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.

The UK Healthy Universities Network has continued to grow in membership and now has a total of 101 organisations, the breakdown being as follows:

- 62 from English higher education institutions
- 5 from Scottish higher education institutions
- 5 from Welsh higher education institutions
- 11 from higher education institutions from other countries
- 22 from other partner organisations.

In this edition of your UK Healthy Universities Network Newsletter, you’ll find articles on activity in member institutions; updates on the Network as a whole and developments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; news items on topical issues such as workplace engagement and wellbeing, e-cigarettes, alcohol, fossil fuel divestment, sustainable and active travel, and domestic violence.

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, nearly 16,000 unique visitors from 142 different countries have made 26,000 visits to the website and toolkit. The statistics indicates that interest and engagement has continued to increase over time, with 5,709 unique visitors from 121 countries making 8,257 visits during 2014.

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

- Please submit news items and feedback to 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 Sheffield Hallam University on 27 November 2014, and was one of our largest yet. Attended by 39 people from 19 universities (including 2 from Scotland and 1 from Wales) and 5 other organisations, the meeting was informative, engaging and energising. The morning was devoted to networking and peer support, and a themed workshop on ‘Healthy Universities: Sustaining High-Level Engagement and Leadership’ was held in the afternoon – with keynote presentations from Mark Dooris (UClan), Sue Powell (MMU), Claire Gandy (SHU), Hazel Wright (Teesside University) and Richie Andrew (Middlesbrough Council). 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 at the University of Edinburgh on 13 May. We are delighted to be visiting Scotland for the first time.

Newsletters

We aim to produce two newsletters each year. The deadline for receipt of material (news, updates, and features) for the next edition is 29 May 2015.

Email: healthyuniversities@uclan.ac.uk

Update – Wales

The Healthy FE/HE Framework in Wales has been finalised. It outlines the criteria that FE and HE settings should be considering when developing actions to promote a whole setting approach to health improvement. The framework has been developed to complement existing programmes such as the Corporate Health Standard.

The framework recognises six health topics that should be covered; and for each of these topics identifies important aspects of college and university life relevant to a whole setting approach: governance, leadership and management, service provision, facilities and environment, community and communication and academic, personal, social and professional development. The health topics within the framework cover mental and emotional health and wellbeing, physical activity, healthy and sustainable food, substance use and misuse, personal and sexual health and relationships and sustainable environment.

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 in the setting. Each section within the framework contains the criteria the setting needs to consider as well as links to guidance, case studies of best practice and links to other programmes or organisations which can offer advice/information on the topic area.

The framework will now be developed as an online resource by Public Health Wales.

Contact: Sue Bowker, Welsh Government Sue.Bowker@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Update – Northern Ireland

The Public Health Agency (PHA) for Northern Ireland formally joined the UK Healthy Universities Network in Spring 2014, and is represented by Hilary Johnston, Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement Manager. The PHA has worked with both Queen’s University Belfast and the University of Ulster on a range of issues for a number of years and hopes to enhance this through Network membership and involvement.

An example of an existing programme is Health Connections which aims to improve access to health and wellbeing services and resources for students through a partnership approach between the further and higher education sector in Belfast – and members of Belfast Strategic Partnership, including Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, the Public Health Agency, Belfast City Council and the community and voluntary sector. The programme started in July 2013 with informal discussions with the Student’s Union representatives at Queen’s University around initiatives to change behaviour relating to alcohol. This has led to links being forged with those across the further and higher education sector in Belfast and to their involvement in a wide range of initiatives to support student mental wellbeing.

Contact: Hilary Johnston, Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland Hilary.Johnston@hscni.net

Update – Scotland

The development of a Scottish Healthy Universities Network has taken significant steps forward with the core members currently being the University of Edinburgh, University of Highlands and Islands, University of Dundee, Queen Margaret University, Robert Gordon University and NHS Health Scotland. At a virtual meeting in December, a general discussion took place around the remit of a Scottish Network and it was agreed that there was willingness to establish an ‘informal’ formal network! It was recognised that there are significant policy differences between the rest of the UK and Scotland and universities in Scotland would benefit from sharing whilst still being part of the wider UK Network.

