



UNIVERSITY OF
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LINCOLN HIGHER EDUCATION
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Project Evaluation Report

Transitioning students effectively:

a student led approach to mental health support

September 2020

Evaluation covering the period July 2019 – June 2020

Executive summary

Transitioning students effectively: a student led approach to mental health support is a £736,000 project which aims to support the wellbeing of students as they transition from school or college into university. Since the start of the project in July 2020, a range of interventions have been successfully implemented by the project team. Project staff take a holistic approach to the planning and execution of all activities, however project activities do generally fall into two distinct categories – those led by the project team based in Student Wellbeing and those led by the project team based in Student Life. Activities and associated findings for the first year are outlined below.

Wellbeing Led Activities

Overview

- Twenty separate transitional outreach visits were made to fourteen schools.
- 2,061 students, ranging in age from Year 11 to Year 13, took part in sessions with the project team.
- Sessions varied in style from large assembly style presentations to smaller presentations and bespoke workshops.
- During the evaluation period a further five visits had been scheduled, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures these visits were postponed.
- The WOW summer school in July 2019 supported 40 transitional students with declared mental health difficulties.
- Fresh Start workshops supported transitional students with concerns relating to homesickness at flashpoints throughout the year.

Highlights

- It is clear from the available evaluation data that transitional outreach sessions are valued by schools and are positively viewed by many of the student participants.
- Across all transitional outreach sessions where student feedback was gathered, 64% of students stated that they felt more confident in their ability to manage stress and emotions (sample: 239 students across 3 settings, years 11-13).
- Across all transitional outreach sessions where feedback was gathered, 53% of students stated that they felt better prepared to manage change and be independent (sample: 239 students across 3 settings, years 11-13).
- 75% of free text responses gathered across all transitional outreach sessions stated that the sessions were 'good', 'helpful' or 'informative' in some way.
- Qualitative data transcribed from video interviews with students indicated that they valued the WOW summer school, with many stating that it had alleviated their anxieties and increased their confidence.

Limitations and learning

- Analysis of questionnaires used to assess outreach sessions throws up a tendency for some students to copy answers from their neighbour. Whilst there is no easy remedy to this, it should be considered as a limitation when analysing the data.

- Standardised questionnaires, whilst extremely useful in terms of comparing data across settings, may not always ask the right questions when workshops are bespoke to the schools' needs. The benefits and limitations of the current standard questions should be considered by the project team.
- Interactive content was preferred by the majority of students who responded and where possible sessions should build in relevant activities.
- No evaluation has been carried out on *Fresh Start* workshops, and this is something the project team should consider in year two of the project.

Digital Led Activities

Overview

- Diverse range of digital content produced by the project team during the evaluation period.
- Student co-production took place on all content covering a range of topics.
- Videos were also produced to highlight the work of the project, including a project overview video and an informational video covering the services offered by the transitional outreach team.
- Podcast series also produced, with the *Fresher Take* series now having released 5 episodes.
- Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing guidelines presented some challenges in producing quality digital content, and there has been a shift in focus to producing more vlogs, blogs and graphic content.

Highlights

- Digital content has reached 29,976 people across all social media platforms.
- Whilst engagement with Student Life content dropped off during the pandemic, mental health content continues to perform well comparatively.
- Fresher Take podcast has performed well, particularly episodes on *Handling Homesickness* and *Social distancing, self-isolation and remote study*.
- *Self-Care Sunday* illustrated series performed well, particularly on Instagram.
- Best performing content was the *World Mental Health Day promo* (reach 8,007) and *Students' react to Men's Mental Health Myths and Facts* (reach 3,076).
- A trial of the Fika app produced statistically significant results in favour of the effectiveness of the app. Fika's content also received positive feedback from focus groups.

Learning and limitations

- Linking content to relevant awareness days in the calendar and to wider events which are happening within the university offers benefits in terms of increasing reach and engagement due to the content being topical (and possibly trending) on social media.
- Evidence suggest that graphics and animations do not perform as well as live action videos. However, the *Self Care Sunday* illustration series performed well, it may be worth creating further illustrative series in future, linking them to specific events and using them to promote live video content rather than using them as standalone posts.
- The timing of when content is released is crucial. When planning for filming and release, specific flash points in the academic year, university led events and national awareness days should be considered, with relevant content released to coincide with these.

- The worst performing content released has been blogs and articles. However, harder hitting mental health content performed well. The project team should consider creating more of this type of content, or possibly creating blogs which compliment video content.
- Content also seems to do well when disseminated via university channels other than the Student Life Channel. Embedding content within existing university channels increases reach and targets students who may not yet be familiar with project content. The project team should look for ways in which content can be more widely shared using other existing university channels.
- Caution should be exercised when considering the high levels of reach the project content has achieved. Reach is not the same as engagement, and some of the audience reached may only have viewed the content briefly, which is often supported by audience retention figures. However, this should not detract from the fact that project content does seem to be drawing a significant audience on social media, raising awareness of the existence of the project.

Challenges

The project has gained momentum in the first year and a huge amount of work has taken place. The main challenge faced by the project team have involved effectively involving partners in all areas of the project. Whilst project resources have been distributed and used by many of the partners, involvement in the planning and implementation of project work has been more challenging due to time constraints, lack of understanding of partner roles and responsibilities, and more recently the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The project team identified partner engagement as one of the main challenges during the End of Year review which took place in June 2020, and both the review and the Activity and Evaluation Plan at the end of this report details the work already carried out to better engage partners and further work planned for year two.

An additional challenge has been in raising the profile of the project both within the university and to a wider audience, with there being some difficulties in getting press releases out through university channels. To address this, a considerable amount of dissemination work took place at virtual events by the project team towards the end of year one, and further dissemination work is planned for year two.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

Transitioning Students Effectively, a student led approach to mental health support, is a £736,000 project funded by the OfS and match funded by the University of Lincoln. It focuses on supporting transitional students as they move from school and college to higher education. The project is led by a core team of nine professional services staff, with one group based in Student Wellbeing carrying out transitional outreach work in schools and colleges and one group based in Student Life producing student led content. Additionally, professional services and academic staff from across the university and ten partner organisations work collaboratively on specific elements of the project. The project is centrally managed and evaluated from within Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute. To drive the collaborative elements of the project, and to ensure buy in from all stakeholders, an overseeing project Steering Board has representatives from all project partners including the NHS, Lincolnshire Police, Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln College and Lincolnshire County Council, as well as commercial partner organisations. This also ensures a city-wide approach which is a key feature of the project.

Since the commencement of the project in July 2019, a number of student-based activities have taken place. 40 offer holders attended the Wellbeing Orientation Welcome (WOW) residential summer school at the university. All attendees had declared disabilities, including mental health conditions, as part of their UCAS application, and were subsequently invited to the summer school to help prepare them for the start of university. Feedback from both student attendees and caregivers was excellent, and a promotional video was produced by the Digital Project Team. The Transitional Wellbeing team have also visited fourteen schools since the start of the project, engaging 2,061 young people. The team offer a variety of presentations, ranging from a large assembly style format to smaller bespoke workshops, and the material on offer can be tailored to the particular needs of the school or college being visited. All sessions focus on the challenges students may face during the transitional period when moving into Higher Education, and are backed up with resources designed by the digital project team. In partnership with the Student Union (SU), Wellbeing Champions are being trained and embedded within the SU's student representation network. SU staff undertook the Student Minds *Look after your Mate* training, and in turn student representatives will form a new Wellbeing Network to support students across the SU.

The digital elements of the project include a partnership with FIKA who developed an emotional fitness app to offer coaching and support to students during transition and beyond. As part of the project, Dr Roger Bretherton, Associate Professor of Psychology recently investigated the effectiveness of the app-based wellbeing intervention on students' psychological wellbeing with 92 student participants. Dr Bretherton has also just completed a small-scale trial into Mindfulness Based Strengths Practice (MBSP). Subject to the results, a larger scale trial will then be conducted with the 2020 student intake with the ultimate aim of embedding the practice within the curriculum as part of the project. In addition to the trialling of apps, a wide range of other digital content for social media has been produced, including dedicated content for World Mental Health Day, a focus on men's mental health issues for Movember and Student Stories highlighting a range of difficulties faced by students. The digital team have also produced a podcast series *Fresher Take* which addresses common transitional issues and is disseminated via all commonly used streaming platforms. The content produced by the digital team is also used in transitional outreach work to support the face to face aspects of the project.

A key feature of the project is student co-production and student content creators have been involved in all aspects of the creation of blogs, vlogs and vox-pop videos. Student focus groups have also taken place to assess the impact of digital content, and a Student Advisory Board is to be appointed in year two to assist in both the planning and evaluation of project activities.

1.2 Project alignment with findings from available literature

A review of the available literature at the start of the project highlighted a number of factors which affect transitional student wellbeing such as student expectations not matching reality and the psychological wellbeing of transitional students changing rapidly. Key features of interventions were also highlighted, with student led and designed support packages and the avoidance of medicalisation being particularly significant. The current project addresses these issues in a number of ways, with transitional work aiming to increase preparedness and balance expectations of students pre-entry, student cohorts being involved in the trialling of the FIKA app, students being involved in co-production in all areas and all digital content aiming to concentrate on the positive aspects of mental health, avoiding medicalisation.

1.3 Evaluation plans

The project team are acutely aware of the need for robust and meaningful evaluation, with the team based in Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute taking a lead in steering evaluation. Local level evaluation plans are in place and are already operational, drawing on the Lincoln Impact Evaluation Framework (LIEF). Two internal evaluation reports have also been carried out, with this report drawing on those findings to produce the first evaluation report for submission to the programme evaluation consultants Wavehill.

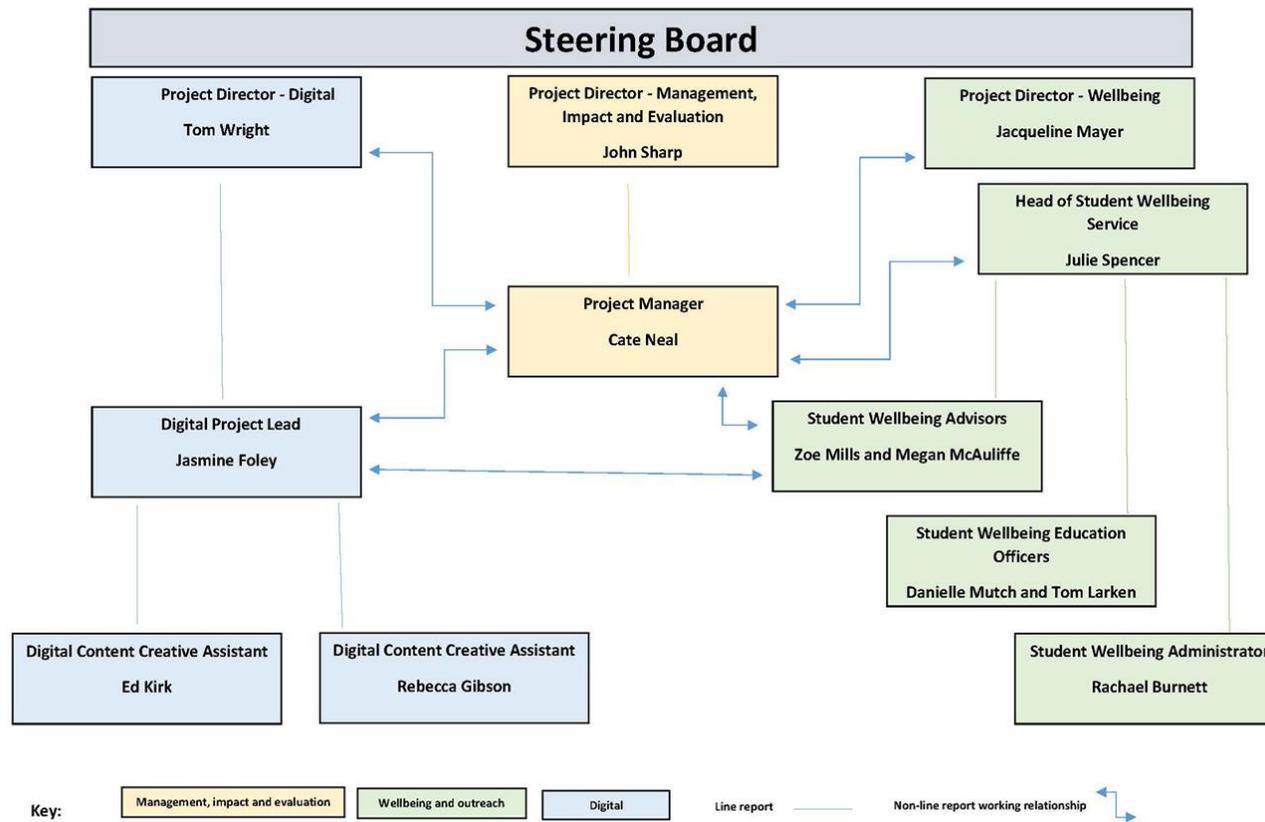
1.4 Priorities for project year two 2020-21

Priorities for 2020-21 include plans on how to better engage offer holders and pre-entry students with the transitional support the project provides, establishing more effective partnership working, and work on sustainability and scaling. The project will run until December 2021, with final evaluation and reporting taking place during the last four months.

This report covers the first year of project activities, running to the end of June 2020.

1.5 Project Governance Structure

Transitioning Students Effectively: A Student Led Approach to Mental Health - Project Team Structure



1.6 Project Team

The core project team consists of eight 1.0 FTE staff members and one 0.5 FTE staff member. Project directors based within the three departments which the project team straddles also have a significant role in the project, with their time dedicated in-kind as part of the match funding agreement.

The roles and responsibilities of the core project team are outlined below.

Project Manager (Cate Neal, based in the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute)

As Project Manager, Cate is responsible for overseeing all of the operational and strategic planning and delivery of the project. She works closely with the project team to facilitate effective engagement and delivery across all areas of the project, liaises with all the project's stakeholders (university staff, external partners, funders and evaluation consultants), monitors the budget and ensures all reporting aspects are met with reports made in a timely manner to the Steering Board, the OfS and Wavehill. Cate is also responsible for overseeing the evaluation of the project, putting processes in place to integrate continuous evaluation into project activities and enable adjustments to be made as required. Cate also leads in the dissemination of project findings, presenting at appropriate events and writing up findings as they emerge.

During the pandemic Cate has concentrated on supporting the project team as they move to new ways of working, with the aim of facilitating continued project delivery by refining and adapting activities so that they can be delivered in a way which takes into account the new restrictions around face to face delivery.

Transitional Wellbeing Advisor and Wellbeing Project Lead (Zoe Mills, based in Student Wellbeing)

Zoe assists in designing, developing and delivering transitional outreach sessions to schools and colleges and supports all students in their transition into the University of Lincoln, particularly those who might disclose a diagnosis for which they need further help and support during study. Zoe also helps to manage and deliver the Wellbeing Orientation Welcome, the annual Summer School for students who may benefit from experiencing a sample of university life to help ease their transition into HE.

As Wellbeing Project Lead Zoe assists in liaison with project partners, stakeholders and university staff, and takes a role in disseminating best practice at events as appropriate. Zoe works closely with the Project Manager, Wellbeing Operational Lead and Digital Project Lead to ensure that continued high quality support is delivered in line with the project aims and objectives.

During the pandemic Zoe has concentrated on collaborating with the wider team to look at adaptive ways of delivering transitional outreach work. She is also currently focusing on supporting new students with transition, which this year in particular may be a challenge for many.

Transitional Wellbeing Advisor and Wellbeing Operational Lead (Megan McAuliffe, based in Student Wellbeing)

Megan's main responsibilities as a Transitional Wellbeing Advisor are delivering transitional outreach sessions to schools and colleges (mainly years 12 and 13), supporting prospective students prior to

their entry into the University of Lincoln, and delivering both group sessions and individual support to students who are having difficulty with the transition into higher education.

During the pandemic, Megan has been working on new ways to deliver sessions to schools and colleges, as well as looking at how the team can best support incoming students to the University of Lincoln, given that transition this year may be more challenging than any other. As operational lead, Megan is also focusing on continuing to build effective relationships with schools and colleges, making arrangements to deliver sessions in a way which complies with social distancing restrictions and takes into account any specialist requirements schools and colleges might have.

Transitional Wellbeing Education Officer (Danielle Mutch, based in Student Wellbeing)

As a Transitional Wellbeing Education Officer based within the Student Wellbeing Centre, Danielle's role includes school outreach work in the form of physical presentations and workshops with school pupils, creating wellbeing resources and planning and preparing for the WOW Summer School.

Danielle has had a key role in WOW 2020 which took place recently and was very successful given the current climate, with participants adhering to social distancing and other guidelines. Danielle is currently working with the Transitional Team on re-contacting schools for the new academic year, as well as the *Fresh Start* project which helps University of Lincoln students transitioning into their first year.

Transitional Wellbeing Education Officer (Tom Larken, based in Student Wellbeing)

As a Transitional Wellbeing Education Officer based in the Student Wellbeing Centre, Tom's role covers a lot of different areas. This includes delivering sessions in schools alongside the Transitional Wellbeing Advisors and creating resources for the sessions as well as resources for use online and on social media. Tom assists with the preparation and delivery of the Wellbeing Orientation Welcome (WOW) Summer School which this year was a challenge, but a successful summer school for 42 students took place with preparations underway for WOW 2021. Tom is currently working on ways to deliver school sessions in a digital format through restructuring content to make it accessible to schools and pupils on a variety of different platforms. As the term starts, Tom will also be running the *Fresh Start* workshops for those transitioning into university, covering topics such as homesickness, adjusting to change and self-care, as well as discussing common myths and perceptions that people may have about university life.

Transitional Wellbeing Administrator (Rachael Burnett, based in Student Wellbeing)

As the Transitional Wellbeing Administrator for the team, Rachael's primary role is to support the Wellbeing Team with administrative tasks, acting as first point of contact for schools and colleges, external partners and prospective students and their families. Rachael assists in setting up Transitional Outreach sessions and records feedback, arranges support for pre entry students with declared disabilities, and works with the team to create resources. She also provides administrative support for the project Steering Board, preparing agendas and minutes, organising meetings and maintaining a SharePoint site for members to access project documents.

Digital Project Lead (Jasmine Foley, based in Student Life)

Jasmine is the Digital Project Lead and oversees the creation of digital resources, ensuring that the objectives of the project are met, and content produced is of a high standard. Jasmine works closely

with the wider project team to plan whole project activities and with external partners and app providers to develop the best approach for supporting students with their wellbeing through digital tools.

