Student Futures Manifesto Theme 3: Support for mental health and wellbeing

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Overview

The Mental Health and Wellbeing strand contains a lot of information that is going to help support the four recommendations that I have recommended for this section of the manifesto. We start off by looking into what Mental Health and Wellbeing means to me alongside what kinds of services are already in place at the university. We then moved on to looking at how I wanted to gather evidence to back up my recommendations. We will then look at exactly what methods I took to gather information, like through surveys, and focus groups. After this I will share with you the results that I found from all the methods of research I partook in, linking all the evidence to each of my recommendations. Finally, I will share with you my recommendations, and what we need to do to put them in place to help support the university. In 2021 the Intergenerational Foundation, by Hugh Nichol, stated that "University support services were already struggling to cope with the increases in demand over the past few years" . This is why the manifesto is so important so that the university can have the proper support in place to be able to support the students who need to use the services.

Introduction

Mental Health and Wellbeing is the theme that I was allocated when I became a student consultant for the manifesto. This theme is something I hold very close to my heart as mental health is something I suffer with myself; I also have friends and family who suffer from mental health conditions. Since Covid-19 mental health has gotten worse. In 2021 Intergenerational Foundation completed surveys through covid-19 and found out that "Almost two-thirds (63%) of students reported a worsening of their wellbeing and mental health since the start of the autumn term last year". This is why I wanted to take on this topic and make a difference for existing and future students. For my theme the University already has a lot of services in place to support students while studying at Lincoln. These services include The Student Wellbeing Centre, The University of Lincoln on campus doctors, The Students' Union (SU), Drop-In Sessions and much more. When writing this section of the manifesto I felt there were a few key areas that I wanted to explore and these were things like communication, support & access to services.

Methods

When creating this manifesto, I thought it would be valuable to gather as much information from as many different sources as possible. To start off with I had a conversation with the Director of Student Services Jaqueline Mayer. This conversation consisted of topics such as the best way to contact students about what they offer, services available at the university, promotional content, services that need more advertisement, what's lacking in support and much more. After this I made a list of all the services that the University has to offer.

Resources/ Service List for Mental Health & Wellbeing

- University Of Lincoln Campus Doctors - https://ulhsonline.co.uk/
- Doctors and Medical Services - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/health-advice/doctors-and-medical-services/
- University of Lincoln Students Union (SU) - https://lincolnsu.com/

- Staying Safe on Campus - https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/coronavirus/
- Cost of Living Support - https://costofliving.lincoln.ac.uk/
- Financial Support - https://costofliving.lincoln.ac.uk/financial-support/
- Careers and Employability - https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/studentlife/yourfuturecareer/
- Student Services - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/
- Suicide Prevention Support - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/mental-wellbeing/student-in-crisis/
- Life at University - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-at-university/
- Health and Wellbeing - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/
- Academic Support - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/academic-support/
- Respect - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/respect/
- Hate Crimes - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/respect/hate-crime/defining-ahate-crime/
- Harassment and Bullying - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/respect/harassment-and-abuse/
- LGBTQ+ - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/respect/lgbtq/
- Mental Health Conditions And Concerns - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/mentalwellbeing/mental-health-conditions-and-concerns/
- Looking after your Mental Health - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/mentalwellbeing/mental-health-conditions-and-concerns/looking-after-yourwellbeing/
- Workshops, Podcasts and Self Help Guides - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/workshopspodcasts-and-self-help-guides/
- Disability Advice - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/disability-advice/
- Mitigating Circumstances - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/academicsupport/mitigating-circumstances/
- Wellbeing Toolkit - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/wellbeing-toolkit/
- Togetherall -https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/togetherall/
- Wellbeing World - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/workshops-podcasts-and-self-help-guides/wellbeing-world/
- Counselling - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/counselling/
- Emotional Support - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/mental-wellbeing/mental-health-conditions-andconcerns/looking-after-your-wellbeing/emotional-support/
- Bereavement and Loss - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/general-wellbeing-advice/bereavement-and-loss/
- Specific Learning Differences - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/healthand-wellbeing/specific-learning-differences/
- Disabled Student Allowance - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/disability-advice/disabled-students-allowances/
- Personalised Academic Study Support (PASS Plan) - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/disabilityadvice/personalised-academic-study-support/
- Student Finance and Funding - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-atuniversity/money-management-financial-support/student-finance-and-funding/
- Housing - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-at-university/housing/
- Pensions - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-atuniversity/employment/pensions/
- Dealing with Debt - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-atuniversity/money-management-financial-support/money-issues-debt/
- Additional University Funds - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-atuniversity/money-management-financial-support/student-finance-andfunding/university-funds/
- Welfare Benefits https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-atuniversity/welfare-benefits/
- Emergency Funds for International Students - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-at-university/money-management-financialsupport/student-finance-and-funding/university-funds/emergency-funds-forinternational-students/
- Scholarships and Bursaries - https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/studywithus/scholarshipsandbursaries/

