SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN RECOVERY

Impact Report

INTRODUCTION

This Impact Report has been prepared to set out the achievements of the past three years of philanthropic funding supporting students in recovery from addiction – importantly including both substance and behavioral addictions.

The focus of the funding has been the direct support of the UK's first University-led Collegiate Recovery Programme (CRP) delivered through the 'Better than Well" Programme (BTW) at the University of Birmingham (UoB).

The ambitions for the initiative reach well beyond the specific programme at UoB. A key objective of the activity has been to provide a focus for growing awareness of the challenges of sustaining recovery for young people in educational settings and to provide the evidence of the potential for Collegiate Recovery Programmes to have positive impact on the outcomes – not only for institutions in terms of retention and completion, but of course for individuals and their families. And in doing this to encourage discussion of the potential for more Universities to consider and eventually adopt CRP to support more students.

This report tells the story of the Better than Well Programme and the impact that it has had in the first two years, using the available data and evidence, but also the individual stories of the students who are the core concern in this work on supporting recovery.

The programme at UoB has provided the platform for Dr Ed Day and his team to develop a live example of CRP which can be shared with a broader audience in the academic community and has captured the attention of the media and other universities.

The aim of this report is not only to tell the story, but also to provide the evidence and insight to encourage new and continuing support for programmes and initiatives in support of students in recovery.



"Ensuring that students in recovery who are in need of support and encouragement to complete their studies and go on to fulfil their potential is a worthwhile philanthropic ambition.

It is evident that the approach embodied by Collegiate Recovery Programmes has the potential to transform the experience of students in recovery.

By supporting the Better than Well Programme at University of Birmingham as a live pilot study we can start to build the case for Collegiate Recovery in more universities in the UK and give more students the support they need on their recovery journey."

CONTEXT



"A Collegiate Recovery Programme is a college or university provided, supportive environment within the campus culture that reinforces the decision to engage in a lifestyle of recovery from substance use and other addictive behaviours.

It is designed to provide an educational opportunity alongside recovery support to ensure that students do not have to sacrifice one for the other.

An effective CRP allows students to access and thrive in a University setting who would not be able to do so without active support."

The challenges facing all students embarking on their university experience are well known and the state of the mental health of young people is both topical and of concern to all educational institutions, as well as to parents and young people themselves.

However, recovery is a term and a topic associated with stigma and shame and has to date had little airtime as a subject for discussion – but it is an issue which has significant positive impact on young peoples' ability to navigate the challenges of university and succeed.

A substantial number of young people are dealing with issues around recovery. In a nationally representative sample of the UK population, 12% of the sample aged 18-24 reported that they had overcome a problem with alcohol or drugs, and 23% had overcome a problem behaviour such as gambling, gaming, sex/pornography, exercise, internet or shopping.. The focus of discussion is often on substance addiction, but the problems of addiction and recovery are about so much more than alcohol and drugs – food, gambling, sex/porn, exercise, internet, shopping and gaming are all reported as problem behaviours.

By the time young people reach university, many are already tackling their problems and are 'in recovery' – hoping to successfully participate in University life and gain academic qualifications.

However, the university environment is clearly a challenging one, with social pressures around alcohol and the demands of making the shift to living independently while still dealing with the challenges of recovery – it is by no means an easy path.

Recovery is an individual journey. Obtaining the appropriate support away from family and established support structures can determine successful long-term outcomes – this is why support in the formative university years is critical.

Collegiate Recovery Programmes have an important role to play and are already proven to be an effective means of supporting recovery. Specifically, in the USA, CRPs date back to the 1970s, and there are currently over 170 programs established in universities across the USA.

The UK is behind other countries in their commitment to Collegiate Recovery, although interest is growing in issues of recovery There is one 'live' example of a University-led CRP at University of Birmingham, where the 'Better than Well' programme has now been running for two years under the Directorship of Dr Ed Day and facilitated by Luke Trainor, the Programme Manager who has lived-experience of addiction and recovery. In addition to the programme for students, academic research is being undertaken to further evaluate and provide evidence of the value of the approach and will be peer-reviewed and published in the coming months.