Digital Content Creator (Rebecca Gibson, based in Student Life)

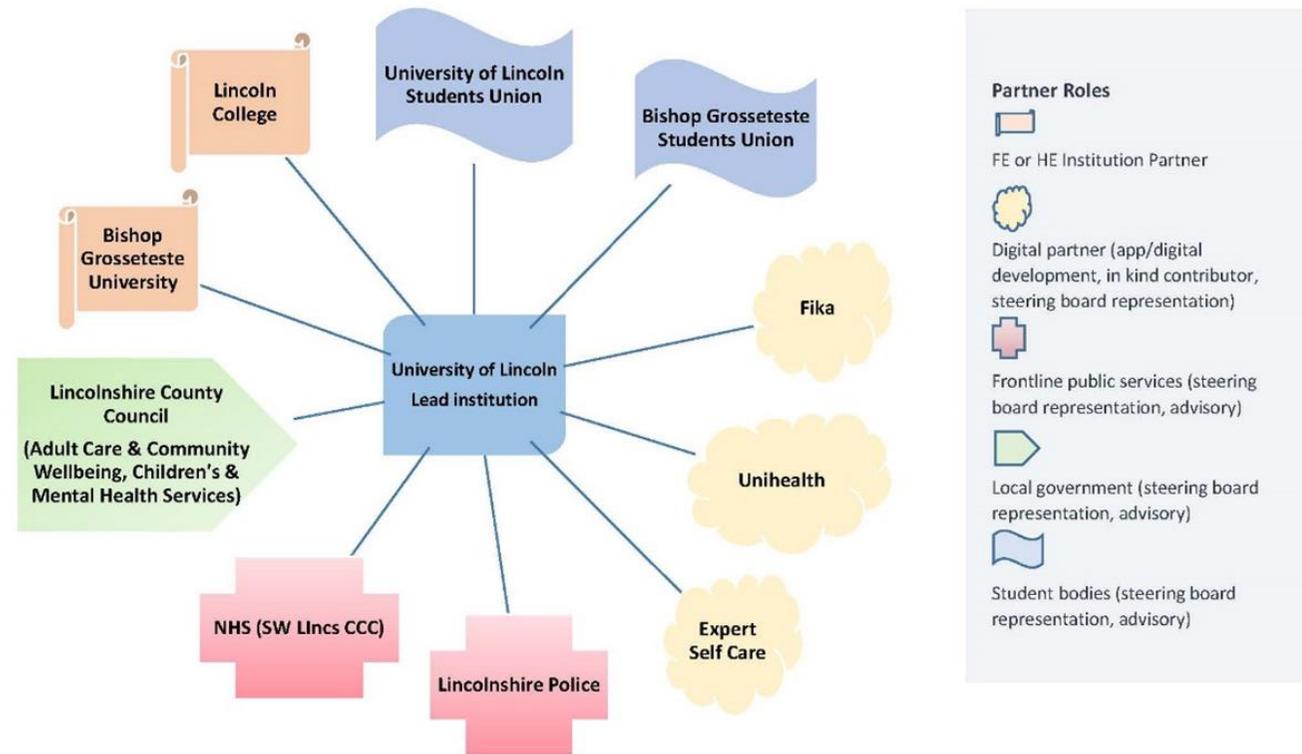
As a Digital Content Creative Rebecca's role can be quite varied. She works closely with a team of student co-producers, supporting students in making videos and writing articles about their experiences at university. Rebecca was key in facilitating the setting up the student-led *Fresher Take* podcast series and continues to manage the production of the series alongside the student hosts. Rebecca is also responsible for creating dynamic and engaging content covering various wellbeing topics which mainly involve filming and editing videos to be shared with students at the university.

Digital Content Creator (Ed Kirk, Based in Student Life)

Ed is a videographer, editor and content creator within the project's digital team, working closely with both the other Digital Content Creator and the Digital Project Lead to help provide resources and materials for a range of university departments. Ed regularly works on project content with the Student Wellbeing Centre and Digital Education and Student Life, working collaboratively with a team of students to help create video content with the goal of supporting transition into university. Ed specialises in video creation and helps support the student co-production team as they learn and work on the project.

1.7 Partnership Structure

Transitioning Students Effectively: A Student Led Approach to Mental Health - Partners



2 Data Collection methods

Evaluation data for this period has been gathered in the following ways:

2.1 Quantative methods used

- Metrics from social media.
- Focus group ratings of content (sample size seven students from across the university with varying levels of engagement with mental health content).
- Statistics on numbers of students engaged from a range of sources.
- Analysis of variance for Fika trial (four psychometric instruments used - The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener et al. 1985), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS, Watson et al. 1988), and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE, Chen et al. 2001)
- Statistics on numbers of students engaged from a range of sources.
- Feedback forms filled out by students at transitional outreach sessions.

2.2 Qualitative methods used

- Transcribed spoken and written responses to content form focus group (sample size seven students from across the university with varying levels of engagement with mental health content).
- Transcribed spoken and written responses from Year 11 focus group (sample size 25 Year 11 students from Queen Elizabeth's High School, Gainsborough).
- Feedback forms sent to staff members at schools visited by the transitional team (5/12 responses received).
- Verbal feedback on WOW Summer School transcribed from promo video.
- Feedback forms sent to staff members at schools visited by the transitional team.
- Feedback forms filled out by students at transitional outreach sessions.
- Qualitative comments gathered via a virtual focus group on the new features of the Fika app (sample size eight students).

3 Summary table: outputs/activities for the evaluation period

Date of output/activity	Description of output/activity	Measurable outcome indicators/methodology	Engagement			
			Student producers	Student participation	Audience reach	Total
Wellbeing led outputs/activities						
July 2019	WOW Summer School	Qualitative from video	1	40 prospective students	131 on You Tube	172
Various from September 2019 – March 2020	Twenty transitional outreach visits to the following schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St George’s Academy Sleaford • University Academy Holbeach • Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School (2 visits) • RAF Waddington • Queen Elizabeth’s High School, Gainsborough (3 visits) • Lincoln Minster School • Kesteven and Grantham Girl’s School • Skegness Academy • Sir Robert Pattinson School, North Hykeham (2 visits) • Walton Academy, Grantham • Priory City of Lincoln Academy • Spalding High School (2 visits) • Brunt’s Academy (2 visits) • Boston High School 	Qualitative from feedback forms sent to contact in school	N/A	N/A	2,061 school and college students	2,061

29/10/2019	Year 11 Focus Group at Queen Elizabeth's High School to inform content for future sessions	Qualitative data taken as notes from discussions with students	N/A	25 Year 11 students	N/A	25
Various dates	Wellbeing World magazine	Quantative and qualitative data from focus group	N/A	N/A	7 focus group Other - Not known	7
30.01.2020	'Super Learning Day' – Long Sutton Academy Five 1-hour delivered sessions to Year 11's on 'Managing Change'.	Quantative and qualitative: Feedback forms filled out by students at transitional outreach sessions	0	88	N/A	88
13.02.2020	'Health Enrichment Day' - University Academy Holbeach Five 1-hour sessions delivered to Year 12's on Emotional Fitness and Managing Emotions.	Quantative and qualitative: Feedback forms filled out by students at transitional outreach sessions	0	73	N/A	73
14.02.2020	Series of workshops – Boston College Four workshops delivered to Year 12/13 on Developing Independence/Goal setting and Emotional Fitness, Self-Care and Managing Emotions	Quantative and qualitative: Feedback forms filled out by students at transitional outreach sessions	0	78	N/A	78
Total engagement with Wellbeing Led outputs/activities			1	765	1,738	2,504

Digital Led outputs/activities						
Filming dates week beginning 16/9/19 Release date 3/10/19	Transitional Voxpop video – Student Tips - Settling in at University	Metrics from social media Quantative and qualitative from focus group	2	5	319 Facebook 7 focus group	333

Filming date 2/10/19 Release date 4/10/19	World Smile Day short film	Metrics from social media	2	7	561 on Facebook	570
Filming date 10/10/19 Release date 18/10/19	World Mental Health Day promo video	Metrics from social media Quantative and qualitative data from focus group	2	5	2,011 Facebook 7 focus group 5,982 Twitter	8,007
Filming date 10/10/19 Release date 18/10/19	World Mental Health Day 'Wellbeing Whiteboard' video	Metrics from social media Quantative and qualitative data from focus group	2	4	878 Facebook 7 focus group	891
Filming date October 2019 Release date 8/11/2019	Students React to Myths and Facts video	Metrics from social media	3	N/A	1,867 Facebook 34 Instagram 7 focus group	1,911
Filming date 11/11/2019 Release date 22/11/2019	Mo or Less video – men's mental health myths and facts	Metrics from social media	5	N/A	2,605 Facebook 459 Instagram	3,076

					7 focus group	
16/11/2019	Independence: A Student's Guide Vlog	Metrics from social media	1	N/A	357 Facebook	358
November 2019	The Importance of talking about Mental Health at University Blog	Metrics from social media	1	N/A	21 on Student Life pages	22
November 2019	Exercise and Mental Health blog	Metrics from social media	1	N/A	27 on Student Life pages	28
December 2019	Estranged Students Infographic and Video	Social media metrics from Facebook	2	N/A	985	987
Various December 2019 – June 2020	Student Life Blogs	Social media metrics from Facebook, stats from website	5	N/A	3,130	3,135
Various December 2019 – June 2020	Student life Vlogs	Social media metrics from Facebook	5	N/A	1,153	1,158
January 2020	Vlog: Self-Care at University	Social media metrics from Facebook	1	N/A	433	434
Various January – June 2020	Fresher Take podcasts (5 episodes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling Homesickness • Dealing with deadlines • Social distancing, self-isolation and remote study • Mastering time management • Mindfulness based strengths practice 	Metrics from streaming sites	2	N/A	195	197
March 2020	Project Overview Video	Social media metrics from Facebook	2	N/A	2,538	2,540

March 2020	20ish Questions – Eating Disorder Awareness Week video	Social media metrics from Facebook	1	N/A	665	666
March- June 2020	Fika app – launch of new and updated content to support remote study and social isolation trialled by a group of eight students.	Qualitative from free text responses to set questions via email	0	8	N/A	8
Various March – June 2020	Graphic Content including ‘Self-care Sunday’ illustrated series	Social media metrics from Facebook and Instagram	0	N/A	5,019	5,019
May 2020	Study Happy Q&A with Wellbeing	Social media metrics from Facebook	1	N/A	702	703
Total engagement with Digital led outputs/activities			38	29	29,976	30,043

Other outputs/activities						
September – November 2019	FIKA trial		N/A	92 University of Lincoln students	N/A	92
Total engagement – other activities			0	92	0	92

Total engagement – all activities			39	886	31,714	32,639
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4 Evaluation of project activities

4.1 Awareness and effectiveness of all project content: baseline evaluation

Project content was showcased to a focus group of seven University of Lincoln students at an early stage of the project in November 2019. The aim of the focus group was to establish a baseline for levels of awareness in students of the project and its resources, and to evaluate the effectiveness of project content to date. For the first part of the focus group, participants were asked the following questions aimed at understanding what content they had already viewed independently to the focus group, and the effectiveness of that content:

'What mental health related content have you seen around the university?'

'How many times have you accessed student life content in the past?'

'How would you rate the mental health content you have seen around the university?'

'Why have you given the mental health content around the university the rating you have?'

Awareness of mental health content available was generally good, with most students having seen some of the video content available and being aware of the support offered by Student Wellbeing.

'Advertisements for wellbeing and being able to talk to someone about mental health. A few videos/ posts on social media.'

'I have seen Students react: Mental Health Myths and leaflets around campus with student wellbeing info on.'

'The video of students reacting to mental health. The Whiteboard video. Some vlogs which I think are a part of the project. The magazine sent out by email.'

100% of participants surveyed said they had accessed video content via the Student Life channel, which hosts all project content. Of these, 57% said that they often accessed content, 29% said they sometimes accessed content and 14% said they rarely accessed content. Ratings of the mental health content that students had seen around the university was also positive.



Figure 1. Focus group participant ratings of mental health content seen around the university

86% of participants rated the content as either good or excellent, with 14% rating the content as fair. As a follow up question, participants were asked why they had given the rating they had to the content they had already seen around the university. Most participants found the video content engaging, but some were less positive about written content and also felt that videos could contain more in-depth self-help suggestions, rather than simply signposting.

'Covers most subjects and highlights ways to solve problems people may face.'
'..... I loved the video, but I've only rated it good as other content isn't as engaging. e.g. the leaflets I wouldn't pick up and read. I think social media best way of making people aware of the wellbeing centre.'
'It goes into depth exploring key points and important facts/ information.'
'It all just points you in the direction of the wellbeing and doesn't really give you much stuff you can do yourself.'

Focus group participants were then shown a selection of project resources, both video and written and asked the following questions on the showcased content:

'Which resources did you find the most useful?'
'How would you rate the quality of the overall content showcased at the focus group?'
'Is there anything we haven't created so far that you'd like to see?'

In line with previous responses relating to the content already seen around the university, participants preferred showcased video content to written content.

'Videos as they are more engaging.'
'The Students React video because it is engaging. I like the 'Buzzfeed' style of the video – whilst it's a serious topic you have made it engaging and easy to watch.'
'Social media or other 'non face-to-face' contact, I think this helps as it is less intimidating.'

Responses to the overall quality of the content showcased at the focus group were also positive with 86% rating the content as good and 14% rating the content as excellent.

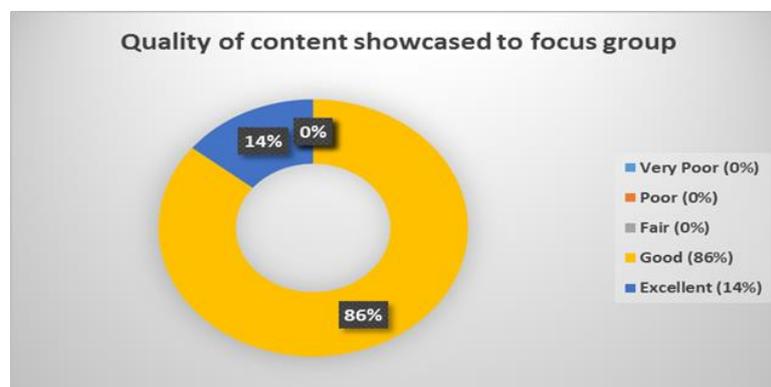


Figure 2. Participant ratings of content showcased at the focus group

A follow up question asked the participants if they would recommend the content to a friend. Again, this elicited positive responses, with 71% stating that they would be 'likely' to recommend the content to a friend and 19% stating that they would be 'extremely likely' to do so. The reasons given for this mainly focused on video content being informative, offering relevant advice in a short space of time, and the opportunity for a friend to be signposted to further sources of support.

'It's a good start to help them.....so they can seek help and it could be a good way for them to seek the right amount of help they need.'

'Very informative and on the whole visually pleasing and enjoyable to watch.'

'I think you can learn a lot from just watching a video that's a few minutes long. They also encourage you to talk about your emotions which I think is so important.'

'It's an important discussion so I like to spread awareness, I think the react ones are good for people to see.'

To inform future content participants were also asked if there was any project content they would like to see in the future. A number of participants said that they liked a format with multiple people talking to each other, and there was also a desire for more in depth content which included personal stories.

'..... More lengthy pieces that are more personal.....'

'More students react videos (I think they work really well).'

'I like the content with multiple people in so more of these.....'

4.2 Evaluation of Wellbeing Led Activities

During the first year of the project the Wellbeing team, led by the Wellbeing Project Lead and the Wellbeing Operational Lead, facilitated a range of activities aimed at easing the transition of first year students into university. Engagement with partner schools was excellent, with 2,061 young people, from years 11-13, being involved in outreach sessions across the region. Resources for parents, teachers and students were also produced, drawing on the expertise of the two Transitional Wellbeing Education Officers funded by the project. The WOW Summer School took place in July 2019, with 40 pre-entry students taking part in activities on campus aimed at easing transition into university. The Fresh Start /Homesickness workshops and 1-2-1's were also a major focus for the project team, offering support to students as they enter university and at key flashpoints throughout the academic year.

4.21 WOW Summer School

The WOW summer school was the first project specific activity to take place in July 2019. Aimed at easing the transition of students with mental health difficulties and disabilities into university life, the summer school involved 40 pre-entry students. Participants live on campus for the duration of the summer school, taking part in activities and sample lectures, meeting key support staff and orientating themselves with the campus. Four Transitional Wellbeing Officers funded by the project took a lead in planning and delivering WOW activities. An overview video was made of the summer school, with transcribed responses from participants and their carers being used as qualitative evaluation. Responses from pre-entry student participants indicated that WOW had helped to alleviate some of the anxiety they felt regarding the transition into university, with many participants now feeling that they had made friends, knew where to find support, and were now looking forward to starting university.

'If you're anxious of coming to university these three days have personally given me a lot.'
'It was like.... a nice welcome to the university.'
'The fact that I know the WOW team are there, the wellbeing team...if we ever needed anything we could go to them.'
'If you're anxious about the school...or the big step up from college to university...then this is definitely the place to come.'
'The fact that I'm already going in knowing people is really making me feel more confident.'
'I came in and took the first step in and I was scared...now I don't want to go home.'
'The apprehension is now more excitement.'
'I'm looking forward to coming back in September...and I do recommend it to a lot of people.'
'It's been a good taster of what it's going to be like...so I can't wait for September.'
'Even though I've only been here three days I've got a new family...these guys...they mean a lot already.'

Parents and carers were also overwhelmingly positive in their comments about WOW, echoing their children's comments regarding increased confidence and reduced anxiety.

'She's happy, she's chatty...that's not like our daughter... I think it's given her a good start for September.'
'She's like a different person, it's really really brilliant to see her, she's been talking to everyone.'
'That's just all a parent ever wants to hear is their child happy...so I would definitely recommend this programme to anybody.'
'We picked Lincoln...one of things was because of the wellbeing service that they have here, it's like no other that we've seen at any other university.'

4.22 Transitional Outreach Visits

During the evaluation period, and prior to the suspension of face to face outreach activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, twenty separate outreach visits were made to fourteen schools across the Greater Lincolnshire region and beyond. 2,061 students, ranging in age from Year 11 to Year 13, took part in sessions with the project team. The sessions varied in style from large assembly style presentations, to smaller presentations and bespoke workshops delivered as part of health and learning days taking place at the school. During the evaluation period a further five visits had been scheduled, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures these visits were postponed. Feedback was gathered via a standard form filled out by student participants and a feedback form for school staff issued post-intervention. The map below shows the location of the schools visited.



