



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

# #QUBeWell

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING FRAMEWORK FOR STAFF & STUDENTS

Towards a healthy Campus:  
Building our Framework Together



Queen's  
Students'  
Union

#QUBeWell



**PHILIP,**  
Masters in Chemistry

[qub.ac.uk/bewell](http://qub.ac.uk/bewell)

“ You realise **you’re not alone**, it’s not only you.  
Other people have been here and beaten it. I feel  
better now than I have for years. I realised  
**I’m stronger than I thought I was.**  
Things can be managed.  
**You can survive.** That’s the lesson. ”

**Philip**

Chemistry Student

# CONTENTS

Forewords	4
Our Key Partners	6
Glossary of Terms	7
Introduction	10
Timeline So Far	11
Covid-19 Response	13
What We Already Know	14
Who is the Framework for?	21
Introducing the Areas we will Focus on	22
Exploring Area 1: Learning Environment	24
Exploring Area 2: Support & Resources	30
Exploring Area 3: Working Environment	45
Exploring Area 4: Living & Awareness-Raising	55
Next Steps: Building Together	60
References	63

# FOREWORDS

**I am delighted to introduce this publication “Towards a Healthy Campus: Building Our Framework Together”.**

Since 2019, Queen’s has had a significant focus on student and staff mental health and wellbeing. This document sets out some of the key milestones, developing projects, and begins to set the scene on how we will plan to move forward.

All members of the Queen’s, staff and students, play an important role in the success of our community. Whether we support the infrastructure of the University, or we have roles that interact with our student community, or we are here to study or undertake research, keeping mentally well helps us be successful and leads to a more fulfilling experience. But when things do not go to plan, it is equally important that we have resources to support you.

#QUBeWell is the Framework within which we will continue to develop our awareness of the needs of our people so that we can respond appropriately. The work of developing the Framework has both been stalled and accelerated by Covid-19. Stalled because we have had to pivot to new ways of working very quickly that meant our consultation process did not progress as planned. But accelerated as we have learnt, now more than ever, about the importance of managing our wellbeing and providing support where it is needed. As we navigate throughout the various challenges presented by Covid, the University will continue to make the wellbeing of its students and staff its first priority.

Our collective response to Covid-19 has put a spotlight on the remarkable abilities of our entire community to work collaboratively and support one another during these unprecedented times.

In this sense, we recommit ourselves to being a compassionate University for our staff and students and their wellbeing.

Throughout each stage of the development of the #QUBeWell Framework, we will be guided by the Universities UK Stepchange Mentally Healthy Universities Framework, the domains and principles of the Student Minds Universities Mental Health Charter, and the Healthy Universities UK Model and Framework for Action. Collectively, these initiatives recognise the importance of a whole university approach to student and staff wellbeing.

We will also continue to develop our positive working relationship with the NHS, government, and staff and student representative bodies on these issues.

We will work with established forums, including but not limited to, the Staff Matters Group, Faculty groups and Student Voice Committees. As well as this, we will undertake more targeted consultations to help us continue to co-produce this Framework to evolve and respond to the wellbeing needs of our staff and students.

**Our University is a place where people study, live and work. It strives to be a nurturing and supportive environment that empowers our students and staff to be mentally well. Moreover, we must seek to create parity of esteem between our physical health and our mental health. Experts show that focusing this on a setting – our healthy campus – will allow us to succeed on that mission.**

**PROFESSOR IAN GREER**

President & Vice-Chancellor

# KATIE NÍ CHLÉIRE

**As the Student Officer for Welfare, we at Queen's Students' Union are delighted to be key partners with the University as we work towards the development of the #QUBeWell Healthy Campus Framework.**

The creation of the framework will be a significant step forward in shaping a mentally healthy university, and is essential not only to providing student support, but to also tackling the stressors impacting on students' mental health.

Mental health is repeatedly identified as a priority issue for students, and in 2019, Queen's Students' Union launched our OMNI – All in for Mental Health movement. The core aim of OMNI is to gain specific insight into the mental health of students at Queen's, and to meaningfully take on those issues. The OMNI Report identified the aspects of university life that have the biggest impact on students' mental health – academic pressures and financial pressures were found to be the lead influences. The OMNI movement mobilised students around the goal of improving our mental health, and had a widespread impact in the University. Mental health is a priority issue within the student movement, and we will always welcome action by Universities towards significant change.

A student's time in university can be formative, and experiences during this time often stay with us for the rest of our lives. The experiences of students are often unique, as students must balance competing priorities, including academic work, part-time jobs, and the transition to Higher Education, as well as socialising, making friends, and making memories we'll have forever. It's crucial that students have the support they need to succeed, as well tackling the stressors that impact so heavily on our wellbeing.

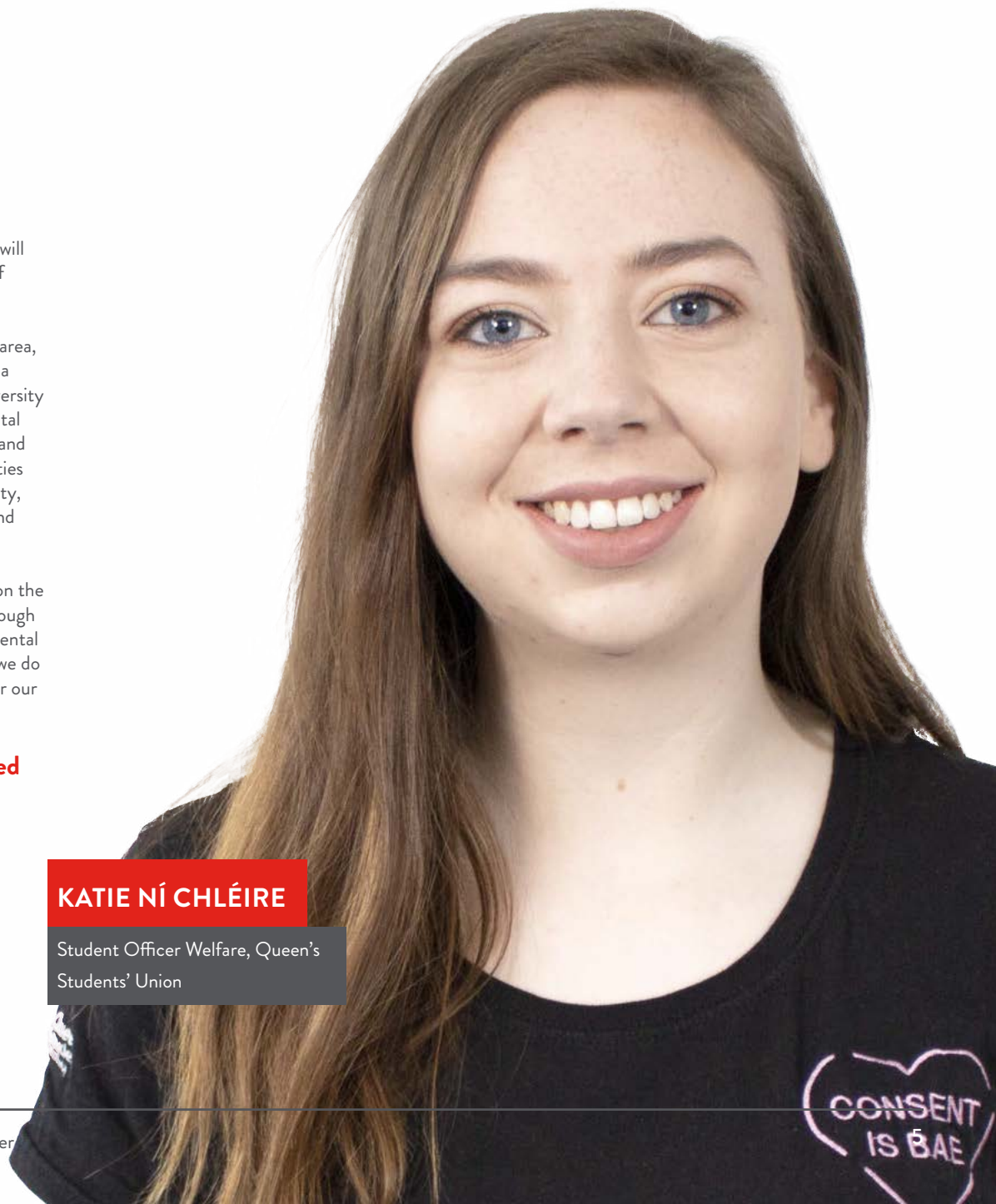
The #QUBeWell Healthy Campus Framework will be about more than looking at student and staff support. It's about taking the whole-University approach, and recognising that each and every student and staff member, irrespective of role, area, and background, has a role in ensuring we have a mentally healthy university. To ensure our University is truly inclusive and supportive to positive mental health, we also need to address the systematic and cultural barriers facing different intersectionalities of our students, including the BAME community, LGBTQ+ community, International students and disabled students.

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed a spotlight on the challenges facing students, and as we move through this crisis and into recovery, keeping student mental health and wellbeing at the core of everything we do as an institution is crucial to a healthy future for our students.

**Queen's Students' Union are excited to continue to work with students, staff and the University as we co-produce the mental health and wellbeing support structures, initiatives, and culture we need for our students at Queen's.**

**KATIE NÍ CHLÉIRE**

Student Officer Welfare, Queen's  
Students' Union



## OUR KEY PARTNERS



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## #QUBeWell

The name of the University's Mental Health & Wellbeing Framework.

## OMNI

The movement launched by Queen's Students' Union in February 2019 to 're-write the rule book on student mental health' and catalyse students and the University to be 'all in for mental health'.

## Healthy Campus

"A learning environment and organisational culture that enhances the health, wellbeing and sustainability of its community and enables people to achieve their full potential."

## Active Campus

A bespoke programme to increase participation using sport and physical activity to support social, recreational and wellbeing of our students, staff and wider community. The three core strands of Active Campus are: Active Fitness, Active Lifestyles and Active Clubs.

## Wellbeing

"Wellbeing can be understood as how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole."

## Physical Wellbeing

"...not just the absence of disease. It includes lifestyle behaviour choices to ensure health, avoid preventable diseases and conditions, and to live in a balanced state of body, mind, and spirit."

## Mental Health

"A state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community."

World Health Organization

## Mental ill-health

"A mental illness is a diagnosable, and treatable, health condition which can be severe enough to disrupt everyday life."