- Care Leavers - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/generalwellbeing-advice/care-leavers/
- Health Advice - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/healthadvice/
- Sexual Misconduct Support - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/sexualmisconduct-support/
- Socialising - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-at-university/socialising/
- Multi-Faith Chaplaincy - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-atuniversity/multifaith/
- International Students - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-atuniversity/international-advice/
- Financial Support and Money Management - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-at-university/money-management-financialsupport/
- Living in the UK - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-atuniversity/international-advice/living-in-the-uk/
- Living In the Community - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/living-in-thecommunity/
- Staying Safe 0=- https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/staying-safe/
- Domestic Abuse - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/respect/harassment-andabuse/domestic-abuse/
- Bullying And Harassment - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/respect/harassment-and-abuse/bullying-andharassment/
- New Student - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/life-at-university/newstudents/
- Campus Police - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/staying-safe/campus-police/
- Safeguarding - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/staying-safe/safeguarding/
- Breathing Spaces - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/stayingsafe/breathing-spaces/
- Concern for Welfare and Responding to a Crisis - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/mental-wellbeing/studentin-crisis/concern-for-welfare/
- Policies - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/policies/
- Student Complaints -https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/academicsupport/student-complaints/
- Academic Offences - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/academicsupport/academic-offences/
- Managing Stress - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/health-andwellbeing/general-wellbeing-advice/managing-stress/
- Service Information - https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/service-information/

The next step was to create questions for the Student Futures Manifesto Consultants Survey. The questions I ended up settling on were:

1) What services do you know about within the university?

Onsite Police Officer
Student Support Centre
Student Wellbeing Centre
Onsite Doctors
Counselling
Drop In- Sessions
Residential Wardens
Chatbot
Personalized academic study support
Disability Support
Mental health Advice
Sexual Health Advice
Abuse, Harassment, Sexual Harassment advice
Wellbeing Toolkit

2) Do you know what these services do and offer?

All
Most
Some
Hardley Any
None

3) What do you feel the wellbeing services at the university are doing well with?

4) What would you like to see included in what the wellbeing service offers at The University Of Lincoln?

5) What is the best way to get Wellbeing information to you?

Phone Call
Text
Email
Letter
Social Media
Videos
Posters
Leaflets
Other

If you ticked other, please specify the preferred method of contact.

The last thing I decided to hold was a focus group and give students the opportunity to express themselves to us using their own voices. We are giving the students the opportunity to express issues they feel that they would like the university to address. All this information gathered has helped inform my recommendations for this manifesto.
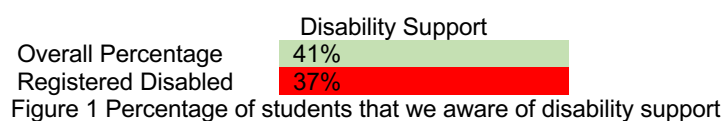
Results

Some of the main points I gathered from the 2 versions of the surveys & the focus group are discussed below. I would like to state that 26 respondents filled out the first version of the survey. 81 respondents filled out the second version of the survey and in the Mental Health and Wellbeing focus group there were 3 participants. So, these results have come from a small percentage of the universities population.

For recommendation 1 I used a result from my focus group. Figure 1 - "The removal of the self-authentication process students did not find helpful". When speaking to students about this I found out that it helped students struggling with mental health issues who were struggling to meet deadlines for assessments. When this was removed as a self-certification reason those students could not hand in their assessments on time and this could then in affect lead to more mental health issues as a result.

