



WESTON
COLLEGE



WELLBEING
@WESTON

A MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2021-2024

PART OF THE BODY AND MIND INNOVATION FRAMEWORK





Dr Paul Phillips CBE, Principal & Chief Executive at Weston College

“Working towards positive student and staff mental health and wellbeing is a College philosophy that engages everyone within the organisation. As an education institution, Weston College’s main strategic objective is to ‘Provide a safe, supportive and inclusive learning culture where students can thrive’, This strategy will direct and deliver an ethos which puts mental health and wellbeing at the forefront of College investment, as an inclusive driver to achieve our overall mission of ‘Creating Brighter Futures’ for all staff and students regardless of their starting point in life.”

Supporting statements from the following on the College’s approach to Wellbeing

“Since winning the AoC Mental Health and Wellbeing Beacon Award in 2019, Weston College has gone on to be a key partner for AoC in promoting good practice and innovation in this area of work. Weston showed leadership by being the first signatory of the AoC Mental Health & Wellbeing Charter, which now has over 180 colleges signed up, and continue to contribute to our webinar series and conferences. We look forward to building our partnership, seeing the impact of ‘Wellbeing@Weston’ and developing more work together to support the wellbeing of all learners and staff in Weston and in all colleges across the country.”

Richard Caulfield
Association of College’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead

“Part of the role of the Education Training Foundation is to raise awareness of the outstanding work that is going on at the frontline of the FE sector – chimes with our role to promote a self-improving sector. Weston College, as one of our Centres for Excellence in SEND, is doing excellent work in encouraging others to create inclusive organisations where staff and learner wellbeing is fundamental to the experience of learning and work. We’re delighted to hear that the

college continues to build on its comprehensive approach with the launch of ‘Wellbeing@Weston’ and look forward to sharing this exciting development with the wider FE sector.”

Teresa Carroll
National Head for Inclusion at Education Training Foundation

“GKN Aerospace as a key partner of the College, is fully supportive of the new mental health and wellbeing strategy and approach, ‘Wellbeing@Weston’ being implemented by Weston College. During this continuing pandemic the college have already demonstrated their strengths in this area with the support provided to our Apprentices. Before and beyond the current pandemic these issues have always been around and will remain, therefore that is why we welcome this strategic approach. We view ongoing wellbeing and mental health support as crucial to support not just our Apprentices, but all learners and college staff.”

Paul Ashbee
GKN Aerospace UK Apprenticeships Manager “

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CONTEXT

In England, the Association of Colleges (AoC) has identified mental health as a priority and challenges education providers to consider how they support staff and students' mental health and wellbeing. In 2019, the AoC launched its Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter that allows colleges across England to affirm their commitment to staff and students by signing up. The 11-point document was created by the AoC in conjunction with mental health experts, and includes commitments to promoting equality of opportunity and challenging mental health stigma, providing appropriate mental health training for staff, and providing targeted individual mental health support where appropriate. Weston College was the first college in England to sign up to the charter.

Coronavirus Pandemic

A mental health crisis was developing before Covid-19. The pandemic has deepened this development, exacerbating known causes, creating new ones and storing up those which are yet to be known.

The pandemic has more than ever, highlighted the need for Weston College to amplify strategically its commitment to the health and wellbeing of its whole community. It has also raised the importance of mental health support and development for all. The short-term impact of Covid-19 has resulted in significant health and wellbeing issues and the indicators are that there will be considerable long-term effects of Covid-19 which have yet to be determined.

Responding to these challenges has required significant innovation as well as external expertise, critical partnership work and sharing of practice, and the development of key, sustainable relationships. All of which, have informed the development and implementation plans for this Wellbeing @ Weston strategy.