## Mental Health Continuum

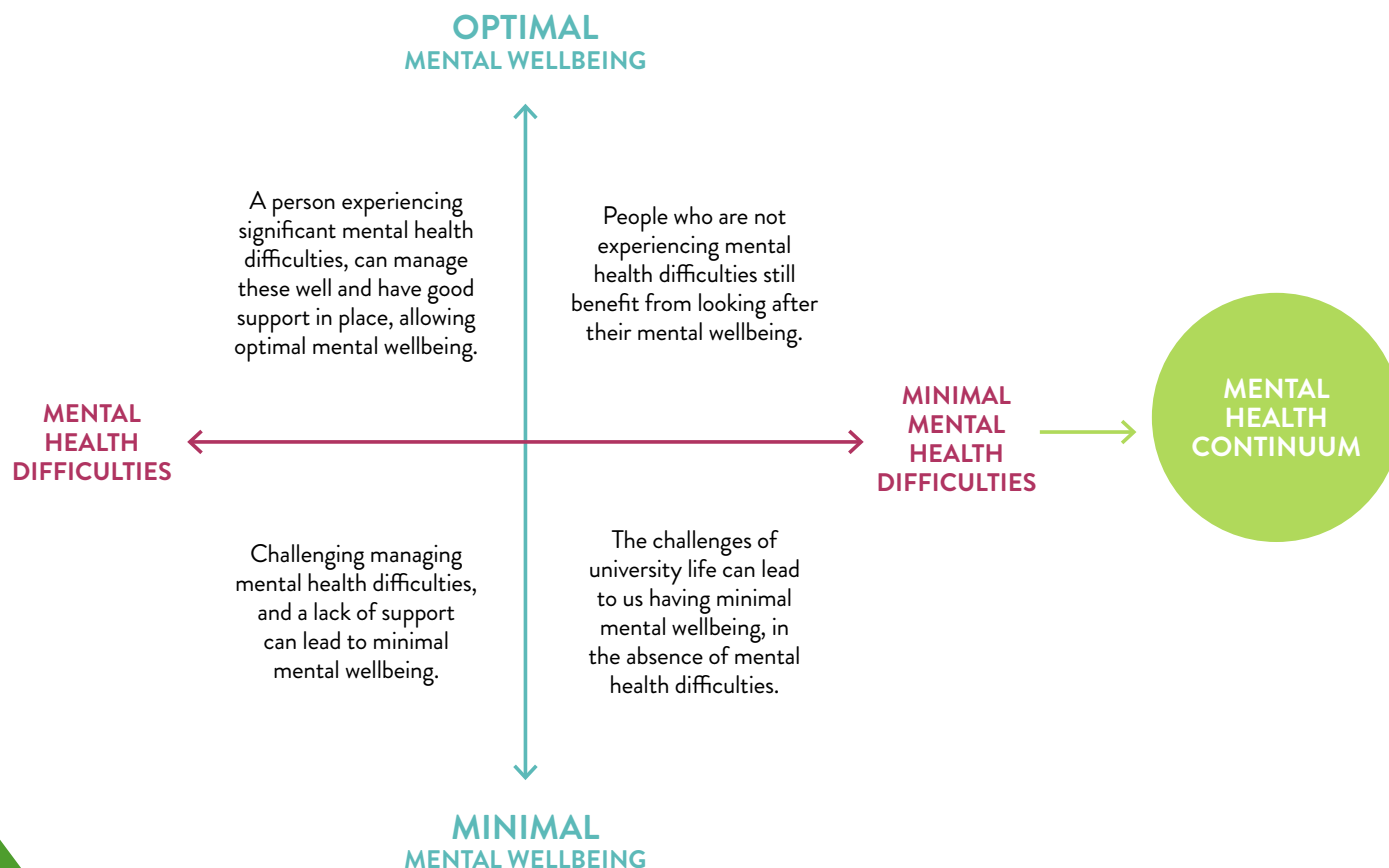
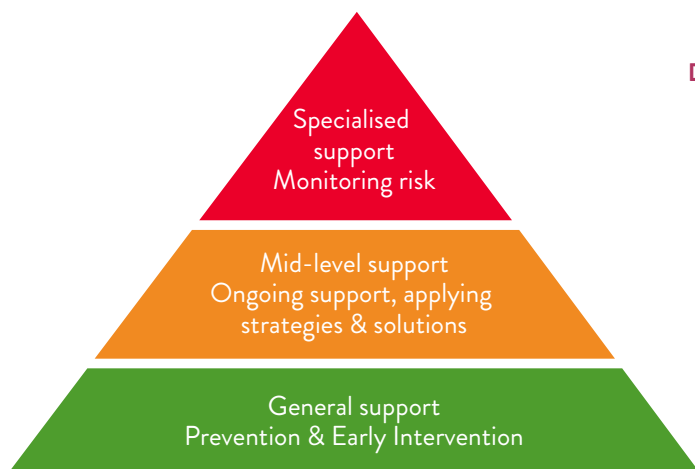
"The mental health continuum is a range having mental health and mental illness at the two extreme ends. Depending on the internal and external faculties of a person at any time, they can lie at one point of the continuum and shift position as their situation improves or deteriorates."

**Please note:** these are not intended to serve as concrete definitions. Many of these terms are subject to many wide and varied interpretations. Their inclusion is intended to help provide context to the #QUBeWell story to date, and the evolution of our own language.

# SUPPORT SERVICES

As human beings, each of us may find ourselves at different points on this spectrum – or, perhaps better known as the mental health and wellbeing continuum. Support Services at Queen's, whether they are for staff or students, exist to support all of our people, irrespective of what they are going through, how long they have been feeling like this, or indeed how they want to manage their wellbeing.

The #QUBeWell Framework will seek to support staff and students at whatever part of the continuum they may find themselves in, and put appropriate supports in place to help identify solutions and manage their wellbeing.



Source: Student Minds

# TAKE 5 STEPS TO WELLBEING

The University uses the application of the “Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing” Framework as it is an evidence-based and accessible way for individuals to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Through careful consideration and application, investing in small but meaningful changes to our everyday life can result in overall enhanced happiness and life satisfaction.



Source: Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland

Link: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/take-5-steps-wellbeing-english-and-11-translations>



**TALK AND LISTEN,  
BE THERE, FEEL  
CONNECTED**



**YOUR TIME,  
YOUR WORDS,  
YOUR PRESENCE**



**REMEMBER  
THE SIMPLE  
THINGS THAT  
GIVE YOU JOY**



**EMBRACE NEW  
EXPERIENCES, SEE  
OPPORTUNITIES,  
SURPRISE YOURSELF**



**DO WHAT YOU  
CAN, ENJOY WHAT  
YOU DO, MOVE  
YOUR MOOD**

# INTRODUCTION

**Mental Health & Wellbeing is an issue for all of us. As a wider societal issue, and indeed an issue for universities to address, it is incumbent upon us all to play our role in supporting both ourselves, as well as the communities we find ourselves in.**

Whether we are a staff member, a student, or an alum, recognising that each of us are at different points on the mental health continuum, we want Queen's to be a place where all relationships are marked by kindness, compassion and respect.

In the context of Northern Ireland, we currently find ourselves with a situation where there are all too high levels of mental health issues. Access to services is extremely stretched, the rates of suicide here are the highest in these islands, and we are still navigating the intergenerational challenges of being part of a post-conflict society.

For universities, there is a clear responsibility on us. As a place of education, as an employer, as a centre of research excellence, we must ensure that the environment is a supportive one. This includes the ability to communicate effectively about how we are feeling – whether that be positive or negative – and have access to appropriate services when we need them.

For the past number of years, Queen's has been on a journey to transform the support we offer to our community. Since 2019, we have made a number of important changes in partnership with Queen's Students' Union and our Staff Forums.

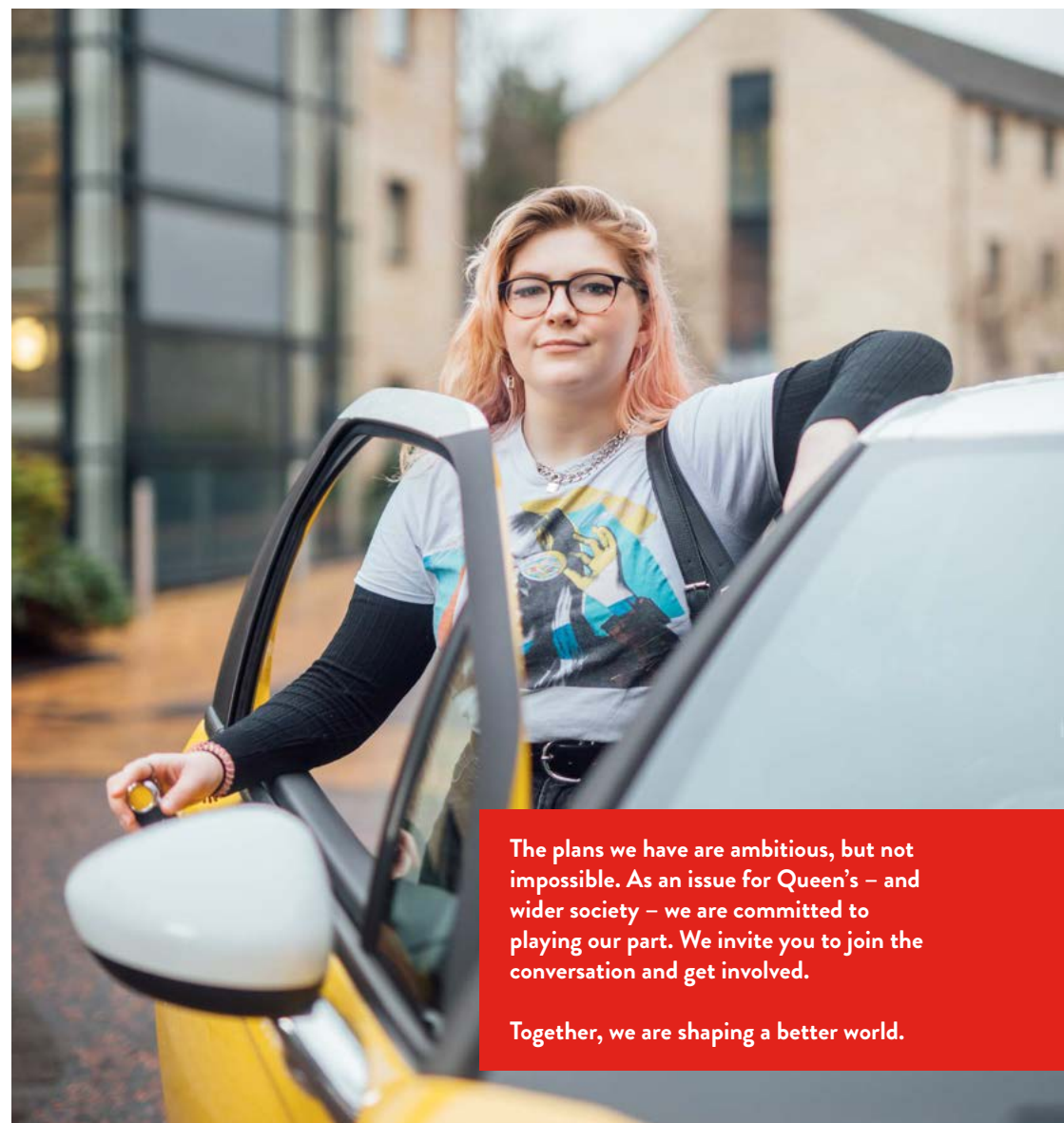
We set out to follow the national approaches including Universities UK (UUK) Step Change Mentally Healthy Universities Framework, and the Student Minds Universities Mental Health Charter. Described as “a renewed call to action for universities”, both represent exciting and challenging opportunities for us in how we move forward.

The benefits of this work are self-evident: universities should be places where our students and staff can thrive. They have the potential to transform the lives of individuals, of communities, and the world. With a growing and diversifying student and staff population, it is a priority for all of us.

Creating a mentally healthy University can lead to positive outcomes of healthier, happier people and communities, healthier culture, and benefits which ripple into wider society.

We know we have more work to do; we must always seek to continuously improve, to strengthen our understanding of the wellbeing of our entire communities, to de-stigmatise our understanding of mental health and mental illness, and to keep the conversation going.

