

## EDITORIAL

It's been another successful six months for the UK Healthy Universities Network – and as always, we are pleased to welcome all those individuals, universities and partner organisations who have joined the Network. We now have as members 76 Higher Education Institutions (62 England; 5 Wales; 7 Scotland); 13 non-UK universities; and 27 other stakeholder organisations.

As we write this editorial, the **International Health Promoting Universities and Colleges Conference**, hosted by the University of British Columbia (Okanagan Campus) has just drawn to a close. It was an enormously exciting event attended by nearly 400 participants from 38 countries – and a major output is the Okanagan Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges. Further information and reflections can be found on p2 of this newsletter.

In this edition, you'll find updates from our members; news items and features on topical issues such as workplace health and wellbeing; alcohol; fossil fuel divestment; physical activity; sexual harassment and violence; and healthy and sustainable food.

*Prof. Mark Dooris, University of Central Lancashire & Dr Sue Powell, Manchester Metropolitan University*

## UK HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES NETWORK – NEWS

### Website and Online Toolkit

For many members, the 'hub' of the Network is the **Healthy Universities Website** and **Healthy Universities Toolkit** (comprising a **Self Review Tool**, **Guidance Packages** and **Case Studies**).

Since it was set up in 2010, **over 19,306 unique visitors** from **146 different countries** have made **31,186 visits** to the website and toolkit. The statistics indicate that interest and engagement has continued to increase over time.

We want to keep the Network as alive and dynamic as possible:

- Please submit news items and feedback to [healthyuniversities@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:healthyuniversities@uclan.ac.uk).
- New case studies can be submitted, using the **template** form.

### Network Meeting and Themed Workshops

● **Latest Meeting:** The latest Network meeting and themed learning event was held at University of Edinburgh on 13 May 2015. The themed session was *Maximising and Measuring the Impact of Whole System Healthy University Programmes on Health, Wellbeing and Inequalities: Challenges, Opportunities and Next Steps*. **A report of the meeting and workshop** is available online, including links to presentations and relevant reports.

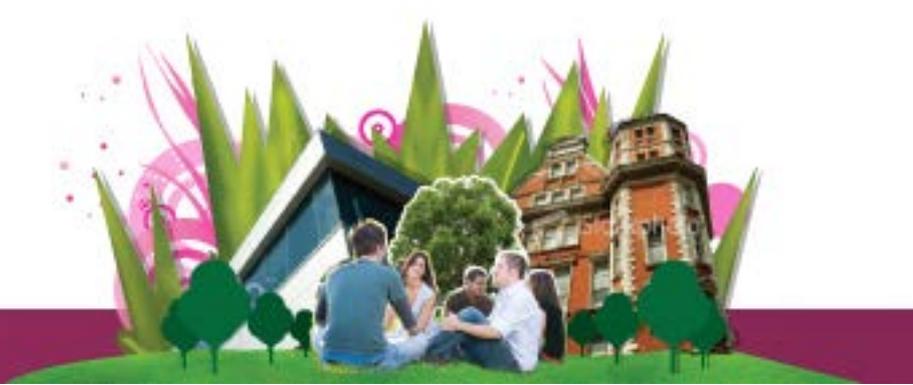
● **Next Meeting:** The next Network meeting and themed learning event will take place in Manchester, hosted by MMU, on the **11 November 2015**.

### Newsletters

We aim to produce two newsletters each year. The deadline for receipt of material (news, updates, and features) for the next edition is **27 November 2015**.

Email: [healthyuniversities@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:healthyuniversities@uclan.ac.uk)





## UPDATE – SCOTLAND

An exploratory meeting was held on 12 May to consider the development of a Scottish Healthy Universities Network. This was attended by eight Scottish universities (Edinburgh Napier University, Queen Margaret University, Robert Gordon University, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, University of the Highlands and Islands, University of Stirling and University of Strathclyde) – with Mark Dooris and Sue Powell also in attendance. It was agreed that, in recognition of the particular policy and funding contexts, a Scottish Network would be established, affiliated and strongly linked to the UK Network – and that they would work with Scottish Student Sport in the initial stages of development.

**Contact:** Helen Ryall, University of Edinburgh [Helen.Ryall@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.Ryall@ed.ac.uk); Gil Barton, RGU [g.barton1@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:g.barton1@rgu.ac.uk)

## UPDATE – WALES

The Healthy and Sustainable FE/HE Framework for Wales provides a criteria-based matrix that allows institutions to consider their activity in relation to six health topics and four thematic process areas. As previously highlighted, the framework has been developed to give colleges and universities the flexibility to identify their own strengths and areas for improvement, and then implement actions to improve how health is embedded into their setting.