Figure 3. Location of schools receiving transitional outreach visits, September 2019 – March 2020

Evaluation by dedicated school contacts post intervention

In the early stages of the project, evaluation of the effectiveness of outreach visits was largely carried out via post-intervention questionnaires sent to a dedicated contact at the school. Respondents were asked the following questions:

'Was the content of the session relevant and useful?'

'Would you use any of the strategies or considerations discussed?'

'Did anything surprise you?'

'Was the delivery and language used by the presenters helpful and appropriate?'

'Is there anything you would like to have heard more about that wasn't covered in the session?'

Respondents were mostly positive about the usefulness of the session, and its relevance to the target audience, though one respondent stated that the session offered no new information.

'Reassuring- good to know there are people there if you need help at uni.'
'Talking to the different categories of student at the presentation everybody seems to have been able to take something from it. The Year 13s top tips about uni. The Year 12's top tips about healthy living and organisation. Many of them - learn how to cook!'
'The content of the pitch was just right for the audience. It was personal and easy to understand and clearly motivated and engaged some of the students.'
'The session repeated information we already know. There was nothing new.'

Respondents also felt that the information and strategies outlined in the sessions would resonate with pupils within school.

'The presentation was excellent in reminding the Year 13's that they really needed to be preparing for uni life or life after school. It was also excellent in giving the 12's pointers for starting to think about life after Year 13.'
'The message that there is no one route into further education and that there are a wide range of foundation courses was well received. Some of the students had felt like failures in having to resit their GCSEs. The section on Mental Health was appropriate considering the fact that we had just had mental health awareness day.'

One of the aspects of the sessions which was particularly praised by the respondents was the tone and delivery of the transitional outreach officers who facilitated the sessions. Respondents felt that the language used by the facilitators was appropriate for the audience engaged and that the style of presentation used engaged the target audience.

'Very appropriate. The presenters were friendly and the language used targeted at the audience. The clips were suitable and entertaining.'
'The presenters were open and friendly and spoke honestly to the students. They were engaging and funny - just right for the session.'
'The delivery and language was excellent and very helpful.'

Evaluating outreach activities post-intervention presented some problems regarding the responsiveness of schools, as out of 15 schools engaged only 6 returned the post-intervention questionnaire. Relying on the views of one contact at the school also failed to capture the views of students themselves. Evaluation methods have now been revised, with selected cohorts of students at outreach visits taking part in a more in-depth evaluation. The findings of evaluations carried out with these students is detailed in the following sections of the report.

4.23 ‘Super Learning Day’ – University Academy Long Sutton

University Academy Long Sutton is a mixed, non-selective secondary academy in Spalding, Lincolnshire. The academy is relatively small with 650 pupils across Years 7-11. There is currently no sixth-form provision. The academy was newly opened in September 2019, converting from the previous Peele Community College to become an academy. The academy trust is The Lincolnshire Educational Trust and the sponsor the University of Lincoln. No Ofsted inspection has been carried out since the opening of the academy, however previously Peele Community College was rated as ‘inadequate’ in March 2019. The profile of the school is as follows; the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average, most pupils are of White British heritage, the proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average. (source: Ofsted)

The project team delivered five sessions as part of a ‘Super Learning Day’ on the topic of *Managing Change*. The five groups were all Year 11 students, with 88 students participating in total. Feedback was gathered using the standard school student feedback forms. Students were asked the following questions:

‘Before today’s session, how confident did you feel in your ability to manage stress and emotions well?’

‘After today’s session, how confident did you feel in your ability to manage stress and emotions well?’

‘Before today’s session, how prepared did you feel about managing change and being independent?’

‘After today’s session, how prepared did you feel about managing change and being independent?’

Responses were recorded on a Likert scale of 1-10 and analysed to assess whether there had been a positive or negative change, or no change. Responses for the question regarding self-management of stress and emotions showed that the majority of students (76%) were more confident in their ability to self-manage following the session.

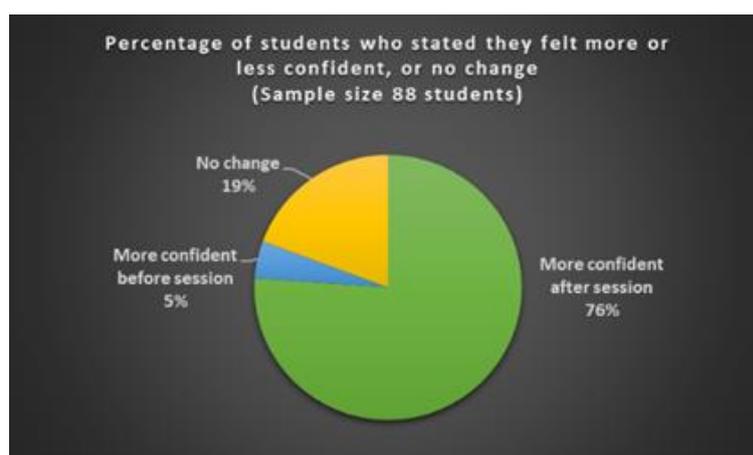


Figure 4. Responses to the question ‘Before / after today’s session, how confident did you feel in your ability to manage stress and emotions well?’ University Academy Long Sutton

Similarly, the majority of students also stated that they felt more able to manage change following the session, though the percentage was slightly less at 71% to 76%.

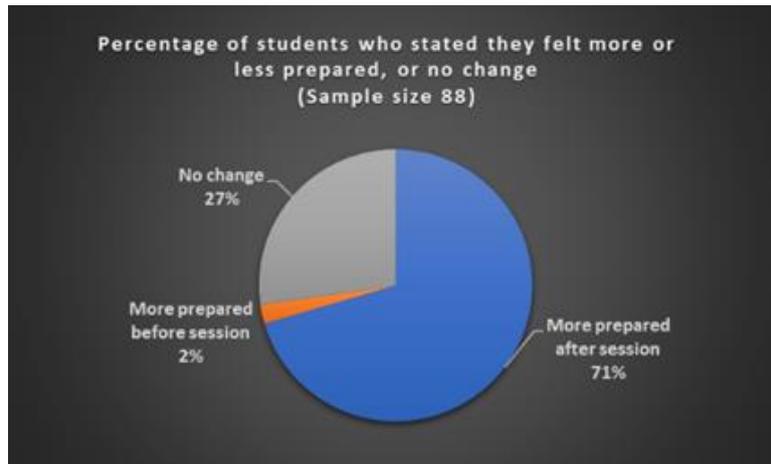


Figure 5. Responses to the question 'Before / after today's session, how prepared did you feel about managing change and being independent?', University Academy Long Sutton

In addition to the standard questions, space was made available on the questionnaires for students to give free text responses. Twenty-one free text responses were also received on the feedback forms, with the majority of comments indicating that students had found the session useful. Twelve of the twenty-one responses (57%) stated that the presentation was 'good', 'informative' or 'helpful' in some way.

'Good tips on how to manage uni life and stress.'
'I found this very helpful as I'd like to go to Lincoln university, and I think I needed ideas to help cope with stress and change.'
'Enjoyed the session.'
'Very good presentation and very clear speaking.'
'Very well presented and gave me good ideas.'
'Well presented and helped with managing change.'
'Made problems at uni more understandable.'
'This was very helpful and got me 100% of how to do the stuff I need to do
'Very well presented, I learnt a lot.'

Eight of the responses suggested that the session could involve more interaction or activities for students to be involved in.

'I think making sessions more interactive would be better.'
'Do some activities, don't just talk.'
'It was just talking and nothing to do.'
'Try to involve students more.'
'More interaction with the students.'
'Make the session more interactive with more activities for us to do (but thank you).'

Embedding more interactive content within sessions may be something for the transitional team to consider for future sessions, subject to the practicalities of delivering more interactive elements, group size and the requirements of the school.

4.24 'Health Enrichment Day' - University Academy Holbeach

University Academy Holbeach is a non-selective secondary school located in South Lincolnshire. The school is part of the Lincolnshire Educational Trust and is sponsored by the University of Lincoln. Larger than average, there are 1,304 pupils on role, with 290 accessing 16-19 provision. The proportion of pupils with SEND, and those on education, health and care plans is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average. The most recent Ofsted inspection is March 2019 rated the school as good. (source: Ofsted)

The project team delivered five 1-hour sessions to Year 12 students as part of a 'Health Enrichment Day'. These sessions focused on *Emotional Fitness* and *Managing Emotions*. The method of evaluation and the evaluation questions were the same as those used at University Academy Long Sutton.

Answers to the question on whether participants felt more confident in their ability to self-manage emotions indicated that the majority of respondents did feel more confident, however the percentage response was less than for Long Sutton, at 62% versus 76%.

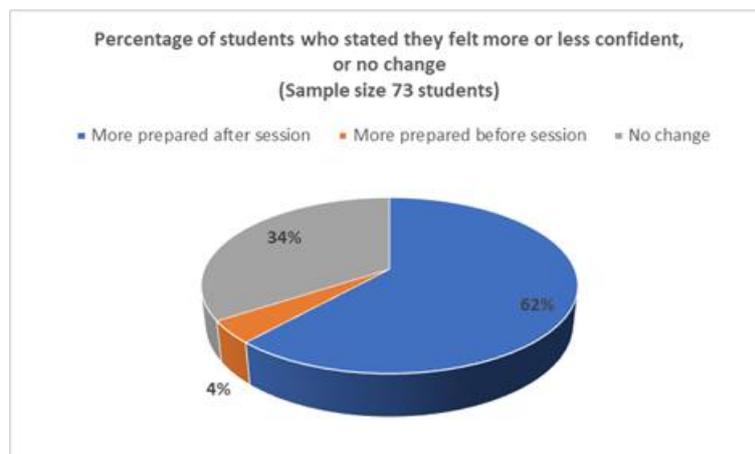


Figure 7. Responses to the question 'Before / after today's session, how confident did you feel in your ability to manage stress and emotions well?' University Academy Holbeach

Student respondents were less positive about their ability to manage change and be independent, with 54% stating that they felt more prepared following the session.

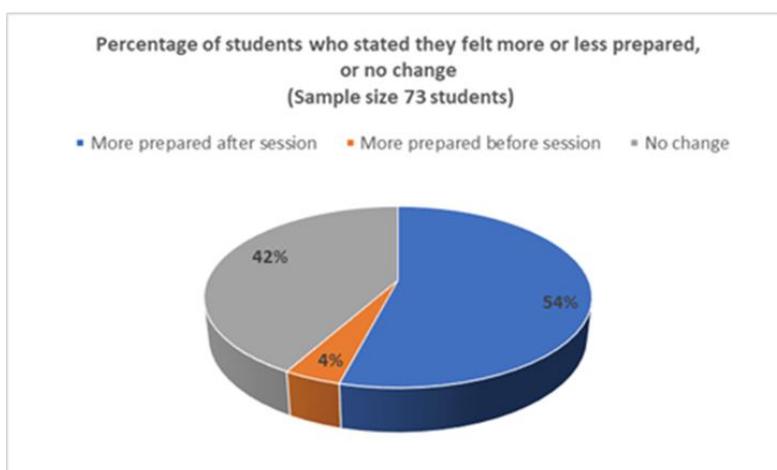


Figure 8. Responses to the question 'Before / after today's session, how prepared did you feel about managing change and being independent?', University Academy Holbeach

Given that these particular sessions focused on *Managing Emotions* and *Emotional Fitness*, it may be that students did not see the relevance of this question to the content of the session. The project team may wish to consider creating bespoke feedback forms for sessions which do not follow a standard format so that more meaningful data can be collected. However, during analysis of the questionnaires, it was noted that a number of questionnaires had identical ratings, with responses having been scribbled out and changed in some cases. When asking students to fill out feedback forms in a group setting, there is always a risk of them simply copying their neighbours' responses, and there is no easy answer to this, but it should be considered as a limitation when analysing the data. Despite these limiting factors, the majority of students, 54%, stated that they felt more confident in their abilities post-intervention:

Twelve free-text responses were received on the feedback forms, and comments were overwhelmingly positive, with ten (83%) of responses stating the session was 'good', 'helpful' or 'useful'. Responses also positively mentioned the activities involved in the session, further providing evidence that interactive sessions are preferred by students and should be offered where possible.

-
- 'Very good session, would recommend.'*
 - 'It was helpful in making me think positive.'*
 - 'I feel more equipped to handle stress and change but feel that there is still a long way to go. Very helpful nonetheless.'*
 - 'It was a very good session.'*
 - 'I liked that there was activities, made it more interactive.'*
 - 'Really good advice.'*
 - 'Useful information.'*
 - 'Good presentation and useful resources.'*
 - 'Make it more relatable and engaging.'*
 - 'Activities were fun.'*
-

4.25 Boston College Outreach Visit

Boston College is an FE college located in Boston, Lincolnshire, educating post-16 students at various levels of study. Approximately 1400 students aged 16-18 are enrolled, studying on course Levels 1-3, excluding apprenticeships, which account for an additional 150 learners. The college also has a significant number of adult, community and employability learners studying part time. The last Ofsted inspection found the college to be a 'good' provider. The areas the college serve have low skills, low wage economy with high levels of deprivation and rural poverty. Over recent years, significant numbers of workers from Eastern Europe have moved to the area and over a fifth of learners at the college are from these groups. Although employment levels are high, aspirations are generally low. (source: Ofsted)

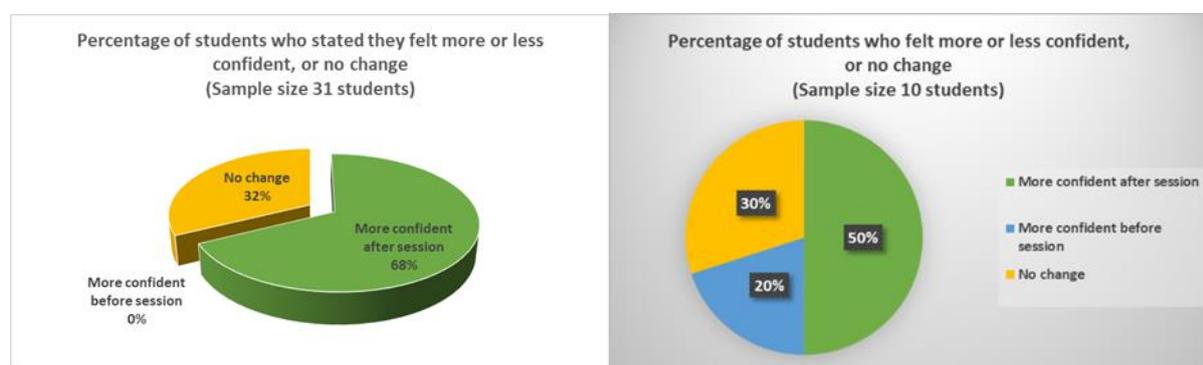
Four sessions were delivered to different groups of students – two sessions on *Developing Independence and Goal Setting*, and two on *Emotional Fitness, Self-Care and Managing Emotions*. Participants were a mix of both Year 12 and Year 13 students, with group sizes ranging from 10-31 students. Feedback was collected on the standard school student feedback forms. Sessions were arranged via Linc Higher, therefore in addition to the standard feedback forms, EMWREP forms were made available and students were asked to complete them. The project team will look into whether CDM can share EMWREP gathered information, to establish if participants in the sessions subsequently enrolled at UoL. The method of evaluation and the evaluation questions were the same as those used at both University Academy Long Sutton and University Academy Holbeach.

As four different sessions were delivered on two topics at Boston College, this outreach visit afforded an opportunity to compare which sessions appear to have the most impact on students. Methods of evaluation and evaluation questions used the standard questions used in previous outreach visits.

Developing Independence and Goal Setting Sessions

In response to the question regarding how confident participants felt regarding the management of stress and emotions following the sessions, results across the two sessions were mixed, with 68% of participants in Session 1 reporting a positive change compared to 50% in Session 2. On average, 59% of students reported feeling more positive following the session.

Figure 9. Responses to the question 'Before / after today's session, how confident did you feel in your ability to manage stress and emotions well?' Boston College

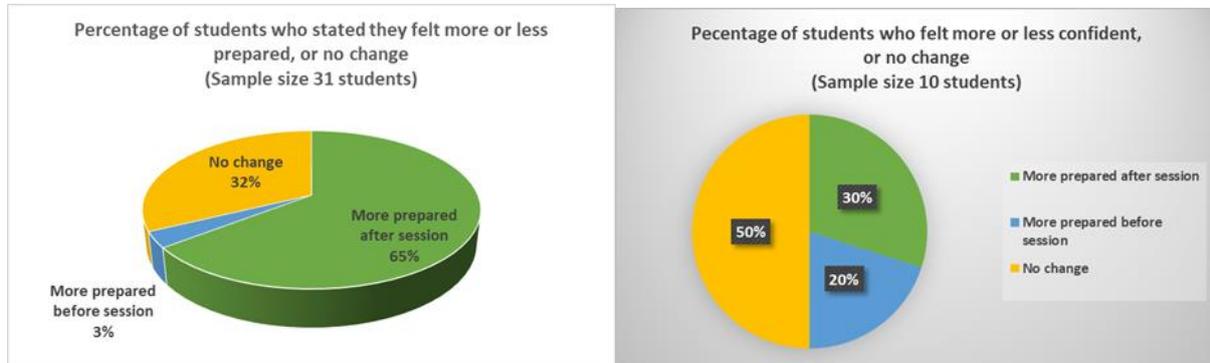


Session 1.

Session 2.

Responses to the question regarding managing change were similarly mixed, with 65% of participants in the first session reporting feeling more positive post-intervention, as opposed to only 30% in the second session. On average 47.5% of students reported a positive change following the session.

Figure 10. Responses to the question 'Before / after today's session, how prepared did you feel about managing change and being independent?', Boston College



Session 1.

Session 2.

Emotional Fitness, Self-Care and Managing Emotions Sessions

For the sessions on emotional fitness a similar pattern emerged, with positive change reported across the sessions being mixed. When asked the question on confidence in managing emotions, 44% of participants reported that they felt more confident, compared to 84% in the second session, an average of 64% across both sessions.