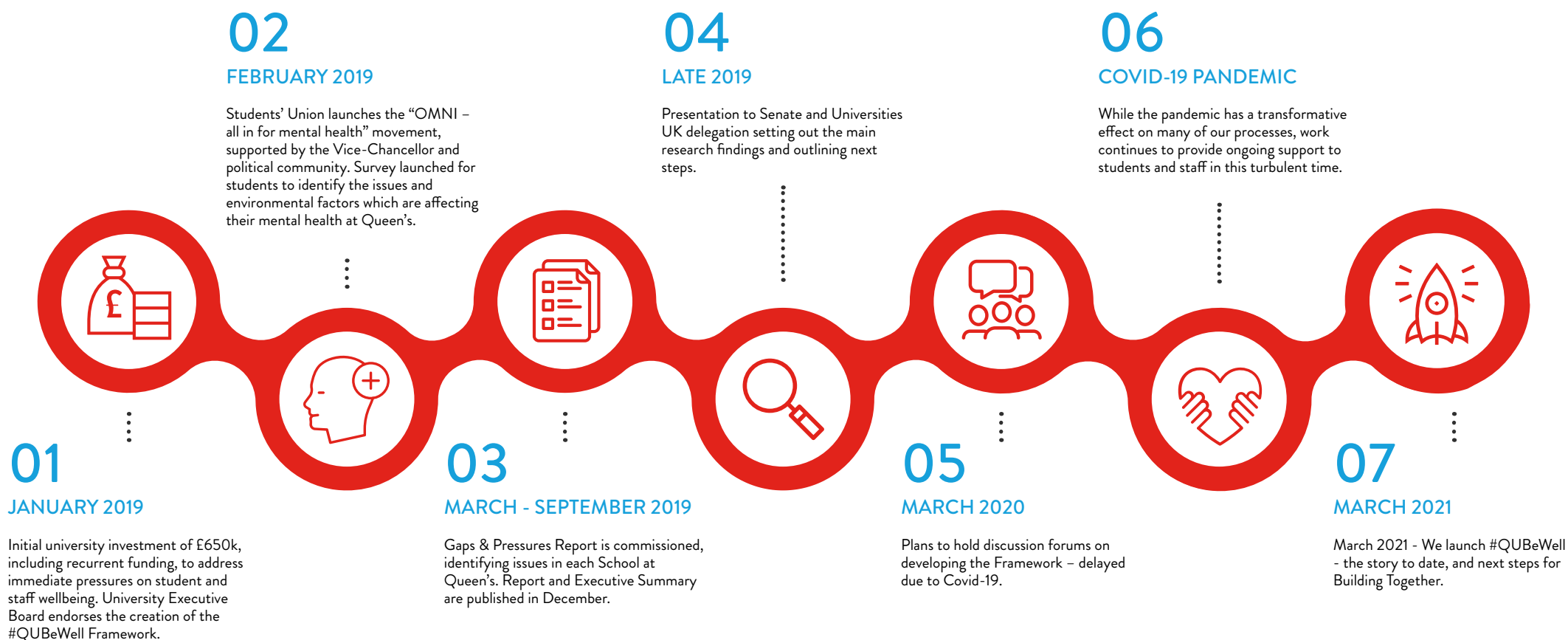
Building our Framework Together represents an opportunity for us all to join the conversation and seek to find solutions. Not only are we strengthened by our people, but so too are we strengthened by the reality of our collective lived experiences. Mental health and wellbeing, as well as mental ill-health, are human issues, therefore, while pressures may be different at different stages of our lives, often the solutions are very similar. This is why we are committed to a Framework that embraces our differences within the community, but acknowledges too that the solutions are similar and often life-long, regardless of whether we are staff or students.



**The plans we have are ambitious, but not impossible. As an issue for Queen's – and wider society – we are committed to playing our part. We invite you to join the conversation and get involved.**

**Together, we are shaping a better world.**

# TIMELINE SO FAR



# ADDRESSING IMMEDIATE PRESSURES

Since 2019, in addition to the resource already provided, the University Executive Board supported an additional investment of £600,000 to support the development of the #QUBeWell Framework.

The initial investments helped to address our most urgent needs before we then turned to our longer term plan for the development of the framework. This funding has allowed for an enhanced support service delivery to students and staff, ensuring our whole community receives timely access to support when they need it.

## STUDENT WELLBEING ADVISERS & ASSESSMENT MANAGER

Increase from  
2.5fte to 5.0fte including  
support for 'High Risk'  
students

## ADDITIONAL STUDENT ADVISER

Advice SU,  
Students' Union

## STAFF TRAINING & E-LEARNING

e.g. Mental  
Health First Aid

## ASSISTANT DISABILITY & WELLBEING ADVISERS X 3

Managing Drop-in /  
Initial Triage

## POLICY CO- ORDINATOR

Operational  
Delivery of  
#QUBeWell  
Framework

## 'OUT OF HOURS' SUPPORT

Strategic  
Review

## CREATION OF STAFF WELLBEING HUB

## BELFAST HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH PILOT

## AWARENESS- RAISING

Marketing  
& Outreach

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

As the University has operated throughout the context of Covid-19, we recognise that the effects and impact of the pandemic cannot yet be fully understood.

At the time of publication, we are still in the midst of the pandemic, and all sectors – including Higher Education – face significant challenges as we attempt to move forward in this context.

Indeed, the pandemic has taken a significant toll on our wellbeing. Both students and staff have adapted and responded in an incredibly diligent way, despite the often complex and multi-faceted personal challenges faced by everyone in our community.

The phrase ‘unprecedented times’ became part of our near daily language. However, much of the support we offer to our students and staff has continued throughout, and we are incredibly grateful to all members of the Queen’s community who has played a part in this.

Undoubtedly, there will be many challenges ahead as we fully understand the impact this has on our wellbeing.

Given the pressures that have been placed upon students and staff, we must carefully consider the effects of individual and collective circumstances and working practices. Therefore, we will ensure that we are realistic, pragmatic, and flexible in how we develop and deliver our Framework.

Since embarking on this journey, it is true to say that we had to shift our focus, and adapt, with little time to prepare. Indeed, the ways in which we support our students and staff has changed – in some ways, for the better. However, our end point remains the same – to **transform the culture of wellbeing** at the University, to **tackle the root causes** which lead to poor mental health and wellbeing, and to **embed a whole University approach** where our students and staff can thrive.

From the outset of the pandemic, there was an immediate and consistent recognition that we are ‘all in this together’. It is within this spirit that we will navigate through the next stages of our future.

**Queen’s is not immune from the effects of these uncertain times or challenges, but together we can get through them, optimistically pushing ahead towards a brighter future.**



To tackle the root causes which lead to poor mental health and wellbeing, and to embed a whole University approach where our students and staff can thrive.

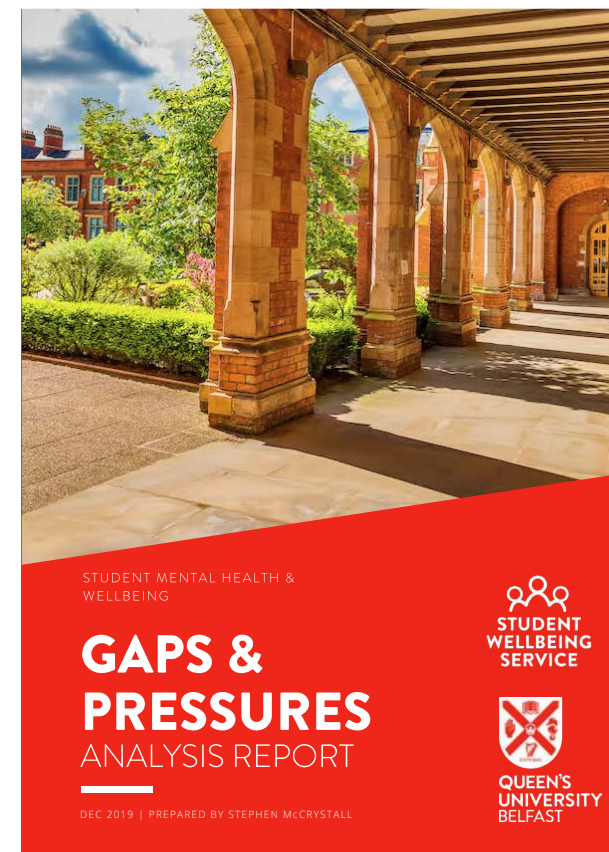
## WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

From the outset of this process, in order to achieve an evidence-based Framework, a data-driven approach methodology was designed to capture the lived experiences of staff, students, and staff supporting students.

A high-level tripartite approach was adopted to fully understand the issues faced by our students as individuals, our staff as individuals, and our staff who support students across Schools at the University. This resulted in three main evidence-bases being utilised to set out our initial work streams and areas to target:

- OMNI Students' Union Survey
- Gaps & Pressures Analysis Report
- Staff Survey

The response to each of these was excellent, reinforcing the importance and collective commitment of both students and staff to join the conversation. We learned a vast amount of rich data from each report, and set out to widely publicise the main findings of each.

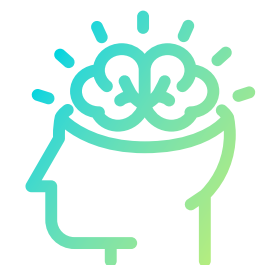


# OMNI REPORT

In February 2019, the Students' Union at Queen's launched the OMNI campaign - 'all in for mental health'. An all-student survey was designed and developed with expert academics, students, and staff at the University. The survey was completed with 2,535 responses and published in December 2019.



From the OMNI Survey, we learned that the main two pressures and stressors for students were academic pressure, and financial pressures.



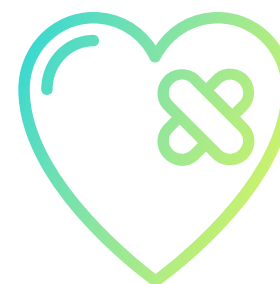
71%

had their quality of life impacted by their mental health



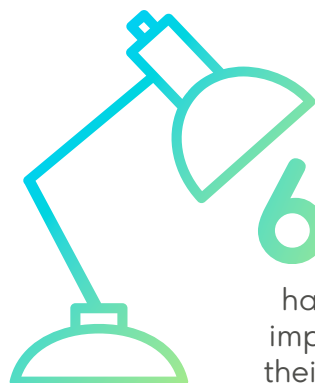
2,535

Students took the survey representing 10.4% of the general student population.



67%

had their relationships impacted upon by their mental health



64%

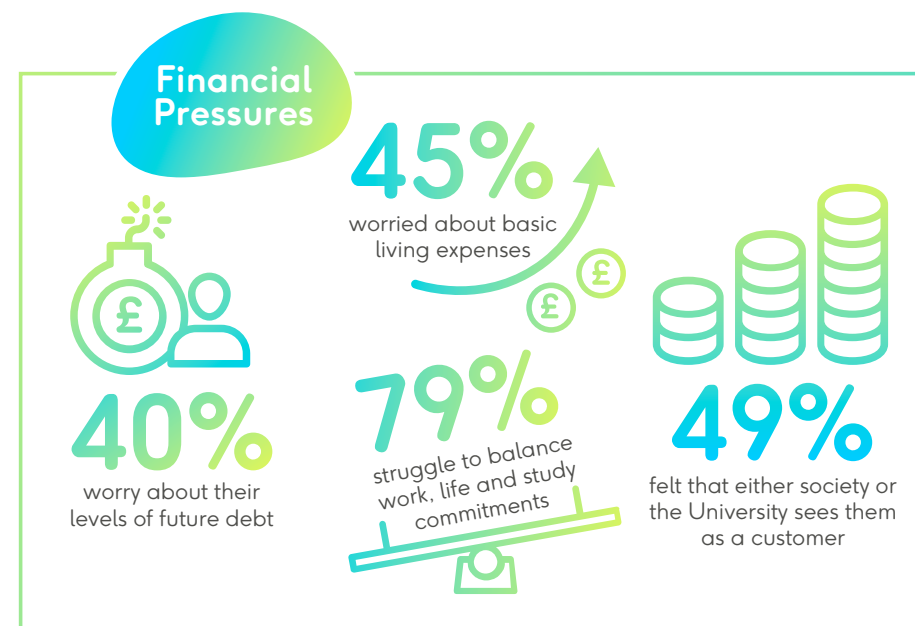
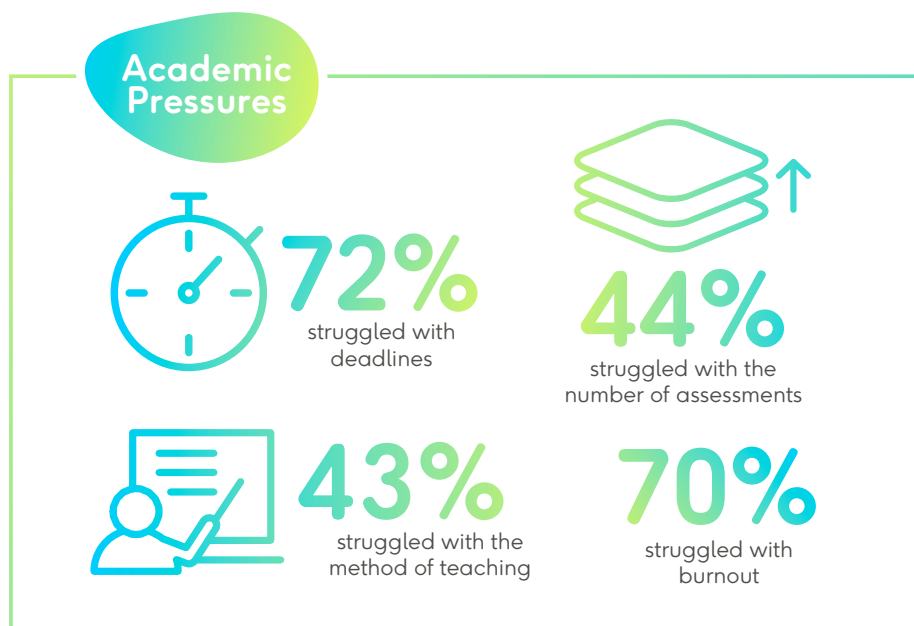
had their studies impacted upon by their mental health



46%

had seriously considered leaving their course

These are further explained below.



