

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON STUDENTS' UNION

# Wellbeing Strategy

2024–2028



uwlsu



# INTRODUCTION

## Why wellbeing matters

As part of our 2024–2028 strategy plan, students at The University of West London and staff at West London Students' Union (UWLSU) agreed that for us to be a truly student-focused organisation, we need to champion wellbeing. Alongside Attainment, Employability, Engagement and Community, Wellbeing is one of our five key pillars for student support within our overall strategy.

In this strategy, “we”, “our” or “us” refers to the staff and Sabbatical Officers at the Students' Union.

Our wellbeing KPI's within our organisational 5-year strategy are:

- **Create a wellbeing strategy and deliver all parts of the strategy in full**
- **90% of student staff and volunteers report that UWLSU supports their wellbeing at work**
- **UWLSU deliver an annual programme of events and activities that primarily enhance wellbeing**

This document sets out how we plan to support and educate students about wellbeing during their time at university.

## How we developed this strategy

We began by exploring what wellbeing really means and how it connects with students' everyday lives. Our exploration revealed that there are interchanging terms around health, wellness and wellbeing. Whilst there are differences, we will consider our broader term 'Wellbeing' to add consistency and focus. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), health is:

***“A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”***

To better understand this, we identified different health and wellbeing models and thought critically about them. Our aim was to find a definition and framework that fits what UWLSU can support. We focused especially on models that, like the WHO, see health as something interconnected and overlapping — not separate parts.

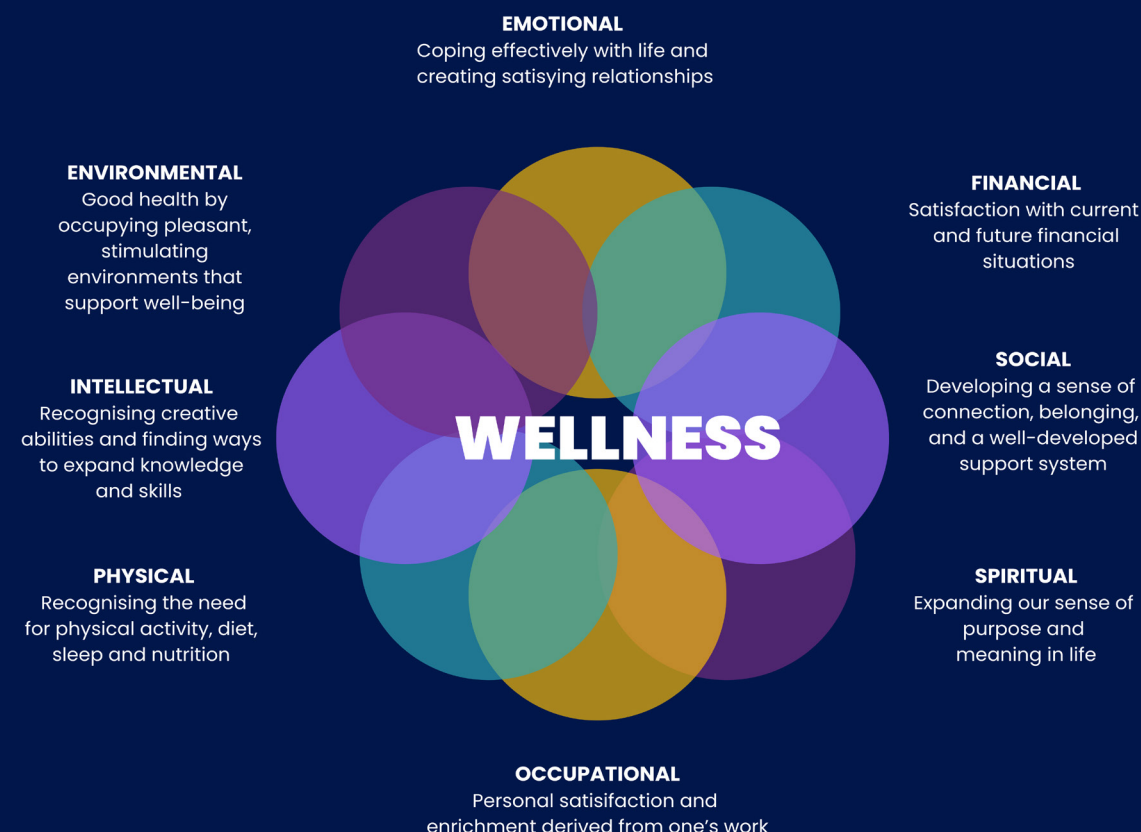




# Our chosen model:

After reviewing several options, we selected Peggy Swarbrick's (2006) model of eight dimensions of wellness. We believe this model reflects the realities of student life here, using straightforward language that feels relevant and easy to relate to.