The Scottish Network will meet on 12 May 2015 at the University of Edinburgh, the day before the main UK Healthy Universities Network meeting, to plan the way forward for the next year. The group would like to acknowledge and thank Mark Dooris and Sue Powell for their continued support and look forward to working together in the coming year.

Contact: Gil Barton, Robert Gordon University g.barton1@rgu.ac.uk

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

International Conference – June 2015, Canada

An International Conference on Healthy Universities is being held in British Columbia, Canada, in June 2015.

Health Promoting Universities and Colleges: 10 Years After the Edmonton Charter – Promising Paths: Research, Practice and Policy for Healthy and Sustainable Campuses takes place from 22-26 June at the University of Kelowna. Mark Dooris and Sharon Doherty from UCLan are on the planning group – and 12 abstracts from the UK have been submitted.

Further details: visit www.internationalhealthycampuses2015.com or contact IHCC2015@gmail.com
UPDATES FROM NETWORK MEMBERS

Cardiff Metropolitan University: Sustainable Campus Scheme – ‘Real World’ Results

The institution wide Sustainable Campus scheme run by the Cardiff Met Learning and Teaching Development Unit has seen its first successes in the form of a range of sustainability oriented project proposals forwarded by final year Cardiff School of Art and Design Graphic Communications design students as part of their ‘Real World’ project. Students addressed a range of sustainable development issues faced by Cardiff Metropolitan staff responsible for managing various aspects of the running of the University’s Halls of Residence. For the purpose of the project a selection of Cardiff Met service staff became real world clients posing real world project briefs to which the students responded. A key objective of the students’ proposed campaign solutions was to instil long term behavioural change among Halls residents with issues tackled including the reduction of gas, electric and water consumption, reduction in food packaging and food waste, promotion of recycling and encouraging the uptake of cycling and the Met Rider as sustainable transport options.

At the recent campaign presentation event, the module leader and project mentors congratulated all students involved, noting the exceptionally high standard of engagement and design output from participants. It is likely several projects will be taken forward in some form for real world implementation by Cardiff Metropolitan University. At the event ‘clients’ from Cardiff Met’s service staff also became judges in order to award a £100 meal and drinks voucher for Park Plaza Hotel in Cardiff (kindly donated by the University’s Accommodation Services) to the campaign they felt was most innovative and likely to achieve real world applicability. Highly regarded projects included Popcycle – a campaign seeking to encourage cycling uptake among students through the development of a cycling community, and Looking Hot – a range of visual reminders which aim to encourage Halls residents to avoid unnecessary use of radiators and thereby reduce gas consumption. However the overall winner of the campaign competition by the judges’ unanimous decision was ‘The Market’ – a campaign addressing the issue of food packaging waste by bringing fresh, healthy and local food produce to Cardiff Met halls and campuses in the form of an onsite market, thereby minimising unnecessary food packaging and at the same time encouraging healthier and more sustainable eating alternatives. The judges felt that The Market campaign team demonstrated a creative approach in their response to the project brief, a keen consideration of the sustainability issues involved a range of enterprising professional skills and above all a very appropriate and attractive visual branding design. Congratulations to The Market team! Whilst details are still currently being finalised, you can expect to see The Market as a feature of Cardiff Met life open to all, staff and students alike, in the coming future.

N.B. By coordinating direct collaboration between students and Cardiff Metropolitan University as an organisation, the Sustainable Campus scheme seeks to create valuable opportunity for students to engage in participatory approaches to the tackling of sustainable development issues in authentic professional settings.

Contact: Stuart Abbott, Learning Development Officer, Cardiff Metropolitan University sabbott@cardiffmet.ac.uk
University of Central Lancashire: ‘Health Promoting’ Video Production by Students

One focus area for UCLan’s Healthy University is the integration of health and wellbeing within the curriculum, across a variety of disciplines. Sharon Doherty, the Healthy University Co-ordinator has previously worked with the Video Production course to produce a range of short videos for the Students’ Union Headroom webpages – which aim to bring internal and external mental wellbeing services together under one umbrella. As the videos on Headroom were getting old and needed a revamp, Sharon liaised with the course leader last semester and arranged to work with twelve students on one of their four week projects.