The Framework is currently being uploaded by Public Health Wales as an online resource – and Network members will be sent information and a link when available.

**Contact:** Sue Bowker, Welsh Government [Sue.Bowker@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.Bowker@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

## UPDATES FROM NETWORK MEMBERS

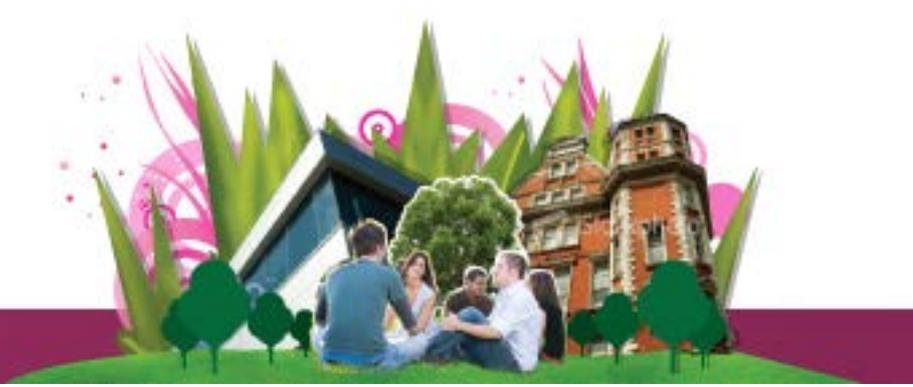
### Healthy Conservatoires Network

Louise Atkins, Research Associate at the Royal College of Music and active UK Healthy Universities Network member, has been working with Conservatoires to explore health and wellbeing provision. A meeting of key stakeholders from across the sector was convened recently to explore the application of the Healthy Universities model – and all participants were very enthusiastic and excited about the concept and agreed that they would like to adopt Healthy Universities principles.

However, all also acknowledged the unique needs and specialist populations of conservatoires – and felt that it would be valuable to establish a separate Healthy Conservatoires Network embedded within Conservatoires UK. Both the Principals Group and Research Group of CUK have agreed to this, and plans are progressing to formalise the group. Louise will be getting things started as part of **Musical Impact** and working on funding bids to ensure that co-ordination is maintained and that the Network is successfully developed.

In order to ensure that the work with conservatoires remains closely linked to the UK Healthy Universities Network and allow a two-way flow of information and learning, Louise will continue to attend meetings and encourage other conservatoires to sign up for newsletters and information.

**Contact:** Louise Atkins, Research Associate in Performance Science [louise.atkins@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:louise.atkins@rcm.ac.uk)



## **University of Edinburgh: An Expanding Healthy University Programme**

### **Supporting Physical Activity Programme**

The Supporting Physical Activity (SPA) Programme is a new free non-judgemental service at Edinburgh which aims to support physically inactive students become more active, feel better and cope better with their studies. The Programme is a partnership between the Healthy University Project, Edinburgh University Sports Union and University of Edinburgh Sport & Exercise.

Students who are currently doing less than 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week and are keen to do more can self-refer to the programme. The programme is widely advertised around the university from the Chaplaincy, to the Student Counselling Service, on many plasma screens in libraries and buildings and through social media.

Once the students have enquired via email, they are sent a pre-intervention questionnaire and an appointment to meet with the Programme Officer. Thereafter, an initial 30 minute consultation to find out their interests, likes and dislikes helps to set goals to increase their activity levels. The pre-intervention questionnaire acts as a great tool for probing further into the reasons why they are looking to change. On average 6 further meetings are scheduled every two to three weeks – all depending on the students' needs and commitments. Over these appointments the students are supported to identify and overcome challenges along the way in order to keep moving towards their goals and ultimately have a healthier experience during their time at in Edinburgh.

Although the programme only started in February, we have already had great results reaching out to lots of different students – from 1st year undergraduate to PhD; home and international students; student's with health issues such as ulcerative colitis and students with severe anxiety and depression, who all need individual support. After the intervention has been concluded a post-intervention questionnaire is sent to the students. Although there are only 7 students who have completed the intervention so far with the remainder still working through their behaviour change, we are beginning to see great impacts already. 100% of students would recommend this service to others, and 100% also claim it is helping them cope better with their studies – and they have improved their physical activity levels by 50%.