BETTER THAN WELL
COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAMME

The underlying principles of recovery are that any path to recovery and all methods to maintain it are valid, and therefore the CRP at UoB continues to develop to offer a variety of supportive elements to meet the differing needs of individual students.

BETTER THAN WELL

The key building blocks of the Better than Well Programme include:

Recovery Support

- Dedicated on-campus location for individual and support group meetings
- A 24/7 network of peer support through group meetings, sober social events and WhatsApp group
- Weekly Celebration of Recovery meeting
- Individual recovery planning and one-to-one support
- Recovery accommodation – sober, peer-supported living environment
- Support for mental health through integrated mind and body strategies
- Student bursaries to attend conferences and engage with other students in recovery
- Outreach activities to the broader Birmingham universities and City recovery communities
- Community service projects
- Continuing engagement with graduates from the Programme

Educational Support

- Assistance and advice relating to all aspects of academic study
- Access to tutoring and resources
- Educational curriculum of seminars and events

Academic Research

- Student outcomes
- Stigma and addiction
- Pathways out of addiction



"On Friday evening last week, I was privileged to join a meeting of 'Better Than Well' (BTW) – the University's support programme for students who are recovering from addiction to drugs, alcohol or behaviours which can be self-destructive.

BTW was launched just under two years ago by Dr Ed Day, an associate professor in Psychology and practicing clinical psychiatrist, and the initiative provides peer support for students during structured and supportive sessions and individual support from both Ed and from Luke Trainor, BTW's Programme Manager.

I was genuinely humbled to hear students openly and honestly talk about the challenges that they faced and their roads to recovery. Every one of them was treated with deep respect by everyone in the room and they all talked about how important BTW has been to them."

Professor Adam Tickell
Vice Chancellor

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



BETTER THAN WELL

COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAMME TEAM



Dr Ed Day - Programme Director

Dr Ed Day is a psychiatrist who combines his work in the NHS and teaching in the School of Psychiatry at University of Birmingham with being the Programme Director for Better than Well.

He is an acknowledged expert in recovery and was appointed National Recovery Champion by the Home Office in May 2019.

Ed is currently working on academic research on recovery and an evaluation of the impact of CRPs on students in recovery.

He is a frequent speaker at conferences and events and has close relationships with the international academic community around recovery.



Luke Trainor - Programme Manager

Luke is the full time Programme Manager for the BTW programme. As a graduate of UoB and a person in long-term recovery himself, Luke has lived-experience of the challenges facing the students.

Luke is the first point of contact for students seeking support, runs all the activities of the programme and provides individual support to students in the programme.

Luke also oversees the recovery accommodation on campus, supporting the students who live together in a supportive, sober setting.



Our Students

Better than Well is a peer-support programme and the students are central to the success of the programme.

There is no typical BTW student, they come from a broad range of subjects, backgrounds and and are in recovery from a range of addictions – including both substance and behavioural addition.

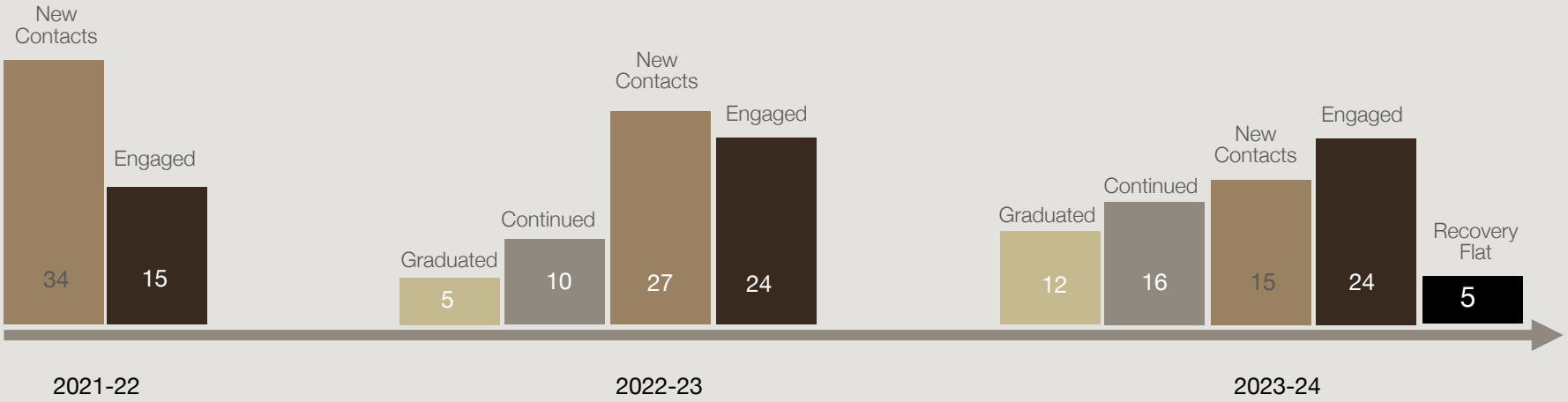
They are undergraduates and postgraduates - some even continue their connection to BTW beyond their time at UoB.