[READ THE FULL REPORT >](#)

“ I decided to talk to someone, get some help. My GP arranged **counselling and it made all the difference.** I had six sessions of CBT and through that I’ve developed strategies for dealing with negative thoughts and feelings. The worrying and the panic have gone and **I feel like myself again.** I can honestly say it was life-changing for me – like a weight had been lifted. ”

**Sorcha**

Development Manager (Major Gifts)

# GAPS & PRESSURES ANALYSIS

1. Presenting Issues & Triggers
2. Challenges, Pressures & Gaps
3. Support for Staff
4. Student Support
5. Diversity & Inclusion
6. Improving Staff & Student Experience



Increased numbers of students presenting with stress, anxiety & depression.



Students coming forward early & identification of students at risk.



Out of Hours provision for student support is challenging.



Extensive variation in the role of staff supporting students.



Recognition for staff supporting students.



Evidence of poorer sense of belonging & community amongst students.



The 'Middle Band' of students are most challenging to support.



Training for staff to assist them with supporting students.



Current resources are great, but very stretched.

[READ THE FULL REPORT >](#)

# STAFF SURVEY



## Staff Survey

The Institutional Staff Survey, completed in 2019, also reported as part of its highlight responses, that staff wanted better 'support for health and wellbeing, including mental health'.

The subsequent actions of the Staff Survey Steering Group, Staff Forum, and Directorate-specific focus groups have helped to expand on these areas, which have helped to shape the development of the Framework.



# WHO IS THE FRAMEWORK FOR?

## Whole University Approach

The phrase ‘whole university approach’ is sometimes used frequently in higher education institutions. Indeed, it is a priority following the Staff Survey, where we seek to act as “one university.”

However, in the context of student and staff mental health and wellbeing, striving to create a ‘whole university approach’ could not be more important. Each of us interact, directly and indirectly, with each of these sections of our community on a daily basis.

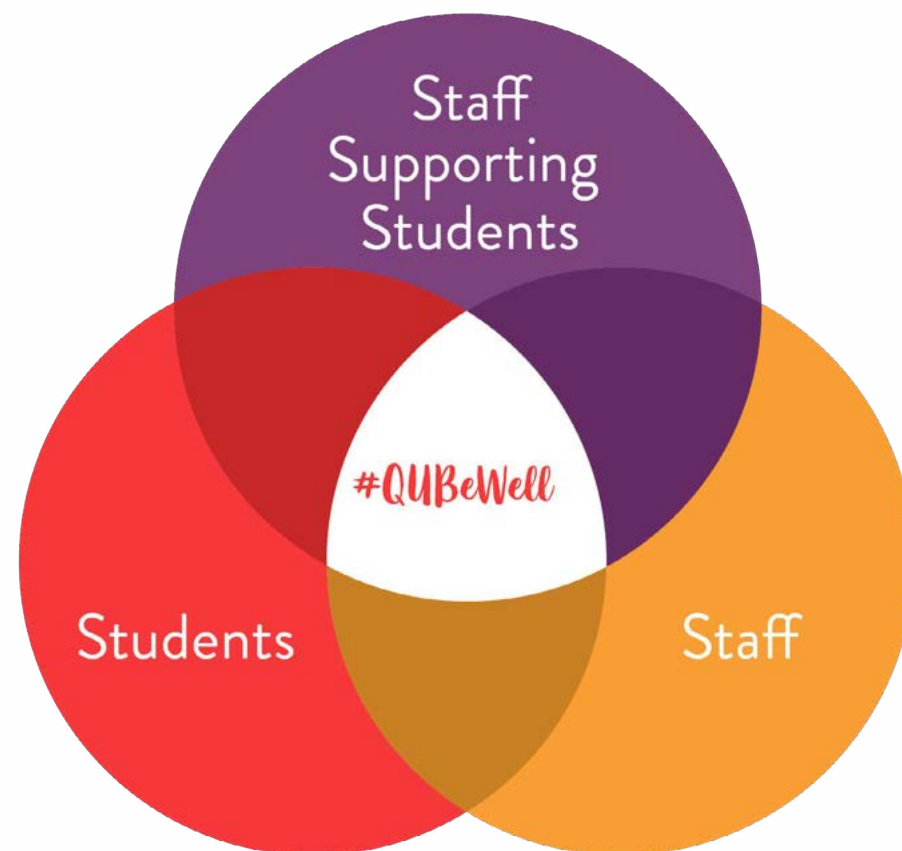
A whole university approach means something different to every one of us. Whether it is in the learning environment, student accommodation, clubs & societies, or research areas, a mentally healthy environment should be the ultimate target.

Further, embedding a whole university approach ensures that wellbeing is seen as everyone’s responsibility. From our senior managers, to our visitors, we all have a role to play.

Each of us may have different responsibilities, but we all have a responsibility to embody the values of empathy, kindness, and respect for each other. Creating a culture of wellbeing is fundamental to our success.

Our core values, ICARE, demonstrate the culture of compassion, respect, and support our staff and students show to each other.

**#QUBeWell is for everyone, and we will always keep this at the centre of our plans to develop our Framework.**



## ICARE



Integrity



Connected



Ambition



Respect



Excellence

#QUBeWell

AREAS WE WILL FOCUS ON

#QUBeWell

[qub.ac.uk/bewell](http://qub.ac.uk/bewell)



# INTRODUCING THE AREAS WE WILL FOCUS ON

During our fact-finding and research stage, the phrase ‘tackling the root causes’ was used often by both students and staff.

The mental health continuum shows that ‘focusing on mental health’ means something different to every one of us. For some, it is the provision of opportunities to connect and socialise with one another. For others, it is the creation of a healthy culture, where we have a high amount of work-life and study-life balance. For others, it is the provision of accessible, ongoing support and guidance with our health and wellbeing.

That’s why our Framework will have to reflect the totality of the settings we find ourselves in.

Whether it is the classroom, the sporting facilities, the research laboratories, accommodation, or our shared offices, there are a suite of activities, initiatives, and changes we must seek to make, in order to create a healthy campus.

Alongside this, our staff and students recognise that there are a number of environmental factors which lead to poor wellbeing. We recognise there are structural changes that we can make to help lead us to a destination of better wellbeing for all. Whether it is our processes, our learning and teaching environments, or our workplace culture, identifying and resolving the root causes of what leads to poor mental wellbeing is of critical importance.

**There can be no ‘band-aid’ approach to these issues. The #QUBeWell Framework commits us precisely to this principle.**

## Whole University Approach

### Learning Environment

Education and Research are the core reasons why the University exists. Studying at Queen’s will be underpinned by a mentally healthy environment.

### Support & Resources

Whatever you’re going through, there is someone ready to listen. Don’t suffer in silence, reach out for support. We’re here to help you be well.

### Working Environment

We are proud of our staff, and that you have chosen to work with us. We will explore the support we provide to our staff.

### Living & Awareness - Raising

Being mentally healthy is about much more than the learning and working environments, it shapes everything we do. We are committed to de-stigmatising mental health.

## Root Causes

# EXPLORING AREA 1: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We know from the OMNI Students' Union survey that academic pressures are within some of the biggest stressors facing our students.

As a University community, our primary functions are to provide a world-class education, conduct cutting-edge research, and provide a dynamic environment for intellectual debate, excellent teaching, the exchange of ideas, and seeking to find solutions to our global challenges.

Ensuring that the learning environment is accessible, intellectually demanding, and supportive, is our shared goal.

Within the new University's Strategy, Strategy 2030, the enabling Education Strategy will seek to put student wellbeing and a transformative student experience at the heart of its mission.

The Learning Environment area allows us to interrogate how we deliver our education and research, and measure how we set our teaching, learning and assessment.

Connected to this, we must look at the entirety of our student population. In such a diversifying campus, there is a need to understand how we support students from all backgrounds. This includes entry points, transitions into and throughout the University, ages, identities, levels of study, disciplines, and a key understanding of several socio-economic factors.

In taking this wider social view, it will seek to ensure that the Framework will be as representative as possible. Its applicability will be rooted in the entire University community.

Within the new University's Strategy, Strategy 2030, the enabling Education Strategy will seek to put student wellbeing and a transformative student experience at the heart of its mission.

**To build our Framework together, we will explore:**



Not an exhaustive list

## CASE STUDY 1

### QUB Connections Project, School of Nursing & Midwifery

Covid-19 forced students & staff at the School of Nursing & Midwifery into lockdown during March 2020. It forced the NHS to deal with unprecedented challenges. To help deal with these challenges, the Department of Health (DoH) and Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) introduced legislation for final year undergraduate nursing and midwifery students. The legislation enabled these students to join the NHS workforce as frontline staff to help deal with the crisis, while retaining their student status. It was unprecedented and provided a number of challenges for all parties concerned – most importantly, our students.

Nursing and midwifery students have always faced unique stressors. They differ from students in other degree programmes, and this is partly because nursing curricula involves study in both didactic and clinical settings concurrently which do not occur at the undergraduate level for other students. Furthermore, they are demographically different, with up to approximately one third of students having parental or caring responsibilities to contend with.

Covid-19 brought further unique stressors for these students. They had to make the difficult decision to either ‘opt-in’ and join the workforce, losing their supernumerary status; or ‘opt-out’ and pause their studies thus not being able to complete their programme and graduate with their peers. Public Health guidelines meant that Link lecturers could no longer visit students in clinical practice and students missed face-to-face teaching time. Furthermore, some were frightened for the safety of their families and the unknown of what they could face in clinical practice.

As this rapidly developing situation was occurring, a small team of teaching staff decided that they

had to do something to increase the support available to these students – to do nothing was not an option. A team quickly formed and they worked closely with students and student representatives to ensure they understood their concerns and to create ways in which we could provide a new way of providing support to our students. The team worked responsively and tirelessly with student representatives to co-produce a service called QUB Connections.

QUB Connections was a ‘safe place’ where students could ‘drop-in’ to talk to teaching staff, and their peers about any concerns they had, to share experiences or just to offload. The service launched on 6 April 2020 as an online, seven day per week service, and was aimed at the students who had decided to ‘opt-in’ to the HSC workforce. However, the team soon realised that those students who had chosen to ‘opt-out’ or ‘pause’ were experiencing a different set of challenges and difficulties. QUB Connections subsequently held ‘targeted’ sessions to support these students. In addition, they supported students who had tested positive for Covid-19 whilst on clinical placement.

The team surveyed students who knew of, or who accessed the service, and the feedback on the QUB Connections service has been very positive. Students have reported that they feel better connected to the School of Nursing & Midwifery whilst being a part of the Health and Social Care workforce during the Covid-19 pandemic. They reported feeling reassured in knowing the service was there for them, knowing how to connect to the service and felt supported by the facilitators. The facilitators offer support and can give information or signpost the student to other resources if appropriate. Students can explore challenging clinical situations and emotions with the facilitators and peers in a confidential and supportive setting.

Staff demonstrated absolute ambition to ensure this work was a success. Many staff worked tirelessly throughout the day and night whilst in lockdown with many other caring commitments and responsibilities. When designing the QUB Connections service, the team collaborated with student representatives throughout the entire process. This co-production approach has continued throughout subsequent waves of Covid-19.