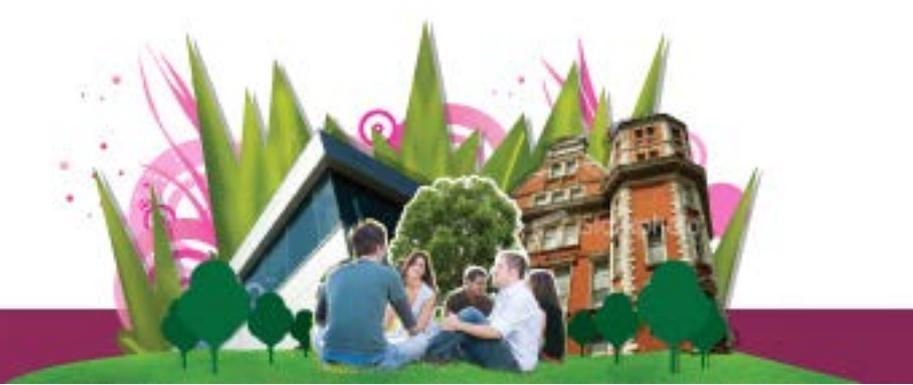
### **Student Lifestyle Questionnaire**

In May we launched a lifestyle questionnaire to find out how students live their lives across a range of lifestyle topics, including physical activity, mental health, sleep, diet, sexual health, smoking, alcohol and drugs. Many thanks to others in the network for sharing their work with us. The survey will complete the first week of June, but interim results taken from just over 1000 students makes a really interesting read. We are happy to share both the questionnaire and the results as they are finalised with others interested in doing similar work.

### **Future Work**

Our remit will expand from August to address the health needs of staff as well as students which is very exciting and recent news for us. One of the first tasks will be to find out about the current health of our staff. If anyone else has carried out similar work and is happy to share what they did and what they learned, I would be really grateful if you could get in touch.

**Contact:** Helen Ryall, Healthy Universities Project Coordinator [helen.ryall@ed.ac.uk](mailto:helen.ryall@ed.ac.uk)



## **University College Cork: Officially recognised as a Health Promoting University**



University College Cork (UCC) has passed its final ‘check-up’ with flying colours on the road to being declared a ‘Health Promoting University’ by Ireland’s Health Service Executive (HSE) South, which marks the university out as a leader nationally for its efforts under the umbrella of the UCC Health Matters initiative. A recent letter remarks: “While many third level institutions are committed to health and wellbeing, UCC can take pride in being the first 3rd level institution to have followed the HSE South’s Framework for Health Promoting Universities and to gain formal recognition.”

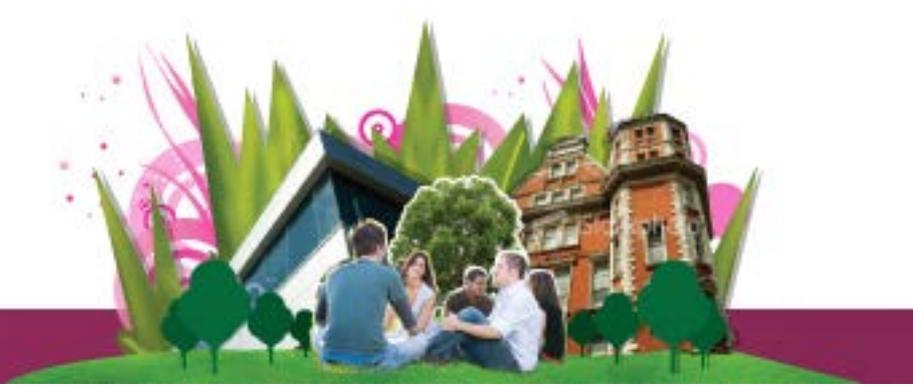
A ceremony took place on 25 February 2015 to mark the culmination of several years of work, at which HSE South presented UCC with a flag representing the University’s continued commitment to health promotion. The recognition formally acknowledged that health has been meaningfully integrated into the culture, processes and policies of UCC.

Dr Michael Byrne, Head of UCC’s Student Health Department and architect and joint co-ordinator of the initiative has commented: “The success of the UCC Health Matters initiative partly lies in its collaborations: collaborations between students and staff, between professional practitioners and expert academics; collaborations that have improved the effectiveness and reach of all the health promoting activity on campus. Particular thanks must go to Health Promotion and Improvement, HSE South for its encouragement and support.”

