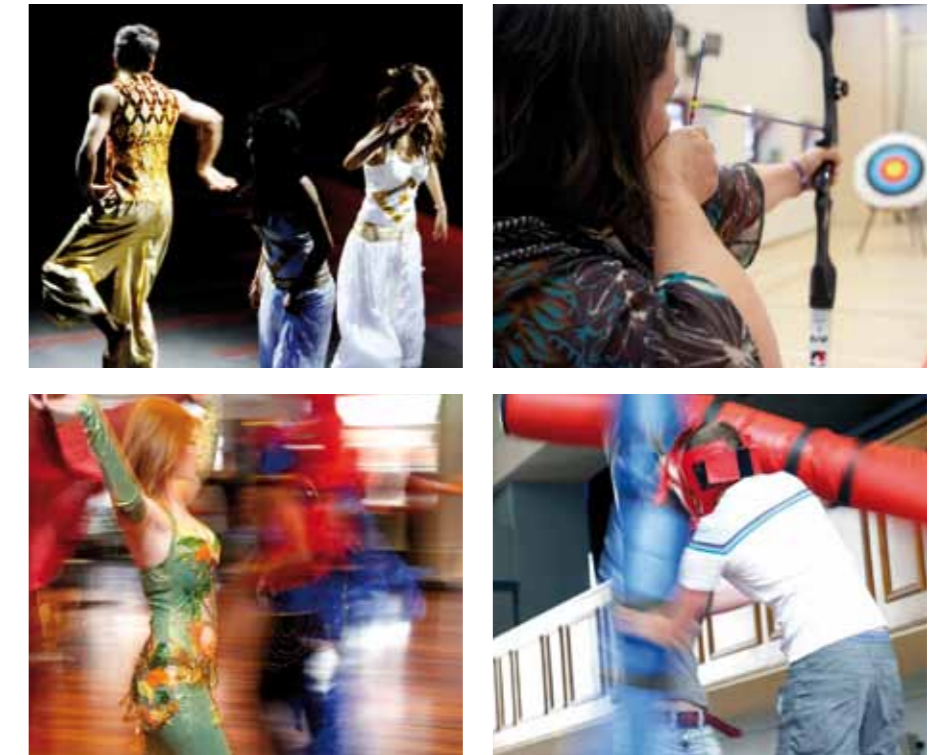
The Birmingham University Awards for Tremendous Achievement

The BUAFAs were launched in 2007/8 as a way to show the University values its staff. This has been a positive and visible way to thank individuals and inspire others. For example, the awards give staff real examples of how good team playing can lead to excellent outcomes. Being nominated has also encouraged individuals and teams to go further because of the vote of confidence they felt had been given to them.

The University of Leeds Staff Festival

www.leeds.ac.uk/staff_festival

Over the past 3 years the University has held an annual festival. It is a diverse event including a live music stage, farmers market, staff-run stalls, wellbeing zone, barbeque, bouncy castles and give-it-a-go activities. Organised by the Employee Communications team, this event attracts around 4000 employees and their families every year.



WHAT GAPS HAVE WE IDENTIFIED?

WHAT GAPS HAVE WE IDENTIFIED?

Whilst such research and demand demonstrates benefits for both employers and employees alike – this project has highlighted gaps in knowledge, practice and evidence within the HE sector, currently forming significant barriers to realising these outcomes. These can be summarised as follows:

- There is currently no HE-specific business case for employee wellbeing. It is therefore unclear what to invest in to maximize benefits.
- It is difficult to measure/evaluate the impact of staff engagement and wellbeing on institutional performance indicators such as research income and student experience.
- In many institutions there is a lack of expertise to enhance wellbeing practice and lack of resource to address this issue.
- A number of institutions and non-HE organisations have done work in this area, and have learnt useful lessons about what works and what doesn't work, but there is no way for others to access this information.
- The topic of staff wellbeing crosses a number of professional areas including Occupational Health, Health and Safety and Human Resources, but there is currently no forum to bring these groups together.

WHERE NEXT?

WHERE NEXT?

Funding for a Phase 2 project has recently been approved under the new HEFCE Leading Transformational Change Fund. This will allow the work to continue for an additional 2 years to address these gaps. This will be led by the Universities of Leeds and Bristol, in partnership with the Universities of Birmingham, Chester, Newcastle, Queen Mary London and Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education.

