



Bishop Grosseteste University: Well-being Institutional Enhancement

Background

Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) has a strong track record in widening participation. As a University with an Anglican Foundation, we are committed to being a community with a diverse population of students and staff, and which fosters an ethos of mutual respect, trust and care. We are an open, forward looking community that celebrates diversity and welcomes students and trainees regardless of their race, disability, gender (and its reassignment), marriage/civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, age, or religion and belief.

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Of our student population, 11.3% disclosed a mental health issue in the 2017-18 academic year. The number of disclosures has increased year-on-year since 2015. With this in mind, and in recognition of the increasing awareness globally, particularly within the HE sector, of the need to address mental health issues, BGU has taken a holistic, University-wide approach to wellbeing. We have recognised that wellbeing is not just about niche areas within our University such as Student Advice, Chaplaincy and the Students' Union. The correct response to the increasing prevalence of mental health issues is therefore a whole institution approach and recognising that all aspects of the University are able to respond and engage with this agenda. This holistic approach is founded on both a strategic vision and a series of practical solutions.

Following committee debates, the Institutional Enhancement was agreed as 'wellbeing' for 2017-18 and also for 2018-19. This was then monitored and borne out of our programme of annual monitoring and review. Annual Monitoring takes place across all academic programmes and support departments and thus enables joined up approaches.

BGU's student engagement framework is in-part implemented through a series of Students Creating Change projects that we run on an annual basis, and this provides an ideal mechanism for staff and students to work collaboratively to change culture across the University, all working to improve and instigate impactful responses to wellbeing.

The combined approach of Annual Monitoring and Students Creating Change culminated in the establishment of a Wellbeing Steering Group, the members of which represent a cross-section of the University population, both staff and student. The Wellbeing Steering Group has overseen the development and coordination of activities via five key wellbeing themes: Be Resilient, Be Creative, Be Mindful, Be Active, Be Relaxed.

Broader Picture

Mental health and the well-being of students and staff is of increasing societal concern and there has been a discernible step-change in the numbers of students presenting with issues relating to well-being across the HE sector.

78% of students reported a mental health issue during study

All Party Parliamentary Group for Students Survey (NUS) 2015

Whilst levels of 'low anxiety' affect 41% of the UK population, only 19% of students identified with this lowest descriptor¹. Contributory factors to lower well-being include:

**Living away from home
Debt
Attainment/employment**

**Lack direct contact with support networks
Living with 'others'**

The increasing presentation of students with mental health issues means institutions need to adopt a more holistic approach to meet demands and plan appropriately². 1 in 8 UK students have mental health concerns³, set against a national context of CAMHS services turning away 23% of children referred to them by parents, GPs, teachers and others⁴ (in 2016, mental health support accounted for 13% of the overall NHS budget, 28% of the 'burden of disease').

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The increasing focus on mental health and well-being resulted in discussions at BGU's Quality Assurance Committee, which noted the impacts of increased numbers of extenuating circumstances applications, levels of progression and retention, and the need for safeguarding students and staff. Subsequently, the Learning and Teaching Committee discussed the proposed strategic approach to well-being and recommended the 2017/18 institutional enhancement theme and challenge:

Identify a key action and develop an associated set of activities in your area to progress the process of embedding 'well-being'

This was the focus for a strategic institution-wide drive producing a framework of well-being for the University, delivered via strands relevant to different programmes and departments of the institution. Programme and Departmental Annual Monitoring Reports included the institutional enhancement as part of the cycle of monitoring and review.

Personal Support

At BGU, there was an 80% increase in student counselling referrals related to mental health in 2015/16, and a 50% increase in BGU staff counselling referrals related to mental health from 2015 to 2017. An increased proportion of extenuating circumstances applications are related to mental health (50% of applications received in 2016/17).