Nationally

- 83% of colleges state that mental health referrals were up in September 2020 compared to September 2019 (AoC, 2021)
- 28% increase in the number of U18s referred to mental health services in the last year up to March 2021, compared to previous 12 month period (Daily Mail, 2021)
- Post lockdown 1.0, over two thirds (68%) of young people in the UK felt their mental health had worsened (Mind, 2020)
- 23% stated there was less mental health support in their educational setting than before the pandemic, while only 9% agreed that there was more mental health support (Young Minds, 2020)

- 65% of colleges have seen an increase in staff accessing services with the greatest factors in this increase linked to return to work post-Covid, recurrence of existing mental health conditions and workload. (AoC, 2021)
- More than half (53 per cent) of young people think their career prospects are getting worse (TES, 2021)
- In 2021, there was a 450% increase in the number of young people who submitted a UCAS application declaring they had a mental health condition (UCAS, 2021)

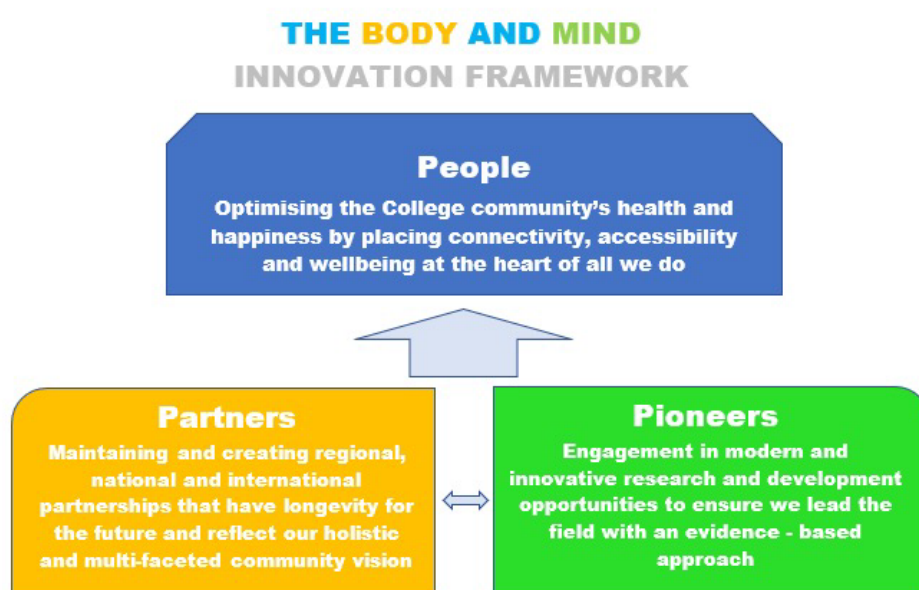
Weston College

- Demand on Weston College welfare services for the period of September 2020-March 2021 has grown by 55.5% compared to the same sixth month period in the previous academic year, with 10,000 interventions recorded already in 2020/21
- 60.2% of students who accessed pastoral support sought support with regards to mental health and/or welfare
- Mental health/welfare interventions in 20/21 to date, have increased by 47.8% compared to the previous year

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING: OUR AMBITION

To continue to grow an enhanced educational mental health and wellbeing innovation framework that encompasses our community and encourages them to reach their whole potential via a synthesis of evidence-based activities - positioning the college as a leader of wellbeing practice nationally and internationally.

This will be achieved through the following framework:



Through this framework the Principal and Chief Executive, is determined to continue to provide an unrivalled education based holistic 'Body and Mind' approach to ensure that students and staff are supported to continue to achieve their ambitions. The framework is designed to ensure that best practice is shaped and shared through a collaborative approach to partnership, placing real emphasis on research and inclusivity, all of which is sustained in a whole College approach, positioning the College as a leader in the field for mental health and wellbeing support.

WELLBEING@WESTON: OUR STRATEGY

Wellbeing@Weston focuses on people and is a key part of Weston College's wider Body and Mind Innovation Framework that centres on three pillars of people, partners and pioneers. Wellbeing@Weston aims to optimise the health and happiness of the whole College community by placing wellbeing, connectivity and accessibility at the heart of all we do through.

With its focus on people, the Wellbeing@Weston strategy sets out our approach to enhancing and developing an inclusive and caring environment at Weston College. We want our staff and students to feel supported and able to reach their potential. This strategy applies across the whole college and has been created in collaboration with a range of stakeholders.