Figure 11. Responses to the question 'Before / after today's session, how confident did you feel in your ability to manage stress and emotions well?' Boston College

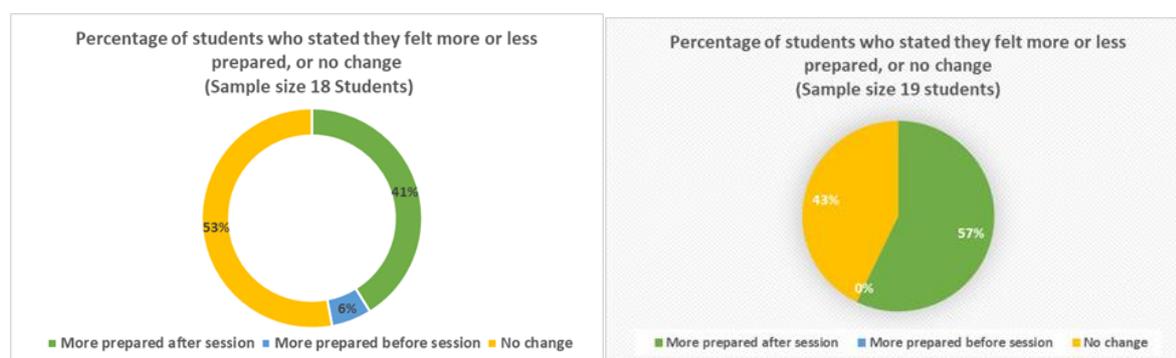


Session 1.

Session 2.

When asked the question regarding managing change, participants responses were slightly more consistent across the sessions, with 41% in the first session reporting feeling more able to manage change, compared to 57% in the second session, an average of 49% across both sessions.

Figure 12. Responses to the question 'Before / after today's session, how prepared did you feel about managing change and being independent?', Boston College



Session 1.

Session 2.

Comparing the *Developing Independence and Goal Setting* sessions and the *Emotional Fitness, Self-Care and Managing Emotions* sessions, there seems to be very little difference in the impact of the two sessions. 59% of respondents stated that they felt better able to cope with stress and emotions following the *Developing Independence* session, compared to 64% following the *Emotional Fitness* session. The impact on the perceived ability of respondents in managing stress and emotions does seem to be greater than their confidence in managing change, with 47.5% of participants reporting a positive change following the *Developing Independence* sessions and 49% reporting a positive change following the *Emotional Fitness* sessions.

There did appear to be some anomalies in the collated questionnaires, with a number of responses being identical, or changed to be identical to other questionnaires, again suggesting that there is a tendency of students to copy their neighbours' responses. Another potential issue may be that standardised questionnaires were used across all sessions, despite the fact that the content of sessions differed, with some concentrating on goal setting and some emotional fitness. As previously mentioned, it would be useful for the project team to consider the benefits of developing bespoke questionnaires tailored to particular sessions, versus the limitations.

Across all sessions fourteen free text responses were received. Twelve (86%) of the responses were positive, stating that the sessions were 'good', 'informative' or 'helpful'. The presenters were also praised as being 'clear and confident' in their delivery.

'I noticed that I can increase my confidence if wellbeing techniques are reminded. Therefore after today I realised how effective I act when I am under pressure and stress.'

'The session was very helpful. I feel more confident now and I know how to deal with my emotions in case of anxiety or depression.'

'Very enjoyable talk. Clear and confident speakers.'

'Very informative sessions that supports students who may be concerned about upcoming changes.'

Participants in the sessions also took part in a goal setting exercise which threw up some common themes, with the vast majority of responses centering around completing current courses, attending university and securing a stable job. It may be useful for the project team to consider ways in which they can highlight how emotional fitness can help in achieving these goals, and also how goal setting itself supports wellbeing. The Fika app has useful content focused around goals and the setting of intentions, and it may be worth the project team reviewing this content to see if there are any resources which could be used in supporting transitional outreach work of this type.

4.26 Wellbeing World Magazine

Wellbeing World magazine is produced on a regular basis by the Transitional Wellbeing Education Officers funded by the project. The magazine is distributed to transitional students via email and hosted on Flipsnack, with digital content embedded within the magazine also being produced by the content team. A focus group of seven students reviewed the magazine, with the following standardised questions being asked:

Do you think the information in this magazine is useful?

What did you think of how the information was communicated?

What kind of content would you like to see in a wellbeing magazine?

Most respondents stated that they did find the magazine useful in some way:

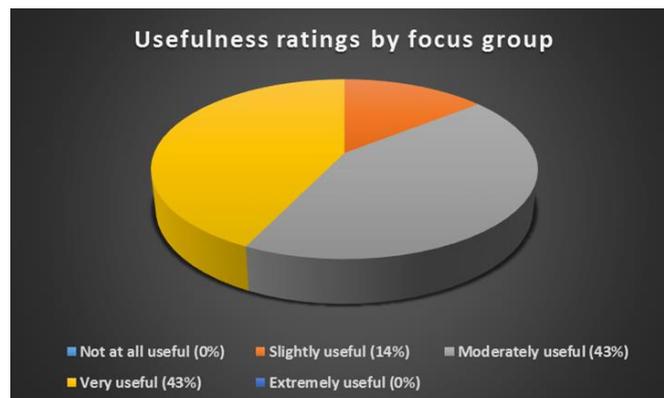


Figure 13: Usefulness ratings for Wellbeing World from focus group

Respondents were asked a follow up question with a free text response as to why they had given the rating they had to the magazine for usefulness. Responses were quite mixed.

'Gives you a large amount of info and guidance with lots of topics.'
'Interesting topics but I find the heavy chunks of text off putting....'
'It's very informative and gives key information on a whole and the stories are easy to read.'
'Diverse, useful tips on being healthy and feeling better eventually.'
'Some content I would read others I wouldn't. I wouldn't really read a stranger's story but do like the recipes section. '
'Would be good to educate students on the other things wellbeing do rather than them just being viewed as a doctor.'
'I think there have some good topics bust sometimes a bit surface level.'

Respondents were also asked what they thought of the way in which the information within the magazine was communicated.

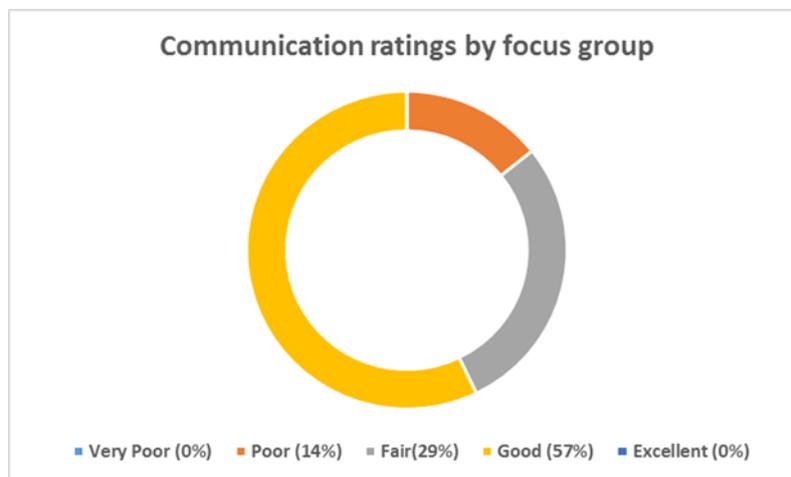


Figure 14: Ratings for how information within Wellbeing World is communicated from the focus group

Generally, respondents thought the method of communication was good, but no respondent rated it as excellent. Free text responses were gathered to gain further insight into why this was.

'It's plain and simple but however it could be a bit more creative to keep you engaged with it.'
'A bit text heavy and not the best design graphically..... Text needs to be broken up more with photos/ illustrations/ graphics and not sure the column layout is the most effective.'
'They weren't long winded and it was set out in a nice way with lists and colours.'
'Concise formatting with a friendly approach.'
'I liked how the meet the team was set out. Everything else seemed a bit too wordy....'
'Light-hearted rather than being intense. Subtle information like good recipes that will help mental health without it being obvious.'
'I think it looks inviting, welcoming and easy to get into.'

Feedback from the focus group has already been acted upon, with subsequent editions of the magazine highlighting more about the work of the Wellbeing Team, heavy sections of text being replaced by links to digital content and articles being included which are more hard hitting.

4.27 Wellbeing Led Content – Conclusions

It is clear from the available evaluation data that transitional outreach sessions are valued by schools and are positively viewed by many of the student participants. Of the 239 students responding to the questionnaires (years 11-13, across 3 settings), 64% of students stated that they felt more confident in their ability to manage stress and emotions and 53% of students stated that they felt better prepared to manage change and be independent. Of the free text responses gathered across all settings, 75% stated that the sessions were ‘good’, ‘helpful’ or ‘informative’ in some way. Free text responses also seem to suggest that students prefer sessions which feature an interactive element of some type, so where at all possible it is worth considering incorporating relevant activities within sessions.

There are some limitations to the evaluation which should be considered. As might be expected, analysis of questionnaires throws up a tendency for some students to copy answers from their neighbour. Whilst there is no easy remedy to this, it should be considered as a limitation when analysing the data. In addition, standardised questionnaires, whilst extremely useful in terms of comparing data across settings, may not always ask the right questions when workshops are bespoke to the schools’ needs. For example, the ‘managing change’ question may not be relevant to workshops which concentrate solely on managing emotions. There are of course, several problems in creating non-standard questionnaires, not least the time involved and whether the data collected can be compared effectively. The project team may wish to consider the relevance of the standard questions to the specific session being delivered prior to evaluation, and the benefits of producing non-standard questionnaires versus the limitations. A further possibility would be to review the current questions and consider whether additional standard questions could be created which would be relevant across all sessions.

Qualitative data gathered through the transcription of participant interviews indicate that WOW summer school is highly valued by both students and parents/carers alike. It might be useful in future years to ask students and parents some structured questions in order to carry out more in-depth thematic analysis on the data to understand what about the event is particularly valued.

Wellbeing World received a mixed response, with some respondents feeling that whilst the information conveyed was useful, graphically the layout was less appealing. Since the focus group’s feedback a revamp has taken place, with more visually appealing content and links to project content created by the digital team embedded in the magazine.

4.3 Evaluation of Digital Led Activities

A diverse range of digital content was produced by the project team during the evaluation period. Student co-production took place on videos covering a range of topics, from estranged students to eating disorders. A number of videos were also produced to highlight the work of the project, including a project overview video and an informational video covering the services offered by the transitional outreach team for use at open days. A podcast series was also produced, with the *Fresher Take* series now having released five episodes. The Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing guidelines presented some challenges in producing quality digital content, and there has been a shift

in focus to producing more vlogs, blogs and graphic content. Overall, digital content has reached 29,946 people across all social media platforms. Feedback was gathered via social media metrics and focus groups concentrating on both video content and the new features of the Fika app.

4.31 Video Content

Video content for the project is produced primarily by student co-producers with the support of two Digital Content Creators funded by the project. Student co-producers are involved in every aspect of the production process from planning and filming to editing and post-production.

4.31(i) Settling in at University video

Reach – 319
Unique views - 106 (33%/total views)
Engagement - 2 (0.6%/total views)
Top audience - Women aged 18-24

The *Settling in at University* video was one of the first resources produced for the project. Despite this, a relatively high reach was achieved. Unfortunately, engagement with the video was low, with just two viewers (0.6%) liking or commenting. Audience retention was also poor, averaging only 9 seconds, with only a third of viewers continuing to watch past the one-minute mark. Poor retention and engagement is likely to be due to the fact that the video was not optimised for social media platforms, reducing visual appeal. However, this resource has been used as part of the transitional talks by the wellbeing team where it has been a valuable tool.

This video was showcased at a focus group of seven students who were asked the following two questions:

Do you think the information/discussion in this video is useful?
What did you think of how the information was communicated?
What did you learn from this video?

Respondents mostly rated the information within the video as ‘moderately useful’ (71%), with only 15% rating the content as ‘very useful’ and no participants rating the video as ‘extremely useful’.

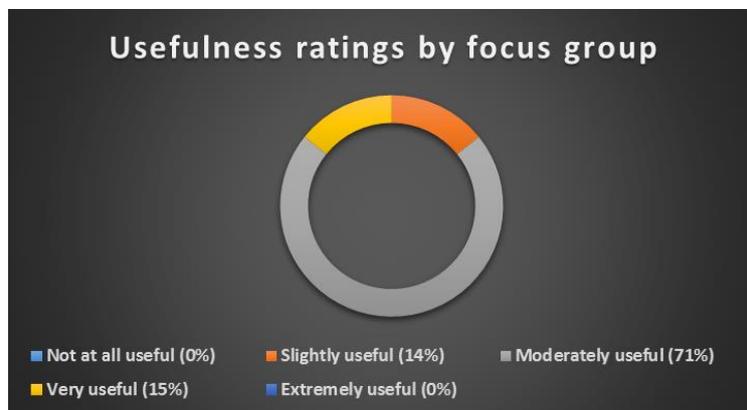


Figure 15. Usefulness ratings for *Settling in at University* video from focus group

When asked a follow up question as to why they had given the rating they had, respondents gave a range of answers.

'It gives you a nice light amount of info and starts a conversation.'
'Good knowing peoples personal experiences and advice e.g. on making friends. Perhaps would be more tailored around being advice based, but as a short video works well.'
'Hearing that people do have the same problems and challenges makes it easier for us and the solutions on top of it guides us on.'
'It does share how people are feeling and the viewer will be (hopefully) able to relate to it and know they aren't the only ones feeling like that.'
'It's interesting to hear about their experiences, but from the title I would expect more tips.'

Respondents were also asked what they thought of how the information was communicated. Views on this were more positive, with 75% of respondents giving a rating of 'good' or 'excellent'.

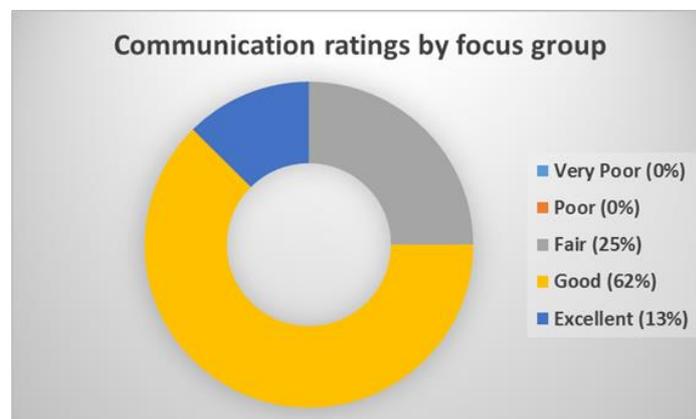


Figure 16. Communication ratings for *Settling in at University* video from focus group

A follow up question of 'why?' indicated that respondents liked the Vox pop style of the video and the fact that the video focused on multiple students given their own views on camera.

'In small and fast chunks, it helps you keep engaged.'
'Clear and easy to understand by having questions clearly written out and the answered by different students.'
'Informative about the key ways to settle, there was no irrelevant information.'
'I really like how the video was a mash up of different Vox pops. I liked hearing from real students about real worries.'
'I liked the range of opinions, use of the public/ students gave more diverse answers.'

Respondents were further asked what they had learned from the video.

'People's experiences in coming to uni'
 'Everyone is in the same boat, introduce yourself to as many people as possible, don't be shy.'
 'To not be scared to make friends because everyone's going through the same thing.'
 'I wouldn't say I really learnt anything but it was still a nice video.'
 'That all students experience similar things from settling in and that you shouldn't be afraid to talk about it.'
 'Icebreakers for meeting new people. That everyone is nervous about something with uni.'

4.31 (ii) World Mental Health Day Video

Reach - 2011
 Unique views - 686
 Engagement - 45
 Top audience - Women aged 18-24

The *World Mental Health Day* promo performed much better on social media than the *Settling into University* video in every measurable aspect. Engagement and reach were both much higher than all other Student Life posts disseminated in the same week (see comparison performance, below).

All posts published						
Published	Post	Type	Targeting	Reach	Engagement	Promote
13/10/2019 13:57	Do you need a food shop this weekend? Look into ways that you	📺	🌐	604	37 6	Boost Post
12/10/2019 11:00	It's the SU vs Wellbeing in a jenga showdown! Cassie and Greg are	📺	🌐	1.6K	176 51	Boost Post
11/10/2019 18:51	32 years ago, during the March on Washington, half a million people	📺	🌐	727	45 11	Boost Post
11/10/2019 16:06	TAKE ON THE TOWER COMING TOMORROW!	📺	🌐	344	17 1	Boost Post
10/10/2019 17:20	It's #WorldMentalHealthDay - but how much do you know about the	📺	🌐	407	4 2	Boost Post
10/10/2019 12:47	We're excited to be bringing you even more content focused on	📺	🌐	438	8 3	Boost Post
10/10/2019 11:48	Roughly 1 in every 4 people struggle with a mental health	📺	🌐	2K	179 45	Boost Post
09/10/2019 18:41	In the interests of self-care, it's important to make sure you take a	📺	🌐	537	27 7	Boost Post
07/10/2019 17:21	Not sure why you have a personal tutor or what the benefits are? 🍷	📺	🌐	577	40 6	Boost Post
07/10/2019 09:08	We're at the PG Fayre today, finding out more about what content	📺	🌐	858	104 7	Boost Post
04/10/2019 11:26	Happy #WorldSmileDay! Tag someone in the comments and do	📺	🌐	569	32 11	Boost Post
03/10/2019 19:15	Come along to our drop-in TOMORROW to find out more ...	📺	🌐	556	6 2	Boost Post

The number of shares and reactions increased, totalling thirty five reactions and ten shares overall, a significant increase on the *Settling In* video which had only two reactions. Reasons for this may be that the content is more engaging due to the square video shape which appears to be more popular on social media as it acts as more of a ‘thumb stopper’ due to taking up more of the phone screen. The timing of this post may also have been key in increasing engagement, with the content of the video being a trending topic related to World Mental Health Day (social media users were likely to already be engaging in and reacting to other mental health related content at this time).

Audience retention also improved with 36% of viewers watching until the end cards before turning off. Whilst precise stats on audience retention are difficult to find, most sources state around 30% retention is a good benchmark for audience retention.

Usefulness rating by the focus group also improved, with 50% of respondents rating the video as ‘very useful’.



Figure 17. Usefulness ratings for *World Mental Health Day* video from focus group

A number of reasons were given for this.

‘Raises awareness of mental health and emphasises the idea that it’s ok to talk.’

‘Discussed what young people feel on the topic as its not spoken about a lot.’

‘It discussed real issues and how to cope with mental health, it encouraged talking which I think is the most important thing.’

‘It shows people that you don’t have to get professional help at first, you may just talk to a friend and lead from there.’

‘It’s always good to hear a diverse group of people say that mental health is important (especially men).’

Communication ratings for this video also increased, with 50% of respondents giving a rating of ‘excellent’.