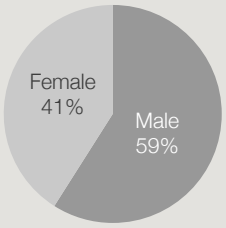
They are all members of the BTW community, providing essential peer support and friendship.

BETTER THAN WELL

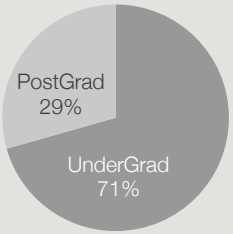
GROWTH TIMELINE AND GROWING ENGAGEMENT

Participation in the Programme has been ahead of expectations, with growing contacts and an active and engaged cohort and, since its launch in 2023, a fully-occupied recovery flat offering sober, peer-supported accommodation.





GENDER



LEVEL OF STUDY



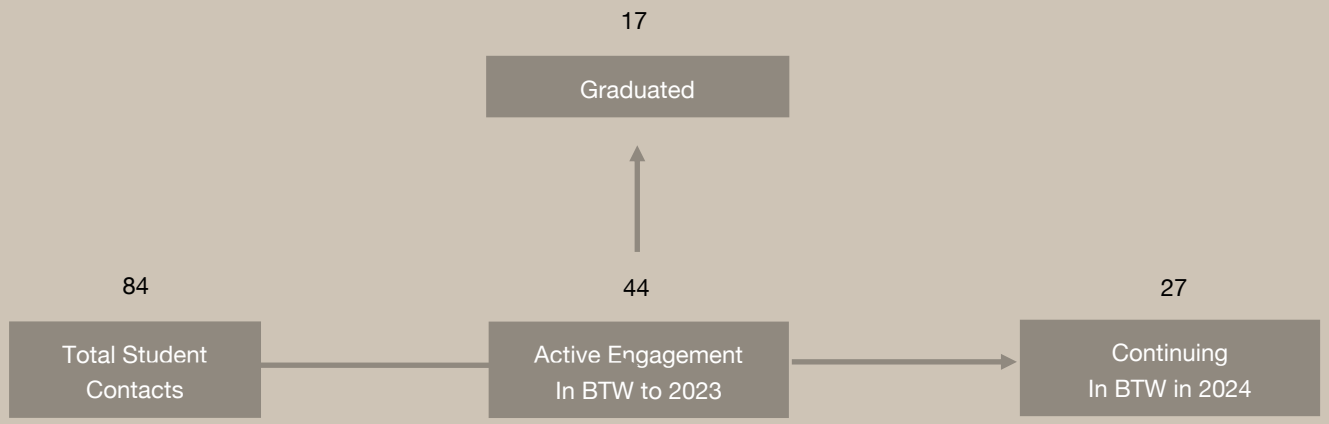
PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

BETTER THAN WELL

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Whilst the absolute numbers are significantly ahead of expectations, the sample size remains small and analysis of success is observational at this stage – but is nonetheless encouraging:





BETTER THAN WELL

IMPACT IN THEIR OWN WORDS



“Through the University's Better Than Well recovery programme I have been able to behave in the ways a recovering addict would. I am recognising my addiction as an addiction and I am understanding my addiction better than I could do alone.