**“The QUB Connections team have provided daily support to students who were working in very challenging clinical environments. In Nursing & Midwifery, we focus our students on care which is compassionate and person centred, QUB Connections has taken its lead from that ethos and is delivering student centred compassionate care.”**

Professor Karen McCutcheon  
Director of Education, School of Nursing & Midwifery

## CASE STUDY 2

### School of Pharmacy Mental Health and Wellbeing Group

**This is a student-led mental health and wellbeing team with staff, undergraduate and postgraduate student members. The aim of the team is to promote wellbeing and offer support to members of the School's community.**

All members of the group are trained in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). The initiative started about four years ago after a discussion regarding recent news headlines about students from similar degree programmes who had taken their own lives.

First aid as we know it is the help given to an injured person before medical treatment can be obtained. MHFA differs only in that it is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem, or who is in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional treatment is received, or until the crisis resolves. Funding for the training was provided by Queen's Annual Fund.

Since the programme started, 39 students and one academic have completed the accredited MHFA training course delivered by the Northern Ireland depression charity AWARE.

All the current students and staff trained in MHFA wear a green coloured lanyard when on campus so that they can be easily identified within the School. The group have a mental health and wellbeing noticeboard in our School foyer to promote mental health awareness, including the Public Health Agency Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing. The photographs and contact details for the trained MHFA are

displayed here too. In light of our current study and working arrangements the team have published twice-semester newsletters during the 2020-21 academic year. The team have active social media accounts and a dedicated email address for anyone in the school wanting support.

The student-led team have led mental health awareness events for other students and have completed fundraising activities for AWARE and Inspire. This has included coffee mornings and mindfulness, resilience, and laughter yoga workshops. They have also created areas where students can wind down and "talk it out" with peers before and after OSCE assessments. Here seating, tea, coffee and biscuits are available to any student who requires some time out. Assessments are a particular source of stress for our undergraduates and so the team are keen to offer support.

Some of the initial students who were trained in MHFA are now registered Pharmacists and continue to use the skills learned. We share reflections from one of these previous members and a current undergraduate student team member.

*"Mental Health First Aid Training was an enjoyable and informative experience. As a pharmacist, it gave me the confidence to develop my counselling skills and consider patients' mental and physical needs, in addition to providing the usual advice on their prescribed medicines."*



**"Our role as members of the Mental Health and Wellbeing team involves organising events, providing wellbeing tips, and making ourselves available to talk to students. Being a member of the team is an extremely rewarding role, especially as a mental health first aider as I can provide vital support to students when needed."**

Students & Staff at Queen's taking part in Mental Health First Aid Training.

## CASE STUDY 3

### Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences Mental Health First Aiders & Wellbeing Committee

The School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science (EEECS) embarked on a project to create a team of Student Mental Health Ambassadors during the 2018/19 academic year. This was co-funded by the Queen's Annual Fund and the School to provide Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to a group of students who had applied to become a mental health ambassador.

Action Mental Health were appointed to provide the training, and the group worked collaboratively to help shape and define their role, boundaries, and limitations. The ambassadors also received localised training from the Student Disability & Wellbeing Service for support services which are available to students throughout the University.

The ambassadors were also provided with visibility through hoodies to help alert other students in the School to who they were. The ambassadors hosted a number of events for students throughout the academic year, helping to promote positive mental health, self-care, and signposting information for students who may be struggling with their wellbeing.

Since the first year of the scheme, it has grown and developed to include some members of staff being trained, and some additional training from People & Culture in this respect.

During the 2020/21 academic year, the Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences (EPS) have expanded the scheme on a Faculty-wide basis, again with student and staff mental health ambassadors across the Faculty.

The Faculty of EPS have successfully rolled out a number of Wellbeing Weeks in November 2020, and a lecture and seminar series in 2021.

**The Faculty have established the EPS Wellbeing Committee for students and staff across the Faculty and wider University to meet, identify priority areas to focus on, and plan for upcoming events and interventions.**

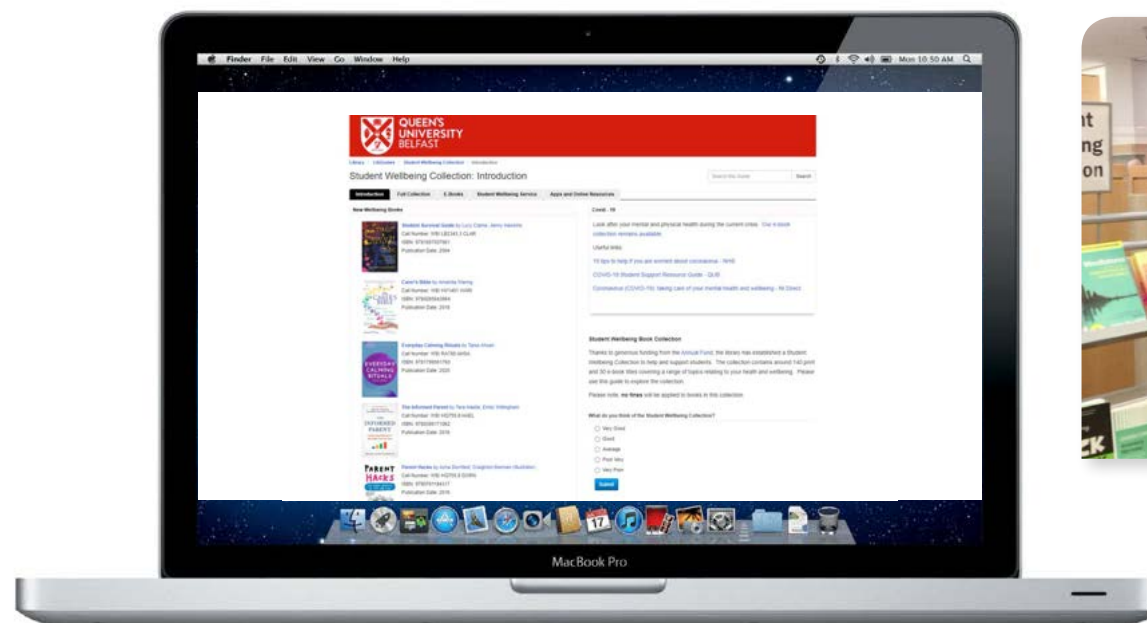
**Collectively, these help to embed a culture of wellbeing across all aspects of the University's learning, working, and living environments.**



## CASE STUDY 4: STUDENT WELLBEING LIBRARY COLLECTION

Thanks to the generosity of Queen's Annual Fund, the McClay Library has established a Student Wellbeing Collection to help and support students. The collection contains around 140 print and 30 e-book titles covering a range of topics relating to your health and wellbeing.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the books have been used extensively by students across all levels of study. The Library work closely with the Wellbeing Service to ensure that the book titles remain relevant, while Wellbeing Advisers also make recommendations to students on books which support them with their tools for support.



# MYQUEEN'S

Throughout the initial phases of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and during the University's planning for the 2020-21 academic year, the idea of "MyQueen's" developed to help provide new and returning students with information, guidance and support about what their new academic year was likely to look like.

Based on a similar interpretation of the #QUBeWell four areas, MyQueen's contains information for all students – irrespective of their level or year of study.

It complements other existing communication channels at the University, and can be utilised for ongoing updates and developments in such a fluid and changing year.

**MyQueen's represents an example of how the #QUBeWell Framework could be applied right across the University, using the ethos of improving student and staff wellbeing as its foundation.**

[VISIT THE SITE >](#)

UNIVERSITY SITES / MY QUEEN'S

## MY QUEEN'S

Information on studying and life at Queen's

### LATEST UPDATES & NEWS

#### SELF-ISOLATING?

- > What do I have to do?
- > Practical & Emotional Support
- > Self-Isolation Wellbeing Checklist

#### LEARNING & STUDYING

- > Student Digital Discovery Hub
- > Supporting Your Digital Learning
- > Getting a Device & Getting Online
- > Staying on Track - Studying Checklists
- > On-Campus Study Spaces

#### SUPPORT & EVENTS

- > Support Services
- > Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- > Virtual Wellbeing Café
- > Student Disability & Wellbeing Service

## EXPLORING AREA 2: SUPPORT & RESOURCES

There are many support services available for both students and staff at the University, but sometimes, students and staff may find it difficult to navigate between them. This has the ongoing effect of not being able to effectively signpost to the right service, perhaps when we need them most.

#QUBeWell will seek to make this easier for both our students and staff, and the communities we represent.

Its applicability will be rooted in the entire University community.

Student  
Support  
Services

Role of Staff  
Supporting Students

Role & Responsibilities for Staff  
- wellbeing support and training  
for staff to assist in supporting  
students

Education & Risk  
Management

Out of Hours  
Support

Early Identification  
& Spotting Warning  
Signs

Information  
-sharing

Ongoing Promotion  
of Services

Collaboration externally  
(e.g. NHS or inter-  
agency)

Not an exhaustive list

# SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW



## Student Wellbeing Service

The Student Wellbeing Service exists to help students lead a happy and fulfilled life, during their time at Queen's and beyond. Our supportive team of Wellbeing Advisers are here to help you when you need support. Whether you are going through a personal issue, experiencing stress, anxiety, or worry, we are here to listen and to help put a support plan in place.



## Drop-in

The Student Disability & Wellbeing Drop-in Service runs daily, Monday to Friday, from 11:00am-3:00pm. In recent years, it has been gradually enhanced following the popularity and increasing usage of the service. It allows students to access same-day support, in a timely and accessible manner.

Assistant Disability & Wellbeing Advisers meet with students to help identify the presenting issues, and put a support plan in place on how to move forward. This can include advice and guidance, low-level wellbeing support, referral to counselling support, or booking a longer one-to-one appointment with a Wellbeing Adviser.

Throughout the pandemic, the Service has expanded to provide a greater degree of remote support to students, via a telephone drop-in service, and through video calls.



## Consultations & Coaching

Consultations & Coaching with a Wellbeing Adviser often involve longer, one-to-one supports. Sessions typically last around 50 minutes, and help to explore in more detail what may be impacting on a student's wellbeing.

Coaching allows students to develop their understanding of setting goals, and how to set SMART goals. They provide a space for students to set goals which are unique and applicable to their circumstances, while also equipping students with valuable skills such as communication, as well as resilience to try again in the event of stumbling with their goals.



## Counselling & Psychological Therapeutic Support

Students at Queen's have access to the University's counselling provider, Inspire. Students can self-refer themselves, or speak to a member of the Disability and Wellbeing team who can refer on their behalf. In addition, students also have access to a 24-hours a day, seven days a week helpline for crisis support.

Students can avail of 4-6 counselling sessions, helping to look at therapeutic solutions to whatever their presenting issue(s) may be.

Since early 2020, Inspire are also offering an enhanced support service through matched-level care. This includes co-managed self-care workshops, and resources and courses.



## Safe & Healthy Relationships Advice

Following the Changing the Culture project, the Student Wellbeing Service has a dedicated Wellbeing Adviser focused on providing support and guidance safe and healthy relationships. This includes students who have been affected by areas such as sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment, or hate crime.

Students at Queen's can also receive support through the University's Report + Support website. This allows students to report something either anonymously or directly with their details, or speak to an Adviser for further support.

The team also work closely with local community and statutory organisations to ensure that the University is proactively committed to a zero tolerance approach towards sexism and sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment and hate crime.

<https://reportandsupport.qub.ac.uk>



SELF-CARE

## Self Care

The Student Wellbeing Service actively promotes the importance of self-care in maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Self-care allows us time to focus on ourselves, identify the stressors in our life, and implement strategies to keep perspective on the issues that matter most. Self-care is a time for reflection and self-compassion, recognising that we are only ever trying our best.

Students who want to spend more time practicing their self-care can take part in our WOW (Wellbeing on Weekdays) Programme. WOW Events are open to all students, and we have at least one event per week during term time.

Students can view the full programme at: <https://go.qub.ac.uk/WOWEvents> and can also make suggestions on events they would like to see at: [WOWEvents@qub.ac.uk](mailto:WOWEvents@qub.ac.uk)



EDUCATION &amp; AWARENESS-RAISING

## Education & Awareness-Raising

Inspire also provides a self-care hub with valuable information, resources, and courses on how to support your individual wellbeing. There are lots of resources available on issues surrounding wellbeing, including stress, anxiety, depression, substance usage, grief, relationships, and body image and confidence.