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The number and proportion of students disclosing mental health issues has increased in recent years:

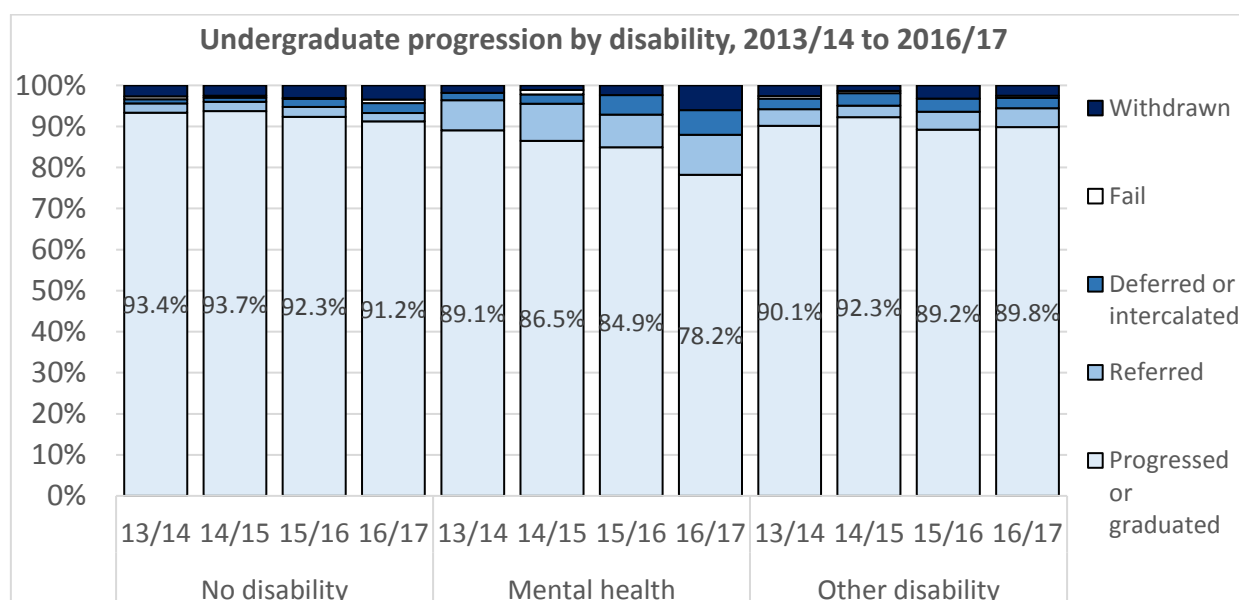
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
No. of mental health disclosures (as proportion of total students)	157 (6.5%)	211 (8.8%)	262 (11.3%)

¹ The Higher Education Academy/Higher Education Policy Institute Student Survey 2017

² HEFCE Report 'Understanding provision for students with mental health problems and intensive support needs' July 2015

³ Unite Students Insight Report 2016

⁴ NHS, 2016



BGU recognised the increases in numbers of students presenting with issues related to mental health and well-being and has sought ways in which to create a culture that is both aware, inclusive and responsive. BGU believe this is reflected positively in the increasing numbers of disclosures and students seeking mental health-related support.

PARTLY REDACTED - Section 40 (part 2) Personal information – applied to some of the data in the table below

	August 2017 to June 2018	August 2016 to July 2017	August 2015 to July 2016
Number of referrals:	158	128	120
REASONS FOR REFERRAL*:			
Mental Health Total	183	129	145
Depression	35	55	54
Anxiety/Panic attacks/Stress	114	81	109
Paranoia	-	-	-
Self-harm	-	Less than five	Less than five
Low self esteem	8	Less than five	7
Anger management	Less than five	Less than five	Less than five
Suicidal Thoughts	-	Less than five	-
Obsessive compulsive disorder	Less than five	Less than five	Less than five
Eating disorder	Less than five	-	Less than five
Other Mental Health	15	Less than five	-
Personality Disorder	Less than five	-	-
PTSD	Less than five	-	-