Importantly, I am building a support network out of the friendships I've made with the recovering students already here at the University.

The first step to recovery is admitting your addiction, and I'm happy that I'm taking that step here."

“I jumped at the opportunity to join a collegiate recovery community and once I started to become actively involved in BTW, things started to change.

I had found a safe environment to escape the university party culture and amazing people to do it with. I felt as though, for the first time in a long time, I had found a place where I felt valued.

BTW also helped destigmatize the way I perceived addiction and recovery and helped me become open and honest with all my friends outside of recovery, therefore, helping me move past seeing addiction and recovery as a weakness or something I would be judged for.

The love, support and encouragement I received from my friends in BTW was paramount in my decision to pursue my dreams following graduation.

I am living a sober and fulfilling life that is incomprehensibly better than it was before. I think it is fair to say, BTW changed my life for the better, and I shall be forever grateful to have been a part of it."

BETTER THAN WELL

BETTER THAN WELL

IMPACT IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Better than Well has played a big part in keeping me connected with other students in recovery and helping me feel a lot less lost in such a busy and stressful time of my life.

Struggling with addiction can be an incredibly isolating experience, but having this help and support available is a great step in the direction of changing that.

Because of the support accessible through the University and the 12-step recovery community I've found in Birmingham, my life is now one that's both manageable and liveable. I've also made some incredibly genuine and important friends through recovery, friendships I'm able to engage with on a meaningful level.

There are definitely still challenges, but I now have places I can go with it all, rather than trying to manage the whole of my life alone."

"Since finding out about BTW, I was surprised by how much I relate to other people in recovery in the group. A lot of the time, the thought patterns are the same but where others chose to pick up drink or drugs to cope with feelings, I chose food.

Although eating disorders are not usually characterised as an "addiction", I am starting to understand that they can be both behavioural and substance-based addictions - we are using overeating or undereating as a way to cope.

Through BTW and other support groups, I am realising it is not my fault I have this illness.

The main take away from this is to not bottle-up and hide away if you are struggling. I'm certainly not free from the illness but can at least say I'm on the road to getting there. I try and keep everything a day at a time, staying well just for today and keeping things as simple as possible."

BETTER THAN WELL



BETTER THAN WELL

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"My son was in recovery from alcohol addiction, but his adjustment to student life didn't go well.

He started to drink again and it went downhill from there. We looked for help for him, but we found that there are very few services that support his kind of addiction. People get caught between the rocks and hard places of alcohol and mental health.

He found AA wasn't right for him – he was a 20-year-old student and he didn't find others who were like him in the groups - 12 step recovery just wasn't very helpful. I felt I had to find him help myself and I found BTW when looking around for something that might help.

He joined the programme and went to BTW for 9 months, twice a week. It was transformational .

He was sober, positive, and was planning to get back to his degree.

BTW provided recognition and a sense of belonging. He felt he had something to contribute in that environment and that he could look forward.

It was very positive for him, he was living in sober accommodation, and attending BTW from there. It was hugely, hugely purposeful for him."

BETTER THAN WELL



IMPACT THROUGH THE MEDIA

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

The Better than Well Programme has received considerable and continuing interest from the Media.


THE TIMES

EDUCATION

Universities fight back against spread of drugs on campus

Luke Trainor and BTW Student feature in this article, including mention of the recovery flat.

Circulation:

Approx. 600k daily – Online & Print



Luke Trainor and a BTW Student contributed to this Radio 4 documentary series on the subject of recovery.

BBC Radio 4 Reach:

Approx. 5m Households



BBC News film report on the BTW programme and the recovery flat.

BBC News Reach:

Approx. 10m Households

EXTENDING REACH TO THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Throughout the programme the reach of the work extends to other academic settings – with both attendance and speaking engagements and publication of articles and academic research in leading journals.

Texas Tech University

Center for Students *in* Addiction Recovery

Dr Ed Day visit to staff and students engaged in the programme at Texas Tech.



