

# ACTIVE WELLBEING PROJECTS

## 2024-25

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### Canterbury Christ Church University

**Project Lead:** Darius Ashtari ([Darius.ashtari@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:Darius.ashtari@canterbury.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Live Well - Student Wellbeing

LiveWell is an active living programme designed to help students and staff at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) with stress, low self-esteem, anxiety, or a persistent low mood. The 6-week LiveWell programme provides a hands-on opportunity for students and staff to develop an understanding of how an active lifestyle can improve physical and mental wellbeing. CCCU has documented a 24% rise in mental health referrals to Student Wellbeing Services since 2020 and within the last year, the University's Occupational Health team have recognised 51% of referrals are mental health-related, which surpassed reported musculoskeletal issues at 31%.

We aim to take a positive and educational approach to the term 'being active'; with the aid of BUCS funding, we will work in partnership across the University to help those in our community who are experiencing low mental wellbeing. LiveWell will provide the participants with the tools to help get them active and teach a holistic approach to wellbeing.

### King's College London

**Project Lead:** Laura Edwards ([laura.edwards@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:laura.edwards@kcl.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Staff Work-Life Balance

Taking care of our own and others' wellbeing has never been more important. Through delivery of this project, we aim to improve staff engagement within our programmes and facilities to ensure that everyone at King's has a good work-life balance and is enabled to thrive, with access to support and advice whenever it's needed. This project will also provide transformative experiences to our students and the wider King's community through our King's Sport & Wellness Academy.

We will do this by upskilling and developing employability skills whilst at university and hope to maximize the impact of our volunteering, coaching and workforce opportunities for students. To connect communities, by providing opportunity for new participants and those less active. We will do this by co-creating services that promote positive life habits and behaviours, optimizing our people and our potential. Our people are at the heart of King's strategic ambitions. We aim to target specific groups e.g. Proudly Kings and engage with our front-line services to improve both their physical, mental, and social Wellness and ultimately help reduce sickness absence days.

### London South Bank University

**Project Lead:** Daniel Campbell ([campbelld17@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:campbelld17@lsbu.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Move for Change – Exercise Referral

Our Move for Change referral project aims to demonstrate the positive correlation between sports, physical activity, wellbeing and academic success. LSBU has a high proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students who work whilst studying, students with additional caring responsibilities, students with disabilities, and students on courses with placements. This project aims to establish interdepartmental partnerships by creating a referral pathway between the LSBU student wellbeing team and LSBU Active.

The Move for Change programme offers a three-stage programme framework; students can access the programme through either self-refer or referral by the student wellbeing team. Self-referring students can access two stages of the programme; these levels include enrolment for a free off-peak fitness membership and access to drop-in social sports sessions delivered by our student activators. Our student wellbeing department will be able to refer students directly to the third stage of the programme where a designated staff will support the referred student through a 12-week physical activity programme.

As a result, this project aims to reduce student dropout rates, enhance academic achievement, increase student satisfaction, increase student employment opportunities, and create a sense of belonging.

### **Loughborough University**

**Project Lead:** Matty Crackell ([m.crackell2@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:m.crackell2@lboro.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Increasing Opportunities for Women

Loughborough University are delighted to have received BUCS Active Wellbeing funding to help us proactively challenge underrepresentation in sport amongst women. We will utilise the funding to identify, recruit and provide a package of support to student role models to champion physical activity and sport amongst underrepresented communities including disability, low socio-economic status and culturally diverse groups. Alongside this student-led role modelling campaign, we will also support students to deliver a Women in Sport week, with physical activity sessions, guest speakers and events to promote and celebrate student involvement in women's sport.

### **Northumbria University**

**Project Lead:** Andy Barton ([andy.barton@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:andy.barton@northumbria.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Daily Mile – Tackling Inequalities within Sport and Physical Activity

Northumbria Sport aims to improve the wellbeing of our students by the delivery of our project “The Daily Mile”. We will provide free and accessible opportunities for students to take part in daily physical activity across all academic semester dates at Northumbria University. Our needs analysis has identified 4 key groups in need of intervention to tackle inequalities within their sport and physical activity provision:

- First Gen (students whose parent(s) did not complete a college or university degree)
- BAME (black and ethnic minority students)
- Commuter Student
- Mature (students over the age of 21)

We will measure pre-intervention, mid-intervention, and post-intervention measures of wellbeing via the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental 7-item Wellbeing Scale. In addition, we will also measure current physical activity levels, sleep quality and motivation for study/work with our students at staff pre-intervention, mid-intervention, and post-intervention to evidence the benefits of an active life.