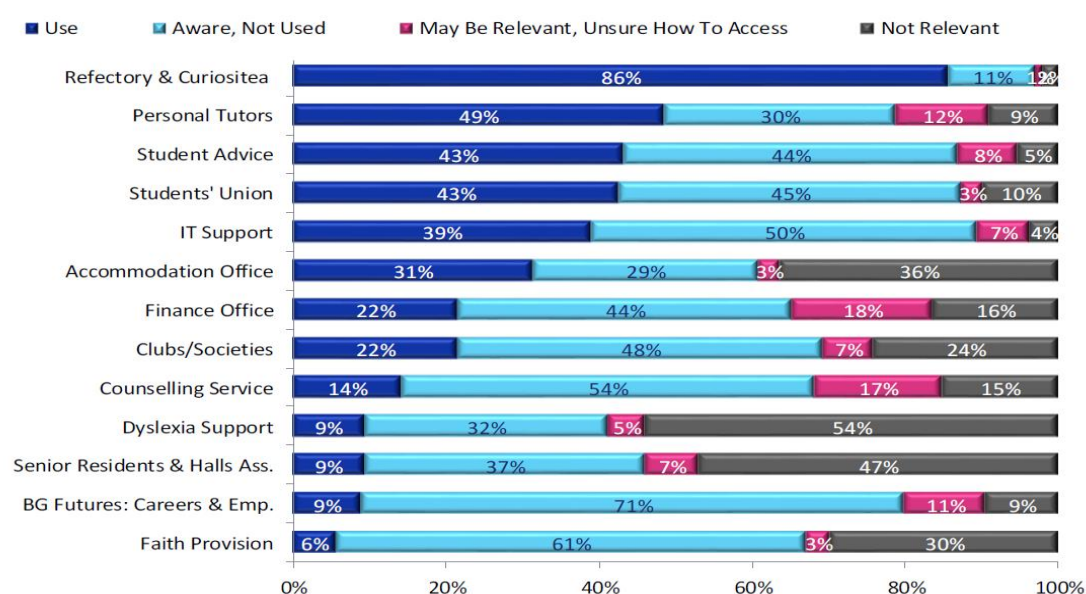
*Number of reasons disclosed exceeds numbers of clients as some individuals presented more than one issue.

In addition to support via the Counselling Service, the Student Advice team began a subscription to Big White Wall (BWW) in 2017/18, ensuring 24/7 online support for BGU students. BWW are encouraged by the rate of engagement with their service in its first year with 80 registrations recorded during 2017/18, exceeding 3% of the total student population – which is higher than BWW's national average for the University sector. The average time spent by students on the site is 27 minutes. Both the Counselling Service and BWW have negligible waiting times at point of access. Access to counselling is only limited by

finding a convenient time to meet (the independent counselling practice we use has a large team of counsellors, so availability is excellent), and BWW provides immediate access to assistive resources online.

Institutional Enhancement

During the previous two years, BGU's Centre for Enhancement in Learning and Teaching (CELT) has played a significant role in assisting staff and students in developing and implementing projects relating to institutional enhancements, whilst the Student Advice team has been reviewing its well-being related provision. The chart below (from the Student Barometer Survey) showing student awareness of and engagement with the holistic net of campus support opportunities has informed the work of the Well-being Steering Group. This group, established in 2017/18, which actively leads the access to and awareness of BGU's well-being services, has created a 'Well-being Map' to support students from 2018/19.



BGU already receives high levels of student satisfaction in respect of services related to students' mental health requirements, and our aim is to realise even higher levels through the enhanced well-being framework.

In terms of Student Advice, how satisfied are you..	2016/17
With staff availability?	95.9%
With the accessibility support provided by Student Advice?	94.9%
With the counselling service available via Student Advice?	92.2%
With the information and guidance provided by Student Advice?	94.1%
In terms of The Chaplaincy, how satisfied are you...	
With the Chaplaincy team's availability to students?	99.2%

Source: BGU Student Satisfaction Survey 2016/17

Well-being Steering Group

The well-being institutional enhancement theme, approved via the committee structure, was formally launched at the 2017 annual Learning and Teaching

Conference. The first day of the conference contained a variety of well-being strands and the second half-day was wholly dedicated to well-being. The establishment of the Well-being Steering Group with representation from across the university and including students has been hugely beneficial. This joined up, strategic approach has resulted in the creation of a university-wide brand and logo comprised of five key themes: Be Resilient, Be creative, Be mindful, Be active, Be relaxed.



Student Engagement Conference – ‘Celebrating Failure’

Building on the success of the previous two years, CELT hosted a Student Engagement Conference for the third year running. This year the conference was entirely student-led and was aimed predominately at students. The theme of the conference was ‘building resilience’ with the aim of challenging the delegates’ perception of failure, thus enabling them to view failure as an opportunity for personal growth. The conference was structured to enable delegates to build resilience, challenge their mind-set and develop a toolkit of strategies for overcoming life’s challenges, whether they be academic or otherwise.

IMAGES REDACTED - Section 40 (part 2) Personal information, applied to photographs.