The students were given a brief to produce a three minute video that promoted ‘5 Ways to Feeling Great’ to students. They worked with Sharon in terms of ideas and content – and the video that they produced is now available at http://www.uclansu.co.uk/headroom. We plan to promote the new video to students this semester and also ask course reps if they can request to lecturers that they show the video in classes across the University.

Contact: Sharon Doherty, Healthy University Coordinator shdoherty@uclan.ac.uk

University of Edinburgh: Engaging Creatively with Students

The Healthy University project at Edinburgh is committed to ensuring that the student’s voice is central to everything that develops in Edinburgh. As a new project, we needed to develop a baseline to find out what is happening already, what the issues are for students, and to paint a picture of what the future could look like when the healthy university principles are applied in practice. But how best to ensure that students are involved and engaged in developing the vision for what a healthy university at Edinburgh looks like to them? We began our work on this front in earnest once the students started their new semester in September. One of the approaches we took was with the help of a local cartoonist, Graham Ogilvie. We wanted to hear from students what the issues influencing their health were, either as new or returning students. We booked some space where students were passing on their way to join societies or sports clubs during Fresher’s week and invited students to come and talk to us about the idea of a healthy university – and Graham managed very successfully to capture their ideas and thoughts. Common issues emerging were the pressure to drink alcohol at many social events organised during Fresher’s week, the feeling and impact of social isolation on their mental health during this key transition stage, the need to be able to access cheap affordable food and the benefits of being physically active both indoors and out – despite the Scottish weather which was a big issue for many of the international students from warmer climates!
As well as wanting to hear about current issues, we also wanted to hear about the student’s vision of a healthy Edinburgh University. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and with this in mind we worked with the photo society and the medic’s society to launch a photo competition. We asked students to submit photos to our HealthyU Facebook page under one of four categories: environment, lifestyle, connectedness and fun. We received over 70 photographs that provided us with great insight into the student’s vision. After a judging panel consisting of key partners from the Student Counselling Service, Department for Sustainability and the Centre for Sport and Exercise together with students from the partner societies we chose a winner and runner up for each category. We then held a prize giving evening where we got to meet the photographers.

The photos are available on a Facebook page.

Contact: Helen Ryall, Healthy Universities Project Coordinator helen.ryall@ed.ac.uk

**Manchester Metropolitan University: Student Perceptions of a Healthy University**

MMU has undertaken a consultative research study to explore and develop an understanding of student perceptions of a healthy university. Eleven universities participated in the study across England, Scotland and Wales. Using opportunistic surveys and focus groups, 423 students participated across a variety of programmes of study. The key themes for analysis were derived from the framework for a healthy university developed by the UK Healthy Universities Network Model and Framework Project. Sub themes were then developed from these (Figure 1).

The key findings from the study indicate that students perceive a healthy university to be one which:

- Promotes student health and wellbeing in all aspects, from facilities and environment, through to curriculum
- Provides Access to reasonably priced healthy food, free water stations and exercise facilities
- Provides bike shelters
- Enables access to convenient and efficient health services
Develops policies in consultation with its students, communicates effectively and, where necessary adapts to change

Has a general ‘feeling or ethos’ of a healthy and happy place to be and promotes health as a fundamental feature of its business

Has approachable and knowledgeable tutors who promote health through the curriculum.

The study has highlighted useful information for universities who are developing as healthy universities and for the UK Healthy Universities Network and umbrella bodies, in considering ways in which to engage with, listen to and respond to the student voice.

