



# **STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AGREEMENT 2025 - 28**

## STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AGREEMENT 2025-28 WEST Lothian COLLEGE AND WEST Lothian COLLEGE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

### OVERVIEW

West Lothian College and the West Lothian College Student Association want all students to have good mental health, and aim to achieve this by listening to student feedback, understanding barriers and making necessary adjustments.

The Student Association and the college work in partnership to create and implement a shared vision and commitment to improve student mental health and wellbeing. This work is guided by the National Union of Student Scotland's Think Positive [Student Mental Health Agreement \(SMHA\)](#) project.

The SMHA is a united approach to improve student health and wellbeing, bringing together actions and objectives that support this goal. This is accompanied by an action plan that includes specific success measures and evaluates the overall impact of the agreement.

Nationally, Student Mental Health Agreements are critical and have been recognised in the [Scottish Government's Student Mental Health Action Plan](#) (which referenced West Lothian College initiatives as best practice). These initiatives increase a student's chance of success, create a healthy, active, supportive and understanding environment, and contribute to better mental health and wellbeing outcomes for students.

This agreement outlines the joint objectives and commitments made by the Student Association and West Lothian College to improve the mental and physical health and wellbeing of students. This agreement is available on the [West Lothian College website](#) and the [NUS Think Positive website](#). Physical copies are available on request from the Student Association.

### COMMITMENT

We recognise that attending college is exciting for students, although it can sometimes introduce or increase challenges. We acknowledge the critical importance of support services for students.

This is why we participate in the [National Union of Students \(NUS\) Think Positive initiative](#), as it is committed to improving student health and wellbeing and embed good practice.

An established group of Student Association elected and voluntary officers and college staff work together to embed the objectives of the SMHA, ensuring that student health and wellbeing remains a priority.

Together, we have agreed four objectives as outlined below. Student consultation and evaluation will continue to be central to all activities. We are committed to:

- Enhancing awareness of available resources and improving communication

- Providing training, education and support, while strengthening partnerships
- Listening to student experiences, understanding barriers and working to eliminate stigma and discrimination through feedback, consultation, evaluation and data collection.

## OBJECTIVES

Our SMHA has four overarching objectives:

1. Reduce stigma and discrimination
2. Increase respect and inclusion
3. Provide training, education and peer support for students
4. Strengthen the student community.

### Objective 1 – Reduce Stigma and Discrimination

Reducing stigma and discrimination is crucial for students at the college. Negative attitudes can have a significant impact on their educational experience, self-belief and overall mental health.

Through openly discussing their experiences, including past discrimination, mental health issues and responding to misperceptions, students can contribute to creating a safer and healthier environment. This will include stigma and discrimination surrounding taking part in physical activities, body image and poverty.

We will continue to partner with external organisations like the Scottish Association of Mental Health, NHS, West Lothian Community Race Forum, Neil's Hugs Foundation and others to develop campaigns that challenge stigma, celebrate diversity, educate students and offer support. Campaigns such as Black History Month, Disability History Month and others will be used to address stigma and encourage open discussion.

#### How we will measure impact

Impact will be measured through feedback from students, service usage data, pre-and post-evaluations of services, engagement in clubs, usage of physical spaces.

### Objective 2 – Increase Respect and Inclusion

Increasing respect and inclusion is vital to creating a sense of community and belonging, which can help reduce discrimination, prejudice and harm.

A focus on respect and inclusion will promote happier, more productive students who feel able to contribute in a safe and supportive environment. The college aims to continue improving support for students, removing barriers to accessibility and improve student awareness of how to access support.

The Student Association and college will provide opportunities for students to learn about each other and care for their own wellbeing, ensuring that initiatives are accessible in supportive environments.

## How we will measure impact

Impact will be measured by evaluating service usage, student engagement and feedback, and by tracking improvements in respect, reductions in damage to college property, and increased use of designated areas for smoking and vaping.

## Objective 3 – Provide Training, Education and Peer Support for Students

Providing education and training is essential to enhancing knowledge, building resilience and offering peer support. This will reduce stigma and discrimination, increase respect and inclusion, and support students in their academic, professional and personal growth.

The college will continue to ensure that appropriately trained staff are available to support students. This includes the TRUST Team (which provides a wraparound service for students who have experienced trauma), the student support team (which assists students academically and personally), the student counselling team, the student association and the safeguarding team. In addition, free Mental Health First Aid courses will be offered to students, along with peer support networks and safe spaces to promote student wellbeing

## How we will measure impact

Impact will be measured through evaluations of training participation, service usage, engagement in clubs and feedback from students.

## Objective 4 – Strengthen Student Community

It is essential to continue strengthening the student community by providing opportunities for students to develop friendships, create support systems, and foster a sense of belonging. A strong student community promotes diversity and provides opportunities for skill development, which can improve student success.

Efforts will include integrating sustainability objectives into the SMHA, with the aim of improving both student and environmental wellbeing. Healthy, active students contribute to a supportive community and develop essential meta skills such as problem-solving, leadership and teamwork.

## How we will measure impact

Impact will be measured through service usage statistics, engagement, student feedback and annual self-evaluation processes.

## UNDERSTAND STUDENT EXPERIENCES THROUGH STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that the student voice remains central to all activities, we commit to continuing with a robust and inclusive approach to feedback and engagement. This includes ensuring that there are:

- **Diverse Feedback Opportunities**  
By hosting online and in-person feedback sessions and consultations, multiple avenues for students will enable them to share insights and ensure that everyone is heard.
- **Student-Led Initiatives**  
The Student Association Team, including executive officers and ambassadors, lead various activities, ensuring that student-driven ideas and perspectives shape campaigns and events.
- **Staff-Supported Activities**  
College staff and lecturers also lead activities within classes, incorporating student health and wellbeing themes into the curriculum.
- **Student-Centered Approach**  
All events and campaigns are designed with the student experience in mind, from planning through to execution, ensuring activities are relevant, impactful and address real needs.

These strategies create a supportive and responsive environment where student voices are central to shaping the college's wellbeing initiatives.

## REPORTING PROGRESS

A detailed action plan has been developed as a mechanism to drive these objectives forward. Specific actions outlined in the plan will be assigned to relevant leads across the college.

Progress will be evaluated using data analytics, evaluation and student feedback.

Self-evaluation will occur annually and planning for future SMHAs will begin after evaluation of the current plan and once the elected officers are in place, ensuring strong student involvement.

Progress will be reported quarterly to our Mainstreaming Equality Committee, at which achievements against success measures will be submitted. The committee will oversee the development, monitoring and review of the objectives. The Student Association will report progress to the Board of Governors.

## CONCLUSION

West Lothian College and the Student Association are united in their shared commitment to fostering a positive, supportive and inclusive environment that prioritises student mental health and wellbeing.

Through active collaboration, ongoing student consultation and continuous evaluation, the Student Mental Health Agreement and Action Plan represent a commitment to

meaningful action and change. By empowering students to lead and integrating staff support, we are building a campus culture that genuinely values and supports the mental health and wellbeing of every student, ultimately creating a healthier, more resilient future for all.

The objectives of the SMHA have been established with a focus on external research, including research commissioned by Think Positive as well as internal research and data from both staff and students.

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Date: 20/01/2025

Signed: Joanna Trybura

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