For recommendation 2 I looked at the results of the second survey.

Figure 2

	Disability Support
Overall Percentage	41%
Registered Disabled	37%

Figure 1 Percentage of students that we aware of disability support

Communication to all year groups about mental health and wellbeing services the university offers is very important and is lacking in each year group. You can see the results of this in recommendation 3's results. An example is that not a lot of disabled students know about the services available to them and what they offer. Again only 19 disabled students filled out this survey and 37% of those 19 students knew of these services which means that 7 students knew.12 students didn't know of the services and needed more information. A statement made by a student in the survey helps to back up my recommendations.

> "Better discussion of reasonable adjustments for disabilities, and what to do if you are unable to attend a number of lectures/ seminars due to disability (including mental health)."

For recommendation 3 Signposting students and giving them the information, they need at any point in their studies is important, we do not want any students to feel like they have been left to fend for themselves. It was reported in focus groups that "Students also thought that support dwindles as you progress through your degree, this may be due to lack of visibility in subsequent years". This is what we want to avoid happening. This is also where Figure 5 demonstrates what services students this year already know about and what they do.

Figure 5

	Onsite-Campus Police Officer	Student Wellbeing Centre	Counselling	Residential Wardens	Personalized Academic Study Support	Mental Health Advice	Abuse, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Advice	SU Advice Centre	Student Support Centre	Onsite Doctors	Drop-In Sessions	Chatbox	Disability Support
Overall Percentage	43%	94%	59%	42%	56%	78%	62%	84%	84%	62%	75%	26%	41%
Registered Disabled	37%	100%	53%	37%	84%	79%	58%	89%	95%	79%	74%	16%	37%
Year 0	100	100%	50%	0%	0%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	100%	50%	50%
Year 1	32%	86%	73%	27%	36%	77%	55%	82%	68%	64%	59%	23%	32%
Year 2	40%	100%	53%	27%	53%	67%	53%	93%	100%	67%	73%	13%	33%
Year 3 & 4	41%	100%	50%	59%	64%	77%	73%	86%	91%	73%	86%	14%	41%
Postgraduate	55%	90%	60%	55%	75%	90%	65%	80%	85%	45%	80%	50%	55%

	Sexual Health Advice	Wellbeing Toolkit
Overall Percentage	49%	37%
Registered Disabled	42%	16%
Year 0	50%	50%
Year 1	45%	32%
Year 2	60%	47%
Year 3 & 4	50%	32%
Postgraduate	45%	40%

Figure 5 Percentage of students who knew about these services and what they offer.

Data shows that some students are aware of the services that the university offers, but there is a lot more we can do to reach more students and in future years get those numbers higher.
From what the statistics show there is about 1/5 of students know about the services but don't know how to use them or contact wellbeing. 3/5 of students know how to contact the wellbeing services and 1/5 of students only know what the services are. All this evidence is pointing towards students needing more information on the mental health and wellbeing services and how to contact them.

For recommendation 4 I gathered quite a bit of evidence to back up the creation of an app for the university. A response from the survey indicated "More digital accessibility (perhaps using the SU app)". Students would engage with an app dedicated to all the areas of university life.

Using an app to get information to students has had a mixed reaction to being emailed mental health and wellbeing information. "83% of students stated the best way to get information to them is through university email", yet it is known that many of the student body do ignore these emails, so perhaps used in conjunction with other prevalent methods may be useful. The second and most common method here, was social media and then, texts" Survey Results. They also stated in survey results "In general, the older the student, the less likely they were to want to receive information via social media, and instead seemed to prefer their personal email". Alongside this I also have the results from the second version of the survey about the best ways to contact students which can help me when adding contact sections on the app to get mental health and wellbeing information to students.