Contact: Maxine Holt m.holt@mmu.ac.uk

University of Nottingham: Supporting Staff Mental Wellbeing

The School of Health Sciences at the University of Nottingham have a Work, Health and Wellbeing Programme which is led by Dr Holly Blake, with support from a committee of staff from APM and Academic job roles. This is the first School at the University to have designed and delivered a programme specifically for its staff. As part of this wider programme, the School have undertaken staff surveys which have identified high levels of self-reported stress in employees; in response to this they have developed a range of initiatives to support staff mental wellbeing. These include bespoke training sessions for staff on coping with change, stress management and resilience. The programme also includes Tai Chi, Yoga, mindfulness sessions, meditation, relaxation, and massage therapies, in addition to a wider range of initiatives to support physical health (eg general health checks and promotion of physical activity and healthy eating). Staff coaching sessions have been delivered with individuals and small teams, in which staff have been able to raise issues that affect their mental wellbeing in the workplace, discuss strategies for addressing them and make positive plans for the future. A workshop has been designed and a pilot tested to support line managers in understanding their approach to stress management, with training based around the use of self-assessment checklists to help managers understand how they best identify and manage stress in their teams. Holly is a chartered health psychologist and has recently contributed to the British Psychological Society’s response to the NICE consultation on Workplace policy and management practices to improve the health and wellbeing of employees.

Contact: Holly Blake, Associate Professor of Behavioural Science, Holly.Blake@nottingham.ac.uk

NEWS & FEATURES

Divesting from Fossil Fuels

As highlighted in the last Newsletter, climate change is widely recognised to be perhaps the most urgent public health issue facing us today – and divestment from fossil fuel companies is a growing focus for a number of organisations.

The University of Glasgow has become the first university in Europe to divest from the fossil fuel industry. After a year of student campaigning the University Court has voted to begin divesting its entire £129 million endowment from fossil fuels. This follows last year’s decision by the University of London SOAS to temporarily freeze its investments.

Further Information: People & Planet Fossil Free http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free
Alcohol Impact

Alcohol Impact is a pilot programme run by the National Union of Students (NUS) that seeks to create a social norm of responsible alcohol consumption by students. Funded by the Home Office, and working with seven pilot partnerships and one control, the programme will develop a new accreditation mark for a whole-institution approach to responsible consumption of alcohol, underpinned by social change theory.

Accreditation will be awarded to partnerships (the relationship between the university and students’ union) which meet a set of criteria which includes responsible drinking communications campaigns, formal training for university staff on alcohol harms, developing social alternatives to licensed premises, and forming steering groups.

The overarching aim for this work is to create and implement a holistic behaviour change model in universities to reduce alcohol related crime and disorder (both students being victims of crime and perpetrators), and other related health and academic impacts, and promote responsible drinking, amongst the student population.

We have an extensive central and local programme of monitoring and evaluation activities which includes an extensive literature review, baseline, mid-point and end point central survey, focus groups, qualitative interviews and collection of secondary data sources.

There has been widespread and largely positive coverage of the NUS Alcohol Impact Scheme – on BBC Breakfast, BBC5 Live, Good Morning Britain, Sky News Radio and BBC Radio Merseyside. We have a microsite for the programme, to share progress of the seven pilot partnerships. As part of the criteria, pilots with the support of our expert advisor Andrew Darnton, are asked to deliver one or more innovative interventions on responsible alcohol consumption to students, these have included safer taxi schemes, using breathalysers as an educational feedback tool on consumption levels, alcohol-free spaces at mass events, and house party safety communication campaigns.

Our criteria and workbook are freely available to use and some institutions have begun to work towards how they might meet different parts of this. Unfortunately we are unable to audit or formally accredit new institutions this year.

We are looking to rollout out the programme to new pilots in March 2015.

Further Information: http://alcoholimpact.unioncloud.org/about; Lucy-Ann Henry, Lucy-Ann.Henry@nus.org.uk

E-Cigarettes

The BMA has updated its briefing on e-cigarettes. Doctors want to see strong regulation of e-cigarettes as a licensed medicinal product, which they argue best reflects their use for harm reduction and ensures their effectiveness, quality, and safety. As BMA Board of Science Deputy Chair Ram Moorthy stated:

“We need strong regulation of e-cigarettes to ensure that they are safe and effective in reducing harm and do not reinforce the normalcy of smoking behaviour.”

The BMA recognises their potential for supporting tobacco harm reduction. There is, however, a lack of robust research and evidence in this area, and any benefits or disadvantages to public health are not yet well established.
It is important also to be aware of the latest NICE guidance on tobacco harm reduction for patients who are not ready or able to quit smoking entirely but wish to cut down.