A plethora of initiatives have taken place under the watch of UCC Health Matters, many of which have previously attracted national interest. For example:

- A funded PhD level thesis on alcohol use published some findings in the last month that led to widespread national coverage as UCC researchers called for further public policy measures as a matter of urgency.
- UCC’s comprehensive action plan on alcohol won outright at the Irish Healthcare Awards (IHA) in 2013 for its actions to reduce alcohol-related harm among students.

*Pictured L-R: Emily Lynch, UCC Health Matters team, Dr. Michael Byrne, Head of Student Health Service, UCC and co-coordinator of UCC Health Matters, Dave Carey, UCC Health Matters team, Michael Hanrahan, UCC Clubs Executive Health Promotion Officer, Dr Dave Otway, UCC, Fiona O'Donnell, UCC Health Matters team and Cian Power, UCCSU Welfare Officer and co-coordinator of UCC Health Matters. Photo: Tomas Tyner, UCC.*



## **University of Nottingham: Promoting Workplace Wellness**

Researchers at the School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham have developed an online learning tool to increase knowledge of workplace wellness as an important public health issue. The project was led by Dr Holly Blake, and Emily Gartshore.

This interactive tool is focused on six key areas relating to workplace wellness, including: work-related stress, musculoskeletal disorders, diet and nutrition, physical activity, smoking and alcohol consumption. For each key area, there is current evidence-based information on causes and consequences, access to government reports and national statistics, and guidance on actions that can be taken to improve health within a workplace setting. The tool was evaluated with 188 users, including university staff and healthcare students and NHS employees. Users completed online knowledge questionnaires before and after using the learning tool. The project showed that baseline knowledge of workplace wellness was relatively poor. However, knowledge significantly improved after using the tool, in all of the key health areas. Staff and students had positive attitudes towards online learning, and they perceived the learning tool to be useful and engaging. The tool has been used to support a Work, Health and Wellbeing programme in the School and has been made available to university staff and students for professional development, and to employees at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS trust.

**Contact:** Dr Holly Blake, Associate Professor of Behavioural Science [Holly.Blake@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Holly.Blake@nottingham.ac.uk)

## **Nottingham Trent University: Exam Campaign and Needs Assessment**

We all know that exams and assessments can be stressful experiences for students. Every year we run our Take 5 exam stress campaign in partnership with the Students Union. The campaign draws mainly on 5 stress busting top tips:

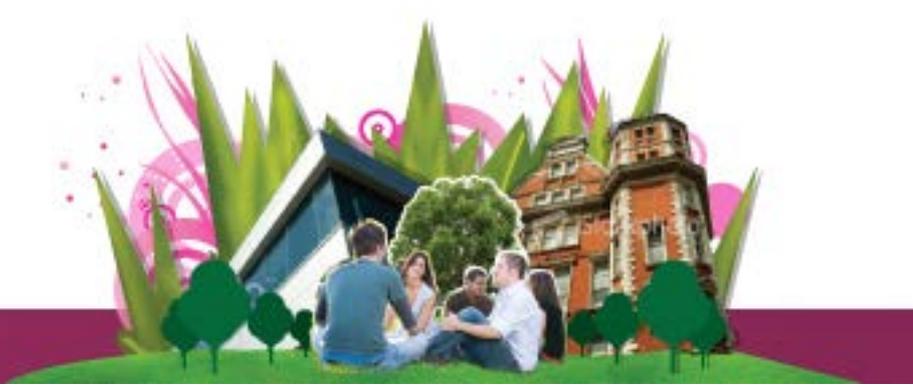
- 🌱 **Taking control** – Having a master plan on paper, break up your revision into manageable chunks and always make room for some downtime.
- 🌱 **Taking some time for yourself** – Giving yourself some breathing room and do the things you enjoy.
- 🌱 **Taking time to care for yourself** – Exercising releases endorphins and allows you to feel good and relax. Work up a sweat and keep the stress down. And don't forget to eat a little healthier too.
- 🌱 **Taking time to talk** – Going out and meeting your friends, or maybe catch the late train home and keep up to date with the loved ones.

**Taking time to reflect** – Having a look at where your hard work has gotten you and remember that a degree isn't easy. You're doing just fine.

As well as promoting the top five tips we link with our sport department and promote their beginner sports programme and our library service, who run a series of support workshops ranging from effective revision techniques and time management to presentation skills. The library also have student mentors and academic skills advisors, who provide advice and support. All these are packaged into a programme and provided to students. To help raise awareness of the sessions we run roadshows in the libraries, where we hand out brain food like free bananas and water.

We find it really important to ask students what their needs are, so this year we are running an Exam Stress Needs Assessment, which is focusing on what the students experiences of exam stress are and their ideas about how we can improve the support provided to students. The needs assessment is now live on the [Take 5 web page](#). The results will be posted on the site towards the end of June 2015.

