



***BUJCS***

ACTIVE WELLBEING **FUND**

**2024-25**



The Active Wellbeing Fund, supported by Sport England, aims to help institutions deliver projects that enhance the wellbeing of students and staff through targeted activity designed to address existing inequalities. The projects focused on strengthening the link between physical activity and wellbeing so participants can experience the benefits of leading active lives. Projects engaged specific audiences using a place-based approach, with clearly defined outcomes, and these were underpinned by a needs analysis and robust impact measures to demonstrate the effectiveness of the delivery.

During the 2024-25 funding cycle, 13 institutions received support; 10 completed their projects, while 3 deferred for one year. Across this cycle, a total of 8,297 unique participants engaged in activities delivered through the 10 completed projects. This document showcases best practice insights from the first Active Wellbeing Fund, with full, detailed project reports available [here](#).



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# BEST PRACTICES

2024-25



**Institution: CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY**

Contact: Jack Crittenden: jack.crittenden1@canterbury.ac.uk



**Name of the project**

Thrive: Active Living Programme



**Project Overview**

Thrive is a tailored physical activity programme underpinned by theory designed to support students and staff. It aims to improve physical activity levels while enhancing health and wellbeing. Thrive is around a six-month programme, with most support given during first six weeks.



**Timeline**

Thrive is delivered all year round. First launched back in September 2024.



**Objectives**

1. Increasing capability, opportunity, and motivation to be more physically active.
2. Enhancing mental and physical wellbeing.
3. Create a sense of belonging



**Key Demographics**

The primary demographic targetted as part of Thrive are students and staff members experiencing either; low levels of physical activity or, low bouldts of mental and physical wellbeing.



**Stakeholders**

- SPEAR Team - University Research Centre for Sport, Physical Education and Activity Research
- Student Support Services
- Staff Support Services
- Sports & Active Health



**Impact**

- PA Levels
- Before: (11.8%)
- After: 150+ mins (71.4%)
- 100% report feeling better
- 100% report how Thrive developed work / study balance



**Recommendations**

- Stakeholder engagement; involve them throughout where possible.
- Consider exisiting staff workloads to manage expectation of the programme.
- Explore collaborative working opportunities.



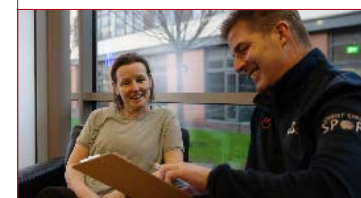
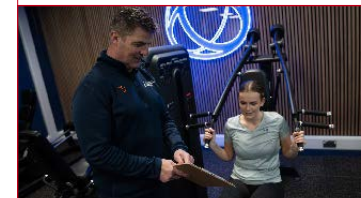
**Challenges**

- Staff Resources; specifically number of advisors available.
- Training requirements for advisors (CPD) An extensive development phase enriched the programme, though it extended the timeline.
- Limited communication available due to uni restrictions.



**Sustainability**

- Consider existing expertise within your department and across the university to develop a stronger programme.
- Identify training needs and what's required to be an advisor.





**Institution:**

**KING'S COLLEGE LONDON**

**Contact:** Laura Edwards: laura.edwards@kcl.ac.uk



**Name of the project**

Supporting the King's Community



**Project Overview**

King's Sport & Wellness delivered a diverse and integrated series of initiatives ranging from clinical interventions and mental health support to inclusive physical activity sessions and student leadership opportunities.



**Timeline**

- July–August – Review & Planning.
- September–December – Term 1 Delivery.
- January – Mid-Year Review & Planning.
- January–May – Term 2 Delivery.
- June – Term 3 Delivery & Wrap-Up.



**Objectives**

1. Enhance staff engagement with the BeActive programme and expand the reach of wellness initiatives.
2. Optimise the impact of student volunteering, coaching, and workforce opportunities.



**Key Demographics**

Our initiatives were designed to be inclusive and low- barrier, with a specific focus on reaching under represented groups and less active groups. Including front line staff and students not engaged previously in physical activity.



**Stakeholders**

We have developed strong relationships with:

- Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine (FoLSM)
- Department of Physiotherapy
- King's Security Team
- Occupational Health
- Disability Support, Counselling and Mental Health



**Impact**

- 20,331 BeActive attendances
- 2,179 Health & wellbeing consultations (physio, nutrition, behaviour change) delivered
- 100+ students supported annually in coaching and workforce. 10,000+ student hours delivered.



**Recommendations**

- Improve demographic data collection to better target underrepresented groups.
- Expand wellness programmes for frontline staff.
- Strengthen partnerships and inclusivity training to enhance impact.



**Challenges**

- Maintaining session continuity has been challenging due to limited access to internal facilities.
- Reliance on external venues has led to frequent cancellations, disrupting consistency and impacting overall engagement.



