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Supporting the King's Community – King's Wellness Pathway

1. Background & Objectives

Thanks to the BUCS Active Wellbeing Funding, King's Sport & Wellness has proudly delivered a wide range of health and wellness initiatives over the past two years, aimed at improving both physical and mental health across the university community.

This funding enabled the launch and expansion of programmes designed to support staff and student wellbeing, increase engagement in physical activity, and enhance student employability through practice-based learning, coaching and workforce opportunities.

At the heart of the initiative is a commitment to inclusive, holistic wellbeing, ensuring all members of the King's community have access to the support, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive.

This work directly supports King's Vision 2029, particularly the university's commitment to fostering a positive, inclusive, and healthy environment for all. It also contributes to the King's Education Strategy by providing students with real-world, practice-based learning experiences that build professional skills beyond graduation.

Key Objectives of the Project:

1. Increase engagement with the BeActive staff programme, gym facilities, and wellness events.
2. Align wellbeing activities with themes identified in the King's Staff Survey.
3. Strengthen existing partnerships while also developing new collaborations across the university.
4. Maximise the impact of student volunteering, coaching, and workforce development opportunities.
5. Foster connection and community by reaching new and less active participants, with a focus on frontline staff and underrepresented groups, supporting improvements in physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

In June 2023, King's launched its biggest-ever staff survey to understand how colleagues felt about working at the university, celebrating what was going well and identifying areas for improvement. The feedback gathered through this survey, alongside insights from local engagement sessions, meetings, and listening exercises, provided a clear mandate to improve the overall staff experience.

Wellbeing emerged as a key theme, with staff highlighting the need for more accessible, meaningful opportunities to support physical and mental health. In response, our department developed this project to directly address those needs, focusing on inclusive, accessible wellness initiatives and expanding engagement with the BeActive staff programme. This work forms part of a broader, university-wide commitment to improving staff wellbeing and fostering a positive workplace culture.

This report outlines the key activities, outcomes, and impact of the wellness initiatives delivered by King's Sport & Wellness over the two-year funding period, demonstrating how the programme has supported the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of the King's community.

2. Key Activities & Programmes Delivered

Over the two-year funding period, King's Sport & Wellness delivered a diverse and integrated series of initiatives that aligned with our strategic objectives and directly responded to the needs of the King's community. These programmes ranged from clinical interventions and mental health support to inclusive physical activity sessions and student leadership opportunities.

Each initiative was designed to improve health outcomes, foster long-term behaviour change, and create spaces where both staff and students could connect, move, and thrive. By embedding student involvement at every level of delivery, we also ensured that the pathway supported professional development, built confidence, and addressed skills gaps through meaningful, practice-based experience.

The following sections outline each core programme delivered as part of the King's Wellness Pathway, highlighting objectives, delivery, and outcomes.

2.1 Student Led Health & Wellbeing Support

King's unique, student-led clinical service allowed physiotherapy students to gain real-world experience while delivering vital services to the wider King's community.

- **Consultations Delivered:** 2,179 (including physiotherapy, nutrition, and behaviour change)
- **Students Supported on Placement:** 64 across BSc and MSc Physiotherapy programmes
- **Net Promoter Score (NPS):** +96 from those who provided feedback
- **Satisfaction:** 100% satisfaction rate among participants who provided feedback
- **Outcomes:** Tangible health improvements and sustained behaviour change
- **Impact on Students:** Increased confidence, hands-on skills, and professional development

Participant feedback:

"PHYSIO was fantastic! Very approachable and methodical... Thank you for making the experience comfortable."

"[Student] explained everything clearly and helped me make real progress in a short time."

This programme was delivered in partnership with the Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine (FoLSM) and supported collaborative service development and academic integration.

Lorna Johnson, Head of Physiotherapy: "King's Sport & Wellness offers physiotherapy students high-quality, practice-based learning opportunities through its student-led clinic. These experiences not only support students' academic progression but also equip them to become future leaders in delivering sustainable, effective, and evidence-based care. I am delighted that the new post, supported by (FoLSM), will substantially enhance physiotherapy placement capacity and foster further collaboration in service development and research."

