



# Move More. Feel Good.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

## Background to the project

Move More, Feel Good (MMFG) aimed to introduce and establish positive physical activity and wellbeing behaviour for first year undergraduate students studying at the University of Leeds. First-year students are transitioning into university life, therefore making this a key time to create positive habits that could have a long-term impact on their wellbeing.

The project idea came about as we were missing a proactive programme that supports students before difficulties arise. At Leeds we have a very successful student wellbeing referral programme but this involves working with students when they are at crisis point. We wanted to pilot a programme that provided students with the knowledge, resources and confidence to incorporate physical activity and wellbeing habits into their life so they can support themselves to be healthy and well. We used data to inform the inception of this project; our annual physical activity and wellbeing survey, Balancing Life, highlighted the need for this project as physical activity and mental wellbeing levels had dropped amongst our student population.



Move More, Feel Good comprised an educational component delivered through a range of workshops, and an exercise component delivered through varied physical activity sessions. The programme was flexible so students can come and go to whatever sessions they feel they would benefit from. The workshops were categorised into 4 areas:



## MOVE

Explore ways to stay active and improve your physical health with fun and accessible exercise ideas.



## FOOD

Learn how to fuel your body with nutritious meals that support both physical and mental wellbeing.



## MOOD

Discover practical tips for managing your mood and enhancing your emotional wellbeing.



## SNOOZE

Find strategies for improving your sleep quality, helping you feel rested and ready to take on the day.

The aim of the activity sessions was to showcase the many ways students can be physically active, so we had a range of classes, some of which were more upbeat, and others were more focused on gentle movement. The sessions took place at different times of day and varied in duration. This was in direct response to student feedback we received through our Balancing Life Survey, which demonstrated that time was one of the biggest barriers to physical activity.

First year students at the University of Leeds receive a gym membership as part of their university residency package. There is always a substantial number of students who do not utilise their membership. Several students cite a lack of confidence of coming into the gym and having the knowledge of using the equipment correctly, so we ran gym inductions to raise awareness of the gym facilities and how to use the equipment correctly and safely. We used feedback from our Balancing Life Survey to inform the semester 1 schedule. The semester 2 schedule was created in response to student feedback from participants who attended in semester 1 and the feedback our student interns gathered from our wider student population. Examples of some of the activity sessions:

Zumba

Spin

Pilates

Step

Yoga

Strength

Run Club

Badminton

We collaborated with our Student Education Service (SES) and recruited 4 student interns to support us across the course of our project. These students were invaluable, and they contributed across various aspects of the project.

Key tasks the students worked on:

- Research & capturing student voice
- Developed workshop material
- Developed online wellbeing guides
- Attended sessions to welcome students for peer to peer support
- Ran promotional stalls
- Engaged with student societies
- Completed administrative tasks
- Created a next steps document based on the data and feedback they had collected throughout the project