Student interns (Activity Leaders) will be required to co-ordinate activity each day on pre-set routes across campus and beyond, where staff and students will be encouraged to run, jog, wheel or walk. In addition, we will 1x recruit student intern (Data Insight) per semester for the duration of the project to manage data gathering and analysis of the programme.

### **Nottingham Trent University**

**Project Lead:** Kate Hansbury ([k.hansbury@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:k.hansbury@ntu.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** International Students

At Nottingham Trent University (NTU) we believe that sport is for everyone, and we are dedicated to promoting physical activity to drive positive change to all our student population. In 22/23 NTU had over 7,000 new and continuing international students, almost 50% more than 18/19, representing 18% of all students – 2,016 of which engaged in NTU Sport activities.

Through the Active Wellbeing Fund, NTU Sport will work with the international department to gain insight into the perceptions of sport and physical activity of international students and develop initiatives to increase engagement. We will do this by establishing student leadership positions within NTU's Global Lounge, advocating our Play for Fun social programme and support international campaigns by organising events and activities to increase participation amongst our international community. We hope to gain a greater understanding of how we can make our programmes more inclusive and to increase engagement of international students into NTU Sport by 2%.

## University of Bradford

**Project Lead:** Ellie Richards ([e.richards5@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:e.richards5@bradford.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** PlayBradford – Tackling Inequalities in Sport and Physical Activity

PlayBradford is a new initiative at the University of Bradford Union of Students (UBU) that started in October 2023. It covers a wide range of sports and physical activities and is targeted at students who are currently inactive and not engaged with UBU. We also have elements of the programme that target disabled students, those struggling with their mental health, and those struggling financially. Currently a large proportion of the students who engage in sports with UBU are White British, but this demographic only represents a small proportion of the student body; through focus groups, we have identified that cost and the high levels of commitment needed for traditional sports are the main barriers for individuals of other demographics that are not currently engaged with us.

An increasing number of our students are accessing food banks due to financial constraints, if we would like students to be able to get involved with physical activities at the Union, we must ensure that there is little to no cost required for them to do so. We have already had success with our Wellbeing Wednesday Walks that took students around the Yorkshire Dales, launched to support students unable to travel home over the summer. It provided them with a social network of individuals which will lead to improved health and social outcomes. We hope that the introduction of more elements to the PlayBradford programme and pass these benefits to as many students as we can.

## University of Brighton

**Project Lead:** Abi Martin ([a.s.martin@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:a.s.martin@brighton.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Student Wellbeing and Students with Disabilities

We will be running projects focused on engaging students in physical activity who are experiencing low mental wellbeing, and students with disabilities. Our targets include increasing the number of opportunities available specifically targeted towards these demographics, as well as removing barriers to our existing programmes. Another key area we are looking to support is growing and developing a workforce confident in delivering accessible and inclusive sport and physical activity sessions.

From this project we hope to engage with around 600 students through events ranging from mass participation campaigns to specific sessions in conjunction with Student Support Services. This will be supported by over 60 members of the student and staff workforce who will take part in training to lead and support activities. We believe by developing internal workforce, building strong partnerships with student services and purchase of specialist equipment via this programme we can build a sustainable offer for our targeted demographic to continue to engage with our programmes post funding.

## University of Exeter

**Project Lead:** Lauren Rowe ([l.e.rowe@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:l.e.rowe@exeter.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** International Students and Staff

Our aim with the funding is to develop a staff and international student walking programme based from our St Luke's campus. Historically, as our smaller campus of three, St Luke's has seen a reduced amount of wellbeing centred activity despite it having a high concrete of staff and international students. The aim of our programme is to deliver weekly walking programmes and initiatives which use the local area, navigating green open spaces, rivers, and footpaths around our city. It's a project designed to de-stress, improve productivity and wellbeing in our staff and students, combined with an opportunity for our international students to see more of our beautiful city whilst they are studying here.

