



**NATIONAL HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES NETWORK
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
THURSDAY 15 MAY 2014**

**REPORT OF MEETING
&
REPORT OF THEMED SESSION/ WORKSHOP
ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN UNIVERSITIES:
FOSTERING A STRATEGIC WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH**

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

John Cappock (Chief Operations Officer, Cardiff Metropolitan University) welcomed everyone, noting that this was the first UK Network meeting to be held in Wales and highlighting the University's strong commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff, students and wider community.

Chris Deacy (Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Cardiff Metropolitan University) offered a further welcome and gave an overview of 'housekeeping' issues.

Sue Powell (Head of Centre for Innovation and Knowledge Exchange, Manchester Metropolitan University – and Joint Co-ordinator of UK Healthy Universities Network) gave a welcome on behalf of the UK Network and thanked Chris Deacy for all his hard work in organising the meeting, the first to be held outside of England. Participants then introduced themselves.

Mark Dooris (Professor in Health and Sustainability/Director of Healthy Settings Unit, University of Central Lancashire – and Joint Co-ordinator of UK Healthy Universities Network) added his welcome, noting how good it was to see so many people at the meeting and so many new faces. He then gave an overview [presentation](#), introducing Healthy Universities and tracing the UK Network's journey.

UK ADMINISTRATIONS: BRIEF OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

- **England:** Mark Dooris passed on apologies from Eustace de Sousa (Deputy Director for Children, Young People and Families, Public Health England [PHE]). PHE is developing a Child and Adolescent Health Framework. Whilst higher education is not currently a strategic priority, PHE has joined the Network's Steering Group and is keen to explore potential developments in higher education.
- **Northern Ireland:** Hilary Johnston from Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland explained that a new public health strategy for Northern Ireland is shortly to be published. Since joining the Network Steering Group, she has strengthened engagement with the universities in Northern Ireland and is keen to develop Healthy Universities work further.
- **Scotland:** Mark passed on apologies from Emma Hogg at NHS Health Scotland, who has joined the Network's Steering Group. Higher education is not currently a strategic priority - and Helen Ryall (Healthy University Project Co-ordinator at Edinburgh University) highlighted that this is in part because universities are not perceived to fit as readily into a work programme focused on addressing inequalities as do other educational settings.
- **Wales:** The Welsh Government is currently consulting on a Public Health White Paper, which will have an emphasis on Health in All Policies. It has worked with partners to develop a Healthy and Sustainable Further Education and Higher Education Framework, building on work in other educational settings - as discussed by Sue Bowker (who is a member of the Network's Steering Group) during the afternoon themed session.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held at Sheffield Hallam University on Thursday 27 November (provisionally 10:00-15:00).

In 2015, it is proposed that one of the meetings is held in Scotland – and Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen have offered to host.

NETWORKING, UPDATES, SHARING OF PRACTICE AND PEER SUPPORT

- Mark Dooris gave apologies from Gil Barton (Robert Gordon University [RGU]). RGU has undertaken a Staff Physical Activity and Wellbeing Survey (see Appendix 2 for details) and Gil is keen to ascertain if there are any other universities within the network that would be interested in collaborating to take this initial work forward. Please email Gil Barton g.barton1@rgu.ac.uk.
- Mark Dooris informed participants that he and several other Network members had participated in an exploratory round-table meeting on workplace health in higher education settings, convened by Dame Carol Black. Further discussions will take place with the Department of Health.
- Ian Kenvyn announced that a Mental Health First Aid Group has been set up.
- Rob Sage (Active Travel Programme Manager, Sustrans Cymru) informed participants that Sustrans Cymru is working in partnership with the British Heart Foundation, MIND Cymru and Ash Wales on a Healthy Universities project.
- Sue Powell gave a brief [presentation](#) about a research project 'What do students think a Healthy University is?' being conducted by Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Participants spent time in round-table networking and peer support discussions. Themes identified as possible priorities for future meetings included mental health and wellbeing; directorate level engagement and leadership; impact and evidence of impact. There was no clear consensus about whether it would be valuable to organise geographically-based sub-network meetings: there are clearly challenges to people travelling long distances and/or taking too much time out of busy work schedules, but there is evidently still enthusiasm for and value in holding full network meetings on a UK footprint.

THEMED SESSION: HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN UNIVERSITIES – FOSTERING A STRATEGIC WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH

Mark Dooris introduced the session, explaining that the meeting organisers had decided that it was timely to revisit what it is that 'defines' and characterises Healthy Universities by looking at what a strategic whole system approach is all about.