**Contact:** Paul Dodsley, Student Health Development Officer [paul.dodsley@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:paul.dodsley@ntu.ac.uk)



## NEWS & FEATURES

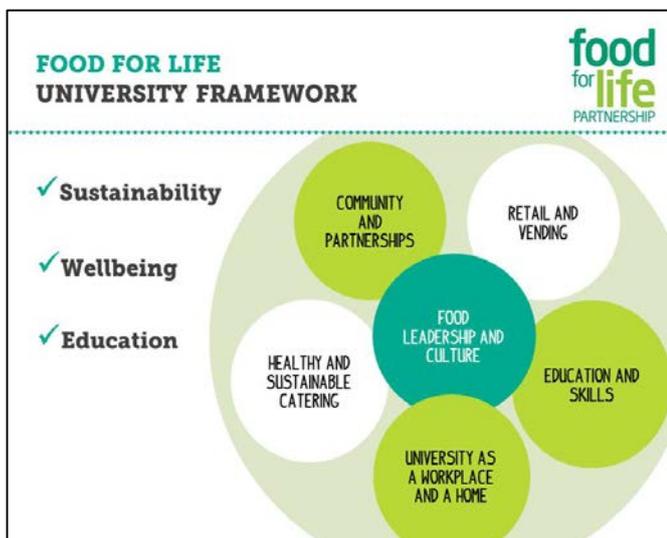
### Food for Life in Universities: Improving Food Culture

Universities have a unique role to play in supporting positive food behaviours. For young people making completely independent lifestyle choices for the first time, universities have the opportunity to model good choices, develop skills and provide the foundation for consumer behaviours that support health, wellbeing, sustainability and the local economy. As major employers, universities also have an opportunity and a responsibility to support the health and wellbeing of staff.

Food for Life, supported by Big Lottery Wellbeing funding, has been working with Lancaster University (LU) over the last 18 months developing a model that supports universities to take a 'whole setting' approach to improving food culture. While LU were already leading in a number of areas, such as their food growing 'eco-hub', on-campus edible planters and Food for Life Catering Mark certified cafes and restaurants, the Food for Life pilot has brought added benefits.



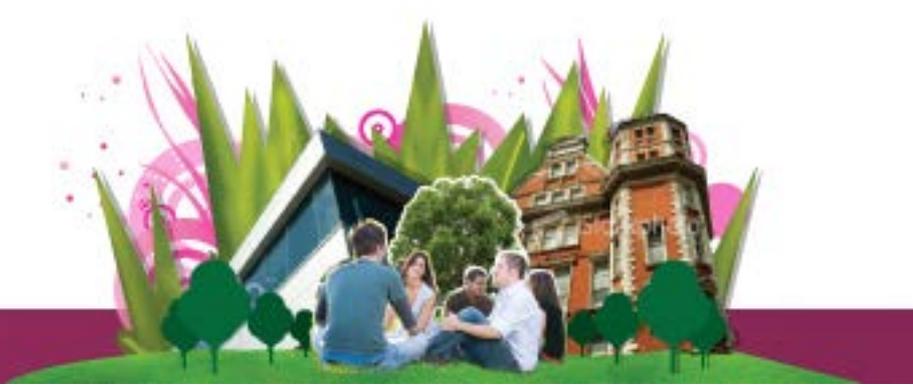
Central to the approach is leadership and a multi-disciplinary approach. The LU steering group brought together leads from sustainability and environmental backgrounds, from catering, human resources, estates and sports, as well as student union leads and a Food for Life project manager. Mapping ongoing food activities within LU helped the group understand what was working well, as well as identifying key gaps and opportunities. Outcomes from the pilot for LU have included a more joined up approach to food activities across the university, the integration of all of their food activities into their food policy, and plans for new projects such as cooking workshops.



The Food for Life university framework, co-developed through the pilot, now offers a blueprint for other universities. Key areas identified are 'food leadership and culture': developing a shared voice on food planning and improvement, and enshrining good food culture in policy. 'Retail and vending' is about making the healthy choice the norm and having consistent approaches across the university. 'Education and skills' develops teaching and research around food, and supports growing, cooking and eating for health and sustainability. 'University as a workplace and a home' supports eating well in the workplace and facilitating positive food behaviours for residents. 'Healthy and sustainable catering' can be achieved through certification schemes such as the Food for Life Catering Mark, along with positive advertising and promotion. The last framework area, 'community and partnerships', links the university to the wider community to support local food agendas.