Many students and staff experience good wellbeing most of the time, but others may sometimes experience mental health problems and compromised mental wellbeing. Mental health challenges may exist prior to and on arrival at Weston College, or may develop during the period of study/work at the College.

The strategy focuses on future actions and improvements to our current service for staff and students to be implemented over the next 3 years (2021-24). It has been designed with collective ownership across the whole college and as such, all are responsible for ensuring its successful delivery.

Overarching objectives

- Create an environment that empowers students with the internal resources to become adaptable, resilient, independent and work-ready
- Create an environment compatible with workforce wellbeing that results in personal and organisational benefits and success
- Develop a community that shares responsibility for mental health, identifying difficulties early, to accelerate targeted, effective and timely interventions
- Ensure that wellbeing naturally permeates all aspects of college life to ensure our community can fully embrace and enjoy their learning and work.

Weston College has identified four key cornerstones that will provide the foundations and drivers for positive mental health and wellbeing through the Wellbeing@Weston whole college approach.

Leadership	To have a consistent and coordinated approach to wellbeing through effective leadership that ensure that wellbeing permeates all aspects of college life.
Prevention	To make a significant shift from reactive to prevention approaches to wellbeing, which focus on empowerment
Intervention	Develop a community that shares responsibility for mental health, identifying difficulties early, to accelerate targeted, effective and timely interventions
Partnerships	To establish a seamless and sustainable provision of care through effective collaborations with external partners

We will measure the impact of the Wellbeing@Weston strategy by using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data obtained from various college data sources, including student and staff surveys and student and staff feedback, using data from 2020/21 (the most recent and fully comprehensive student and staff dataset) as our baseline reference. This will feed directly into our annual review processes and from 2022, an annual report on mental health and wellbeing trends, actions and outcomes will be delivered at an organisational level.

WELLBEING@WESTON: THE FOUR CORNERSTONES

1

Leadership

To have a consistent and coordinated approach to wellbeing through effective leadership that ensure that wellbeing permeates all aspects of college life.

- 1.1 Establish a Wellbeing@Weston Strategy Group to have oversight of the strategy and responsibility for its implementation. Members of the group will include key stakeholders from all aspects of the College
- 1.2 Ensure the impact on student health and wellbeing is considered in any future policies and strategies developed across Weston College by reflecting on the opportunities to inspire good health and wellbeing
- 1.3 Introduce an annual college mental health wellbeing report
- 1.4 Recruit a network of local mental health champions to work collaboratively across the College to influence decision-making and play a key role raising awareness and tackling the stigma surrounding mental health
- 1.5 Use a range of transparent engagement methods to gain insight and feedback from students and staff on the implementation and effectiveness of this strategy, ensuring the processes are supportive and inclusive of all within the college community
- 1.6 Review resource allocation and investment in mental health and wellbeing support, initiatives and activities to ascertain which actions make a difference, remove unintended duplication and address gaps in service
- 1.7 Selection processes for leadership roles will include assessing commitment and approach to supporting wellbeing.
- 1.8 Sign and adhere to the Department for Education's Education Staff Wellbeing Charter
- 1.9 As an organisation sign up to the Mental Health at Work Commitment, highlighting that mental health at work is a priority and that we will use the framework to improve the wellbeing and support for our college community.

"We are committed to ensuring that across the whole College community, everyone has a responsibility for actively supporting mental health and wellbeing, whether their own or that of others. By taking a whole institution approach to mental health and wellbeing, we will work collectively to promote an informed and inclusive culture. A culture that enables our students and staff to flourish and ensures an appreciation of mental health and wellbeing is central to all we do."