**Sustainability**

Expanding targeted interventions like the Physiotherapy Security Project to other front line departments, such as the Cleaning team. Supported by newly funded Lecture Practitioner Post.





**Institution:** LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

**Contact:** Sophie Warrener: s.warrener@lboro.ac.uk



**Name of the project**

EmpowerHER



**Project Overview**

A week long campaign to empower women and non-binary people in and through sport, physical activity, and wellbeing.



**Timeline**

Launched in March 2024. Now happens every March and culminates on International Women's Day.



**Objectives**

Create a culture of empowerment amongst women and non-binary people on campus.



**Key Demographics**

Almost 500 women and non-binary people attended at least one EmpowerHER session throughout the week.



**Stakeholders**

- AU Clubs
- Korfball
- Rugby League
- Women's Cricket
- Women's Hockey
- Loughborough SU



**Impact**

- 4.75/5 average experience rating.
- 82.2% agreed EmpowerHER increase their confidence in sport and physical activity.
- 86.7% agreed they felt more connected to a community of women at Lboro.



**Recommendations**

- Always take an evidence-based approach where possible.
- Use student demographic data if it's available to you.



**Challenges**

- No access to demographic data - tracking the true value and impact of the campaign in regards to our key demographics is challenging.
- Heavily reliant on qualitative methods due to restrictions placed upon us by Registry.



**Sustainability**

- EmpowerHER is now entering its third year.
- Robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning process in place.





**Institution:**

**NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY**

**Contact:** Andy Barton: andy.barton@northumbria.ac.uk



**Name of the project**

The Daily Mile Challenge



**Project Overview**

Northumbria Sport launched the Daily Mile Challenge to improve wellbeing through inclusive and accessible physical activity. Staff and students were challenged to move at least one mile each day, with prizes available for completing daily, weekly, and full 25-day milestones.



**Timeline**

- 25 February 2025 - The Daily Mile Challenge Launches
- 21 March 2025 - The Daily Mile Challenge Concludes



**Objectives**

1. To increase activity levels among target groups.
2. To measure the wellbeing impact of daily physical activity.
3. To share findings with the university and BUCS network.



**Key Demographics**

The following student groups were targeted:

- First-generation
- BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)
- Commuter
- Mature



**Stakeholders**

- Northumbria Sport
- BUCS
- Northumbria University Wellbeing Network (Students Union)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Services, HR and Marketing)



**Impact**

- 419 participants completed 19 different exercise formats across 20 countries, logging 19,000 miles.
- 90.7% of participants were from widening participation backgrounds, and 82% experienced meaningful improvement.



**Recommendations**

Through our a "Your Mile Your Way" motto, we empowered participants to interpret daily movement on their own terms. This approach built trust, lowered barriers, and ultimately fostered lasting engagement.



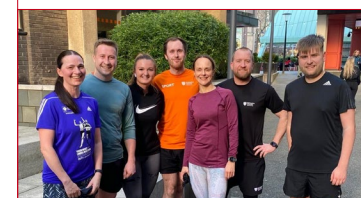
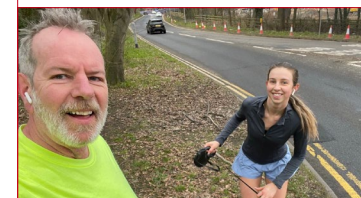
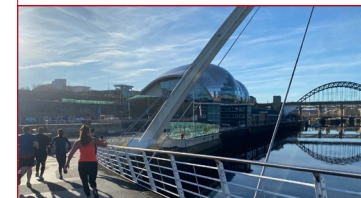
**Challenges**

- Our original format, daily wellbeing walks at a set time, was too rigid and open-ended to gain traction.
- Reframing it as a flexible, time-limited challenge made all the difference.



**Sustainability**

The programme promotes active movement, such as walking, running, and cycling emphasizing sustainable travel and reduced carbon footprints by integrating healthy activity into daily routines.



**YOUR MILE, YOUR WAY**



Institution:

**NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY**

Contact: Heidi Spencer: heidi.spencer@ntu.ac.uk



**Name of the project**

Global Game Changers



**Project Overview**

To gain insight into the perceptions of sport and physical activity of international students and develop initiatives to increase engagement.



**Timeline**

- Global Week 2024
- Global Sport Champions
- Insight gathering
- Out of term Play for Fun offer
- Targeted marketing
- Global Lounge Event
- Global Week 2025



**Objectives**

Through an inclusive and engaging sport and physical activity opportunity, our aim is to;

1. Help international students build connections
2. Develop friendships
3. Enhance their university experience.



**Key Demographics**

During 24/25 Nottingham Trent University has a population of 6,840 international students. NTU Sport engaged 11,788 students, including 1,908 international students—a 2% increase from 23/24.