The eight dimensions are within the model:



We want to acknowledge that while this model is a great fit for our work with students, there are some important things to keep in mind:

**Perception of “Singularity”:** Although the model shows how these areas overlap – capturing that interconnectedness the WHO talks about – it might first look like the areas are separate. That is why it is crucial for us to keep reinforcing that all parts of wellbeing affect each other in our conversations and education.

**Cultural, Ethnic, and Religious Differences:** Different backgrounds may relate to these dimensions in unique ways. Some areas might be more important to some students, or less relevant to others, depending on traditions and beliefs. It is key that we respect this diversity and understand that not everyone will see the model as equally relevant or balanced.

## What it does + doesn't include, + why

Now that we have picked our model, the next step was to decide which parts of wellness (which we are using interchangeably with wellbeing) we want to focus on most. It is important for us to work together with UWL, so we fully understand what support is already in place for students. We want to avoid duplicating the support, which would risk creating confusion amongst students.

We took a close look at Swarbrick's eight wellness areas and identified which ones are already being supported by the university, and where we have the chance to step in and offer something new.

Here is what we found:

- **Intellectual wellness** is well covered through UWL's teaching and degree programmes.
- **Financial wellness** is supported by the Student Money & Immigration team and the Finance team.
- **Emotional wellness and Spiritual wellness** are looked after by the Wellbeing Team.
- **Occupational wellness** was a bit trickier to map since students focus on their studies and are not usually in full-time jobs. But we know that student roles within the university and UWLSU – plus support from the Careers team preparing students for life after university – play a big part here.

## Priority Areas and Next Steps:



### PHYSICAL WELLNESS

With our sport and gym teams, there are plenty of opportunities to keep supporting students' physical health – and to explore fresh, innovative ideas we can take into the future.



### SOCIAL WELLNESS

Thanks to our strong community, vibrant events, activities, and the wide variety of societies, students already have lots of chances to grow their social wellbeing.



### ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS:

We noticed this is a newer area for us, and potentially the university. Campus spaces where students' study and socialise can contribute, but we are keen to explore how we can help students further connect with and care for their spaces and environment.





#### AREA 1:

## Physical Wellbeing

Physical wellbeing is a state of maintaining good health and fitness through regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, adequate rest, and preventative health measures. We know that students value opportunities to get involved in sports, use the gym, and stay active as an important part of their university experience.

Research shows that staying physically active and in good health has many benefits, including contributing to an individuals' mental wellbeing.

#### COMMITMENTS:

- ✓ Provide physical activity opportunities that are affordable for students on and off campus
- ✓ Support students to live a healthy, balanced lifestyle through nutritional guidance.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for students to gain sporting qualifications and skills.





## AFFORDABLE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Being physically active is a key contributor to a healthy and happy life. It helps reduce stress, lifts mood, and improves overall wellbeing. Providing affordable opportunities creates a level playing field where students can become physically active, not limited by what they can pay for. We recognise the impact that cost-of-living is having on student engagement and livelihoods, and we hope this commitment helps to sustain an inclusive environment.

### IDEAS:

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**NON-TRADITIONAL SPORTING ACTIVITY**  
(I.E., MINI GOLF, TRAMPOLINING ETC.)
- 

**DISCOUNTED SPORTING FESTIVALS**
- 

**LOCAL AND EXTERNAL CLUB PARTNERSHIPS**
- 

**PROVIDING SPORTS EQUIPMENT**
- 

**TRAVEL AND MEMBERSHIP COST SUBSIDISING**



## NUTRITIONAL GUIDANCE

Good nutrition can empower many functions — energy, focus, memory, and overall physical health. When students get practical support around nutrition, they are better equipped to perform academically and feel their best day to day. Learning how to maintain a nutritional diet is also a life skill that sets students up for success after university, in work and beyond.