Figure 9

	Phone Call	Text	University Email	Personal Email	Letter	Social Media	Videos	Posters Across Campus	Leaflets
Overall Percentage	17%	41%	83%	25%	4%	47%	6%	21%	5%
Registered Disabled	16%	47%	89%	37%	0%	32%	5%	16%	0%
Year 0	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%
Year 1	5%	36%	86%	27%	5%	36%	5%	23%	14%
Year 2	13%	60%	87%	0%	0%	67%	0%	27%	0%
Year 3 & 4	18%	45%	86%	32%	0%	50%	9%	27%	0%
Postgraduate	35%	25%	75%	35%	10%	35%	10%	10%	0%

Figure 9 Percentages of what students feel is the best way to get wellbeing information to them

Recommendations

Recommendation 1- Mental Health self-certification for extensions needs to be brought back into motion. After speaking to Jaqueline Mayer at The University of Lincoln it has already been planned and they are already planning to putting this into action for next year. This is something that I want to get behind and recommend myself, because by putting this into play students who really need this are going to be accommodated to and not feel like they are being discriminated against because of mental health issues.

Recommendation 2- Communication needs to be worked on when advertising services or supporting students who have reached out for help. Registered disabled students and students with pre-existing mental health and wellbeing issues need to be made aware of the services available to them as they start their university experience in their 1st year of study. In the second version of our survey 37% of the Registered Disabled Community didn't know what services were available to them. This is

something that we can easily work on to make sure that they do know what services are available to them. This will in turn help students to reach out for the correct help.

Regarding this recommendation, this is something that we can start to put into place at the start of the next academic year. We can do the same thing as recommendation 3 and have weekly check-in meetings. We can either combine these meetings and address both issues together or have separate meetings for both recommendations. We will create digital documents to send out to students before or during welcome week in 1st year to let students know. After this we will also send this information to students a few times a term as a reminder of services.

Recommendation 3- New students in Welcome Week and students in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th year alongside postgrad need to be educated more in what the Wellbeing Centre offers and how to contact them. This information needs to be emailed out to students two or three times a term and it also needs to be included in sessions at the start in each year's welcome weeks. This is going to make sure that all students have multiple opportunities to hear about the services and how to go about contacting. Personal Tutors should have sessions with students explaining these services and also act as a point of contact for students to talk to and help get referred to wellbeing services. This will also include tutors having sensitivity and mental health and wellbeing training. The students are still able to ask for more help with how to access the services and contact them, but if we have this information in welcome weeks and reminders a few times a term more students will feel like they know how to get the help they need. This is instead of not knowing how to contact the Wellbeing Centre and struggling on yourself.

Alongside this we have a booklet with all information such as services available, how to contact them, new services being worked on, promotional material and other stuff that can affect mental health like academic study support services. These booklets should be placed in student accommodation as well as in The Student Wellbeing Centre and in designated areas around the university, so all students always have access to the document.

With this recommendation this is something that is very achievable to put into action starting from next year. Over the holiday before the next academic year PowerPoints and digital resources need to be created so they can be emailed out to students at the start of next year. We will have weekly check-in meetings so that we can place all of the information needed into these documents. A weekly meeting would also help us to be able to keep on track to meeting our deadline for the start of the next academic year. With the PowerPoints these need to be created and sent out to all course leaders so they can have a session with all these students in welcome week, so staff know that students have been shown all the important information. In regard to the booklet this is something else we can aim to create and distribute out around campus at the start of next academic year as we will already have the information needed, we just need to put it all into a booklet format.

Recommendation 4- Create an app that University staff will create, they can also invite students to work alongside them. This app is going to be made uniquely for our university instead of buying an app and trying to make the format work out for what our university needs. This app could be a pin board for everything that a student is going to need while studying at university. It should include services such as:
- Timetable
- Library Search
- Emails
- Announcements
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Information
- Drop-In Session Appointments
- Counselling
- On Site Doctors Information
- Modules/ Module Information

- Assessments
- Grades
- Library Support
- SU and much more

This app will be the only place that a student will ever need to look to find what they are searching for. This will be a less overwhelming way for students to get information and find what they are all looking for in one place. As stated in the focus group "When the university releases an App, the idea for Wellbeing services to be included into this was well met as emails are often ignored" showing that students would find it very useful to have all this information in one location.

This recommendation might take the longest to implement as we need to create the app before we can start to add all the information needed on it and roll it out. I feel like we should have monthly check in points for this recommendation to see how the process is coming along to get a reasonable achievable deadline. This is so we can work closely to make sure that everything is achievable and added to the app alongside having all the university's input to create something everyone is happy with.