Dr Paul Phillips CBE, Principal & Chief Executive, Weston College

- 2.1** Continue to invest in the provision of professional mental health training programmes to enable staff and students to proactively recognise the signs of poor mental health and wellbeing in students, other staff and themselves, and support individuals to develop better resilience and personal coping strategies. This training should provide a tandem benefit for both staff and students in recognising and becoming self-aware of mental ill health and wellbeing.
- 2.2** Ensure students can access relevant information and gain the necessary skills to make informed choices so that they can make best use of self-directed tools and training programmes to manage and maintain their own mental health, wellbeing and resilience, knowing when and how to seek help.
- 2.3** We will continue to consider the physical environment for staff and students to encourage the development of learning and workplaces that support wellbeing
- 2.4** Embed the teaching of mental fitness and wellbeing across all curriculum provision via the continued development of our curriculum and building an FE teaching model for all subjects with health and wellbeing at its core. This will centre on 'Wellbeing@Weston' curriculum packages that are differentiated dependent on where a student is on their college journey
- 2.5** Embed wellbeing in extracurricular activities, recognising the impact positive wellbeing has on students learning, attainment and student life. This will include promoting the benefits of a physically active life and facilitate health improvement activities
- 2.6** Under the Wellbeing@Weston banner, develop a long-term mental health and wellbeing communications campaign, underpinned by self-help strategies, that supports, empowers and motivates staff to engage with wellbeing activities and behaviours in their life, health and working environment
- 2.7** Promote autonomy and independence by develop wellbeing pathways for staff and students that will allow individuals within the college community to optimise their own wellbeing
- 2.8** Build a community that champions active and meaningful signposting by developing individual's confidence and skills, so that they can find their own way to services
- 2.9** We will review the structure of the working day including meetings, to ensure staff are given sufficient time to complete their workload to high standard without it impacting their work/life balance

"By putting wellbeing at the heart of what we do, we are able to deliver that supportive and open environment where we continue to recognise and support all employees throughout their career at Weston College"

Caroline Pringle, Director of Human Resources

3 Intervention

Develop a community that shares responsibility for mental health, identifying difficulties early, to accelerate targeted, effective and timely interventions

- 3.1** Ensure that a holistic and fluid mental health and wellbeing support model exists across the College, that combines specialist digital and in-person activity to maximise reach and accessibility
- 3.2** Evaluate the effectiveness of current mental health and wellbeing awareness campaigns at reducing stigma and promoting timely disclosure by students and staff across the College and use this insight to modify campaigns to improve reach and engagement
- 3.3** Continually investigate the potential for new support service models and posts that will develop the support for Weston College students and staff experiencing mental health issues
- 3.4** Focus on our admissions and transition processes to ensure students are known to the necessary support services from their first day as a college student. This includes developing our student systems to provide a much more transparent approach to student wellbeing that will support staff identify, differentiate where needed and implement effective strategies to deliver positive wellbeing and learner success.
- 3.5** Train all outreach and recruitment staff in mental health and wellbeing awareness to enable positive messages to be included in outreach work
- 3.6** We will identify appropriate metrics to measure student wellbeing, in collaboration with curriculum staff and specialist support staff
- 3.7** Continue to place a great emphasis on providing healthy food, a fit-for-purpose estate including sport, leisure and support service facilities.

“We strongly believe that mental health and wellbeing is everyone’s responsibility. Our constant drive is inclusivity and making learning accessible to all. We therefore recognise how important it is for students to access specialist support and the integral role it plays in student success.”

Sam Mayhew, Director of SEND

4 Partnerships

To establish a seamless and sustainable provision of care through effective collaborations with external partners

- 4.1** Continually evaluate our existing partnerships regarding mental health and wellbeing and be proactive in setting up partnerships that will enhance support for staff and students
- 4.2** Work collaboratively with the Students’ Union to review the effectiveness of our wellbeing support services and involve the student voice in ongoing developments to promote an inclusive and supportive community
- 4.3** Monitor developments within the online digital mental health services market and other external agencies (focusing on services administered by qualified clinicians and registered with the Care Quality Commission) to identify potential opportunities to provide enhanced specialist mental health services
- 4.4** Where feasible and appropriate, explore further options for working with local NHS providers to improve access and pathways into local services for our students and staff
- 4.5** Place a strong emphasis on social prescribing and community where the College for both staff and students will act as the key link to be able to deliver truly holistic mental health and wellbeing support.