2.2 Physiotherapy Security Project

This co-designed intervention provided targeted support to 15 frontline Security staff experiencing musculoskeletal issues. A significant number of staff had been referred to Occupational Health (OH) for musculoskeletal concerns, highlighting a clear need for preventative and rehabilitative support. In response, a referral pathway was established, enabling OH to direct relevant cases to our team via the individuals' line managers. This collaborative approach aimed to reduce discomfort, improve functional movement, and support staff in remaining active and well at work.

Outcomes:

- 57% reduction in pain
- 56% decrease in back-related disability scores
- **Impact:** Early signs suggest improved physical wellbeing and potential to reduce absenteeism

John Conaghan, Head of Security:

“We have been working in partnership with the King’s Sport and Wellness team since late last year, on an initiative to provide physiotherapy, assessment, and exercise advice to members of the KCL Security team. This was in response to feedback from some members of our team about role-related physical issues, which were impacting on their wellbeing. The King’s Sport & Wellness team developed a tailored programme which enabled us to refer members of staff with their consent, for rapid assessment by trained professionals who provided bespoke physio and exercise programmes. We have had several members of staff referred and the feedback has been wholly positive. This is a great initiative which is already delivering both personal and operational benefits for our team.”

2.3 BeActive Programme

Responding to rising social isolation and sedentary behaviour, the BeActive programme offers inclusive physical and social activities such as yoga, Pilates, LGBTQ+ tennis, and more, across online, on-campus, and offsite formats.

Programme Impact:

- 20,331 attendances over two years
- 33% year-on-year increase in participation
- Comprehensive training for activators to ensure inclusivity and professional development
- Over 6,000 members per year

Staff feedback: “These sessions are effective for improving wellbeing and accessibility, especially for minoritized staff.”

As part of our BeActive support, we had 40 student activators each year to deliver support to those at the sessions. The activators developed employability skills and were put on training courses such as First Aid and Street Games.

Testimonial from student activator - “Being a Wellness Activator gave me independence and trust... It helped me take care of my own wellbeing too.”

As part of our Academy, more than 100 students annually engaged in delivering approximately 10,000 hours of coaching, volunteering, and workforce opportunities, significantly enhancing their employability and leadership skills.

2.4 Wellness Events

Over 2022-24, we delivered numerous wellness events engaging hundreds of staff and students with a total of 3,241 attendances. Key highlights included:

- Staff Wellbeing Festival with 192 attendees
- International Women’s Day events with 97 women participating
- Great King’s Run - In March, we hosted the Great King’s Run with 300 participants and support from over 20 student staff members
- Delivered 20 energisers engaging over 300 individuals at faculty meetings, lecturers or events
- Delivered initiatives as part of World Mental Health Day collaborating with counselling, wellbeing and more.

2.5 Active Wellness Scheme

Participants referred to our clinical services for pre-assessments then joined our Active Wellness Scheme, designed to boost long-term activity and wellbeing. Among those completing the scheme we saw a 26% improvement in mental wellbeing, 84% reported increased physical activity levels with 100% previously deemed inactive.

“The AWS is absolutely amazing. I’ve gained confidence, encouragement, and support. Having a kind coach and access to classes and physiotherapy made a real difference to my health and wellbeing.”

3. Funding and Budget

Funding provided by BUCS was allocated to key areas including student activator costs (training and session delivery), supervisor support, facility hire, and essential equipment and consumables across various initiatives. This funding was combined with internal university resources to maximise the reach and quality of wellness programmes delivered to the King's community.

The Active Wellbeing funding was primarily used to cover facility hire for BeActive sessions, with £3,000 allocated over a two-year period. An additional £1,000 was invested in activator and student training courses, enabling students to gain industry-recognised qualifications such as First Aid and other relevant certifications.

4. Partnerships and Collaboration

A core strength of the King's Wellness Pathway has been the breadth and depth of partnerships underpinning its delivery. Internally, we have developed strong interdisciplinary collaborations with the Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine (FoLSM), the Department of Physiotherapy, Occupational Health, Disability Support, Counselling and Mental Health Services, Security, and the wider Wellbeing Team. These relationships have been instrumental in embedding wellness into the broader university ecosystem, ensuring a joined-up, holistic approach to health promotion.

One of the most impactful outcomes of this collaborative approach has been the creation of a joint Lecturer Practitioner post between King's Sport & Wellness and the Academic Physiotherapy Department. This new role will significantly enhanced placement capacity for physiotherapy students, supporting an increase from 35 to 70 students annually and has laid the foundation for deeper integration between academic learning and applied service delivery.