### IDEAS:

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**COOKING WORKSHOPS**
- 

**NUTRITIONAL ADVICE**
- 

**FOOD + RECIPE CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**
- 

**HEALTHY OPTIONS IN FREDDIE'S + COFFEE UNION**
- 

**NUTRITIOUS FOOD IN THE COMMUNITY CUPBOARD**

## SPORTING QUALIFICATIONS + SKILLS

When students gain sporting qualifications and skills, they can inspire and support their peers to get involved in sport — making activities safer and more inclusive. These skills also open doors to new career paths and help prevent injuries, improving everyone's experience. We have seen that students active in sports tend to stay engaged and succeed at university, so this is an important part of growing our sport offer.

### IDEAS:

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**SPORTS TAPING WORKSHOPS**
- 

**FIRST AID TRAINING**
- 

**MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID**
- 

**PERSONAL TRAINING**
- 

**COACHING QUALIFICATIONS**
- 

**OFFICIALS' TRAINING**





## AREA 2:

# Social Wellbeing

Social wellbeing is all about building and maintaining positive connections with others. Humans are social beings by nature, and we know that the chance to meet new people, make friends, and feel part of a community is just as important to your university experience as your studies. Feeling connected and supported helps boost your sense of identity and belonging. Students' Unions have built strong reputations through our events, activities and programmes, that create opportunities for students to build connections with each other.

## COMMITMENTS:

- ✓ Offer a wide variety of inclusive, accessible activities and events that reflect the needs of our diverse student communities.
- ✓ Continue providing safe spaces at all Students' Union-led events.
- ✓ Champion student ideas to shape social life and activities across all campuses.





## CHAMPIONING STUDENT IDEAS ACROSS CAMPUSES

Students should feel empowered to express their ideas and needs in an ever-changing university environment. We want to centre the voices of our students to shape everything we do across our events and activities. Student preferences and interests evolve at high speed, and we are here to make sure our social offer evolves with them.

We also know that the demographics of university students change dynamically, and we want to keep informed of how this may shape their views and needs. We are encouraging and empowering students to contribute to the social fabric of their campus by organising their own events and getting involved in planning, so every community feels represented in our activities.

### IDEAS:



STUDENT  
EVENTS  
COUNCIL



DEVELOPMENT OF  
COMMITTEES IN  
SOCIETIES AND  
STUDENT CLUBS



EDUCATION ON  
TACKLING STUDENT  
LONELINESS



IMPROVED  
VISIBILITY OF  
EVENTS



PARTNERSHIPS  
WITH STUDENT  
GROUPS



REGULAR SURVEYS  
FOR FEEDBACK



## SAFE SPACES AT STUDENTS' UNION EVENTS

Safety is key — not just physically, but emotionally too. We want every student attending our events to feel comfortable, safe, free from harassment, and confident to report concerns to the Students' Union.

We are especially mindful of students with learning differences, disabilities or anxieties who may find particular environments overwhelming or intense. It is important for us to provide quiet, safe spaces where students can decompress and take a moment away.

### IDEAS:



TRAINING SESSIONS  
FOR STAFF + STUDENTS  
(ANTI-SPIKING, ACTIVE  
BYSTANDER, CULTURAL  
SENSITIVITY, ALCOHOL + DRUG  
AWARENESS)



QUIET SPACES AT  
EVERY EVENT



EDUCATION ON  
SAFE ONLINE  
ACTIVITY



TRAINED  
WELFARE OFFICERS

## INCLUSIVE, ACCESSIBLE ACTIVITIES + EVENTS

We are proud to represent and celebrate our diverse student population. Compared to many universities, we have a high number of international students, mature students (including parents and carers), and students who have disclosed learning differences or disabilities.

UWL is known for offering non-traditional routes to higher education and encouraging students from underprivileged or marginalised communities to consider and access university learning. We want to create a "home away from home" where everyone can find their community and enjoy events that are accessible and inclusive.

### IDEAS:



IDENTITY-FOCUSED  
EVENTS  
(BLACK HISTORY MONTH,  
LGBTQ+ PRIDE ETC.)