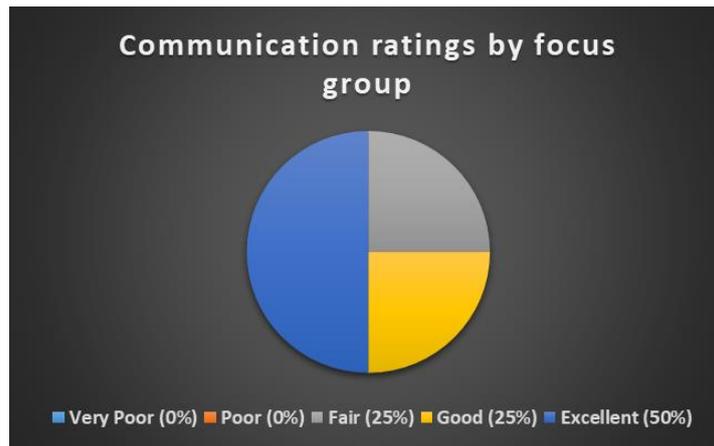


Figure 18. Communication ratings for *World Mental Health Day* video from focus group

Respondents gave positive free text responses about what they had learned from the video and how the information was communicated.

'Different cultures mental health expectations.....'
'There's always someone to listen, better to get it out.'
'Other people's definitions of mental health, what to do if you think you friend is struggling and the times of the mental health drop ins at Lincoln.'
'That students around you can help too, and you just have to take that first step.'
'It should be talked about more, seek help, you're not alone.'
'Points from a range of people and it's placed in short bursts to keep you interested.'
'Created in a really respectful and informative way.'
'Discussed what young people feel on the topic as its not spoken about a lot.'
'I liked how you spoke to students and asked their advice on how to deal with mental health problems, it seemed very human which was lovely.'
'Information coming from students makes it relatable to me the viewer, again the factor of potential intimidation is removed.'
'.....I like how empathetic they were and their calls to action.'

4.31 (iii) Wellbeing Whiteboard Video

Reach - 878
 Unique views - Not available
 Engagement - 48
 Top audience - Not available

The *Wellbeing Whiteboard* video had good levels of engagement in the form of shares and likes as compared to other posts on the social media of UOL Student Life. Audience retention is reasonable, with similar levels of retention to the World Mental Health Day Vox pop, maintaining around 35% of its viewers until the end cards. However, reach is lower than other posts, and reasons for this are unclear. One possibility is that the time of posting was a significant factor, with the post being disseminated on social media at 4pm. Comparative stats show that other videos that have been put out around mid-day/lunch time have proven to have a larger reach.

Despite the lower reach, 63% of focus group respondents rated the video as 'very useful' and comments on the video from the focus group were positive.

'Gives you examples in a plain and clear way to understand.'

'Simple and effective. Use of visuals over sound was a nice change.'

'A variety of people all different ages showing the amount of different issues.'

'I LOVED this video – it showed that so many people struggle with many different issues without putting names or faces in the video it still felt do real and so human. By also providing solutions it made it a very beneficial video.'

'If I were someone suffering with mental health I would feel a lot better after watching this! Good to be aware of the scale and the suggestions were good too.'

'Makes you feel like you're not alone and also gives you solutions for issues you might be facing.'

'Relatable reasons for feeling that way. Shows you may not be the only one with these thoughts.'

4.31 (iv) Students React to Mental Health Myths and Facts video

Reach - 1867

Unique views - 648

Engagement -178

Top audience - Not available

The Facebook stats show that, in comparison to other content released in the same week on Student Life, the video performed better than others in terms of engagement, with around 10% of the audience watching until the end titles of the video. There was no negative feedback, and the post was shared nine times, possibly helping to push the video to more potential viewers.

Both subject matter and format are important, and when putting the content together inspiration was drawn from BuzzFeed style videos which are a popular format. That, along with the important and engaging subject matter, may have contributed to the video's success.

Comparing the *Students React* video to Student Life's other video which utilises a more BuzzFeed style format, (the *Take on the Tower Jenga* video), the 'jenga' video performed better across all measurable aspects. There are some characteristics of this video which could be used in future content to increase engagement. The interactive game format could help viewer retention, along with the use of more energetic editing styles. In support of this, feedback from the focus group did highlight that the single set up wasn't always enough to hold a viewer's attention, with one

respondent commenting *‘Little bit longwinded, I personally won’t watch videos that are in the same setting for long because I naturally lose attention.’*

12/10/2019 11:00		It's the SU vs Wellbeing in a jenga showdown! Cassie and Greg are			2.4K		248 70	 
08/11/2019 12:00		How much do you really know about mental health? Watch Jess			1.9K		125 53	 

However, ratings for both usefulness and communication by the focus group were positive.

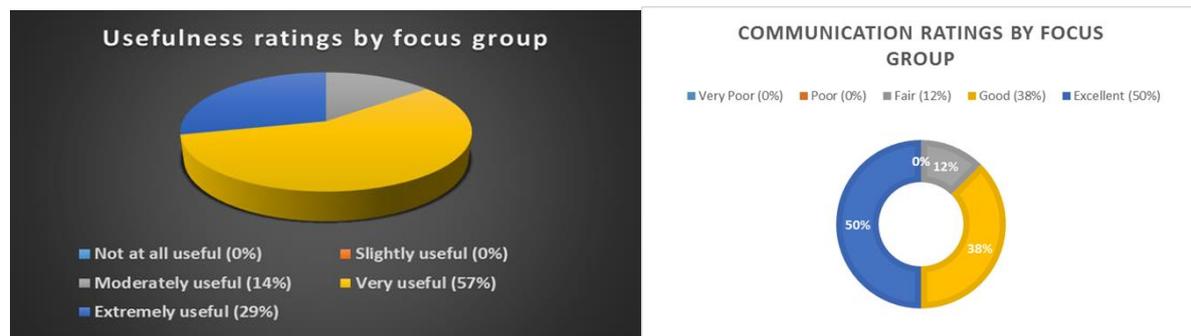


Figure 19: Focus group ratings for *Students React to mental health myths and facts* video

Free text comments regarding the video also threw up some positive comments on the style and substance of the video.

-
- ‘Very helpful. Proper conversation about topics, problems and ways to solve them. ‘*
 - ‘Breaks down common misconceptions in an approachable way. Almost puts a positive spin on mental health issues.’*
 - ‘It’s good to have information on myths because there are so many people that believe they’re true which turns out it’s not.’*
 - ‘It does debunk myths and provides people with the ‘truth’ they may have been thinking some things and this would help begin to change their attitudes.’*
 - ‘Communicated in a simple but fun and creative way.’*
 - ‘I really like the BuzzFeed style of this video – it creates a friendly way of talking about a serious topic. I also like the ending saying to carry on the conversation in the comments.’*
-

4.31 (v) Students React to Men’s Mental Health Myths and Facts video

-
- Reach - 2,605
 - Unique views - 1,011
 - Engagement - 117
 - Top audience - Not available
-

The *Men's Mental Health* video performed better than the previous *Students React* video. It had more engagement in less time than the *myths* video, with over double the shares as well as more positive reactions. Compared to the *Take on the Tower* video, this video also performed slightly better with regards to reach, albeit with double the shares. Reasons for this improved performance could be the heavy and highly topical subject matter, with the video being timed for release during Movember when awareness of men's mental health issues is high. The format may also have been more appealing to the audience, with two distinct set-ups. Acting on feedback that a single set-up is less engaging, this video used two pairs of students, cutting between the groups, rather than just the one pair of students. This change in format could have helped tackle the feedback received regarding maintaining audience attention. Finally, the titles and graphics have been overhauled, helping to enhance the production value.

The video performed extremely well for usefulness, with 88% of focus group respondents rating the video as 'extremely useful' or 'very useful':

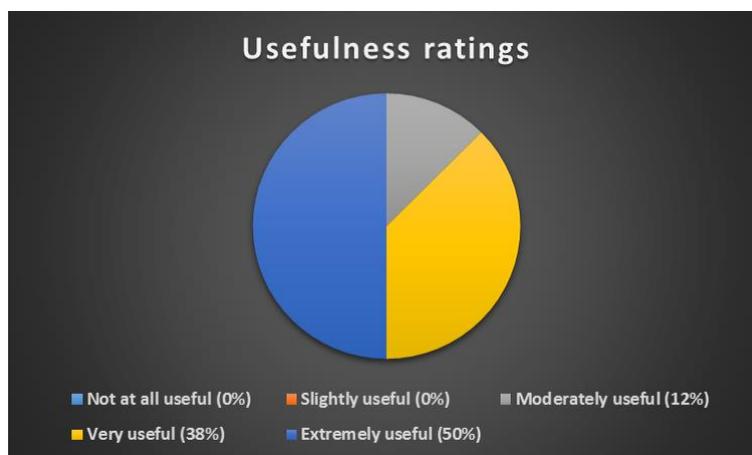


Figure 20. Usefulness ratings for *Students React to men's mental health myths and facts* video

Respondents were also positive about how the information was communicated.

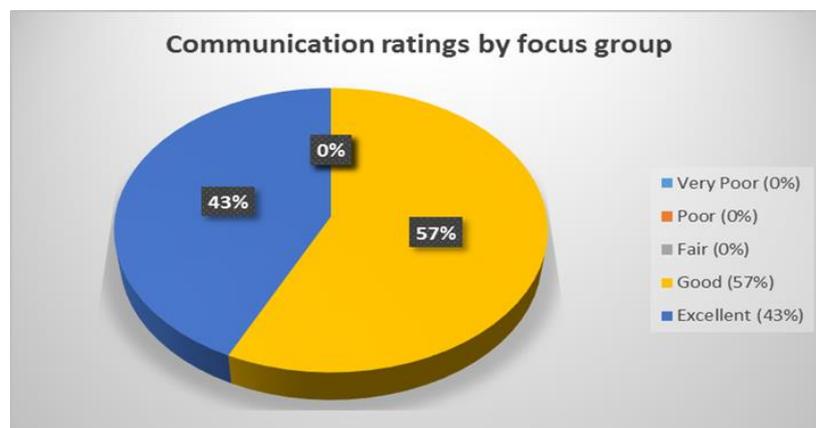


Figure 21: Communication ratings for *Students React to men's mental health myths and facts*

Free text responses were also overwhelmingly positive regarding content, style and learning opportunities, with many respondents praising the fact that the video concentrated on men's mental health.

'You don't often hear men speaking out about mental health issues so this was a good way to spread awareness.'

'Informative, good use of statistics and it wasn't long winded.'

emotionally social is easier for women – scientifically.'

'VERY IMPORTANT TOPIC! It's so important to have mental health content for men by men and this hit every nail on the head.'

'Effective, shows facts and the other views it helps you think about the overall impact of it.'

'Acknowledged the lack of men speaking out about mental health and adding their own opinion is useful. Having men speak out may also encourage other men to speak to friends/family.'

It was a very emotional video to watch and I think that it needed to be. I liked that you got men to start the conversation of men's' mental health.'

'I like the BuzzFeed style of the video, switching between pairs keeps my attention. It was good to see men talking to each other because you don't normally see that.'

4.31 (vi) Estranged Students Infographic and Video

Reach

Infographic – 504

Video - 481

Engagement

Infographic – 7

Video - 3

Audience retention on Facebook

Infographic – 187 3-second video views

Video – 110 3-second video views

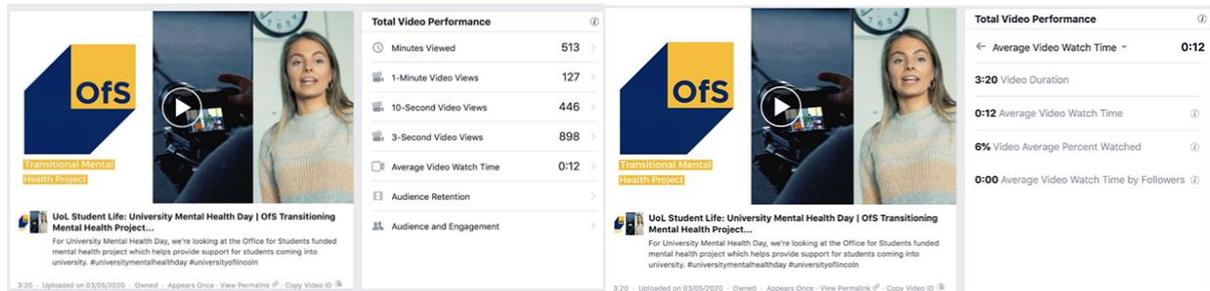
Considering that the topic of this video would only be relevant to a smaller group of the student population than other content, performance was good. Interestingly, the estranged student infographic performed better in terms of reach, views and likes, comments and shares than the video on social media. This could be an indication that that quicker to make, simpler posts can be just as effective as more complex content. It may be worth considering making simple, informative content such as infographics to share on social media weekly. To promote the work of the project and the services we offer, infographics could share information such as the Wellbeing Centre drop-in times, which could be re-used on a regular basis.

4.31 (vii) Project Overview Video

Reach - 2,538

Engagement - 96 interactions, 11 shares, 242 post clicks

Audience retention on Facebook



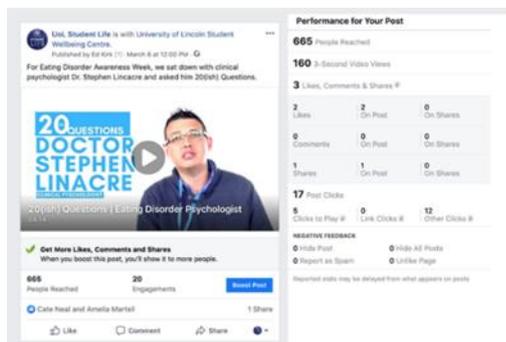
The project overview video had a good reach with a total audience of 2,538. The larger reach was probably helped by the relatively high number of shares, and post clicks were also much higher than average for other project content at 242. Retention was poor however, with only 127 viewers watching past the one-minute mark. With a running time of over 3 minutes, the video is much longer than most of the project content, and it has been previously noted that short snappy videos retain viewers more effectively. However, the project overview video is distinct from other content in that it is aimed at raising awareness of the project itself, rather than offering a specific intervention to students. It may be worth considering creating a short version of the video summarising the main points, or an infographic which has previously performed well, which could be re-released at various points throughout the project to further raise awareness.

4.31 (viii) 20ish Questions – Eating Disorder Awareness Week Video

Reach - 665

Engagement – 20

Engagement



Audience retention on Facebook



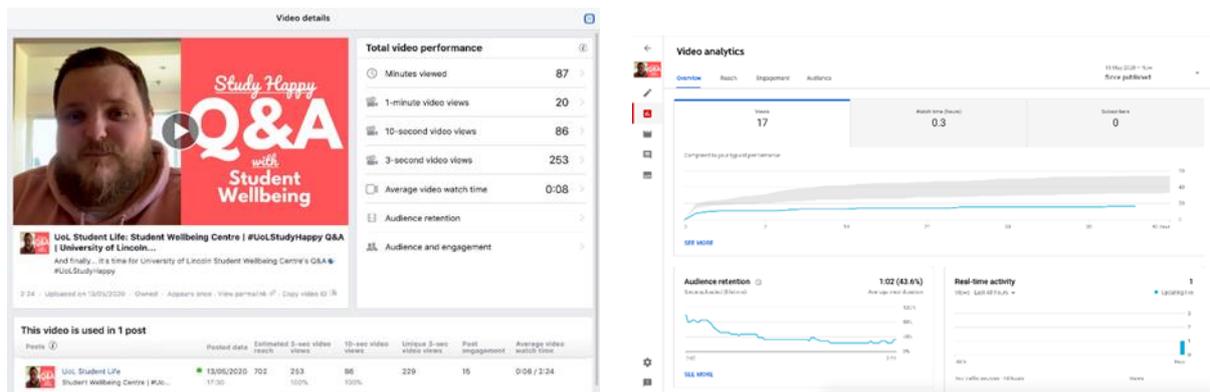
The reach of this content was reasonable, though not as high as for some of the other project content. Engagement was fairly low, as was audience retention, with only five viewers watching past the 1-minute mark. There are various reasons why the post may have performed poorly. Students may not feel the content was as relevant to them as some of the more general project content, however given that this video was released during Eating Disorders Awareness Week, it was topical and should have been trending on social media channels. Another reason may be that the video was shot in landscape, which often fails to fully engage viewers on social media. Consideration should be given to shooting future content in portrait, which may increase visual impact.

4.31 (ix) Study Happy Video

Reach - 702

Engagement - 15

Audience retention - 43.6% beyond 1 minute



The *Study Happy* video performed well, with a reach of 702. Audience retention was much better than for some other project content, with 43.6% of the audience watching past the 1-minute mark. In comparison to the Eating Disorders video, which was also in the Q&A format, this video performed significantly better. This may be because the content was relevant to a larger group of students, the questions were topical and the video’s release coincided with exam season, a time where students may be looking for information regarding how the Wellbeing Centre is operating and what support they deliver. In addition, the video was released as part of the wider Study Happy event, which had already reached significant publicity. It may be worth the project team producing similar video content for future events of this type, as it maximises reach of content to students who are already engaged with the wider event. Timing of the release of videos should also be planned in advance as part of the filming schedule, to facilitate maximum engagement.

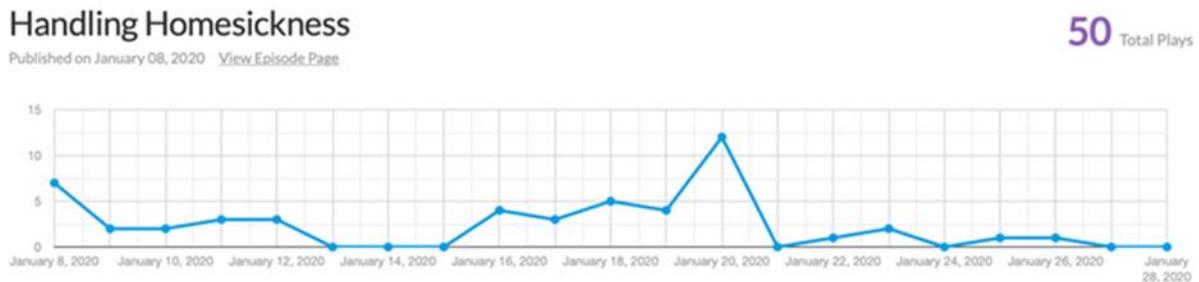
4.32 Fresher Take Podcast

As with project video content, the *Fresher Take* Podcast is entirely co-produced by students with support from the project’s Digital Content Creators. Two or three students act as podcast hosts on each episode, planning a topic with the project team in advance. Since the Covid-19 pandemic podcast production has been able to continue unabated, with remote production quickly put in

place, enabling an episode on *Social distancing, self-isolation and study* to be released within days of lockdown.