Broadening the focus

Feedback gathered throughout the project has confirmed that employee wellbeing is a broad and flexible agenda. Whilst there have been high levels of engagement with a large and diverse group of institutions and stakeholder organisations, due to stereotypes and negative perceptions, the terminology has, in some cases, been off-putting. In addition to this, the challenging economic climate means that institutions working differently to increase efficiency and performance, whilst ensuring that staff remain supported and motivated.

It is therefore proposed that the focus will shift slightly. Whilst the outcomes, for both employees and employers, are still the same, the project will encompass important aspects of wellbeing such as employee engagement and resilience.

The following areas will be addressed:

Exploring the relationship between staff engagement and performance

This part of the project will investigate the links between staff engagement and performance. Pilot studies have been undertaken at the Universities of Bristol and Derby which have demonstrated some very interesting links. A detailed specification would be drawn up in consultation with key stakeholders as part of the project.

Developing, piloting and evaluating interventions

This part of the project will involve working closely with a small number of institutions to develop and pilot topic-based interventions. These are likely to include:

“Creating an environment that is productive, rewarding, enjoyable and healthy is central to our University Strategic Plan. This project brings together a range of professionals from across the sector to share the very best practice out there for the benefit of all in HE.”

Christian Carter, Personnel Manager, University of Bristol



- Embedding staff engagement in the change management process
- Evaluating the staff engagement survey process
- Embedding staff engagement in leadership and management
- Positive attendance management
- Dignity at work (bullying and harassment)
- Developing a sustainable wellbeing programme
- Psychological health and resilience
- Physical health and nutrition
- Redefining the academic psychological contract

Members of the project team will work with expert advisors to help institutions to enhance their planned interventions, develop the evaluation criteria, and monitor progress. A final evaluation will be carried out – both for each pilot and across all pilots – to assess the impact on key performance indicators including sickness absence, individual performance and student feedback. The findings will then inform the case studies, practical toolkits and events.

Events

Following the popularity of the workshops, a programme of regionally based events will be run. The aim will be to enable continued peer support and networking across different professional groups, sharing of ideas and joint problem solving. Events will be based on a number of key topic areas and will be informed by the ongoing findings from other areas of the project. It is likely that several will be run in partnership with other projects, organisations or associations eg. UCEA, Unison, UHR and HELIX.

Marketing and communications*

A comprehensive and accessible programme of communications is planned to ensure that learning is captured, shared and disseminated throughout the whole project.

“Our people agenda has been a major driver of change, redefining ‘how we do things around here’ and getting the buy in of all stakeholders. The University feels and is a very different place to what it was a few years ago. Our approach is now nationally recognised as excellent within the sector.”

Samantha Wortley, University Health and Safety Adviser, University of Derby

1. Project website (currently www.wellbeing.ac.uk)

An interactive resource website will enable subscribing institutions to access project information including update reports, information on related projects and organisations, toolkits and case studies. An online forum will facilitate idea sharing and problem solving across institutions, outside of the events.

2. Toolkits

The toolkits respond to the direct feedback gathered during Phase 1. They will provide both topic and activity based, practical guidance for staff in different professional groups, and at different levels, including check-lists, communications plans and training guides. These will be developed to allow individual institutions to tailor them, as appropriate, to their specific needs.

3. Case studies

Building on the case studies gathered throughout Phase 1, the bank will be expanded to include examples from different topic areas as well as different sectors. Again, emphasis will be placed on giving institutions the opportunity to learn from what has worked well and how challenges have been overcome.

4. E-newsletter and distribution list

Feedback has suggested that institutions would benefit from regular project updates as well as a centralized resource to find out about related projects, activities and events. The distribution list will also allow online networking.

* A nominal fee will be charged on an institutional basis to subscribe to the project, receive regular updates and access toolkits and case studies.

Linking up

In addition to working closely with the organisations and associations mentioned, there are a number of specific related projects which have been carried out and/or are planned which we will work closely alongside to ensure collaboration as well as no duplication.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Copies of workshop presentations and case studies
are now available for download: www.wellbeing.ac.uk

For more information or to find out more about getting
involved contact:

Kim Shutler-Jones

Project Manager for Wellbeing in Higher Education
k.shutler-jones@leeds.ac.uk
0113 343 6525

Return to start