Raising awareness is also a key aspect of the Student Wellbeing Service as it allows students and staff the opportunity to talk openly about our wellbeing, to destigmatise negative perceptions towards these issues, and to build the profile of support services both on and off campus.



COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY PILOT

## Low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (PWP) Pilot

During the last two academic years, a number of trainees from Ulster University's Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP) training programme have been working in the Disability and Wellbeing team. This allows Wellbeing Advisers to refer students to take part in low-intensity CBT sessions.

The criteria for referral into the Programme are:

- Clients with mild / moderate Depression; or
- Clients with mild / moderate Anxiety disorder (i.e. Generalised Anxiety / phobias / OCD, panic attacks with or without agoraphobia)

The Practitioners provide an average of between five and nine sessions, per student. The feedback from students who have availed of this programme has been extremely positive.



# SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW

## Faculty-Facing Model

With an increased resource of Student Wellbeing Advisers, the Service was able to embed a Faculty-facing model, whereby three Wellbeing Advisers have been assigned to one of the three Faculties at the University. They are also supported by an Assistant Disability and Wellbeing Adviser.

This approach allows colleagues to build up valuable knowledge and expertise, specific to the Faculty, while also building relationships with and supporting colleagues at a Faculty and School level. Since implementation, this has proven useful in generating rapport with both staff and students.



Arts, Humanities &  
Social Sciences



Engineering &  
Physical Sciences



Medicine, Health &  
Life Sciences



# STUDENT WELLBEING MATCHED STEPPED CARE MODEL OF SUPPORT

Tier 1 Level 0-1	Tier 2 Level 1-2	Tier 3 Level 2-3	NHS Level 3-4
Other Supports	One:One Wellbeing Advisers	Students at Risk (Coordinated by Wellbeing Assessment Manager)	Secondary Mental Health Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WOW Events</li> <li>Online Apps</li> <li>Self-help sites</li> <li>Sports membership</li> <li>Clubs &amp; Societies</li> <li>Social Media Campaigns</li> <li>Webinars &amp; Workshops</li> </ul>	Identify presenting issue and complete assessment. For example, Inspire Counselling, Report & Support, Advice SU, Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete Assessment</li> <li>Identify presenting issue(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, GP referral to BHSCT Student Mental Health Pilot Project</li> <li>Community &amp; Voluntary Organisations. For example, Action Mental Health, DAISY, Nexus, Victim Support etc.</li> </ul>
Drop-in Assistant Disability & Wellbeing Advisers	One:One Low Level Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)	High Risk	
		Attend A&E (with friend / family if possible)	
		Moderate / High Risk	
Short 15 min face-to-face or virtual meeting to identify presenting issues and signpost on. For example, School support, LDS, Accommodation, Inspire Hub, Chaplaincies etc.	Students who have mild / moderate depression, anxiety, OCD, phobias, panic attacks etc. explore interaction of thoughts, feelings, behaviour, and impact on lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GP / Out of Hours</li> <li>Safety Plan</li> <li>Notify emergency contact</li> <li>Contact Senior Manager / School / Accommodation</li> </ul> <p>Refer Student to Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspire Counselling</li> <li>External Supports</li> <li>Wellbeing Adviser</li> </ul>	



## Student Wellbeing Support Service

**We know exactly how exciting, and at times challenging, your time in higher education can be.**

Whether building new connections, managing academic pressures, or dealing with financial or family concerns - they can all make us anxious and reduce our sense of wellbeing; **and we can all experience issues at different times and in different ways.**

That's why we're working in partnership with your QUB Student Wellbeing Team to provide an enhanced wellbeing support service that's tailored to you - ensuring you have **the right help, at the right time.**

This guide will show you how the service works and the range of potential options available.

**If you have any questions, call us free and confidentially at any time on:**

**0808 800 0016**

## Student Wellbeing Support Service

### Referral

Call our helpline, free and confidentially, 24/7, 365 and speak with our specially trained support team. They'll make an appointment with a counsellor for you.

### Assessment

Our counsellor will call and take you through a short assessment to determine the support that best suits your needs. You'll then be referred to one of the following support options:

Option  
1

### Online Tools and Resources

The Inspire Support Hub provides access to a range of online information, guidance, screening and intervention tools tailored to help care for your personal wellbeing.

Option  
2

### Guided Self-Help

Guided learning puts you in control of your own personal development, empowering you to make positive personal lifestyle choices to maintain wellbeing. 3 x 30 min online sessions.

Option  
3

### Group Workshops

Therapeutic group support programmes, tailored workshops and information sessions helping you to engage in the experience and perspectives of others.

Option  
4

### Structured Counselling

Your counsellor will help you to identify the resources, strengths, qualities and skills that you have to set goals and find solutions to the issues you may be experiencing.\*

Call us free and confidentially at any time on: **0808 800 0016**

For more, email us at: **qubstudents@inspirewellbeing.org**

For general info on QUB Student Wellbeing Service: **qub.ac.uk/sgc/wellbeing**

\*Counselling sessions usually last around 50 minutes and can be arranged to suit your own schedule. Typically, we can offer up to 4 sessions. Telephone or online sessions may be offered as an alternative to face-to-face.



Inspire Students is an operating name of Carecall (UK) Limited Company No: 14038960 / VAT Registration No: 179 1484 72



**inspire**

wellbeing, ability, recovery

# BELFAST HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY & ULSTER UNIVERSITY PILOT STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

The innovative pilot project was announced on University Mental Health Day 2019, and is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland.

The service improves the link between local NHS care provision and on-campus support available to Queen's University and Ulster University students, ensuring that vulnerable students do not slip through gaps in the health system.

The Belfast Trust, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University have each committed to investing £50,000 annually to develop and run the initiative, which has established:

- A co-produced student-friendly mental health service
- The development of clinics on campus staffed by BHSCT Mental Health professionals as well as non-campus clinics – all organised around the structure of the academic year
- Agreed referral, assessment and treatment pathways with student support services, GPs and Trust mental health services
- Timely assessment and engagement in treatment
- A joint planning of care forum between the student support services and the trust mental health services involving Ulster University, Queen's University Belfast, BHSCT, Students' Unions, local GP representation and students with lived experience of mental ill health
- Transition of students to Belfast with pre-existing mental disorders and arranging ongoing treatment for those who have completed their degrees

Early engagement is key to this project. Now in its second year of operation, whilst continuing to receive a large volume of students, it is achieving first contact with 90-95% students within 24 hours of referral.

The Project has grown from strength to strength, even during Covid-19, continuing to deliver the service by adapting to virtual consultation as well as face to face appointments, thereby offering

additional choice for students on how they engage with the service.

Access to the service was initially operating via a GP referral scheme, later expanding and developing to include a "Trusted Referrer" option, enabling the Student Wellbeing Services at both Queen's and Ulster University to refer students to the Project.



“ When I moved back to Northern Ireland, I went to tech to get caught up on my exams, because I’d missed out so much school. I know my family were worried for me, that exam stress might mean another set-back, but **I knew I was strong enough** now, that could handle it.  
I always felt **supported and understood.** ”

**Laura**

BSc Professional Nursing (Children and Young People), Student

# DISABILITY SERVICES

**Queen's University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and seeks to ensure that students with a disability or long-term condition have equitable access as far as reasonably possible to all aspects of university life.**

Students can disclose their disability to the University at any time, whether that it is during their application to the University, or throughout any stage of their studies.

Support is available for a wide range of conditions and disabilities. This includes:

- Autism Spectrum Condition;
- Blind/ visual impairments;
- Deaf/ hearing impairments;
- Long-term health conditions such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy;
- Mental health conditions, such as depression, personality disorders, eating disorders and anxiety disorders;
- Specific Learning Difficulty, for example, dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia;
- Physical or mobility issues;

The nature and type of support available varies and is tailored to each student's individual needs.



## DISABILITY SERVICES PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING SUPPORT:



DROP-IN

### Drop-in

Students who are either registered with Disability Services, or want to know more about what support can be put in place for them, are able to attend a daily drop-in service, operating Monday to Friday, 11:00am-3:00pm. This drop-in service is available via telephone, or face-to-face in the Student Guidance Centre.



WELLBEING

### Wellbeing Support

Disability Services works alongside the Student Wellbeing Service, to ensure that students' wellbeing needs are being met and supported on an ongoing basis. This helps to ensure that students receive a more holistic, joined-up approach, meaning that students have a number of support avenues to call upon.



ADVICE

### Advice

Disability Services provides advice on how the registration process works, what medical evidence students require, how to apply for funded support such as Disabled Students' Allowance, and what reasonable adjustments can be put in place within their course. Students are assigned a Disability Officer who can support and advise students throughout their time at Queen's.

FUNDED  
SUPPORT

### Funded Support

Depending on where a student is domiciled, they may be eligible to receive funded support. Examples may include Disabled Students' Allowance (Northern Ireland and Great Britain) or the Fund for Students with Disabilities (Republic of Ireland).

Students who apply to these schemes may be invited to a Needs Assessment where an Assessor will complete an assessment of the student's individual needs, make a number of recommendations, and discuss possible avenues of support such as equipment, software, one-to-one non-medical support and consumables allowances. For example, students who have a mental health condition may be able to receive support from an Academic Mental Health Tutor.

IN-COURSE  
SUPPORT

### In-Course Support

In addition to the student's Disability Officer, each School within the University has a Disability Adviser whom students can contact. Each student receives an Individual Student Support Agreement (ISSA) from Disability Services, which outlines what supports and reasonable adjustments have been recommended for the student. Examples may include receiving learning materials in advance of lectures, flexibility with assignment deadlines and examination support.

TRAINING &  
EVENTS

### Training & Events

Disability Services delivers training to Schools and a range of departments across the University. This includes disability awareness training, SENDO and in depth training on specific disabilities and long-term conditions. There are also events for student groups, such as an informal Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) Social Group, and an Epilepsy Support Group. Both networks are an informal space for students to meet, socialise, and get involved in fun events and activities.

**DISABILITY SERVICES >**

# ADVICE SU



All students at Queen's are automatically members of Queen's Students' Union. Advice SU exists as a free, independent, confidential advice service for students. They can provide advice and guidance on a wide range of issues including academic concerns, such as appeals and exceptional circumstances; finance, including money & debt; housing rights, Queen's disciplinary processes and employment issues.

Currently students can contact Advice SU on [studentadvice@qub.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@qub.ac.uk).

When public health regulations permit, we will be able to see students face-to-face again.

**ADVICE SU >**



Queen's  
Students'  
Union



# QUEEN'S ACCOMMODATION – RESIDENTIAL LIFE SUPPORT TEAM

The Residential Life Team at Queen's Accommodation are made up of Residential Assistants, and Residential Life Coordinators.

Together, they are there to help you make the most of your stay at Queen's Accommodation.

They are able to offer wraparound support, especially if you feel lonely or homesick or need encouragement to join in social events to make new friends.

The Residential Life Team offer a range of events throughout the year, open to all student residents.

Residential Assistants are also students – just like you, so they may have a better understanding of what you are going through.

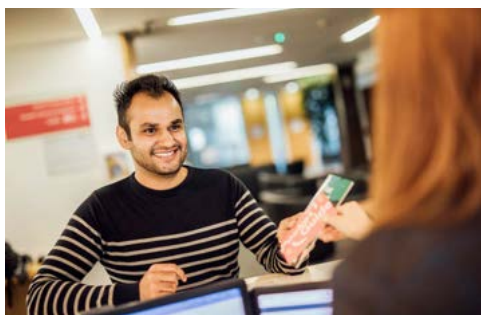
Each block and building across all Queen's Accommodation sites has a Residential Assistant.