4.32 (i) Handling Homesickness Episode

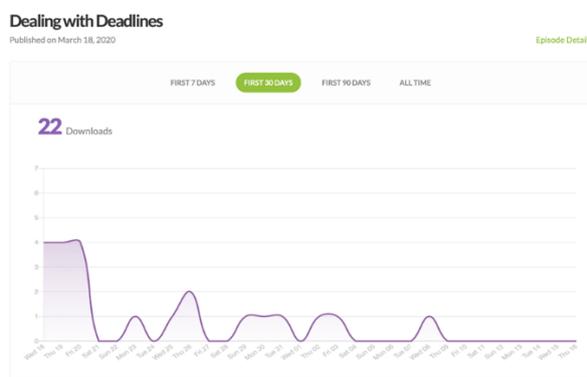
This was the first episode of the podcast released in January 2020, focusing on homesickness due to the fact that January is a known flashpoint for transitional students returning after the Christmas break. Engagement with the podcast itself has been good with total plays being 50 on the 28th January. The podcast is growing steadily and should continue to build in momentum as more episodes are released, as it is usual with podcasts for listeners to go back to older episodes as they discover the channel. A timeline of podcast performance is shown below.



The spike in views towards the end of January coincides with promotion of the podcast at the ‘Refreshers Fayre’. Given that this promotion seems to have been effective in increasing engagement, it may be worthwhile having the podcast hosts on campus promoting the content to students and prospective students. Whilst there continues to be restrictions in place due to Covid-19, this could also happen virtually at events such as WOW, Get Started Week and Offer Holder days. Once restrictions are lifted, the hosts and project team could book a regular space on campus to ensure continuous promotion

4.32 (ii) Dealing with Deadlines Episode

Dealing with Deadlines did not perform as well as previous episodes. One reason for this may be that the promotion of the episode struggled to be visible due to the fact that the release date coincided with the university announcing a move to remote teaching, therefore social media was saturated with posts regarding student issues. Social media campaigns such as a petition regarding the payment of final semester rent may simply have meant that the post was missed by the target audience, who were engaged in other activity on social media. It may be worth revisiting this episode at a later date when it is more relevant, perhaps around the next ‘deadline season’ in January 2021.



The main traffic for this episode came from Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Listeners on these platforms are either finding the podcast on their own through searching the site for content, or are already familiar with the podcast and have subscribed for notifications of new episodes. In the past, the majority of listeners have come from the Buzzsprout site link, probably because the link to this site is shared whenever promotional material is posted on the Student Life social media pages (a promotional post for the podcast had a fairly reasonable reach of 527). Lower engagement for the episode via this route supports the view that promotion may have been ‘lost’ on social media due to world events.

APPS

 Apple Podcasts	33%	10
 Spotify	23%	7
 Your Buzzsprout Site	20%	6
 Google Podcasts	6%	2
 Buzzsprout Embed Player	6%	2

[See all apps](#)

As with other episodes, the podcast reach is mostly within the Lincoln area and several other British cities. However, given that the overall engagement is so low, it is difficult to estimate reach as compared to other episodes.

4.32 (iii) Social distancing, Self-isolation and Study episode

Social Distancing, Self-isolation and Study performed better than *Dealing with Deadlines*, with many more peaks and listeners. However, it still did not perform as well as previous episodes, particularly the *Handling Homesickness* episode, which has had the most listeners to date. This is partly due to challenges in promoting episodes due to Covid-19 restrictions. Peaks in downloads have previously occurred following face to face promotion by the podcast hosts, demonstrating that this method of promotion is more effective. However social distancing measures mean that the sole method of promotion is currently through Student Life social media. The project team should therefore implement further face to face promotion once restrictions are lifted.



The main traffic source for this episode was through the Buzzsprout site, reinforcing evidence that most listeners find the podcast through social media, as the link to the Buzzsprout site is embedded in any promotional posts for the podcast.

APPS

 Your Buzzsprout Site	36%	19
 Apple Podcasts	23%	12
 Spotify	23%	12
 Google Podcasts	3%	2
 Alexa Enabled Device	3%	2

[See all apps](#)

Most listeners are from the Lincoln area, indicating that content is hitting the target audience of Lincoln students. Further reach beyond the local area is also positive, with the podcast potentially benefiting students across the UK.

CITIES (25 Total)

Lincoln, England	23 %	12
Islington, England	13 %	7
Blackheath, England	9 %	5
Sutton Coldfield, England	9 %	5
Dublin, Leinster	3 %	2
Maidenhead, England	3 %	2
Mountain View, California	1 %	1
Lincoln, Lincolnshire	1 %	1
Nottingham, England	1 %	1
Addlestone, England	1 %	1

[See all Cities](#)

4.32 (iv) Mastering Time Management Episode

Mastering Time Management was performed well overall. The success of this episode may be due to the fact that Learning at Lincoln, the university's digital education portal, embedded the episode on their website, which provided information on the new online learning systems at the university. As this webpage was topical and aimed at supporting students with new assessment methods the episode was relevant, timely and useful to the target audience.

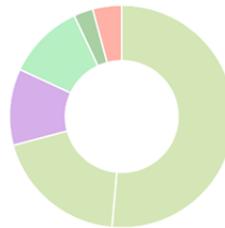


Over 50% of the episode's listens came from the embedded player on the Learning at Lincoln site. Given the success of the episode via this route, the project team should consider pushing for relevant episodes to be embedded on other university sites in order to maximise reach and increase our capacity to support more students.

APPS

	Buzzsprout Embed Player	51%	37
	Your Buzzsprout Site	19%	14
	Apple Podcasts	11%	8
	Spotify	11%	8
	FMPEG	2%	2

[See all apps](#)



As with other episodes, most listeners are from the Lincoln area, but the podcast is still consistently attracting listeners from other areas of the UK. Listeners from further afield may be prospective students or students simply hoping to attend university and looking to prepare. Either way it is encouraging that the podcast is supporting students outside of Lincoln.

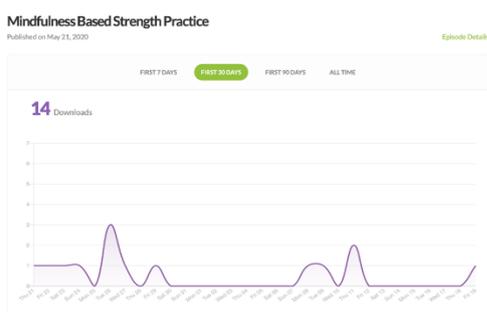
CITIES (32 Total)

Lincoln, England	22 %	16
Blackheath, England	12 %	9
Islington, England	11 %	8
Bucharest, Bucuresti	4 %	3
Scunthorpe, England	4 %	3
City of Westminster, England	2 %	2
Mansfield Woodhouse, England	2 %	2
Århus, Central Jutland	2 %	2
Kuwait City, Al Asimah	2 %	2
Loughborough, England	2 %	2

[See all Cities](#)

4.32 (v) Mindfulness Based Strengths Practice episode

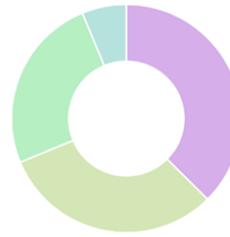
Mindfulness Based Strength Practice was recorded with Dr Roger Bretherton and underpins the MBSP work carried out as part of the project. The episode did not perform well, which may be due to a combination of factors. Firstly, engagement with all Student Life channels drops off significantly in spring and summer when this episode was released, potentially due to students finishing for the year and not wanting to engage with university content. It is normal for this reduction in engagement to take place in June, but this may have occurred earlier this year due to coronavirus. Secondly, MBSP may be regarded as a niche topic, with students who have no prior knowledge of the practice regarding it as inaccessible to them. A third issue may be that this particular episode features an academic and one student host, creating an atmosphere which is distinctly different to the laid-back vibe of a student only panel. A student only panel may be more appealing to listeners. The content of the episode is strong enough to be successful however, and the project team may wish to consider using this episode in different ways, perhaps to promote workshops, or for dissemination to the School of Psychology, whose students would be more familiar with the content.



Stats for this episode suggest that those who listened were already aware of, or following, the podcast on Spotify or Apple Podcasts. Only five listens came from the link shared on the Student Life social media channels, which as previously outlined would be expected due to a seasonal drop-off in engagement.

APPS

 Apple Podcasts	37%	6
 Your Buzzsprout Site	31%	5
 Spotify	25%	4
 TuneIn Radio	6%	1



An anomaly with this episode is that most of the listeners are not located in Lincoln, possibly because students had already travelled home for the summer.

CITIES (11 Total)

Islington, England	31%	5
Grimsby, England	12%	2
Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur	6%	1
Timisoara, Timiș	6%	1
Lincoln, Lincolnshire	6%	1
Addlestone, England	6%	1
Lincoln, England	6%	1
Northampton, England	6%	1
Sutton Coldfield, England	6%	1
Barton upon Humber, England	6%	1

4.33 Graphic Content

Due to the constraints of producing high quality filmed content remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic, focus was shifted to producing more graphic content in March 2020. Engagement on social with this type of content was good, with a reach of 792 and a high number of post clicks on the first post of this type. To promote the project work further, consideration should be given to regular shares of graphic posts which highlight not only the digital support but also that offered by the transitional wellbeing team, such as drop-in times and workshops.

4.33 (i) Self Care Sunday Series

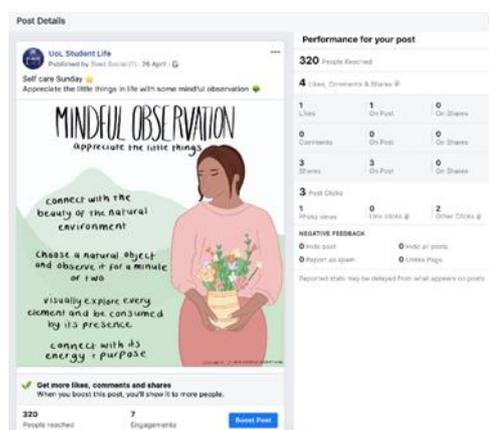
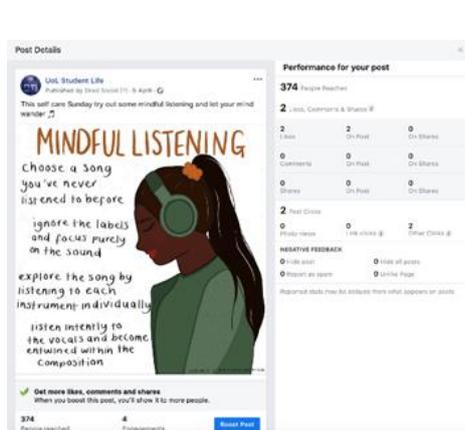
A new type of content for the project, the *Self Care Sunday* series performed well. Both reach and engagement were higher on Instagram than on Facebook, possibly due to the nature of Instagram which is a common platform for sharing photographs, artwork and other visuals.

Figure 22. Social media metrics for *Self-Care Sunday Series*

Reach	Facebook	Instagram
Mindful Breathing	333	544
Mindful Listening	374	646

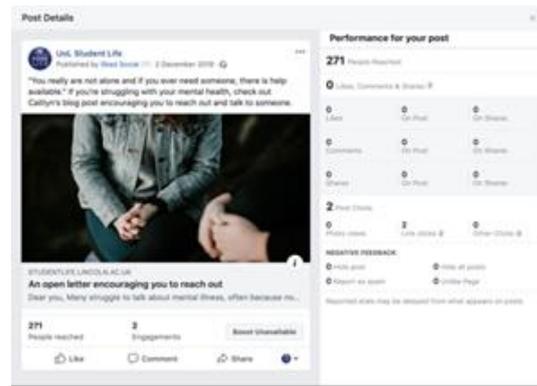
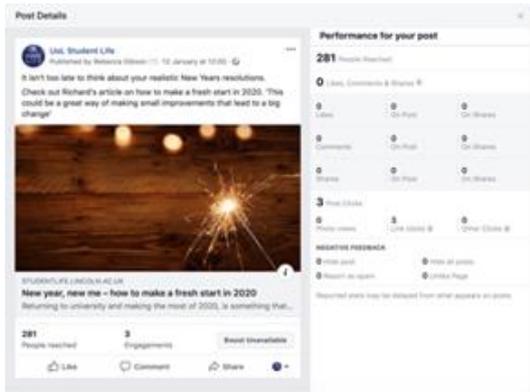
Mindful Appreciation	278	604
Mindful Awareness	355	424
Mindful Observation	320	349
Engagement		
Mindful Breathing	13	24
Mindful Listening	2	26
Mindful Appreciation	0	15
Mindful Awareness	2	16
Mindful Observation	4	18

The eye-catching illustrations may have helped the series perform better than a text only graphic or video. It may be worth the project team considering releasing further content of this type which underpins and supports the wider work of the project, including some of the video content and transitional wellbeing work. Using the graphics in this way would make the content more relevant to the project, and the inclusion of links within the post could increase the engagement of students with other project content.



4.34 Student Life Blogs

Student blogs produced during the evaluation period (*Getting Involved when Starting University*, *Reach Out*, *New Year's Resolutions*, *10 Things to do before you come to Uni*, *International Day of Happiness*) were the worst performing content. It may be that the stock imagery typically used in these blogs affects viewer engagement, as it fails to make the posts look relevant and relatable. Given the success of infographic style posts, it may be a good idea to create infographic videos summarising some of the content within the blogs. Student producers should also be encouraged to share the content they have created via their own channels to improve reach.



Several blogs bucked the trend of poor performance however. A hard hitting piece ‘*When in a Mental Health Crisis*’ attracted around five times more views than is typical for an article despite the fact that it was released during a time when Covid-19 was affecting social media reach. Several other articles focusing on talking about mental health and supporting peers in crisis also performed well compared to others on the website. Given the success of pieces focusing on these topics, the project team may want to consider creating more content that is honest and straightforward about mental health difficulties, ensuring that relevant information and signposting is appended to such articles and that trigger warnings are included where necessary.

4.35 Fika app

4.35 (i) Trial with University of Lincoln students

As part of the project, Dr Roger Bretherton, Associate Professor based in the School of Psychology investigated the effectiveness of an app-based wellbeing intervention (Fika) on students’ psychological wellbeing.

92 university students (91% female, 8% male, 1% fluid; average age 18.4 years) were randomly allocated between two groups:

Group one (N=46) was assigned app-based positive psychology exercises (Fika).

Group two (N=46) was assigned an app-based journaling task (Day One).

Both groups were instructed to use their assigned apps for five minutes at least three times a week, over six weeks. Four psychometric instruments were administered at baseline, 3-week and 6-week intervals: The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener et al. 1985), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS, Watson et al. 1988), and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE, Chen et al. 2001). Between groups analyses of variance were conducted.

The results of the study were promising, with Group 1 (Fika) attaining statistically significant 6-week post-test scores on all four measures: SWLS ($F(1.888, 169.943)=12.385, p<.001$), Positive Affect Schedule ($F(2,180)=4.866, p=.009$), GSE ($F(2,180)=14.274, p<.001$), and significantly lower post-test Negative Affect Schedule ($F(1.840, 165.604)=3.920, p=.025$).

From a research perspective, this study adds further evidence to the assertion that regular use of positive psychology interventions, such as those in the Fika app, are effective for improving psychological wellbeing. It carries considerable implications for retention, engagement and academic attainment in university students. In terms of the project, it lends support to the promotion of the

Fika app to all students at the university, and potentially in partner organisations, as a means to improve student wellbeing and reduce the pressure on student wellbeing services.

Dr Bretherton plans to disseminate the results of the study in 2020.

4.35 (ii) Feedback from WOW cohort of pre-entry students

Students at the WOW summer school were given access to the Fika app to try out the exercises and interventions. The majority of participants were very positive about the app.

'There's breathing exercises...which were really helpful... they were vocally instructed, you had someone telling you what to do which was quite nice.'

'I have used lots of different apps but the fact that you have a 5 minute workout option is quite nice as it's easy to fit into your day.'

'I really enjoyed the app and I will continue using it.'

4.35 (iii) Focus group with eight university students

Towards the end of the first year of the project, a small scale focus group was conducted by the Digital Content Creators to gain feedback on proposed new features of the app, and ask for students' opinions as to how the app could be best used with students at the pre-entry stage. The focus group were overwhelmingly positive about the new content created by Fika. It was apparent from the feedback that the video content within the app was valued, and that embedding Lincoln specific content was also desirable – work on this has already commenced with Fika. Several students also mentioned the use of awards or rewards to encourage greater uptake of app content. Again, Fika's new courses will feature completion certificates, which may help offer a reward-based element to app usage. The community section of the app also received positive feedback, and the project team should ensure that as they continue to work with Fika that the app offers opportunities for students to connect with each other, both pre and post arrival. The questions asked to students and selected responses are outlined below.

How can we encourage students to use the app?

'Maybe promoting it at the beginning of the year, at fresher's fayre and open days. Setting challenges on social media to complete tasks and awards.'

'Getting new students to use these type of apps is difficult because there are a lot of students who are happy to just turn up and see how things goes. I think you want to target those who are maybe a bit nervous. Maybe just an email a few days after results day, talk about it on the social media. Try frame it like "If you are having some worries, this app has easily accessible short videos that cover a range of topics." For current students, I think just making it known through the odd email, posters and on Blackboard is the best way. Those who do want to use it will likely seek it out, whereas if you push it too much it may deter people.....'

'If there was a way of rewarding students who gain particular rewards on Fika to encourage people to use the app in the first place, incoming students would have in incentive to use the resources and the benefits of what they are learning would come afterwards. I think people are less likely to take time to proactively download an app if they don't know enough about it. I think Fika could be promoted and explained by personal tutors so that there is more of an understanding of what the app does.'

'Talk more about it in the podcast – the next episode could centre around support systems, Fika being a major one, and an accessible one. I haven't seen us promote it on social media as yet – if we are allowed to do that, we should because I think that would be a great way to promote it – also when students get their welcome packs, it might be worth slipping in links to Student Life and Fika – it will help get the word out that we're here to support struggling students.'

'Engage on social media platforms – get current and new students to post about it across all social media platforms; Add it to the end credits of Student Life videos possibly – the same way we do with Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok (or on videos with a special focus on mental health support); Create short, engaging videos with first year students talking about their experiences with the app, so new students can see other students engaging with it; Promotion through Student Wellbeing and Residential Wardens as both of them will deal with first year students and mental health support.'