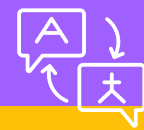
SOBER SOCIALS



CULTURAL  
CELEBRATIONS



SENSORY-  
FRIENDLY  
ACTIVITIES



LANGUAGE  
EXCHANGE  
EVENTS





### AREA 3:

# Environmental Wellbeing

Environmental wellbeing is all about feeling safe, comfortable, and connected to the spaces around you. It means living in an environment that is caring, healthy, and respectful of nature and our community. That is why we want to encourage students to care for their personal spaces and make sure there are welcoming, comfortable places for everyone on campus.

### COMMITMENTS:

- ✓ Make sure students have opportunities to access to green spaces regularly.
- ✓ Advocate for comfortable, suitable spaces for students across campus.
- ✓ Support students to create healthy, sustainable, and nurturing home environments.





## SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO BUILD HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE HOME SPACES

Life skills like cleaning, organising, and creating a pleasant home environment can make a stark difference in reducing stress and helping students feel comfortable. University life is busy and can be overwhelming, so taking care of your personal space sometimes gets pushed aside. We want to support students to feel proud of their home space so studying from home feels calm, productive, and relaxing.

With more learning happening online, such as for commuters and those that have competing priorities in life, it is important to help students create nurturing and comfortable learning environments at home.

### IDEAS:

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**SHARING TIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE HOME SPACES**  
(I.E., CLEANING SCHEDULES, DECLUTTERING TIPS + ORGANISING HACKS)
- 

**ARTS + CRAFTS WORKSHOPS**
- 

**CLOTHES SWAP EVENTS**
- 

**CLEANING PRODUCTS IN THE COMMUNITY CUPBOARD**
- 

**SUSTAINABLE CHOICES WHEN MOVING ACCOMMODATION**



## COMFORTABLE + SUITABLE CAMPUS SPACES

We understand that a students' attendance to university is critical in their success, and so if there is a provision of space that motivates them to work, socialise and rest at campus, this can greatly benefit them. While UWLSU does not manage all campus spaces, we are committed to championing student voices and working closely with the university to make sure your feedback shapes the spaces you use.

### IDEAS:

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**ADVOCATE FOR COMFORTABLE FAITH + CONTEMPLATION SPACES**
- 

**VISIBLY APPEALING STUDY AREAS**
- 

**REVIEW OF ONLINE PLATFORMS**  
(BLACKBOARD + UWL APP)

## ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES

Spending time in green spaces isn't just relaxing — it is proven to boost mental and physical health. Studies show that being outdoors can lower anxiety and reduce the need for mental health treatment. Green spaces also help with things like lowering blood pressure and encourage social and physical activity in a positive, inviting way. Having easy access to parks, gardens, or green spots near campus helps students connect, build community, and support social interactions.

At UWL and within Ealing and the surrounding areas, there are plenty of green areas on and off campus that we want to help students make the most of.

### IDEAS:

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**IMPROVE EXISTING SOCIAL SPACES WITH NO GREENERY**
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**ACTIVITIES SUCH AS PICNICS AND HIKES**
- 

**TRIPS TO NEABY PLACES SUCH AS KEW GARDENS**
- 

**SUPPORT PLANTING VEGETATION**
- 

**WORKSHOPS ON BENEFITS OF GREEN SPACES**  
(I.E., CARING FOR HOUSEPLANTS, GARDENS + LOCAL OUTDOOR AREAS)





# Theory of Change statement

Throughout this strategy's timeline, we will continually evaluate the implementation plans and specific ideas to ensure they continue to meet the needs of our diverse student community.

Our approach aligns with our broader UWLSU strategy which uses a Theory of Change model. This allows us to adapt our approaches and remain open to new insights, student perspectives, and emerging wellbeing themes. The Theory of Change approach also ensures that everything we do stays connected to our strategic direction and objectives, making sure our planning achieves the broader organisational vision.

We will review this Wellbeing Strategy and how it is put into action every year. Where commitments, ideas or approaches need to change based on insights, we will adjust our commitments and ideas to complement these changes and share them transparently through our governance channels.





uwl.su@uwl.ac.uk  
020 8231 2276