**Feel free to reach out to yours if you want a chat.**

**RESIDENTIAL LIFE SUPPORT TEAM >**

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

The International Student Support Team at Queen's exist to provide international students with expert immigration support and advice throughout every stage of their University experience from application right through to graduation. They can help you navigate the Visa application process and steps you are required to take by virtue of being an international student at the University.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT >



# STUDENT FINANCE

Financial issues are the second-biggest issue impacting on students, according to the Students' Union's OMNI Survey. For many students, balancing the cost of living, as well as maintaining part-time and full-time jobs alongside full-time and part-time study, means that students can struggle with their finances.

Financial support is available at the University to students experiencing financial difficulties whilst studying, from the Student Support Fund and the University's Hardship Fund.



STUDENT FINANCE >

## EMPOWERING WELLBEING AND ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH SPORT

Queen's Sport aims to drive a culture of excellence through sport and wellbeing to positively impact the lives of students, staff and the wider community. We are here to help you lead an active and healthy lifestyle, across all levels and abilities.

Whether you are a beginner or an elite athlete, there is something to suit everyone.

### WHY GET INVOLVED IN SPORT?

Sport offers unique opportunities to enhance mental, emotional and physical wellbeing in a variety of settings.

The connections that participation in sport or exercise can provide are an impactful aspect of campus life for thousands of our students, staff and the engaged wider community already.

The benefits of maintaining an active and physical lifestyle in terms of improving our mental wellbeing are well documented. Being Active is one of the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing, and the endorphins released by exercise are shown to improve our mood. Even 30 minutes per day can have a transformative effect on our wellbeing.

For those who are new to sport or keen to try out something new, the University's Active Campus Programme is the perfect opportunity. Through initiatives such as "Couch 2 5K", taking part in one of their "taster sessions", or joining one of the Sport Clubs, there is something for everyone.

All students living in Queen's Accommodation receive free, off-peak gym membership as part of their accommodation package, and staff are entitled to a discounted membership rate. There are dozens of classes per week for members to get involved in, and lots of world-class facilities to try out your new passion.

Managing participation and wellbeing is central to Queen's Sport's mission. For those who are ready to take the next step, or are competing in performance level sporting, there is a dedicated team at Queen's Sport ready to make your dreams a reality.

Queen's Sport also has a full team of Development Officers for GAA, Rugby, Hockey, Soccer, and Rowing.



QUEEN'S SPORT >

# EXPLORING AREA 3: WORKING ENVIRONMENT

## AWARENESS & ACTIVITY

The Staff Wellbeing team provide a number of events throughout the year which are open to staff from across the University. They also are aligned to the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing. Events are focused on maintaining a healthy mind, physical health, home life, and being connected.

A full calendar of events and activities is made available throughout the year, and is regularly advertised via the Staff Roundup.



HEALTHY  
MIND



PHYSICAL  
HEALTH



HOME  
LIFE



BE  
CONNECTED

## SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

The #QUBeWell Framework is about empowering our people to be well, but this doesn't have to be done alone. There are a range of supports available for staff at the University any time you need.

### Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The University's Employee Assistance Programme provides a confidential helpline to staff, which can be accessed at any time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This helpline can provide staff with advice on a range of topics, such as:

- addiction or alcohol/substance use
- anxiety or depression
- bereavement
- bullying and harassment
- debt problems
- experience of a traumatic event
- family worries
- personal relationship problems
- stress

This list is not exhaustive, so if there is something you are concerned about, whether something you are experiencing yourself, or if you're concerned about a loved one, then please give them a call. Staff will be offered additional support, such as face to face, video, or telephone counselling.

**Call the Freephone number  
0800 389 5362  
at any time of the day or night,  
seven days a week.**



### TAKE 5 STEPS TO WELLBEING



**STAFF WELLBEING >**

# INSPIRE HUB

The Inspire Support Hub provides the right help right now, giving you instant access to a range of information, guidance and screening that is tailored specifically to help care for your individual wellbeing needs.

The Hub will help you to create a bespoke wellbeing care-plan, as well as giving guidance on appropriate support and intervention through guided self-assessment.

PIN for Staff: **QUBSTAFF**

PIN for Students: **QUBHUB!**



**INSPIRE HUB - GETTING STARTED >**



# TRAINING & GUIDANCE

In recent years, People and Culture have enlisted the central provision of an accredited Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training programme to be delivered by Action Mental Health. The organisation was selected as the institution's provider of MHFA for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years.

## Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training

Throughout both academic years, the University has centrally organised Mental Health First Aid training for staff, particularly managers at Queen's. This was extremely well received by staff.

An evaluation of the Mental Health First Aid training programme for Year 1 found that:

- 100% of participants agreed that attending MHFA training has made them more likely to offer initial support to someone experiencing a mental health problem;
- 81% agreed the relevance of the content of the sessions was very good: 9.5% rated it good, and 9.5% rated it as average;
- 85.7% of participants indicated that most of the information presented was new to them, 14.7% indicated some of the information was new to them;
- 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that MHFA training helped them to recognise the signs of someone who may be at risk of harming themselves or others;
- 71.4% of participants strongly agreed that MHFA will help them to understand, support and reassure someone with a mental health problem.

After attending Mental Health First Aid training, results show that participants have increased:

- Knowledge of mental health issues;
- Ability to recognise mental health problems;
- Confidence to help someone with a mental health problem; and
- Skills to help someone with a mental health problem.



Staff at Queen's taking part in Mental Health First Aid training.



# 100%

of participants agreed that attending MHFA training has made them more likely to offer initial support to someone experiencing a mental health problem

# 81%

agreed the relevance of the content of the sessions was very good

# 85.7%

of participants indicated that most of the information presented was new to them

# 100%

of participants agreed or strongly agreed that MHFA training helped them to recognise the signs of someone who may be at risk of harming themselves or others

# 71.4%

of participants strongly agreed that MHFA will help them to understand, support and reassure someone with a mental health problem

“ The most important thing I could say to anyone is that **asking for help is not admitting defeat.** Sure, yes, it can be hard to hold your hand up or make that first call. But it gets easier after that. I think that Disability Services do a **great job** here, I really do. ”

**Lewis**

MPharm Pharmacy

# STAFF SUPPORTING STUDENTS

**A large percentage of staff at the University often find themselves in positions of student support, whether it be via email, in the classroom, or a combination of settings.**

The University recognises that, from the Gaps & Pressures Analysis, there is extensive variation in terms of staff roles and boundaries.

The #QUBeWell Framework will seek to make your role clearer, so that you feel equipped to deal with any potential situations of support you may find yourself in, while balancing this with your own personal and professional limitations and boundaries.

Some staff may have a formal student support role attached to their primary duties. Examples of these include, but are not limited to: Supervisors, Personal Tutors, and Advisers of Studies.

Equally, a large number of staff may perform informal support roles to students, perhaps because a student may reach out for support to a particular member of staff.

In all of these situations, it is important that staff are equipped with the necessary training to provide the foundations of support, and signpost to appropriate services where necessary.

Some of the below initiatives have been happening for a number of years, while others are new or being re-developed. The #QUBeWell Framework will deliver:

- Wellbeing training for Personal Tutors and Advisers of Studies
- Having difficult conversations or breaking bad news
- How to effectively guide and signpost
- “What to do if...” resources
- Identifying students at risk



# E-LEARNING MODULE FOR STAFF ON SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The #QUBeWell Framework will also introduce a mandatory online staff e-learning training module on supporting student mental health and wellbeing.

This 30 minute module will:

- Provide a baseline knowledge and understanding for all staff and student-facing workers to support students who they identify as struggling with their mental health or wellbeing;
- Learn how to effectively signpost students to appropriate support services in a careful and managed way;
- Apply their knowledge to real-life situations through scenario-based examples.

Similar to other staff training modules, it is important that staff keep up-to-date with the latest developments in student support across the University.

Not only does this help to create parity between physical and mental health, but it ensures that service development and delivery continues to be cascaded internally. It also allows staff to build upon their knowledge by taking part in advanced training programmes where their role may require them to do so.



# SUPPORTING MANAGERS

A large percentage of staff at the University often find themselves in positions of student support, whether it be via email, in the classroom, or a combination of settings.

## Mindful Manager

The aim of the Mindful Manager course is to give managers the tools required to identify issues staff may be having in the workplace and facilitate a solution before issues cause significant loss of productivity or absenteeism.

The course explores:

- Introduction to the Mindful Manager Model
- Setting the scene – the business case
- The common mental health issues and suicide
- Managing attendance and the difficult conversation
- Duty of care – staying mentally healthy

## Covid-19, Stress and Returning to Campus Sessions

Recognising the challenging circumstances many of our staff found themselves in, People & Culture commissioned Action Mental Health with providing bespoke sessions on “Covid-19, Stress, and Returning to Campus”. This provided an opportunity for staff to identify their stressors, apply new techniques, and practice kindness towards ourselves and others against a backdrop of much uncertainty.

## Covid-19 Staff Health and Wellbeing guidance

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of our staff's working conditions and routines have changed dramatically. Although a number of staff have remained on campus throughout providing

support for our students and essential operations, a large percentage of staff have adapted to working remotely.

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/StaffGateway/Filestore/Fileupload,957572,en.pdf>

## Staff Networks

The University's staff networks exist to celebrate the diversity of our staff. They provide spaces for members of the Queen's staff community to meet in a friendly, informal way to liaise, discuss ideas and support each other from day to day.

To date, the following staff networks have been established:

- [PRISM – For LGBT+ Staff at the University](#)
- [iRise – For BAME & International Staff at the University](#)
- [Staff Disability Support Network](#)
- [Carers' Network](#)

Staff networks help to create a mentally healthy university as they provide the time and space for members of staff to live proudly and authentically, surrounded by colleagues who empower one another.



**People First** sets out a commitment to “bring ICARE to life” and the #QUBeWell Framework helps us to do just that.

The Staff Forum have been tasked with taking forward work on showing positive examples of living out the Core Values.

Alongside this, there are also a number of additional schemes which help to create a culture of wellbeing.

## Anti-Bullying & Harassment Advisers

We want everyone who works here to feel comfortable within the workplace.

To support this, we have established a network of Anti-Harassment Advisors on Campus who can provide confidential information to staff on issues relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Any member of staff who is experiencing harassment can contact an Anti-Harassment Advisor to seek advice, support or to talk to them about what they are experiencing in strict confidence and help them decide what steps to take next.

## LGBT+ Allies

The University continues to promote a culture of LGBT+ allyship. In a workplace, good allies recognise that LGBT people can perform better if they can be themselves, and that everyone benefits from inclusion. Allies use their role within an organisation to create a culture where this can happen.

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion - Taking an Intersectional Approach

Recognising that mental health issues can affect anyone, but sometimes in different ways. As we develop the #QUBeWell Framework, it is important that we keep this focus in both identifying what the issues are and attempting to find solutions where possible. What may work for some may not work for all, and so it is important that the support we put in place focuses on the individual and their needs. This is compassion and person-centered support in action.

[PRISM >](#)

[Carers Network >](#)

[ANTI-HARASSMENT ADVISORS >](#)

[iRise >](#)

[Disability Staff Network >](#)

[LGBT+ Allies >](#)

## Developing our Staff

Empowering you to be well means providing you with the tools and resources to feel confident in speaking openly and honestly about how you feel. It means that not only do we look out for ourselves, but we look out for others too: our team, our wider colleagues, our students – everyone.

Although we all have a role to play, none of us should have to feel out of our depth. Developing our entire community means that we all need to have a solid understanding of how to effectively manage signposting colleagues or students to appropriate support services. Our commitment within our training on signposting and mental health is that it will be specific to your role, recognising that each of us have our own set of boundaries and limitations.

The #QUBeWell Framework must also account for the systemic inequalities which exist both in universities and in wider society. In supporting our own wellbeing, and that of our fellow students and staff, we all have a role to play in noticing that the potential responsibility of supporting others is often absorbed by women and those with caring responsibilities.