Sharon Doherty (Healthy University Co-ordinator, University of Central Lancashire) gave a [presentation 'Making the Links: A Whole University Approach'](#) that introduced what is meant by a whole system approach in the context of Healthy Universities.

[Click here to view video](#)

Sue Bowker (Head of Tobacco Policy Branch, Department for Health and Social Services, Welsh Government) gave a [presentation 'Health Promoting Educational Settings in Wales'](#) that traced the history and development of healthy educational settings in Wales and outlined the Healthy and Sustainable Further Education and Higher Education Framework.

[Click here to view video](#)

Chris Deacy gave a [presentation 'Health and Well-being at Cardiff Metropolitan University – the EmWell Project'](#) that outlined the approach taken and how EmWell had harnessed academic/research expertise and facilities to improve organisational performance through encouraging a healthier and more engaged workforce at Cardiff Metropolitan University and serve as a catalyst to develop its reputation for being a healthy and sustainable university.

[Click here to view video](#)

Sarah Huws-Davies (Director of Student Services, Swansea University) gave a [presentation 'Developing a Whole System Healthy University Approach'](#) that gave a history of Swansea's Healthy University journey (catalysed by Swansea becoming a WHO-designated Healthy City), set out key challenges, and outlined processes, structures and achievements.

[Click here to view video](#)

APPENDIX 1: ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY STAFF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WELLBEING SURVEY

In March 2013 RGU undertook a Staff Physical Activity & Wellbeing survey within the staff population. This was timely due to developments in the university campus and a centralisation of all teaching to the Garthdee Campus. The breakdown of the project is detailed below however we are keen to ascertain if there are any other universities within the network that would be interested in collaborating to take this initial work forward. If anyone is interested please email Gil Barton, Senior Lecturer at g.barton1@rgu.ac.uk for further information or an informal discussion.

Staff Physical Activity & Wellbeing in University Staff

Background: There is growing evidence that workplace interventions can increase physical activity and health, and have a positive effect on presenteeism, stress tolerance and productivity (To et al, 2013), thereby enhancing overall staff wellbeing. University staff are an under-researched population in terms of workplace physical activity; therefore there is a gap in the knowledge required to successfully plan strategies and resources for enhancing physical activity in university staff, one important dimension of the Health Promoting University (Dooris 2010, Xiangyang 2003).

Methods: We surveyed 502 staff at one Scottish university capturing self-reported physical activity levels and mental wellbeing using the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). We also captured information on barriers and incentives for increasing workplace physical activity and wellbeing, which were further explored in focus groups with 13 volunteers.

Results: The age, gender and position (academic or support) of our sample was reflective of the university staff group as compared to 2013 RGU university staff statistics. IPAQ scores classified 23% as having low, 39% moderate and 38% high physical activity levels. Low physical activity levels were statistically significantly related to lower WEMWBS scores. A range of barriers and incentives for increasing workplace physical activity and wellbeing were explored, whose nature could be defined as personal, practical or cultural. Four themes emerged from focus groups as being important for facilitating increases in staff physical activity and wellbeing: (i) effective communication, (ii) cultural change, (iii) personal control over workplace issues and (iv) effective change management.

Conclusions: Staff in one Scottish university have demonstrated physical activity and wellbeing levels that would benefit from interventions aimed at enhancing them. Barriers to increasing workplace physical activity have been identified, along with some practical suggestions for overcoming these barriers. Further exploration would be recommended along with a larger sample size.

APPENDIX 2: ATTENDANCE

Name	Organisation	Email
Louise Atkins	University of Glamorgan	Louise.Atkins@rwcmd.ac.uk
Dr Andy Berry	Cardiff University	BerryAW@cardiff.ac.uk
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Apologies		
Dr Manuel Alonso	Loughborough University	
Dame Carol Black		
Coral Brazier	Kingston University	
Gil Barton	Robert Gordon University	
John Cowley	Cardiff University	

Karen Cregan	Chester University
Eustace DeSousa	Public Health England
Matthew Doran	NUI Galway
Jonathan Dover	City University
Suzi Gammon	Soil Association Certification
Jo Goodman	NUS
Dawne Gurbutt	UCLan
Emma Hogg	NHS Health Scotland
Jenny King	Worcester University
Margaret Sills	Higher Education Academy (HEA)
Eileen Martin	Teesside University
Amy Norton	HEFCE
Jit Pandya	de Montford University
Sarah Queralt	Oxford Brookes University
Sue Rothwell	Chester University
Laura Smythson	Surrey University
Alisa Stanton	Simon Fraser University
Rose Terpstra	Cardiff University
Mrs Jane Thomas	Swansea University
Emma Wilkins	York St John