While universities may be working well in any of these areas, the Food for Life approach supports an integrated and holistic way of working that puts a positive food culture at the heart of the university for the benefit of students, staff and the local community.

**Contact:** Susannah McWilliam, Food for Life Project Manager [SMcWilliam@soilassociation.org](mailto:SMcWilliam@soilassociation.org)



## On Your Feet Britain

Working lives are often spent sitting at desks. April 24th saw a new campaign to encourage us all to get on our feet and off our chairs – On Your Feet Britain, launched by the British Heart Foundation and Get Britain Standing Campaign. The average adult spends nearly nine hours a day sat down and the evidence of the damage this is doing to our health is growing. We are designed to move, and these long periods of being sat still, often in a bad posture, are basically training our body into a state of immobility. **Studies** now show that lots of time spent sat down is independently associated with poor health outcomes, regardless of how active you are outside of this time. So if you sit at work for eight hours, and go for a 30 minute run in the evening, there will still be some health impact from the sitting that the run won't compensate for.



As part of the Live Well, Work Well Healthy Universities project, **Sustrans** promoted this campaign in universities across Wales, to get university staff on their feet. Simple things that can in time become new habits that will help reduce your sitting time without impacting on productivity, and actually may well increase it. For example:

- Stand up and take a break from your computer every 30 minutes
- Stand during phone calls
- Use the stairs
- Have standing or walking meetings
- Eat your lunch away from your desk
- Walk to your colleague's desk instead of phoning or emailing them
- Stand at the back of the room during presentations
- Walk or cycle at least one journey every day



Feedback from two of the universities who got involved suggests the campaign was well received and prompted some interesting discussion, as well the opportunity for some FUN!

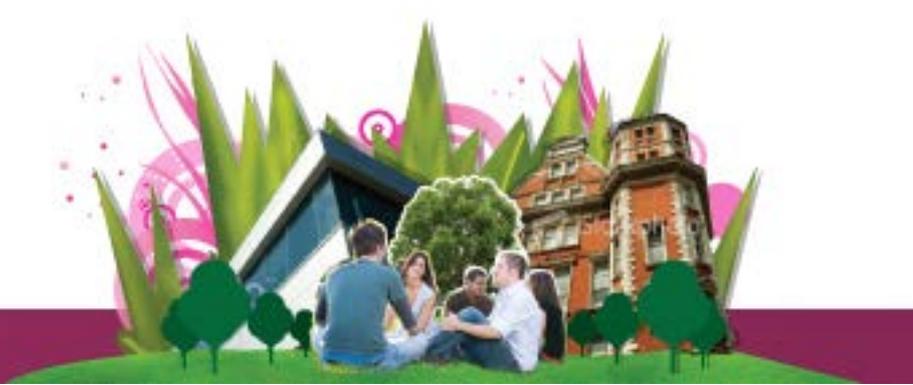
“As for the standing meeting, my line manager (and chair of said meeting) was very enthusiastic and we're now having standing meetings every fortnight as we have a team meeting on Fridays. Everyone seemed positive about it and it certainly made the meeting more efficient, which was a positive if unintended result.”

Stephen Beale, Swansea University

“Over the course of the two weeks, staff approached me to report activities they were undertaking as a result of the challenge. For example, many reported they had held standing meetings; switched to a printer further away; eaten lunch in the communal kitchen as opposed to at their desks; and talked to instead of emailing their colleagues. The challenge also sparked many conversations around barriers, such as the ‘awkward’ feeling caused by the sedentary ‘social norm’ at the office and the lack of funding for equipment such as standing desks. Whilst still awaiting analysis of data from a ‘before and after’ questionnaire evaluation, my impression is that it is possible to change sedentary cultures. However, reducing the amount of time that staff spend sitting at work would require a huge effort on an organisational, as well individual, level in order to change the social norms and staff self-efficacy and beliefs.”