## Data and insight

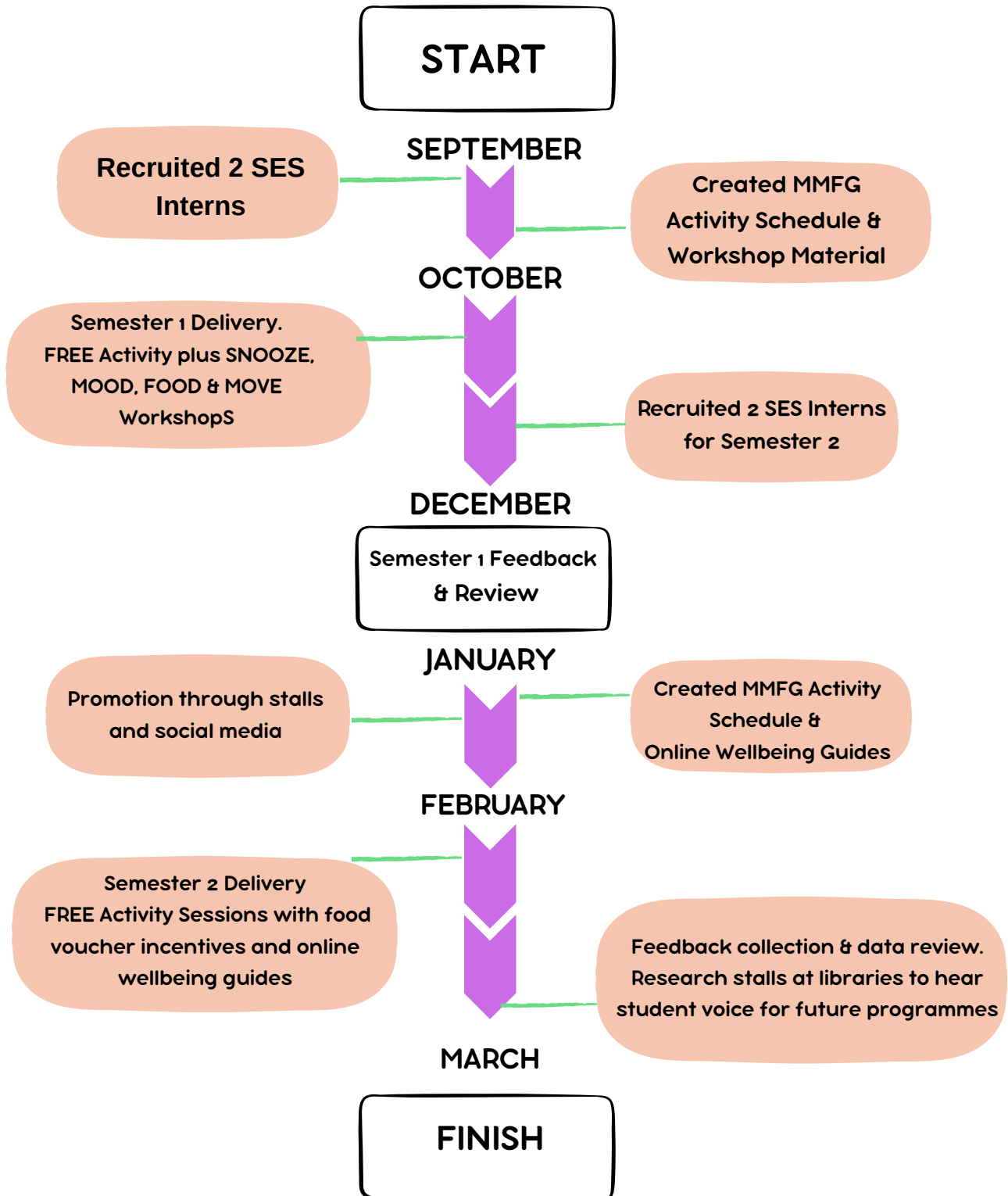
Towards the end of the project, our student interns engaged over 60 students in person on the University of Leeds campus regarding their preferences for physical activity and wellbeing programmes. The data provided insight into students preferred physical activities, barriers to exercise, learning interests, scheduling preferences, and factors that would encourage continued physical activity.

## The following key themes emerged:

- The main barriers preventing students from being physically active include a lack of confidence, time constraint, and lack of confidence (these results are consistent with our annual physical activity and wellbeing survey results).
- Programme structure - students preferred one session a week with Wednesdays, Fridays and weekends in the evening being the most popular
- Students preferred way of receiving communication was via Instagram with emails and WhatsApp being the other top two preferences.
- Our interns specifically targeted receiving feedback from students classed as inactive (less than 30 minutes of activities a week). Whilst many of the themes were similar, it was interesting that inactive students showed a preference for yoga, Pilates and dance as their choice of movement and cited a lack of motivation as their top barrier to physical activity.

*We are using the data to inform what this project looks like next academic year. Please see later in the report for more detail.*

## Project Timeline



## Semester 1 October-December 2024

- 68** students attended activity sessions and educational workshops
- 48%** of students that attended activity sessions were 1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduates.
- 60** NPS score of 60 for activity sessions

## Semester 2 January-March 2025

- 63** students attended activity sessions (no workshops)
- 248** online wellbeing guide views
- 26%** of students that attended activity sessions were 1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduates
- 72** NPS score of 72 for activity sessions



# Overall Project Impact

Semester 1 & 2 data combined;