'A fun and brief explanatory video to run them through the basics of the app functionality and purpose. Include reviews from other students. Make it part of their welcome package when they start in..... Maybe advertise it in a way that isn't a leaflet as these are often discarded, especially if a student has already been give a load. Maybe a miniature popup book with quick explanations within it?'

How can we use the current features on the app with incoming students?

'Promoting and signposting to the articles and courses on making friends and connections, beating homesickness would be great for incoming students. Encouraging them to complete the awards that are most useful to them e.g. connection.'

'Directing them to specific videos and resources that help with starting uni/managing stress/confidence. If students know of a specific resource for a specific struggle, they may be more likely to access it than if they're just directed to Fika generally.'

'..... the community section could... be a good feature to link students with potential course mates before they arrive.'

'I think the connections and confidence areas of the library would be particularly useful as it will give people the skills they need to make friends when starting university.'

'I think all the categories such as "Manage Stress, Sharpen Your Focus, Get Positive".. they can all work with incoming students. All of those headings will apply to students who are starting university and are looking for support or help.'

'The community section for upcoming students to voice concerns about university life and the workload, and for current students to post reassuring tips.'

What content would be useful for A-level students?

'Preparing for university, information on the options other than university, how to revise, accepting unexpected grades, articles or videos on extra-curricular activities that universities look for.'

'Motivation and focus would be good for A-level students who are doing exams and revising. In the 'manage stress' section, there is a video called 'Prepare for What's Next', which would be useful for A-level students transitioning into whatever they're planning on doing after school.'

'I would say content that is about that transitional process, so perhaps packing checklists, advice on what to do if you don't get the grades, case studies from people who didn't do so well at A-level and are now really successful.'

'Focus hacks, practical stress hacks, and calming techniques. I think all the content can be relevant.....'

'I think the different categories of exercises are a great idea – confidence, connection and positivity would be key ones to promote to A-level students in the last leg before Uni. I also think the profile section where you can write your mentally fit goal is genius, because they can look back on it after they finish A-levels and think, did I achieve this; and if not, they can use it as a goal for first year of uni.'

'Hearing what first year students have to say about their first year at university (or their first few weeks) – top tips for moving to university, engaging with your university community, surviving Freshers week, things they've learnt and wished they'd known before coming to university; Preparing for the move to university – packing tips, leaving your friends and family.....'

'What to expect when coming to university, how to prepare to go to university. Virtual campus tours to refresh their memories from open days and become more familiar with it before they arrive.'

What content would be most beneficial at the start of university?

'Beating homesickness, making friends, staying in touch without staying dependent on those at home, managing your work load, sports and society benefits, testimony from students who may have struggled in first year but that overcame their issues and went on to really enjoy university, easy recipes for healthy meals.'

'I think the confidence videos are most beneficial for people starting university. The confidence audio guides could be really good as podcasts are popular at the moment, and so the audio guide style could work well and it really accessible. 'Friendship Challenges' is also a section which could be extremely useful and reassuring to people that are just starting university.'

'Advice for making friends, and homesickness advice.'

'Course hacks – particularly things like how to present confidently as I know that can be tough at the very start!'

'I think connection would be most important as they have probably just moved away from home and want to make new friends. Two other factors could be motivation – as they may feel down with all the change of moving to a new uni and such – and focus; starting classes, and moving to a new house requires a lot of organisation, focus and attention – it would be good to hone in on these traits whilst starting uni.'

'How to cope with homesickness and loneliness; Connecting with other people in your university halls – not sure if you can actually do this but I just thought it would be nice for first year students, who may be feeling lonely or isolated in their flats, to contact other people who may feel the same that live in their university halls – a way to connect people; Stay focused through first year – how to balance your work and social life...'

'Making friends, what to do if you don't really like going on nights out and drinking and therefore feel like you're missing out on making friends and fitting in with flatmates.'

How do you feel about the new student video clips? Will these be useful to students?

'Yes, I think one of the most helpful things is knowing that you aren't alone in a situation or problem that you're experience – seeing student video clips of people that have overcome these and how can be more useful than just article because it puts a face to the story, makes it seem more real and relatable.'

'Student video clips are really relatable for students using the app. I think seeing other students on the app and using the app can stop people from feeling embarrassed/ashamed to be using an app such as Fika, as it can be hard to admit to yourself that you need help. I think it would be good if there were summaries of who the students are, where/what they study etc in order to make it slightly more personal.'

'I think they're helpful in the sense that it makes the content a lot more relatable. I personally find reading information more useful than hearing it from someone, but I think having that option will appeal to different people.'

'I thought this was a really beneficial part of the app. Hearing it from other students makes the app so much more relatable – also it's easier to watch a video than it is to read a student's account of how they deal with their student life. I also think the way they have been fitted in was really smart, and the general aesthetic of the app was pleasing to the eye and made it more fun to explore the different features.'

'Yes definitely. I think hearing what other students are doing is a really great way to engage new students.'

'They are logical, calming and helpful. For example, I watched one on how to treat yourself regarding studying during the current situation. It reminded me to not be hard on myself, to balance my work time well, and to recognise how well I am doing.'

'These types of videos will be helpful for students, as they act as a reassurance and helping hand when they are stressed. They offer advice and remind them about self-care, which will be essential to hear for some students.'

Are there any places where student life content could be used on the app?

'I think that the content on Student Life would fit really well into the app because they cover similar topics, I think the app could use slightly longer written articles so that there is a collation of information – this is somewhere student life content would work well. All of the self-help style vlogs on student life would fit really well onto the app.'

'Student Life content could be used in basically any of the sections. The Fresher Take podcasts could be really relevant to some of the content that the app has and maintains the student-focus of the advice. I also think some of the content on Student Life's social media could be used on the community section of Fika, as the Instagram often has people sharing positive stories and experiences that could be put on the community page.'

'Absolutely, for every heading on the awards section of the app, student life has made content on them. Videos would work better, if they could be shortened and optimised.'

'I think... content focused around self-care, mental health, and the podcast episode dealing with deadlines could all be incorporated into the app. There aren't any long audio clips on the app, so (the) podcast could be a good alternative for someone who wants something a bit longer to listen to while working for example.'

'Definitely. I think it would be great to get...content creators to make video – and also share topics they would like to see covered on the app. I noticed that a lot of the things talked about were things... already covered.... definitely ask to link it to...videos and blogs.....'

'The Student Life videos would definitely contribute well. Student life tips could be posted in the community section.'

What are your thoughts on the new community section of the app?

'I like that there is a space to connect to other people on the app, but it feels a little messy I wasn't really sure what it was all about to start with. I like that it is anonymous as well, it makes people more likely to post on there.'

'I think the community section is really uplifting. To see other people finding simple pleasures and positivity when you're feeling negative, or like you can't find this positivity yourself can be incredibly helpful. It's also really refreshing to scroll through a feed which is in the style of social media but you're not worried about seeing something which is critical, negative or upsetting...'

'I think it's nice to be able to discuss with other people, but it feels a bit cluttered. People are trying to reply to one another but there isn't a way to do this – and so there's a lack of ability to interact.'

'I like being able to cheer someone's post as it's encouraging and shows you can relate to other people. I also think the fact you can't comment on other people's posts is good as it stops any risk of negativity. It's nice to hear about other people's experiences and how they're coping at the minute.'

'I like it. I think if you engage students to use the app it would benefit students to hear from one another - how they're coping with everything etc.'

'It seems like a good place to explain your worries, especially in the current situation and how it's affecting education, exams, and revision. It's also a useful platform where members can explain their solutions to their problems, potentially helping others who can relate. Overall, it is a useful place for members to express worries and post solutions, and for others to read, relate to, and feel as though they aren't alone.'

General comments

'Really nice UI, colourful, it took ages for my confirmation email to come through, bit overwhelming, no tutorial on how to use.'

'It would be good if there was a way to search for specific types of videos or particular topics, so that you had a list of everything that was available to you under that bracket. For example, the 'living at home' section is under the 'stress' heading, but people may not think to look here for it. I think the app has a good balance between community, but also still being fairly anonymous and therefore less intimidating to sign up to. The benefit of the videos is that everything seems much more personal, and you're seeing positive and smiley faces whilst hearing advice, which makes it much easier to receive. I really like the statements section on the profile page as this gives users something to refer back to, however this could perhaps be even more interactive with the option to set goals and add updates to statements.'

'I really like the concept of the app, but I feel as though without any true benefit from taking part in the awards, it may be a struggle to get people involved.'

'I think if there was a search bar in the library section that could be helpful as opposed to having to scroll through all the sections to find what you're looking for. This could also be a good way to have certain key words link to other relevant resources.'

4.36 Digital Led Content – Conclusions

A hugely diverse range of digital content has been produced for the project, and whilst this makes generalisation difficult, there are some common themes across all types of content which offer opportunities for learning. Generally, there was a drop off in engagement across all Student Life content in spring and summer with posts performing less well in light of the pandemic and campus closing early. However, despite this, mental health content continues to do relatively well.

In terms of top reach and engagement, the best performing content in recent months has been relevant and timely, even if it has been reposted. Content posted for Mental Health Awareness week pulled in better numbers than other content for reach and engagement, despite being promoted heavily before. The *Students React* videos were reposted during Mental Health Awareness Week and performed better than a lot of other reposted content, showing the format and topic has staying power. Similarly, wellbeing related content promoted as part of the *Study Happy* event was successful. This indicates that linking content to relevant awareness days in the calendar and to wider events which are happening within the university offers benefits in terms of increasing reach and engagement due to the content being topical (and possibly trending) on social media.

Content also seems to do well when disseminated via university channels other than the Student Life Channel, as demonstrated by the success of the podcast episode embedded in the Learning at Lincoln site. Embedding content within existing university channels increases reach and targets students who may not yet be familiar with project content. The project team should look for ways in which content can be more widely shared using other existing university channels.

Evidence suggest that graphics and animations do not perform as well as live action videos. Additionally, feedback from the Fika focus group highlights that the video clips within the app are some of the most valued content, whilst in comparison, animated text videos posted for MHAW didn't have any engagement. However, the *Self Care Sunday* illustration series performed well, again possibly because it was linked to a specific event (albeit one created by the project team). It may be worth creating further illustrative series in future, linking them to specific events and using them to promote live video content rather than using them as standalone posts.

The timing of when content is released is also crucial. The *Fresher Take* podcast has generally performed well, but the Handling Homesickness episode posted in January, when homesickness is known to be heightened, performed better than most. In contrast, the *Dealing with Deadlines* episode was released at a time which was less relevant for this topic and performed poorly. When planning for filming and release, specific flash points in the academic year, university led events and national awareness days should be considered, with relevant content released to coincide with these.

The worst performing content released has been blogs and articles, giving weight to evidence that live action videos are preferred. However, harder hitting mental health content performed well. The project team should consider creating more of this type of content, or possibly creating blogs which compliment video content.

Lastly, caution should be exercised when considering the high levels of reach the project content has achieved. Reach is not the same as engagement, and some of the audience reached may only have viewed the content briefly, which is often supported by audience retention figures. However, this should not detract from the fact that project content does seem to be drawing a significant audience on social media, raising awareness of the existence of the project.

5. End of Year One Annual Review

The Annual Review below details the project work which has been carried out to the end of Year One (June 2020), and that which is planned for Year Two. The project activity is arranged into distinct work packages which align directly to the objectives of the original bid.

Work package 1	Project work carried out in Year One
<p>Partner collaboration City wide working with partners</p> <p>Increase partner involvement across all areas of the project</p> <p>Increase involvement with Lincolnshire Police</p> <p>Involvement of students at BGU and Lincoln College with trials of digital content and apps</p> <p>Further involvement of external partners in content creation and further engagement with digital project resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned each partner a relationship manager and sent introduction email • Filming carried out at Lincoln College • Development work with VitruCare, assisting in content creation for the app • Initial discussions with dedicated contact at Lincolnshire Police around co-creation of content • Briefs for project work sent to student workers at BGU, workshop held for applicants and BGU students have commenced work, involving them in student co-production
	Project work planned for Year Two
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly project updates to be sent to all partners by relationship managers, template provided by project manager • Create a dedicated section in Teams to record partner interactions • Relationship managers to work with dedicated contact in Lincolnshire Police to increase involvement • Distribute monthly filming schedule to BGU and other partners through relationship managers
Work package 2	Project work carried out in Year One
<p>Digital Content Creation Development of student led content by Student Life team</p> <p>Create schedule filming for the year ahead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive range of student co-produced digital content produced, evaluated and disseminated via a range of social media channels • Digital content produced for use by transitional outreach team in presentations and workshops • Fresher Take podcast episodes produced, including supporting video clips • Fika app trial complete and Fika available to all students • Focus groups held to evaluate digital content
	Project work planned for Year Two

Continue to work with Fika to promote and evaluate the app	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Month by month filming schedules to be planned, revised and implemented, including evaluation plans • Fresher Take episodes to be planned, revised and implemented, including evaluation plans • Promotion and evaluation of FIKA to be planned and implemented, including plans for embedding peer support, work with personal tutors and work to prescribe courses to specific schools
Work package 3	Project work carried out in Year One
<p>Student steering Students to lead and steer project through a Student Advisory Board</p> <p>Formalise student steer of project through advisory board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students involved in co-production of many digital resources • Students involved in focus groups for evaluation • SU Sabbatical Officers attend Steering Group • UROS Student Researchers included in Steering Group membership
	Project work planned for Year Two
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Student Advisory Board (SAB) in Wellbeing to be used to steer and feedback on project
Work package 4	Project work carried out in Year One
<p>Peer support Students will be enabled to support themselves and each other developing emotional resilience and self-sufficiency through peer to peer content and interaction Creation of new student roles (Wellbeing Champions) and strengthening of existing ones (peer mentors)</p> <p>Aim to build in peer-to-peer approaches into the existing NCOP project</p> <p>Work more closely with SU to develop and evaluate peer to peer approaches Peer led work, with students encouraged to share their own experiences with pre-arrival students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SU have trained staff and student representatives via Student Minds training, with the intention of embedding Wellbeing Champions in the Student Reps Network • Project resources have been shared with LincHigher, embedded in online courses and distributed directly to schools, data will be provided to the project manager for evaluation purposes
	Project work planned for Year Two
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve regular liaison through relationship manager approach to work more closely with SU to develop and monitor effectiveness of Wellbeing Champions • Work with SU sabbatical officers, WOW ambassadors etc to come out and co- present Transitional School sessions, to share lived experience and do informal Q & A's. Student representatives could also support Fresh Start and other workshops • Liaise with BGU to highlight the Wellbeing Champions model and assist in facilitating a similar scheme at BGU • Work with LincHigher to support each other's outreach work, create video content and online resources • Produce more video case studies on transitional student experiences for use on the website, online and in outreach presentations
Work package 5	Project work carried out in Year One

<p>Transitional outreach Delivery of specialist elements of transitional and early intervention support to schools and colleges working with external partners through visits to school and colleges</p> <p>TMHS team to implement liaison with welfare teams within schools and colleges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous transitional outreach visits have been made to schools including assembly style and workshop formats, feedback has been collated for evaluation Focus groups have been held to inform future content Schools have been contacted to establish if they would welcome transitional visits in the Autumn term, with some positive responses
Project work planned for Year Two	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face to face outreach is currently suspended, however digital resource packs are being distributed for use virtually Wellbeing Team will contact all schools in the new academic year, to offer support through welfare teams 	
Work package 6	Project work carried out in Year One
<p>Transitional events TMHS team development of student-led transitional workshops and conference-type events for students who are applying to university</p> <p>Development of support material to reinforce the key messages delivered face to face</p> <p>Events will be underpinned and supported by digital tools and platforms, which will be used to encourage participating students to interact and engage with student peers once the sessions have ended</p> <p>Over reliance on digital tools needs to be avoided</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WOW Summer School held with 40 attendees Open Days supported by both Digital and Wellbeing teams, with project resources showcased and presentations held Homesickness workshops held at key points in the academic year Project presence at both Welcome Week and Refresher's Fayre
Project work planned for Year Two	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project team presence at open days and offer holder/your first day events Project sessions delivered virtually during 'Get Started' week WOW Summer School planned both face to face and via live stream Plan for a 'Welcome to Lincoln' event for September 2021 which will showcase all the resources produced throughout the project and involve LinHigher, BGU and Lincoln College 	
Work package 7	Project work carried out in Year One
<p>MBSP/life skills sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MBSP trial complete with nineteen participants, results awaited MBSP session included in Fresher Take podcast episode

<p>Sessions to deliver wellbeing and life skills, including Mindfulness Based Strengths Practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Project work planned for Year Two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further planning subject to results of trial, however outline plans include ideas for MBSP sessions to be delivered via podcasts and videos, students can access them in their own time • Small MBSP workshops may be delivered as part of Fresh Start, if this isn't possible students can be directed to podcasts and videos • Wellbeing and digital to work together to produce a video of Fresh Start workshops
<p>Work package 8</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Project work carried out in Year One</p>
<p>Dissemination Dissemination of outputs nationally through the OfS and other pre-existing networks</p> <p>Plan for dissemination of key findings and accomplishments</p> <p>The Student Life Team will help capture the projects finding and outcomes by creating videos and other resources which can be shared nationally via a best practice repository</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project outputs have been disseminated via various routes through social media, via LinHigher and through the OfS Network and Digital Communities of Practice • Project team members have presented at numerous internal and external events • Written pieces have been published by the OfS, IMPact and BERA • A project overview video has been produced and distributed • Case studies have been published by the OfS • The project manager has created a guide to 'topic packages' for team members to follow should they wish to work on journal articles, tap into the expertise of JS and others with the aim to publish in IMPact and other relevant journals • Resources and written pieces have been shared through UMHAN • A literature review was prepared and distributed internally and through the OfS network • All dissemination is tracked through chronological list, with feedback attached for evaluation purposes <p style="text-align: center;">Project work planned for Year Two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos to be produced to give an overview of work currently being carried out and capture findings • Video to be produced showcasing transitional workshops with views and comments from the teachers • Resources and content to be shared via the Digital Community of Practice (Slack Channel) and directly to the OfS for dissemination via OfS networks • Dissemination timetable to be drawn up, including list of key conferences and other dissemination events, ensuring opportunities are available for every team member

6. End of Year One Output and Outcome Tracking

The following table details the outputs and outcomes defined in the original bid and using a traffic light system identifies which outputs and outcomes have been met, partially met or not started in year one of the project.