Becky Richards, Cardiff University

**Further Information:** Rob Sage, Sustrans Cymru [robert.sage@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:robert.sage@sustrans.org.uk); [Cardiff University Decipher 'blog'](#)



## Alcohol Impact



As reported in our January 2015 newsletter, **Alcohol Impact** is a whole-institution approach to responsible consumption of alcohol by students. It is a strategic framework and supported accreditation mark designed to bring the students' union and its partner institution together to create the conditions for a social norm of responsible alcohol consumption. In 2014/15, Alcohol Impact was externally funded by the Home Office and run at seven pilot institutions. To date (June 2015), a total of 280 criteria have been completed; 12,500 students have responded to our central research surveys; we have engaged with 116 sports clubs and societies; reached just under 10,000 students; and trained 22 student auditors helping with their employability and the delivery of the programme. We have seen some great local results including non-drink focused events doubling during the autumn term, from 50 to 100 with over 1,000 students participating; a 30% decrease in students being excluded from venues on campus due to irresponsible drinking; a decrease in welfare incidents in halls of residence; 76 students developing specific campaigns work on responsible alcohol consumption as part of their academic coursework and landlords changing incentives given to new student tenants to free food vouchers, rather than free alcohol. Alcohol Impact has been successfully piloted at seven institutions this year, with some great results. We now wish to see the work of the project extended to more institutions and students' unions, and for this reason we are inviting you to take part in year two of the scheme. Our information document where you can find further details about the programme can be found [here](#) and you can sign up directly [here](#).

**Contact:** Lucy Henry, Alcohol Impact Programme Manager [lucy-ann.henry@nus.org.uk](mailto:lucy-ann.henry@nus.org.uk)

## Sexual Harassment and Violence on University Campuses: Call for Practice Examples

In response to significant press coverage and sector discussion about the issues of sexual harassment and sexual violence on university campuses, the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) recently hosted a roundtable discussion on the topic. Participants, including academics, representatives from the NUS and Universities UK, shared their view of the problem as well as the work they have been doing to tackle it. Generally, attendees agreed there is a substantial amount of work already happening in this area, especially led by the student movement, but considered that more should be done. In response, ECU has decided to create a new section of its website, which will profile good practice and examples of what universities and others have done to tackle sexual harassment and sexual violence at university, as a central resource for the sector. We would greatly welcome contributions from Healthy Universities Network members.

**Contact:** Gemma Tracey, Equality Challenge Unit [gemma.tracey@ecu.ac.uk](mailto:gemma.tracey@ecu.ac.uk)

## Workplace Health and Wellbeing

### Workplace Wellbeing Charter

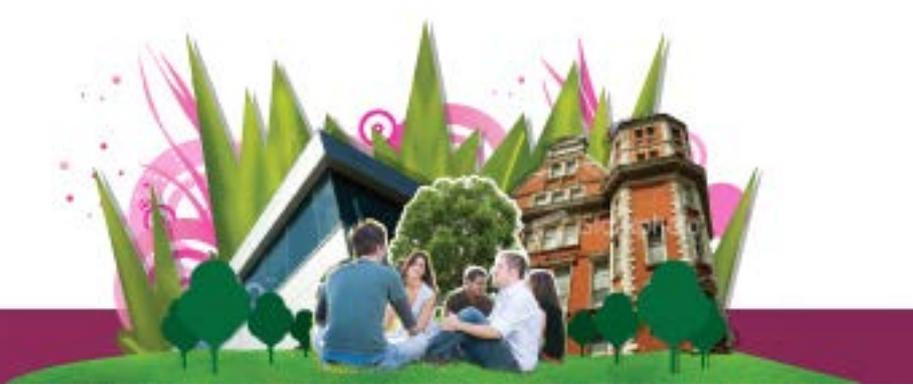
Public Health England (PHE) has launched a national **Workplace Wellbeing Charter** to improve health at work and reduce health inequalities – having commissioned **Health @ Work** and Liverpool City Council to develop a systematic way to drive improvements in workplace health. It offers a locally-led, accredited model to be used as a management tool to audit and improve workplace health, and gain external recognition for their practice. It provides employers with a clear guide on how to make workplaces a supportive and productive environment. The model builds on the success of existing schemes that vary in format, content and evidence. Its uniform structure means it will be the first time that standards are consistent and equal for businesses across the country. Accompanying the charter are ten topic guides which provide information to help organisations consider the value of improving various workplace health issues, including physical activity; healthy eating; mental health; alcohol and substance misuse; smoking and tobacco; dementia; carers; weight management; NHS health checks; Inclusive employment. Each topic guide includes advice and signposts towards sources of support.