## University of Huddersfield

**Project Lead:** Natalie Sinclair ([n.sinclair@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.sinclair@hud.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Muslim Women

The aims of our project are to engage and retain 75 Muslim females in physical activity and create a sense of Belonging & Community for these women. We will achieve this by offering development opportunities to female Muslim volunteers who will then be able to assist in the delivery of weekly activity for our targeted group. These sessions aim to increase engagement and confidence within the target group enough that they feel comfortable to take part in physical activity tournaments and wider University challenges/campaigns. The sessions will take place in the University's Faith Centre which has been identified as a location appropriate and familiar by both Muslim women and the Muslim Chaplain.

The project will be supported by partners across university campus such as The Students Union, Islamic Society, International Students Network, Women's Network and the Muslim Chaplain to overcome cultural and financial barriers. From our data analysis, we have identified female Muslims as a minority group with the lowest physical activity engagement. The funding will be used to close this engagement gap, increase participation in female Muslims, break down cultural barriers, develop prospective CPD and leadership skills whilst providing more opportunities to engage in exercise.

## University of Leeds

**Project Lead:** Kate Petty ([k.petty@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:k.petty@leeds.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Move More, Feel Good – Establishing Positive Physical Activity and Wellbeing Behaviour

Move More, Feel Good is a new holistic health and wellbeing project at the University of Leeds. Move More, Feel Good aims to introduce and establish positive physical activity and wellbeing behaviour for students while at university and beyond.

Other aims include providing students with a usable toolkit of tips and techniques they can easily use to self-manage their health and improving students' sense of belonging and social interaction in a safe and structured environment.

Move More, Feel Good comprises an educational component delivered through a range of workshops, and an exercise component delivered through varied physical activity sessions. The Active Wellbeing funding will be used to pilot this project in three blocks. The first block of Move More, Feel Good will be targeted at first year students before we open it up wider to all students across all degree levels.

## University of Nottingham

**Project Lead:** Louise Smith ([louise.smith2@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:louise.smith2@nottingham.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Empower – Female and Non-Binary Participation

Empower is a collaborative campaign of targeted sessions and events to focus on tackling common barriers faced by female and non-binary UoN students to participate in physical activity, exercise, and sport. The campaign has a particular focus on building self-confidence in UoN students and inspiring local female secondary school pupils to be active, through the Girls Active Leaders programme.

Empower sessions will aim to upskill and empower female and non-binary UoN students in physical activity, exercise, and sport by introducing new activities in small group environments to help build confidence, social connections, and competency. Empower Girls Active Leaders is an opportunity for female identifying UoN students to inspire secondary school pupils to motivate themselves and others in their schools to be more active and confident. The Girls Active Leaders will be trained to mentor school pupils to support them through the development of their own activity programmes in their schools.

University of Nottingham Sport have identified a clear need for Empower, through data and insight which shows less females currently engaging in UoN Sport than their male counterparts - a trend seen within higher education and national statistics. Empower aims to help bridge the gender physical activity gap at UoN.

## University of Southampton

**Project Lead:** Gabriel Bees ([g.g.bees@soton.ac.uk](mailto:g.g.bees@soton.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Intercultural Olympics – International Students

The University of Southampton's Intercultural Olympics initiative seeks to address the gap in sports engagement between home students and international students within our societies and club sports. Encouraging our international students to participate and create more awareness on how to join sporting societies and build a sense of connection and belonging.

With international enrollment expanding at the University of Southampton, the funding will support us in delivering the Intercultural Olympics initiative and empower student connection through inclusive and diverse team setups participating in activities such as Boccia and Walking Football. Proposed impact measurement includes tracking increased participation, improved attitudes around belonging, and increased recruitment from international students joining societies.

## University of West London

**Project Lead:** Jamie Traxon ([Jamie.traxon@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:Jamie.traxon@uwl.ac.uk))

**Project Focus:** Wellbeing and Physical Activity, Supporting Academic Success

We know our students face many inequalities during their time at UWL and we will aim to break these down by providing activities that they want, at a time, in a place that suits them. We will inform and educate our students on the importance of Wellbeing and Physical activity and the positive impact it has on their academic success.

We want to be able to take wellbeing activities to our students in a location that suits them. This will help to bridge the gap and link them to physical activities that are already running and provide a more comprehensive programme of wellbeing activities. These could be a class based within the teaching time pre-exam wellbeing activities or linked directly to activity that enhances their learning experience.

To effectively utilise the funding, we will consult with the Equality Champions network to understand the current challenges, barriers and inequalities that are faced by students in accessing wellbeing and physical activities. They will then advise us on what wellbeing and physical activities are required, where and when and where our focus as an SU needs to be.