Outputs

Key outputs		How output met	Comments and planning/actions to ensure continuous delivery, if required
No.			
OP1	Delivery of specialist elements of transitional and early intervention support to schools and colleges working with external partners through visits to school and colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 visits to 14 schools have taken place during the evaluation period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further focus groups should be carried out to review current content and inform future content A stronger working relationship with LinHigher should be established to identify schools and engage where need is greatest (few students accessing university, large numbers of students with special needs etc.) Virtual visits should be offered where face to face intervention cannot be resumed
OP2			

	Development of support material to reinforce the key messages delivered face to face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital content and print resources (homesickness postcards, z-cards) have been produced and continue to be produced for use in schools and within the university Parent/teacher resources have been designed and made available to all schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further feedback on sources should be gathered in inform future project content Suitable digital content should be sent out to schools to be used in school or as resources for students and carers
OP3	Students and their families will have access to support materials at key times via digital tools/platforms and print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have access to some print and digital resources pre-entry, during transition and throughout university 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources should continue to be developed and refined, and constructive feedback obtained on all resources via further focus groups
OP4	Materials will be readily available at all stages of student transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have access to some print and digital resources pre-entry, during transition and throughout university 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning is required to ensure further access to resources pre-entry
OP5	Development of online digital support to reinforce face to face aspects of the project and student led material to reinforce online aspects of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of digital content has been produced and released, with student co-production being part of all digital content creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content should continue to be created, refined, and feedback obtained vis focus groups, social media metrics should continue to be monitored
OP6	Delivery of a suite of digital tools to support the wellbeing and mental health of students through transition and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fika app has been trialled and is available to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metrics for Fika use should be continuously monitored, and further focus groups should be planned
OP7	Development and evaluation of positive psychological interventions with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fika trial has been completed, initial results are promising and full write up is in progress MBSP small scale trial has been completed, results awaited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metrics for Fika use should be continuously monitored Dependent on the results of the MBSP trial, further trials should be planned
OP8	MBSP to become a sustainable programme delivered by trained staff and/or students making it widely accessible to all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MBSP small scale trial is in progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on the results of the MBSP trial, plans should be put in place to train staff and students to make MBSP widely accessible

Outcomes

Key:

Outcome can be fully evidenced during evaluation period



Outcome can be partially demonstrated during evaluation period



Outcome cannot be demonstrated during evaluation period



	Key Outcomes	How outcome evidenced during evaluation period	Comments
No.	Measurable increase in:		
OC1	Levels of resilience and confidence in students during the transition phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from transitional outreach sessions indicates that the majority of transitional students feel more confident post-intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further pre and post intervention questionnaires and focus groups should be planned to assess whether this outcome continues to be met
OC2	Ability of students to positively confront the challenges experienced during the transition phase due to the acquisition of life skills	Data from transitional outreach sessions indicates that the majority of transitional students feel more positive about managing change post-intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further pre and post intervention questionnaires and focus groups should be planned to assess whether this outcome continues to be met
OC3	Student entry numbers from targeted schools and colleges due to positive impact of outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should be collected for 2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes to assess if there is an increase in entry numbers
OC4	Engagement of schools and colleges with transitional wellbeing team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 visits at 14 schools have taken place and further bookings are being taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School booking numbers should continue to be monitored to ensure continuous engagement with new and existing schools

			<p>to ensure this outcome continues to be met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual visits should be offered where face to face interventions cannot resume
OC5	The wellbeing of the general student population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre and post intervention questionnaires and focus groups should be planned to assess whether outcome has been met
OC6	Student attendance and attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should be collected for 2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes to assess if there is an increase in attendance and attainment
OC7	Engagement of students with extra-curricular activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should be collected for 2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes to assess if there is an increase in engagement with extra-curricular activities Pre and post intervention questionnaires and focus groups should be planned for 2020-21 intake to assess whether outcome has been met
OC8	Willingness of students to talk about their mental wellbeing in a positive manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student co-producers and students taking part in the focus group spoke willingly and positively about mental wellbeing WOW attendees spoke positively about mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive discussions should be encouraged continuously through digital content and focus groups to ensure this outcome continues to be met Further feedback and focus group data related to transitional visits should be obtained to assess transitional students willingness to talk about mental health

OC9	Normalcy of use of digital tools to enhance mental wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with both the Fika app and digital content is high and has received positive feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of apps and digital content should continue to be monitored via metrics and focus groups to ensure this outcome continues to be met
OC10	Understanding of self-efficacy related to mental wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from focus groups suggests some understanding of self-efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups data indicates that some students feel more could be done to promote self-help. Continued monitoring of resources via focus groups and metrics should ensure these issues are addressed
OC11	Ability of students to discuss difficulties with peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from focus groups and from videos shows students are able and willing to discuss mental health freely with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of content via focus groups and metrics should take place to ensure this outcome continues to be met
OC12	Normalcy of preventative measure such as MBSP in day to day life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MBSP trial data is currently being analysed, following which data should be analysed and further plans put in place to meet this outcome
Measurable reduction in:			
OC13	Students accessing specialist mental health support services during the transition period and early in their university career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should be collected for 2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes to see if there is a change in those accessing support services
OC14	Students with pre-existing mental health diagnoses or disabilities experiencing worsening symptoms due to the stress of transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should be collected for 2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes to see if there is a reduction in worsening of symptoms during transition
OC15	Problem behaviours during the transitional phase (anti-social behaviour etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should be collected for 2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes to see if there is a reduction in problem behaviours

OC16	Withdrawal of students from university at early stage due to mental ill health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should be collected for 2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes to see if there is a reduction in early withdrawal
OC17	Students presenting with more severe mental health issues or at crisis due to the emphasis on continuous self-care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not evidenced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should be collected for 2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes to see if there is a reduction in crisis cases
OC18	Stigmatisation of mental health issues in the student population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from focus groups and videos shows stigma is reducing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future focus groups should contain specific questions regarding stigmatisation to further assess this outcome

7. Activity and Evaluation Plan 2020-21

In preparation for the second, substantive year of the OfS Mental Health project, which will run during the academic year 2020-21, the project team carried out a thorough review of the original project bid. The team considered tools, processes and initiatives which were already taking place, those which had not yet started, and those which required amending. Through a series of virtual meetings the project team developed and refined a plan for 2020-21. The plan consists of a revised project timeline, discreet work packages with designated actions, and a brief description of evaluation methods. The alignment of each work package to the defined project outcomes and outputs has also been listed where appropriate.

The plan outlined in this document forms a template for the running of the project in the second year, but will be revised and updated as necessary, particularly in the light of the ongoing issues caused by social distancing guidelines.

Work Package Timeline

WP	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sept 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sept 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21
1																				
2																				
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WP No.	WP Title
1	Partner collaboration
2	Digital content creation
3	Student Steering
4	Peer support
5	Transitional outreach
6	Transitional events and support materials
7	MBSP/Life Skills
8	Dissemination

Work Package Details

Work packages	Tools Processes Initiatives 	Partner involvement	Date	Status	Evaluation	Output no.	Outcome no.
WP1: Partner collaboration City wide working with partners	Create a dedicated section in Teams to record partner interactions (CN/All)	All partners	June 2020	Not started	Informal feedback from project team	OP1, OP4, OP6	OC4, OC13, OC14, OC15, OC16, OC17, OC18
Increase partner involvement across all areas of the project	Assign each partner a relationship manager (CN/JF/MM/ZM)	All partners	May 2020	Complete	Partnership assessment survey (Wavehill) Informal feedback to relationship managers		
Increase involvement with Lincolnshire Police	Initial email to be sent by each relationship manager to their contacts, template prepared by project manager (CN/JF/MM/ZM)	All partners	June 2020	Complete	Partnership assessment survey (Wavehill) Informal feedback to relationship managers		
Involvement of students at BGU and Lincoln College with trials of digital content and apps	Monthly project updates to be sent to all partners by relationship managers, template provided by project manager (CN/JF/MM/ZM)	All partners	July 2020 – project end	Ongoing	Partnership assessment survey (Wavehill) Informal feedback to relationship managers		
Further involvement of external partners in content creation and further engagement with digital project resources							

	Relationship managers to work with dedicated contact in Lincolnshire Police to increase involvement (ZM/MM)	Lincolnshire Police	June 2020 onwards	Initial contact made; future work being planned	Informal feedback to relationship managers Partnership assessment survey (Wavehill)		
	Distribute monthly filming schedule to BGU and other partners through relationship managers (JF/CN/MM/ZM)	All partners	June-July 2020	Filming schedule currently being prepared	Partnership assessment survey (Wavehill) Informal feedback to relationship managers		
	Briefs for project work to be prepared and sent to student workers at BGU to involve them in student co-production (JF)	BGU	June 2020 – project end	Content already created, further work planned	Monthly reports on social media interactions, watch stats Virtual and/or face to face focus groups Student co-production Interviews with Wavehill as part of external evaluation		

WP2: Digital Content Creation Development of student led content by Student Life team Create schedule filming for the year ahead Continue to work with Fika to promote and evaluate the app	Month by month filming schedules to be planned, revised and implemented, including evaluation plans (JF/RG/EK/CN)	N/A	June 2020 to project close	Filming schedule currently being prepared	Monthly reports on social media interactions, watch and listen stats Virtual and/or face to face focus groups Student co-production Interviews with Wavehill as part of external evaluation	OP2, OP3, OP4, OP5, OP6	OC1, OC2, OC5, OC6, OC7, OC8, OC9, OC10, OC11, OC13, OC14, OC15, OC16, OC17, OC18
	Fresher Take episodes to be planned, revised and implemented, including evaluation plans (JF/RG/EK/CN)	N/A	June 2020 to project close	2020-21 schedule currently being prepared	Monthly reports on social media interactions, watch and listen stats Virtual and/or face to face focus groups Student co-production Interviews with Wavehill as part of external evaluation		
	Promotion and evaluation of FIKA to be planned and implemented (JF/CN)	Fika	June 2020 – project end	Plans in place to conduct closed trials with cohorts of students from October 2020 Work with academic staff in progress to	Monthly reports on app usage Virtual and/or face to face focus groups Student co-production interviews with Wavehill		

				<p>promote the app</p> <p>Work with SU in progress to embed the use of the app within the work of Wellbeing Champions</p>			
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<p>WP3: Student steering</p> <p>Students to lead and steer project through a Student Advisory Board</p> <p>Formalise student steer of project through advisory board</p>	<p>Existing Student Advisory Board (SAB) in Wellbeing to be used to steer and feedback on project (ZM)</p>	N/A	September 2020 – end of project	To be started Sept 2020	<p>Student interviews conducted by Wavehill</p> <p>Gathering of continuous feedback on student involvement with project at regular SAB meetings</p> <p>Focus groups with SAB</p>	OP2, OP5, OP6, OP7	OC8, OC10, OC11, OC12, OC18
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<p>WP4: Peer support Students will be enabled to support themselves and each other developing emotional resilience and self-sufficiency through peer to peer content and interaction Creation of new student roles (Wellbeing Champions) and strengthening of existing ones (peer mentors)</p> <p>Aim to build in peer-to-peer approaches into the existing NCOP project</p> <p>Work more closely with SU to develop and evaluate peer to peer approaches</p>	<p>Improve regular liaison through relationship manager approach to work more closely with SU to develop and monitor effectiveness of Wellbeing Champions (CN)</p>	UoL SU	June 2020 onwards	Ongoing – work in progress with Wellbeing Champions and embedding resources into International Students ‘Pen Pals’ scheme	<p>Focus groups with Wellbeing Champions, student reps and key SU staff</p> <p>Student interviews by Wavehill</p>	OP1, OP2, OP3, OP4, OP5, OP6	OC1, OC2, OC3, OC5, OC6, OC7, OC8, OC9, OC10, OC11, OC13, OC14, OC15, OC16, OC17, OC18
	<p>Work with SU sabbatical officers, WOW ambassadors etc to come out and co-present Transitional School sessions, to share lived experience and do informal Q & A’s. Student representatives could also support Fresh Start and other workshops (ZM/MM)</p>	UoL SU	September 2020 onwards, or when transitional visits can resume	To be started Sept 2020	<p>Feedback from transitional outreach sessions</p> <p>Focus groups with students</p> <p>Feedback from key school staff</p>		

Peer led work, with students encouraged to share their own experiences with pre-arrival students	Liaise with BGU to highlight the Wellbeing Champions model and assist in facilitating a similar scheme at BGU (CN)	BGU	September 2020 onwards, or once Wellbeing Champions are fully embedded	To be started Sept 2020	Student interviews by Wavehill		
	Work with LinHigher to support each other's outreach work, create video content and online resources (CN/JF/ZM/MM)	LinHigher	June 2020 onwards	Material already provided by LinHigher online course, initial planning meeting already held with LinHigher and CN/JF/ZM, further work in planning stages	Partnership assessment survey (Wavehill) Focus groups and online surveys with users Social media metrics on engagement with content		

	Produce more video case studies on transitional student experiences for use on the website, online and in outreach presentations (All)	N/A	July 2020 onwards	To be started October 2020 with new student intake	Social media metrics Student co-production interviews conducted by Wavehill Focus groups with users		
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WP5: Transitional outreach Delivery of specialist elements of transitional and early intervention support to schools and colleges working with external partners through visits to school and colleges TMHS team to implement liaison with welfare teams within schools and colleges	Face to face outreach is currently suspended, however digital resource packs are being produced for use virtually (ZM/MM/DM/TL)	N/A	June 2020 onwards	Face to face work suspended, work ongoing on digital resource packs Schools are currently being booked in for the new academic year	Focus groups with users		
	Wellbeing Team will contact all schools in the new academic year, to offer support through welfare teams (ZM/MM/DM/TL)	N/A	September 2020 onwards		Feedback from transitional outreach sessions Focus groups with students Feedback from key school staff		

<p>WP6: Transitional events TMHS team development of student-led transitional workshops and conference-type events for students who are applying to university</p> <p>Development of support material to reinforce the key messages delivered face to face</p> <p>Events will be underpinned and supported by digital tools and platforms,</p>	Project team presence at open days and offer holder/your first day events. (All)	N/A	Already in place, to be continued throughout the project	Ongoing	Social media metrics/tracking of engagement with apps etc pre entry Feedback surveys	OP1, OP2, OP3, OP4, OP5, OP6	OC1, OC2, OC3, OC4, OC5, OC6, OC7, OC8, OC9, OC10, OC11, OC12, OC13, OC14, OC15, OC16, OC17, OC18
	Project sessions delivered virtually during 'Get Started' week (All)	N/A	September 2020	Sessions are currently being planned for 'Get Started Week' in October	Social media metrics/tracking of engagement with apps etc at the point of entry Feedback surveys Focus groups		

<p>which will be used to encourage participating students to interact and engage with student peers once the sessions have ended</p> <p>Over reliance on digital tools needs to be avoided</p>	<p>Plan for a 'Welcome to Lincoln' event for September 2021 which will showcase all the resources produced throughout the project and involve LincHigher, BGU and Lincoln College (All)</p>	<p>LincHigher, BGU, Lincoln College</p>	<p>Event September 2021, planning from March 2021</p>	<p>Planning to be started March 2021</p>	<p>Feedback surveys</p>		
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<p>WP7: MBSP/life skills sessions</p> <p>Sessions to deliver wellbeing and life skills, including Mindfulness Based Strengths Practice</p>	<p>MBSP sessions to be delivered via podcasts and videos, students can access them in their own time (JF/ED/RG)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>June 2020 onwards</p>	<p>MBSP techniques already included in one podcast, further sessions to be planned as part of filming schedule</p>	<p>Social media metrics/tracking of engagement with apps etc at the point of entry</p> <p>Feedback surveys</p> <p>Focus groups</p>	<p>OP2, OP3, OP4, OP5, OP6, OP7, OP8</p>	<p>OC1, OC2, OC5, OC6, OC7, OC8, OC9, OC10, OC11, OC12, OC13, OC14, OC15, OC16, OC17, OC18</p>
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	Small MBSP workshops may be delivered as part of Fresh Start, if this isn't possible students can be directed to podcasts and videos (All)	N/A	September 2020	To be started Sept 2020, subject to MBSP trial results	Social media metrics/tracking of engagement with apps etc at the point of entry Feedback surveys Focus groups		
	Wellbeing and digital to work together to produce a video of Fresh Start workshops (All)	N/A	September 2020	To be started October 2020 when new students arrive	Social media metrics/tracking of engagement with apps etc at the point of entry Feedback surveys Focus groups		

WP8: Dissemination Dissemination of outputs nationally through the OfS and other pre-existing networks	Dissemination timetable to be drawn up, including list of key conferences and other dissemination events, ensuring opportunities are available for every team member (CN)	Partners to be invited to assist in dissemination at appropriate events	Timetable to be drawn up June 2020 Dissemination throughout project	Complete	Feedback received from sessions delivered at conferences etc. through organisers	N/A	N/A
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<p>Plan for dissemination of key findings and accomplishments</p> <p>The Student Life Team will help capture the projects finding and outcomes by creating videos and other resources which can be shared nationally via a best practice repository</p>	<p>Resources and content to be shared via the Digital Community of Practice (Slack Channel) and directly to the OfS for dissemination via OfS networks (CN/JF/ZM)</p>	N/A	Throughout project	Ongoing as resource are produced, a range of resources have already been shared	Feedback gathered through interactions with other projects on Slack and from responses to content disseminated by the OfS		
	<p>Case studies to be prepared for publication with the OfS (All)</p>	<p>Partner input to be sought if case studies are relevant to them</p>	<p>Current – May/June 2020</p> <p>Other opportunities as they arise</p>	<p>Case study published by the OfS in May 2020</p>	<p>Feedback to be collated (if received)</p>		
	<p>Create a guide to ‘topic packages’ for team members to follow should they wish to work on journal articles, tap into the expertise of JS and others with the aim to publish in IMPact and other relevant journals (All)</p>	N/A	<p>Topic package guide May 2020</p> <p>Write ups throughout project</p>	<p>Topic package guide has been produced, work on research and write ups ongoing</p>	<p>Feedback collated from responses to any written pieces published</p>		

	Dissemination to be tracked through chronological list, with feedback attached for evaluation purposes (CN)	N/A	June 2020 – end of project	Tracking list produced and will be kept updated by PM	N/A		
	Videos to be produced to give an overview of work currently being carried out and capture findings (All)	N/A	June 2020 onwards	Project overview video has already been produced, further videos to be planned as part of filming schedule	Feedback captured within the video		
	Video to be produced showcasing transitional workshops with views and comments from the teachers (All)	N/A	September 2020 onwards	To be started Sept 2020, or as soon as transitional outreach work can resume	Feedback captured within the video		