Additionally, the Physiotherapy-Security Project emerged as a result of our partnership with the King's Security team. By co-designing a tailored intervention for frontline staff experiencing musculoskeletal issues, we demonstrated how targeted wellbeing initiatives can drive measurable improvements in both personal health and operational performance.

Externally, we have worked with local organisations to address spatial constraints across our central London campuses, enabling us to extend the accessibility and reach of our programmes. These collaborations continue to be vital in expanding capacity and supporting long-term sustainability.

5. Demographics and Data Limitations

Although our previous booking system was not equipped to collect comprehensive demographic data, limiting detailed participant profiling, we have gathered valuable insights from programme feedback and targeted interventions. We know that frontline staff such as security personnel along with minoritised and less active staff groups, engaged significantly with our initiatives. For example, the Physiotherapy-Security Project specifically supported frontline Security staff, while the BeActive programme attracted diverse participants including women and those experiencing social isolation. With the implementation of a new booking system, we are now positioned to capture more detailed demographic information. This will enable us to better understand diversity, improve inclusivity, and tailor future programmes to reach and support underrepresented groups more effectively.

6. Evaluation and Impact Summary

The King's Wellness Pathway has had a demonstrable and lasting impact on the King's College London community. Through continuous monitoring and evaluation including surveys, focus groups, and feedback loops. We have ensured our approach remains evidence-based, participant-informed, and strategically aligned.

Key achievements across the two-year funding period include:

- **Over 20,000 session attendances** across physical activity and wellness initiatives.
- **2,179 clinical consultations** delivered by physiotherapy and nutrition students, improving recovery outcomes and increasing access to professional support.
- A **+96 Net Promoter Score (NPS)** and **100% satisfaction rate** from service users, with qualitative feedback highlighting high-quality, person-centred care.
- A **26% increase in mental wellbeing** and **84% increase in physical activity levels** among participants completing the Active Wellness Scheme.
- **100+ students** engaged in employability opportunities each year, contributing over **10,000 hours** of workforce development and gaining valuable leadership and employability skills.

In line with our strategic objectives, the programme has been particularly effective in supporting underrepresented groups, including frontline staff, minoritised staff, and those previously inactive, by offering inclusive, socially driven, and low-barrier opportunities to engage in wellness activity.

7. Next Steps and Sustainability

Building on the success of this two-year funding period, King's Sport & Wellness is committed to the continued growth and development of the Wellness Pathway. Our long-term vision focuses on deepening impact, increasing capacity, and ensuring sustainability through both institutional and external partnerships.

Key future developments include:

- **Doubling placement capacity** for physiotherapy students, enabling us to deliver more consultations and further integrate practice-based learning within the academic curriculum.
- **Expanding targeted interventions** like the Physiotherapy-Security Project to other frontline departments, including the Cleaning team, to ensure access to tailored support.
- **Strengthening the Active Wellness Scheme**, including potential collaboration with the KCL GP service to enhance referral pathways and health outcomes. Additional funding will be sought to increase coaching capacity and expand reach.
- **Enhancing the Staff BeActive Programme** by developing specialised offerings in response to identified needs, such as menopause support and pre/postnatal exercise provision.

These developments will be underpinned by a robust commitment to inclusivity, evaluation, and continuous improvement, ensuring that the programme remains responsive to the evolving needs of our community.

8. Acknowledgments

We would like to express our thanks to BUCS for their generous support through the Active Wellbeing Funding. This funding has been instrumental in enabling King's Sport & Wellness to design, implement, and sustain a diverse range of initiatives that have positively impacted the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of our community.

We are also grateful to our internal partners including the Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine, King's Security, and the Department of Physiotherapy as well as our dedicated staff and student teams whose passion and expertise have brought this work to life.

9. Appendices

Below are a selection of photos showcasing key moments and activities from our wellness and engagement programmes.

Example of a physiotherapy session supporting staff wellness



Incorporating short energisers into meetings as a promotional tool for wellness initiatives.



Photo from one of our sound bath yoga and wellness events



International Women's Day Event with our Women's Footballers



Candle Making Sessions at our Sport & Wellness Centre