# EMPOWERING YOU TO BE WELL



## Developing our Framework

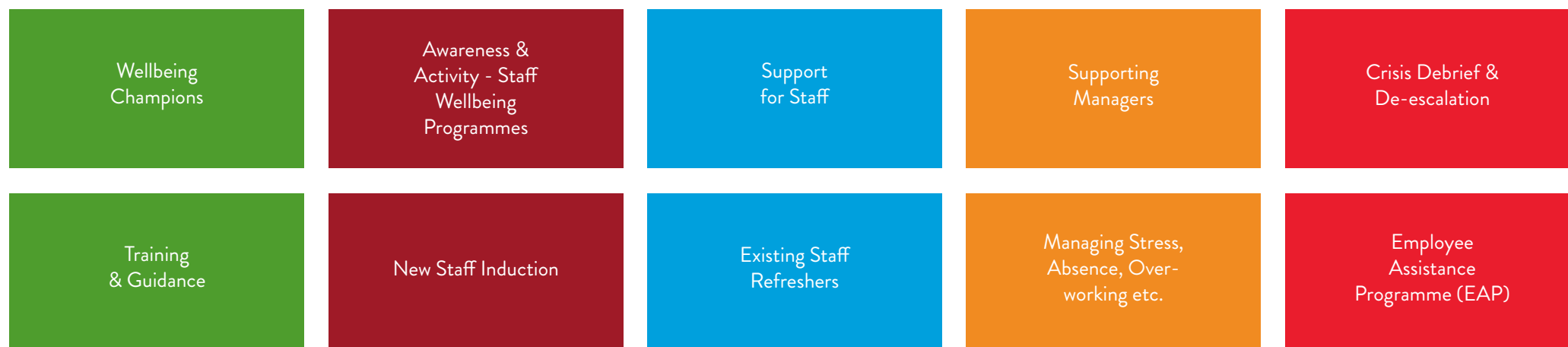
Over the coming months, you will hear more about how you, as a staff member, can join the conversation and help to build our framework together.

More details can be found on page 61 but will include a comprehensive engagement plan to introduce this plan, cascaded and introduced across different areas of the University.

We will work to co-produce the Framework with as many staff as possible. Specifically, we will also hold specific co-production workshops with:

- iRise
- PRISM
- Staff Disability Support Network
- Staff Forum

## To build our Framework together, we will explore:



Not an exhaustive list

## EXPLORING AREA 4: LIVING & AWARENESS-RAISING

Building awareness around mental health and wellbeing, both on and off campus, is an extremely worthwhile task. It breaks down notions of stigma, creates parity between physical health and mental health, and reminds our community that it is okay to not be okay.

Similarly, ensuring that our students and staff feel connected, and a sense of belonging to our community will be critical to the mission of the #QUBeWell Framework. Developing and sustaining healthy communities, healthy people, healthy cultures, and healthy settings allows our staff and students to flourish and to thrive.

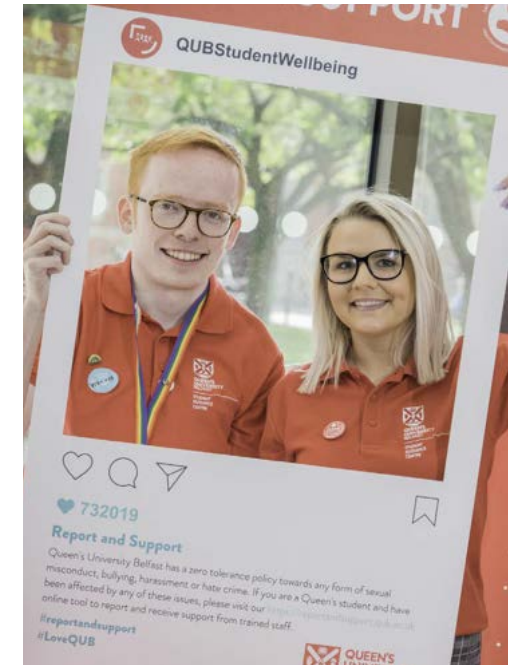
Reinforcing these principles helps to ensure that students and staff can reach out for support, often when they need it most.

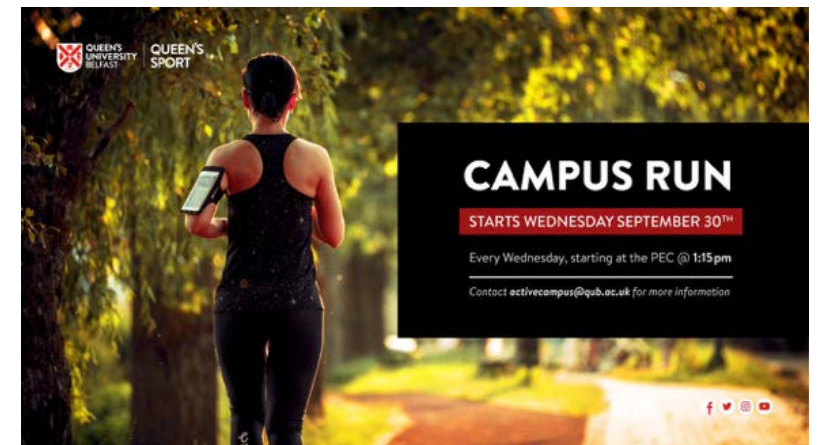
The Living & Awareness-Raising area extends beyond the walls of the classroom and learning environment. It must be embedded right across the whole University, in accommodation, sport facilities, research labs, and our shared offices.



Not an exhaustive list







## ENABLER CO-PRODUCTION

**Co-production with students and staff is at the core of the whole university approach.**

We will consider co-production for:

- establishing a shared vision
- strategy development
- developing appreciation of the effects of mental health
- service design and evaluation
- quality assured peer support

Through effective co-production, students' and staff unions and representative bodies have the opportunity to establish a non-adversarial space to improve outcomes.





#QUBeWell

NEXT STEPS:  
BUILDING  
TOGETHER

#QUBeWell

[qub.ac.uk/bewell](http://qub.ac.uk/bewell)

# BUILDING OUR FRAMEWORK TOGETHER

## Join the Conversation

Queen's is on a journey to transform the culture of wellbeing at the University. As a student or staff member, we invite you to get involved, contribute to the conversation, and work together to address our issues and share our strengths.

The #QUBeWell Framework is ultimately about putting our people front and centre – whether we are a student or staff member, we bring ourselves to the University, and it is this shared humankind which will be at the centre of our vision.

The Framework will be developed in line with our Core Values and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Measuring our Success


The question is often asked about how we know we are making a genuine difference and impact to the lives of our students and staff?

Drawing this back to the mental health continuum, it is also important that our community of students and staff engage with any initiative, event, or discussion about wellbeing. Engaging with these opportunities, when we feel able and equipped to do so, allows our community to flourish, and ultimately make support services better for everyone.

People sometimes think that an increase in the number of students or staff reaching out to wellbeing services can be a sign of a wider issue, but it is also possible that the same increase can, in part, be attributed to the success of these Frameworks and the work which lies therein.

An increase in service user data can mean that stigma is being reduced, students and staff are reaching out earlier, and support is received in a timelier, accessible manner.

Prevention and early intervention are core components of providing a comprehensive support structure to students and staff. It reminds us that the message of the #QUBeWell Framework is being heard, listened to, and ultimately, our students and staff feel represented by its mission.



We won't always have all the answers, but our commitment is to do our best to transform the culture of wellbeing, to provide support to students and staff who need it, and to provide the structures to remind students and staff that they need not suffer in silence.

# BUILDING OUR FRAMEWORK TOGETHER

## How will we do it?

We will continue to collaborate with staff and students across the institution to understand what the wellbeing issues are.

We will co-design impactful projects, implement changes, and effective interventions.

Over the next few years, the health & wellbeing of our entire student population and workforce will be a top priority.

A comprehensive communications and engagement plan will be developed and shared across different areas of the University.

We will also establish a meaningful co-production process, allowing all members of our University community to have input, and co-create the next stages of developing the #QUBeWell Framework.

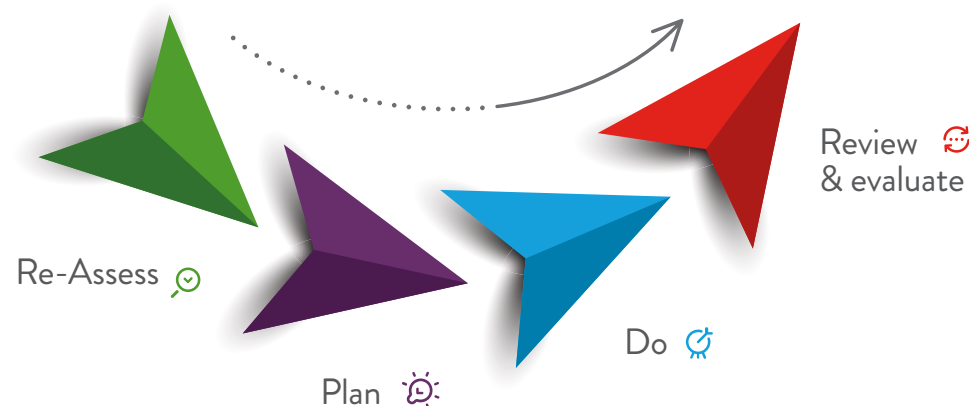
Queen's will:

- continue to build appropriate forums to actively listen to staff and students on their Health & Wellbeing issues
- continue to promote a health and wellbeing culture at Queen's
- continue to engage leaders to be ambassadors of health and wellbeing for all staff and students
- continue to identify health and wellbeing trends and seek tools and techniques to address poor mental health & wellbeing, where possible

As we navigate throughout the challenges presented by Covid-19, we must take the rich datasets we already have, and re-assess these through the lens of what we have learned from Covid-19.



## Co-Production



# REFERENCES

- **OMNI Report**  
<https://omni.qubsu.org>
- **Gaps & Pressures Report**  
<https://go.qub.ac.uk/gaps-and-pressures>
- **Student Wellbeing Service**  
<https://go.qub.ac.uk/wellbeing>
- **People & Culture**  
<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/>
- **Queen's Students' Union**  
<https://www.qubsu.org>
- **Hughes, G. & Spanner, L. (2019). The University Mental Health Charter. Leeds: Student Minds**  
<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/charter.html>
- **UUK Step Change Mentally Healthy Universities Framework**  
<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/stepchange-mhu>
- **Queen's announces £150k investment to improve mental health services for students**  
<https://www.qub.ac.uk/News/Allnews/2019/150kinvestmentannouncedtoimprovementalhealthservicesforstudents.html>
- **Thorley C (2017) Not By Degrees: Improving student mental health in the UK's Universities, IPPR.**  
<https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/not-by-degrees>
- **PRISM, QUB LGBT+ Staff Network**  
<https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/PRISM/>
- **iRise, QUB BAME and International Staff Network**  
<https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/iRise/>

#QUBeWell





## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING WEEK

MON 1 – FRI 5 MARCH 2021

#QUBeWell

### STUDENT SUPPORT

---

DISABILITY & WELLBEING DROP-IN

MONDAY – FRIDAY  
11:00am – 3:00pm  
**07387 546 123**

STUDENT WELLBEING WEBSITE  
[go.qub.ac.uk/StudentWellbeing](https://go.qub.ac.uk/StudentWellbeing)

INSPIRE STUDENT SUPPORT HUB (SELF-HELP)  
[go.qub.ac.uk/InspireStudentSupportHub](https://go.qub.ac.uk/InspireStudentSupportHub)  
**PIN: QUBHUB!**

INSPIRE STUDENT COUNSELLING 24/7 FREEPHONE  
**0808 800 0016**

### STAFF SUPPORT

---

STAFF WELLBEING WEBSITE  
[www.qub.ac.uk/wellbeing](https://www.qub.ac.uk/wellbeing)

INSPIRE STAFF SUPPORT HUB (SELF-HELP)  
[go.qub.ac.uk/InspireStaffHub](https://go.qub.ac.uk/InspireStaffHub)  
**PIN: QUBSTAFF**

INSPIRE STAFF COUNSELLING 24/7 FREEPHONE  
**0800 389 5362**

## CONTACT

Queen's University Belfast  
University Road  
Belfast  
BT7 1NN

[QUBeWell@qub.ac.uk](mailto:QUBeWell@qub.ac.uk)  
[www.qub.ac.uk/bewell](http://www.qub.ac.uk/bewell)