**Stakeholders**

- NTU Global Lounge
- Global Student Experience Team
- Nottingham Trent International College



**Impact**

Since 1st May 2024, we have seen a 4% increase in international student engagement in our Play for Fun programme and a 2% increase in international student gym users.



**Recommendations**

International students often seek extracurricular involvement once settled. They value integration with home students. Consider offering out-of-term activities, as many remain in the UK during breaks.



**Challenges**

- Recruitment of Global Sport Champions
- Timing of international students arrival
- Social media and marketing
- Competing with events within the Global Lounge



**Sustainability**

- Continue to collaborate with the NTU Global Lounge
- Delivery of an out of term Play for Fun programme
- Targeted marketing
- Regular reporting
- Monitor trends





Institution:

UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD UNION OF STUDENTS

Contact: Adam Tasker: a.tasker@bradford.ac.uk



### Name of the project

Play Bradford



### Project Overview

Play Bradford engaged over 250 students through 15 wellbeing walks and a football tournament. Pivoting from multi-sport to walking, it successfully fostered mental health and social inclusion for underactive and disabled student groups.



### Timeline

May 2004 to March 2005



### Objectives

1. To remove barriers to participation in physical activity.
2. To improve mental wellbeing, skills and health outcomes in hard-to-reach and underactive student groups.



### Key Demographics

- Underactive Groups
- International students
- Disabled students
- Student affected by mental health
- The disabled local community



### Stakeholders

- UBU
- BUCS
- Students
- External experts
- Local community
- University support services



### Impact

- Project reached over 250 individuals
- Physical and mental health
- Social inclusion
- Inclusivity
- Cross community connection
- Exploration



### Recommendations

- Embed successes, integrate the walks into the UBU Calendar
- Empower students
- Simplify access to physical activity by incorporating volunteering
- Run seasonal events that smaller activities build to.



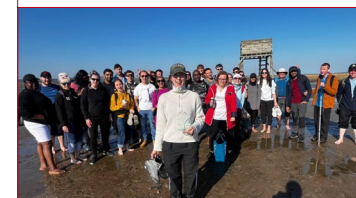
### Challenges

- Staff turnover - original bid author left weeks into the cycle and many UBU staff took severance packages
- Staff restructuring
- Capacity to deliver with reduced staffing
- Resource Management



### Sustainability

- Student Leadership - develop student walk leaders
- Core integration - integrate walks into the UBU calendar
- Repeat attendance grew over time indicating a sustainable interest in the activity





**Name of the project**

Brighton Active Wellbeing



**Project Overview**

To create new wellbeing Girls Night in Activities sessions and events to target those not currently engaged in university sport programmes. Focussing on removing barriers and targetting under represented groups. Alongside a programme to upskill our students and staff workforce to achieve this.



**Timeline**

- January 2024 - Funding Awarded
- March 2024 to June 2025 activities and upskilling/training delivered.



**Objectives**

1. To increase the unique students engaging in physical activity outside of sports clubs.
2. To get better engagement with the wider student population to understand their needs to increase participation.



**Key Demographics**

We targeted non-sports related societies such as the Islamic Society, African Caribbean Society, and disabled students society. Events were also created targeting groups such as female identifying students.



**Stakeholders**

- Students' Union Societies
- Sport Brighton Staff
- Student Sports Clubs
- Committees
- Residential Services
- Volunteers
- Student Services
- NGBs



**Impact**

- 673 students were engaged outside our current programmes.
- 6 events were held.
- 4 new free regular activities were created.
- 3 new non-sport societies were engaged.
- 3 student/ graduate roles created



**Recommendations**

- To continue to reach target groups through student societies.
- Creating bespoke sessions to remove barriers that impact those participants. e.g women's only swim.



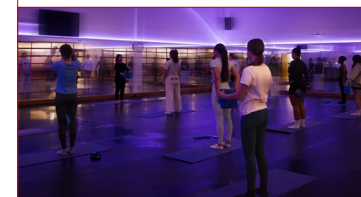
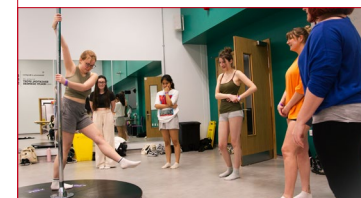
**Challenges**

Marketing and promoting activities to the target groups. For example disabled student contact requests were denied due to GDPR concerns.



**Sustainability**

- We now have an established relationship with certain non-sport based societies that can help us engage these audiences.
- Mental health and inclusivity training is now delivered to student clubs.





**Institution:**

**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

**Contact:** Kate Petty: k.petty@leeds.ac.uk



**Name of the project**

Move More, Feel Good (MMFG)



**Project Overview**

MMFG was a programme that included educational workshops on four topics (move, food, mood and snooze) and physical activity sessions. The programme was flexible so students could come and go to whatever sessions they feel they would benefit from.