**Further Information - Briefing:**
http://bma.org.uk/working-for-change/improving-and-protecting-health/tobacco/e-cigarettes

**Further Information:** Additionally, if you would like to receive a copy of a report on e-cigarettes compiled by the UK Healthy Universities Network following a recent request to Network Members for information on policies, contact healthyuniversities@uclan.ac.uk

### Smokefree Universities in Wales

As part of the Live Well, Work Well initiative with Sustrans Cymru, British Heart Foundation Cymru and MIND Cymru, ASH Wales facilitated a morning workshop titled: Working towards smokefree university campuses across Wales.

The workshop looked at best practice from Ireland, which is already implementing whole-campus smokefree policies and looked to how universities in Wales can work towards becoming completely smokefree.

**Further Information:** All literature presented in the workshop can be found at [www.ashwales.org.uk/smokefree-universities/](http://www.ashwales.org.uk/smokefree-universities/)

### Supporting Students at the Royal Society for Public Health

The Royal Society for Public Health is developing its support for students including a new student membership package and would like to invite members of the Healthy Universities Network to help shape this for the future. The RSPH is an independent organisation dedicated to the promotion and protection of collective health and wellbeing.

We are investigating how we can more directly involve students in our work. Our student membership package provides a range of benefits to further knowledge and demonstrate commitment to public health. These currently include monthly updates, discounted events, participation in focus groups, access to our journals and content in our online Members’ Area. We will be introducing a jobs board to aid members in career development. We also work with students and universities across the country through our qualifications. Sheffield Hallam University has integrated our Level 2 Award in Understanding Health Improvement into undergraduate courses. This qualification inspired our Sport for Health initiative, launched with the University of East London. Our Level 2 Youth Health Champions award equips young people with the knowledge and skills to support their peers in leading healthier lifestyles.

We would like to expand the support and involvement offered by our student membership, qualifications and collaborative projects; to build on the connections we already have with universities and students as well as to develop new ones. We are keen to hear from anyone with any thoughts or suggestions and all ideas are most welcome! If you would like to help us shape our student membership, discuss working with us or help circulate details across relevant student groups, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

**Further Information:** [www.rsph.org.uk/](http://www.rsph.org.uk/); Marie Findlay, Membership and Marketing Assistant MFindlay@rsph.org.uk
Tackling Domestic Abuse in University Settings

In response to the growing research around domestic violence and sexual abuse in university and workplace settings, Public Health England (PHE) has launched a set of toolkits to empower bystander action and increase awareness.

Domestic abuse is a pervasive issue that affects all of society, including universities. Recent National Union of Students and Telegraph surveys have highlighted the problem of sexual assault and domestic abuse on university grounds across England. During their time as a student, 1 in 7 women have reported physical or sexual assault and 2 in 3 women have reported sexual harassment.

Domestic abuse also affects staff. It is a hidden workplace issue, yet 75% of people who endure abuse experience it at work. Sexual assault and domestic abuse can have a significant impact on an individual’s health and wellbeing. It can also negatively affect their ability to learn, grow and thrive.

In response to this, PHE commissioned the University of the West of England (UWE) to develop an Intervention Initiative, supporting universities to challenge the negative social norms towards sexual assault and domestic abuse, and empowering students to act if they witness problematic behaviors. The toolkit is available for free online, and all universities across England are being encouraged to embed the initiative into the first year law curriculum. UWE are the first university to run the programme.

Emma, a student taking part in the course at UWE said:

“Before taking part in this course I didn’t realise just how common sexual abuse in universities is. I was aware of it, and had experienced it myself, but I never spoke about it to peers and presumed that was normal. Since taking the course I feel so much more supported in my views, and more confident to speak up and raise awareness about an issue that I now know affects so many others. I think it’s great that this course is compulsory. Every university should be doing it.”

Alongside this, PHE’s Violence Toolkit for Businesses, developed with CAADV, addresses domestic abuse in the workplace. The toolkit is a step by step guide with resources to help raise awareness and train staff on the potential signs of domestic abuse and how to respond.