Well-being week

The Well-being Steering Group organised a dedicated Well-being Week in the run-up to National Mental Health Day. A week-long series of activities was open to both staff and students and included laughter yoga, therapy dogs, small animals, art therapy, music sessions, didgeridoo therapy, wellbeing walks, to name but a few. The library established a publicised well-being collection and provides free herbal tea bags for anyone (staff or student), who borrow from the collection.



Student Engagement

As part of the student engagement strategy and BGU’s Students Creating Change framework, CELT offers funding for research projects that result in a variety of impactful outcomes – for wider sector dissemination and also to ensure practical impact at BGU. All CELT funded projects are dependent on staff and students collaborating to change culture. Major projects have included accessible and inclusive campus, with an initial focus on autism. The development of a network of quiet spaces across campus, inside and out for relaxation, quiet reflection and other specific needs. This initiative has also established a ‘parents and carers’ Facebook™ group to provide support to those who may not have ready access to activities on campus.

BGU have increased the number of paid opportunities on campus for students (e.g. Digital Change Agents, Student Engagement Champions, Student Change Agents), recognising that working on campus provides good practical support for individuals which is then also good for their well-being.

Summary

Many of the activities have been about fun and raising awareness – ‘it’s ok not to be ok’ – but others have focussed on policy review:

- ‘Fitness’ to Study procedure (to become Support for Study Procedure)
- Review of intercalation/extenuating circumstances/crisis intervention procedures
- Late Submissions/Sliding Penalty Scales introduced
- Review of Student Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Procedure

The following well-being framework emerged from the institutional enhancement for 2017/18:

- Links to local mental health services
- Counselling Service (staff/student)
- Big White Wall online wellbeing service
- ‘Fitness’ to Study procedure (to become Support for Study Procedure)
- Review of intercalation/extenuating circumstances/crisis intervention procedures
- Late Submissions/Sliding Penalty Scales introduced
- Review of Student Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Procedure
- Personal Tutoring
- Chaplaincy – pastoral support; social events; religious and secular support for all
- AMOSSHE Resilience Toolkit adopted
- Student Engagement Annual Conference 2018: ‘Celebrating Failure’
- Learning & Teaching Conference 2017: ‘Well-being’ strand
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Students’ Union National Mental Health Awareness Day
- Creation of quiet spaces network
- Students Creating Change projects (linked to institutional enhancement)
- ‘Student Wellbeing Journey’ map created
- Learning Development ‘Live & Learn’ activities
- In partnership with the local authority, ‘Hirebike’ pedal and e-bikes available on campus
- Student and staff Gym Membership and Therapeutic Subscriptions
- BGU Well-being Steering Group
- HR Well-being Strategy
- SU Strategy

All activities and events have been monitored and quantitative and qualitative data recorded. Activities were well attended and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from staff and students. For example, delegates attending the Student Engagement Conference were asked for their feedback:

‘Amazing. The workshops were amazing, the presentations were so good. Really well thought out and very enjoyable.’

‘So many inspirational people. I loved it! Please do more conferences like this!’

‘Very positive and inspirational sessions. Very impressive speakers. Some great positive messages.’

‘All speed presentations were amazing. Brilliant. 😊’

‘The conference made me laugh and cry at some parts, but it made me rethink how I view failure and gave me some very useful strategies. Would definitely recommend to others.’

'It was really inspiring and super helpful! Well done everyone! 😊'

The impact of changes to codes of practice and policies will not be fully established until the end of the next academic cycle.

Next Steps for 2018-19

The result for 2018-19 academic year will be the finalisation of an Institutional Well-being Framework aligning the 5 key themes (Be Resilient, Be creative, Be mindful, Be active, Be relaxed), with Personal Support (staff and student), Health and Fitness, Support for Study and Curriculum Design and Development. The framework will allow BGU to take forward the key themes ensuring they are implemented and embedded successfully. BGU will utilise data evaluation and research in order to assess impact of the various strands of activity. In summary, for 2018-19, BGU will:

- Develop research to inform practice/raise awareness
- Raise BGU's profile nationally with an agenda of well-being
- Further implement and embed activities to enhance/raise awareness
- Review Registry codes/policies/procedures
- Gather examples of current practices supporting well-being
- Gather developments emerging via AMR process/business planning
- Identify gaps in provision
- Seek external funding opportunities
- Evaluate and impact assess strategic approach to well-being
- Establish monitoring and review frameworks for sustainability of BGU's well-being framework
- Investigate a government proposed wellbeing and mental health kite mark that aligns with the student journey