“Fostering strong partnerships with external organisations to support mental health and wellbeing has been crucial to providing the meaningful pastoral care and support our students and staff need. It is vital that we ensure that what we do as a college, seamlessly links to all other support our community either receive or can access.”

Ben Knocks, Assistant Principal Students and Wellbeing

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The commitment to supporting both students' and staff's mental health and wellbeing is shared by managers and leaders at all levels including the governing body. The Principal and Chief Executive, has set the health and wellbeing of staff and students as key strategic objective. Good health and wellbeing is recognised by the corporate leadership as essential to supporting staff productivity and morale as well as being a fundamental supporting construct to outstanding learning, progress and progression for students.

This strategy will be driven forward by the Principal & Chief Executive with the support of the Assistant Principal for Students and Wellbeing and other key strategic leads across the College.

The key strategic leads are responsible for ensuring that provision for students needing specialist or targeted support /intervention is in place and is working effectively. In addition, a Wellbeing @ Weston working group will ensure that all key stakeholders are involved and contribute to the education and initiatives that will help learners/staff implement preventative measures and ensure a proactive not reactive model so that less of the College's community is at risk of developing poor mental health and

wellbeing. This working group consists of the following.

- Welfare and Pastoral Support Services
- Mental Health Team
- Sports and Enrichment
- Human Resources
- Students' Union
- Quality
- Curriculum representation
- Student representation from the Student Council

The table below summarises the other college stakeholder groups play a significant role in successfully implementing this strategy.

Governors	College governors are responsible for ensuring that that all objectives are adhered to and that a positive ethos of mental health and wellbeing exists to meet the needs of students, staff and stakeholders.
Corporate Leadership Board and Senior Leadership Group	Responsible for communicating and reviewing this strategy and the performance of all related activities, as well as ensuring a consistent high quality 'Whole College' approach is delivered.
Wider College Management Team	Making sure each subject area or team delivers its responsibilities set out by this strategy and any supporting documents.
Staff (curriculum and support services)	College staff are responsible for making sure the student need is met as well as taking ownership for their own wellbeing and assisting in the delivery of a positive mental health ethos.
Students	Students are encouraged to engage with wellbeing services and initiatives in order to develop resilience for themselves and for their peers.

KEY DELIVERABLES

The strategy focuses on future actions and improvements to our current service to be implemented between 2021-2024. The below outlines key deliverables of the strategy – to be reviewed annually.

Milestone	Cornerstone
Launch a 'Wellbeing @ Weston' whole college strategy and approach	1, 4
Launch 'Wellbeing @ Weston' app	2, 3, 4
Establish a wellbeing programme of staff CPD to sustain the initiative	1, 2, 3, 4
Implement Mental Health Champions network	1, 2, 3, 4
Improved learner voice, including the number of students who feel supported by the College with their mental health	1, 2, 3
Progression from initial starting point on C-MET – the College Mental Health Self-evaluation Tool	1, 2, 3, 4
Develop a comprehensive wellbeing transition offer for new college learners	2, 3, 4
Maximise opportunities to influence local and national mental health approaches and strategies	1, 2, 3, 4
Continue to grow partnership opportunities locally, regionally and nationally	1, 4
Be recognised as a beacon of excellence both within and outside of the sector.	1, 4

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- C-MET – the College Mental Health Self-evaluation Tool (AoC and Charlie Waller Trust, 2021)
- Association of Colleges Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter (AoC, 2019)
- The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter (DfE, 2021)
- Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a green paper (DHSC and DfE, 2018)
- Supporting Mental Health in Schools and College (DfE, 2017)
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing – a whole school and college approach (Public Health England, 2015)
- Weston College Inclusion Policy
- Improving Mental Wellbeing in Colleges Through Physical Activity (AoC Sport, 2018)
- Weston College Safeguarding Policy
- Weston College Human Resources policies
- Wellbeing@Weston Committee Terms of Reference