These resources are part of a holistic approach to create environments free from sexual coercion and violence, promoting positive, respectful and healthy relationships. Addressing the issue in university settings has the potential to change an entire generation’s attitude towards sexual assault and domestic abuse.

Professor Kevin Fenton, Director of Health and Wellbeing at Public Health England, said:

“Over a third of women and 12% of men have faced unwelcome sexual advances. Everyone is entitled to a life free of violence and abuse. It is crucial that those on the ground feel confident and safe enough to take active steps when they witness a problem, or experience domestic harassment themselves.”

References

Further Information: dawn.tennant@phe.gov.uk
http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/bl/research/interventioninitiative/abouttheprogramme.aspx; http://16daysofaction.co.uk/
UHR and UCEA Workplace Engagement and Wellbeing Regional Networks

Introduction
Following on from activity undertaken across the sector, and to support a current interest in this agenda, the Universities and Colleges Employers’ Association (UCEA) and Universities Human Resources (UHR) are establishing self-managing regional networks focusing on employee engagement, and in some cases employee well-being. These will allow members to share practice, work collaboratively, discuss relevant developments, and support the wider national agenda around these topics. Some of the networks have already held well attending meetings, and co-ordination arrangements are below:

- **Scotland** (Engagement and Well-being) – Selina Woolcott, University of Glasgow, selina.woolcott@glasgow.ac.uk
- **North East** (Engagement and Well-being) – John Hamilton, Leeds Beckett University, j.hamilton@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
- **North West** (Engagement and Well-being) – Karen Cregan, University of Chester, k.cregan@chester.ac.uk
- **Midlands** – Anne Meredith, Nottingham Trent University, a.meredith@ntu.ac.uk
- **Southern/M25** (Engagement) – Lois Moore, University of Surrey, l.moor@surrey.ac.uk
- **South West/Wales** – Deborah Griffin, University of Bath, d.griffin@bath.ac.uk

What are the Networks Doing?
Leeds Beckett University hosted the first **North East** meeting. There was a mixture of both HR and Health and Safety colleagues, who expressed an interest in both the well-being and engagement agendas. Colleagues discussed areas that they currently working on, as well as key challenges. It was agreed that the network will meet once per term, with a different institution hosting each meeting, meetings being topic based.

**North West/Northern Ireland**’s first meeting, held at the University of Chester, aimed to engage colleagues from a range of areas, achieving a cross-institutional approach to staff engagement and well-being. Some core themes were identified:

- Institutions wish to achieve cross institutional approach to staff engagement and well-being
- Line Management development to support wellbeing culture
- Differentiating approaches for academic and support staff
- Benchmarking and sharing practice amongst regions
- Gaining local support for change.

The **South West** network plans to share best practice and develop collaborative working in the area of employee engagement and at its first meeting, the **Southern/M25** group identified the following core themes:

- Evaluating the case for measuring employee engagement in HE institutions
- Exploring possible relationships between engagement and university performance
- Evaluating the case for measuring employee engagement in HE institutions
- Benchmarking across the sector
- Understanding differences in engagement due to characteristics such as gender/length of service/academic discipline
- Sharing experience of implementing staff surveys and action plans.

Future Meetings
- The **Southern/M25 group** is due to meet on 6 May 2015 in London.
- The **North West/Northern Ireland group** is due to meet on the 28 January at the University of Chester.
- The **North East group** is due to meet on the 16th January at York St John University.

Contact: See list of area co-ordinators above
University Travel Challenge Wales

During October, Welsh universities took part in a sustainable travel challenge in an attempt to top the leader board for the highest participation rate in the Live Well University Travel Challenge. It was a close call, but Bangor University came out on top. The Challenge saw over 600 people sign up to ditching the car and walking, cycling, using public transport, or car-sharing into university, with over 9000 journeys logged across the month. It was extremely easy to log journeys, and participants took advantage of the new ‘App’ to quickly upload their journeys using GPS. The weather was on and off, but that didn’t stop anyone: “Wet one this morning, but nothing a good coat and brolly won’t fix. The child in me made me do a quick splosh in some of the puddles on the way in too!” Meanwhile others discovered that “commuting by bike is like having a bit of a holiday before work”. The challenge was extremely well received, with lots of fantastic photos and case studies sent in to the project team. There was a whole range of prizes up for grabs over the challenge duration. It was inclusive for all, and by just logging at least two journeys each week, participants were in with a chance of winning shopping vouchers! In total 20 sets of vouchers were given out as spot prizes, and everyone loved the incentive to get active and start enjoying the environment.