**Further Information:** [Workplace Wellbeing Charter](#)

**Contact:** Dawn Tennant [dawn.tennant@phe.gov.uk](mailto:dawn.tennant@phe.gov.uk)



THE WORKPLACE  
WELLBEING CHARTER  
NATIONAL AWARD FOR ENGLAND



### Health at Work Programme

The British Heart Foundation (BHF)'s Health at Work programme is a free scheme that helps give employers the power to create a healthier workforce. By helping companies improve the health of their staff, BHF aims to reduce the number of people dying prematurely from cardiovascular disease in the UK. By **becoming a member** of Health at Work, you'll get access to advice, support, ideas and information on promoting health and wellbeing in the university. BHF will send you monthly e-newsletters and quarterly member packs by post with our latest guides and information. There are a range of resources to download or order to support implementation: once your scheme is set up, you can use our website to get ideas and inspiration for health campaigns, such as a pedometer challenge or healthy eating event.



**Further Information:** [Health at Work](#)

### UK Healthy Universities Network Strengthens Links with UCEA

Maxine Holt from MMU, who is representing the Network's Co-Chairs on matters relating to workplace health and wellbeing, attended and presented on behalf of the UK Healthy Universities Network at Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA)'s Health & Safety Committee and Higher Education Safety and Health Forum. Members of both were extremely interested in and supportive of our Network – and would like to keep in touch as a two-way process, feeding back to the Network Steering Group and having annual updates at their meetings. As reported in the last **newsletter**, UCEA and Universities Human Resources (UHR) have established a number of regional engagement and wellbeing networks.

**Further Information:** Maxine Holt, Manchester Metropolitan University Healthy University Co-ordinator [m.holt@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:m.holt@mmu.ac.uk)

### Divesting from Fossil Fuels

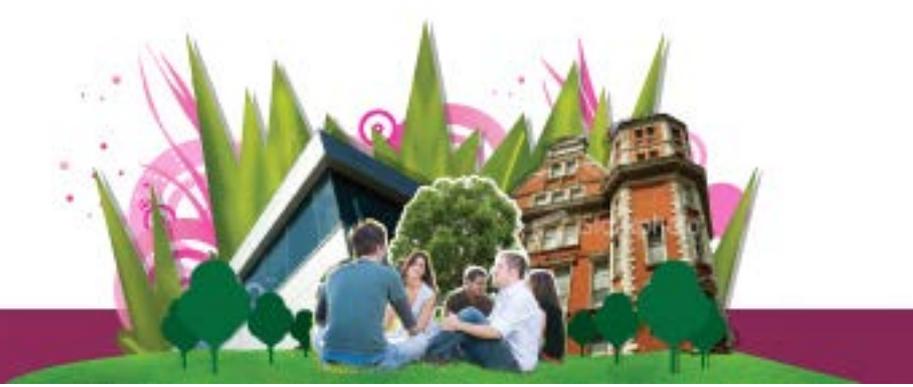
As highlighted in the last Newsletter, divestment from fossil fuel companies is a growing focus for a number of organisations, in recognition of the importance of climate change for the health of people, places and planet.

Following the University of Glasgow's announcement of its decision to divest from the fossil fuel industry, People and Planet reports that the campaign has expanded rapidly, with the University of London SOAS, Bedfordshire University, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Oxford University and the University of Edinburgh all announcing their intentions to divest.

Interestingly, fossil fuel divestment is much more strongly established in North America and featured in several keynote presentations at the International Health Promoting Universities and Colleges Conference.



**Further Information:** People & Planet Fossil Free <http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free>



## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Ten Reasons to Build Resilience into the Future of your University**

The Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) has launched a new **Business Guide for University Governors: Ten Reasons to Build Resilience into the Future of your University**. The Guide has been developed with support from the **Leadership Foundation** and aims to demonstrate the business benefits that your university can capitalise on by making Sustainability Resilience and Opportunity a ‘top team, top table issue’ that complements and enriches current agendas.

**Further Information:** [Ten Reasons to Build Resilience into the Future of your University](#)

### **Madness, Distress and the Politics of Disablement: new publication.**

Whether a mental health problem should be viewed as a disability is a pressing concern, especially since the inclusion of psychosocial disability in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It may be that policy has ‘jumped the gun’ by framing mental health problems as disability without an appreciation of the myriad complexities involved: for example, students experiencing distress may not see themselves as disabled, or indeed be seen as such by others – with profound implications for their access to the accommodations that they need. This new book – authored by Helen Spandler (from UCLan), Jill Anderson (Mental Health in Higher Education Project and Lancaster University) and Bob Sapey – brings together leading scholars and activists from Europe, North America, Australia and India, to explore the relationship between madness, distress and disability. It will appeal to academics, disability or mental health support staff and anyone else who is grappling with these complex issues in a higher education context.

**Further Details:** [Madness, Distress and the Politics of Disablement](#)

**Contact:** Jill Anderson [j.anderson@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:j.anderson@lancaster.ac.uk)