**Timeline**

The programme ran across the academic calendar from October 2024 to March 2025.



**Objectives**

1. Improve student mental health through increased levels of physical activity.
2. Provide students with a usable toolkit of tips and techniques they can easily use to self-manage their health in everyday life.



**Key Demographics**

Targeted first year undergraduate students in particular but the programme was open to students of all degree level.



**Stakeholders**

Student Education Service - we worked with them to recruit student interns to support the planning and delivery of the programme.



**Impact**

- Throughout - 131 NPS score of 60 (semester 1) and 72 (semester 2)
- 90% of respondents said participation in the programme enhanced their sense of belonging to UoL



**Recommendations**

Digital resources - attendance at in person workshops was lower than expected. We digitalised the content, providing flexible, on-demand access to workshops, regardless of time or location.



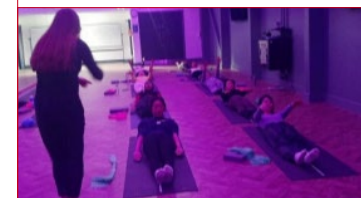
**Challenges**

Promotion & marketing - social media promotion was limited due to us not having access to a dedicated social media account. We relied on 'takeovers' on existing social media accounts.



**Sustainability**

The project has been assimilated into our Active Campus initiative, allowing further growth. The range of activities is shaped by ongoing student feedback.





**Institution:** UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

**Contact:** Louise Smith: louise.smith2@nottingham.ac.uk



### Name of the project

Empower



### Project Overview

Empower is a collaborative campaign of targeted sessions and events to focus on tackling common barriers faced by women, trans and non-binary identifying students to participate in physical activity, exercise, and sport.



### Timeline

- Feb 24 - received funding and redesigned marketing
- March 24 - launched Empower week across 3 campuses
- Oct 24 - Empower week no.2
- March 24 - Empower week no.3



### Objectives

1. To increase engagement in sport and physical activity in women, trans and non-binary students.
2. To build confidence and sense of belonging in women, trans, and non-binary students.



### Key Demographics

- On average, 59% of Empower attendees were non UoN Sport members
- March 2025 - 81% of attendees self-reported under 120 mins/ week physical activity and 57% of attendees are of the global majority



### Stakeholders

- Partners - Grace & Green and Player Layer
- Sports clubs
- Health and Fitness Team
- Sports Marketing Team
- Students Union
- Central marketing team



### Impact

- Empower contributed to a 32% increase in women engagement in UoN Sport in 2 years!
- 330 Empower Attendances (237 unique) and on average 59% were non UoN Sport members.



### Recommendations

- Speak to students who aren't engaged to identify barriers/ reasons why are disengaged
- Collaborate with marketing teams outside of sport
- Jump on trending music/ themes to direct the focus of targeted sessions



### Challenges

- Finding women gym instructors to reliably deliver
- Marketing Empower outside of our channels to reach non-members and competing with other campaigns
- Free activity can mean lots of no-show bookings



### Sustainability

- Securing external sponsorship to financially support
- Embedding Empower into the participation remit to ensure consistency and resource
- Exploring a fitness provision and student led committee





**Name of the project**

SU ACTIVE - UWLSU



**Project Overview**

- To engage 1300 students that don't currently engage with any of our Wellbeing or Physical Activity offer
- To Engage and Retain students at UWL through providing interventions to support student Wellbeing



**Timeline**

- All year round
- Semester 1 Sept to Dec 24-25
- Semester 2 Jan 25 - June 25



**Objectives**

1. To engage 1300 UWL students
2. Retain students at UWL providing Wellbeing support
3. To support 75% target of extra curricular opportunities



**Key Demographics**

- UWL Students
- International Students
- More Accessible Sports for UWL Female students



**Stakeholders**

- University of West London
- Student Union (Sports Department)
- UWLSU Finance
- SU Gym



**Impact**

- 432 Free Gym Classes six core formats - Yoga, Pilates, Hyrox, Spinningh, Power HIIT & Core
- 55% Female & 47% Male
- Low Commitment Sports: Padel, Table Tennis, BUCS Events entries etc.
- Total Engagement: 772 Students



**Recommendations**

- More new activities following current trends and demographics - More off site activities across venues to create future connections.
- Facilitate more students who never played sports before across other campuses



**Challenges**

- Same returners to the activities/500 short on engage
- Hours limitation with externals also booking spaces
- Students prefer in house activity rather than external venues.
- Fridays had low attendance



**Sustainability**

- We used our Online platform on Native to promote our events via tickets which helped us reduced our paper usage.
- Also used Ipads for sign ups and using digital screens to promote such as TVs, Socials