A series of ‘mini challenges’ also took place weekly throughout the challenge including: Best Post using #LiveWellWorkWell; Best ‘Selfie’; and Best Comment. The winners were:

Best Post

Best Selfie

Best Comment

Meanwhile there was also a prize for the winning department from each University:

“We were particularly blessed at Swansea University with our Travel Challenge, as our campus sits perfectly between beautiful parkland and the gorgeous Swansea bay coastline. In choosing sustainable travel options we were spoilt for choice: Cycle in across the beautiful bay? Bus along the seafront? Stroll through Singleton Park at its Autumnal best, taking in the rambunctious antics of cheeky squirrels? That’s the beauty of not driving – you get to appreciate the world around you and nature at its best. This proved to be a substantial motivator for colleagues used to jumping in the car – gone was the stress of finding a parking spot on campus (usually impossible for even the earliest risers!). Student Support Services normally have a strong team work ethic, and the Travel Challenge certainly brought us closer as a team. We’re a competitive bunch and were overjoyed to be announced as the winning sub-team within the University! Jokes aside, it goes to show the strong values we hold as a department towards sustainability, health and wellbeing. ‘We’d love to do the challenge again, although given the wet October we’d welcome a fair weather challenge next time – maybe in the Springtime?”

Further Information: https://livewellchallenge.getmeactive.org.uk/; Charlotte Moore charlotte.moore@sustrans.org.uk
Walk to Work Week

We’re all aware that walking is a form of transport with numerous benefits to health and the wider environment. Active travel provides an ideal means to achieving the recommended levels of daily exercise; it reduces travel costs and is a sustainable way to make your journey. However, despite this, the decision to walk may be influenced by a host of environmental, social and psychological factors. The challenge, therefore, is less about improving understanding of why we should walk, and more about winning hearts and minds in order to encourage and sustain a change in people’s travel behaviour towards more journeys on foot.

Living Streets is the national charity working to create safe, attractive, enjoyable streets where people want to walk – offering solutions and interventions to increase the levels of active travel in workplaces, schools and communities. Living Streets’ Walk to Work Week is a simple, free, week-long challenge that takes place across the UK each May. It’s a great way to get some fun team competition going between colleagues and trigger understanding of the benefits of walking more during the working day.

To get you in the spirit, here’s a mini challenge to try:

Print out a map of the area around your workplace and draw a boundary ring roughly one mile away in all directions. This is your ‘Food Exclusion Zone’. For the next week, you must walk to beyond the boundary walls to purchase your lunch. A great way to stretch those legs and refresh your mind for the afternoon.

Further Information: www.walktoworkweek.org.uk

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) Conference

23-25 March 2015, University of Leeds

This conference inspires and challenges tertiary education to look again at our connections, our partnerships and the voices we are hearing and those we are not. Over three days, it will explore how a whole new level of creativity, innovation and leadership is possible when sustainability becomes the central and connected consideration for your university or college.

Further details: http://www.eauc.org.uk/annual_conference

Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) Conference

22-24 April 2015, Bournemouth

The Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA)’S 43rd spring conference is looking at a healthier future in higher education for staff and students alike and how we can change and influence our culture and behaviour to get healthy.

Further details: www.usha-conference.org.uk/programme/ or contact events@usaha.org.uk

International Healthy Universities Conference

22-25 June 2015, University of British Columbia, Kelowna, Canada

As detailed under ‘International News’ above, an International Conference on Healthy Universities is being held in British Columbia, Canada, in June 2015.

Further details: www.internationalhealthycampuses2015.com or contact IHCC2015@gmail.com