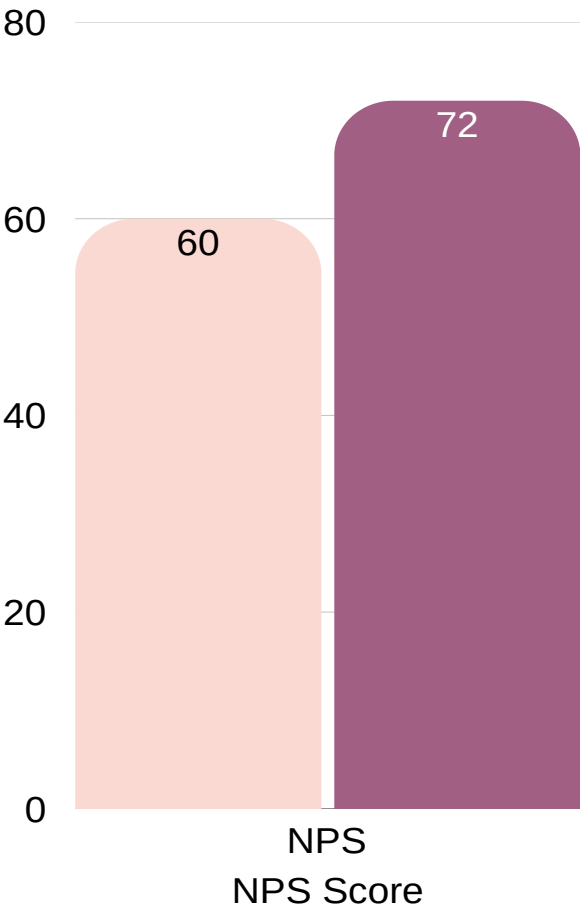
Total throughput = **131**

Total occupancy for activity sessions = **45%**

Total views of wellbeing guides = **248**

**NPS SCORES;** ● Semester 1

● Semester 2



***“The instructor was really friendly and dealt with all of us at different levels”***

***“Informative slides which were thoroughly explained and included on the work booklet explained ways in which we can improve daily exercise”***

***“It felt very welcoming and beginner friendly”***

***“I learned a lot about not only food groups, but specific examples of foods that I can realistically incorporate into each meal”***

## Successes

- Working with Student Interns and listening to student voice
- A significant achievement was the creation of a comprehensive dataset of student emails, which will serve as a foundation for ongoing email promotions and communications. This dataset includes students who attended exercise sessions and workshops, as well as those who signed up for email communications at the stalls. Additionally, it includes contacts we have utilized for promotions including society contacts, newsletter contacts, Leeds University Student Union (LUU) contacts. This resource provides a sustainable way to maintain engagement with students.
- Maximising Signups in Semester Two - This was primarily due to increased promotional efforts and collaborations with different campus organisations.
- Gaining Collaborations for Sustainability - Key relationships were established to help sustain the project long-term. Partnerships with the library, the wellbeing team and various societies allow us to reach more students and gain more exposure across multiple student networks. These collaborations played a crucial role in enhancing the visibility of the programme.

## Challenges & Learnings

Several valuable insights emerged from the Semester 1 delivery that shaped our approach in Semester 2.

- **Promotion & Marketing** - social media promotion was limited due to us not having access to a dedicated project specific social media account. We relied on 'takeovers' on existing social media accounts. Therefore promotion was limited to face to face stalls and emails to existing participants. We learnt the importance of adopting a multi-method approach to promotion and marketing. You cannot rely on just one method. Peer-to-peer promotion was particularly effective, with our student interns playing a key role in engaging their fellow students and increasing awareness.
- **Attendance** - One challenge was lower-than-expected attendance at our in-person workshops. In response, we quickly adapted by collaborating with our student interns to develop digital resources. These materials provided students with flexible, on-demand access to workshop content, regardless of time or location.



- Looking ahead, the project is set to be fully assimilated into our Active Campus initiative, with the launch of a student programme scheduled for the upcoming academic year. This integration will allow for future growth and impact
- In response to student feedback, the programme schedule will be more flexible, with evening sessions introduced to better accommodate student availability and lifestyles
- The range of activities will be shaped by ongoing student input, with a focus on variety - both physical activity sessions and wellbeing-focused activities. Emphasis will be placed on engaging students who identify as 'inactive', creating an inclusive, welcoming space that supports first-time participation and continued involvement
- It is expected that promotion and marketing will be more effective with the project now embedded into a broader initiative. The enhanced visibility and reach of the Active Campus programme will hopefully lead to increased student attendance and engagement
- A key priority is to strengthen collaboration with LUU. There is now shared recognition of the value in working together. A closer working relationship will enable more targeted promotion, and delivery of student-centred activities



THANK  
YOU



*We would like to thank BUCS for the funding support that made this student project possible. Their contribution has enabled us to design and deliver a programme that responds to student needs and interests. We are excited to see the project continue to evolve as part of our wider Active Campus initiative.*