Research Article

Recovery from Addiction on a University Campus – a UK Perspective

Ed Day , DM & Luke Trainor , MSc

Published online: 08 Jun 2024

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07347324.2024.2364694

ARHE

ASSOCIATION OF RECOVERY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

14th Annual Collegiate Recovery Conference

BTW students attending the 2023 Association for Recovery in Higher Education conference in Ohio, USA.

BJPsych open

The UK National Recovery Survey: nationally representative survey of people overcoming a drug or alcohol problem

Ed Day, Ifigeneia Manitsa, Amanda Farley and John F. Kelly

https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bjpsych-open/article/uk-national-recovery-survey-nationally-representative-survey-of-people-overcoming-a-drug-or-alcohol-problem/2419DE3E4BBFFF65FCB5CD510E4F340D

LISBON ADDICTIONS 2022

Global Addictions

#LxAddictions22 23–25 November lisbonaddictions.eu

Dr Ed Day & Prof John Kelly give keynote speeches at international conference.



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment

ELSEVIER

journal homepage: www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-substance-use-and-addiction-treatment

JSAT

Being better than well at the University of Birmingham

Luke Trainor

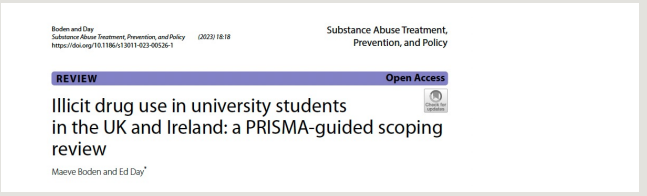
Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP), University of Birmingham, Institute for Mental Health, 52 Pritchatts Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B152TT, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

https://www.jsatjournal.com/article/S2949-8759(22)00020-0/fulltext

RC PSYCH

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

Dr Ed Day and Programme Manager Luke Trainor deliver a workshop session to the Faculty of Addictions.



Boden and Day

Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy (2023) 18:18

https://doi.org/10.1186/s13011-023-00526-1

Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy

REVIEW Open Access

Illicit drug use in university students in the UK and Ireland: a PRISMA-guided scoping review

Maeve Boden and Ed Day*

https://substanceabusepolicy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13011-023-00526-1

CREATING AWARENESS IN OTHER UNIVERSITIES

Outside of the programme at University of Birmingham, a consultation exercise has also been undertaken with other universities in order to understand attitudes to Collegiate Recovery, explore to what extent there was interest from other Universities and to identify ways to encourage wider awareness, greater knowledge and future adoption of the thinking and approach.

The candidate institutions for the exercise were chosen to represent a range of University settings along with other contacts with expert knowledge of addiction and recovery.

The overall goal of the exercise was to take an initial look at the landscape of student wellbeing, explore current attitudes to addiction and recovery in university settings and to initiate discussion of CRP and its principles.

The exercise was, by design, small scale as the potential was not apparent, however, the exercise established that there is sufficient interest to extend the consultation to include a broader cohort – and this is now in hand.



"We are facing a tsunami of mental health issues, and we are aware that some of these problem behaviours are becoming more of an issue for our students – but we are not really addressing them in any structured way."

Key Findings:

- Interviews ranged from Wellbeing Officers with little knowledge of addiction and recovery to leading experts in the field – although mostly from the perspective of substance addiction - drugs and alcohol - rather than behavioural addictions which are less well known, researched or understood.
- All were aware of the challenges facing students in the mental health and wellbeing arena – for all the societal reasons we now know and as a result of the impact of the COVID pandemic.
- They are aware that 'troubling behaviours' are more in evidence than before – the issues around gambling, porn and food-related behaviours have considerable resonance and are 'on the radar' as issues affecting students.
- Specifically, there is greater awareness of the role of neurodiversity in some of these behavioural challenges and understanding of the need to support students with these conditions.
- As a result, all were interested to hear about the concepts of CRP, the BTW programme at University of Birmingham and the potential for the principles of CRPs to be relevant to their own situation.
- It is interesting to note that the nature and type of university setting has considerable impact on the background status of student mental health and wellbeing – for example:
    - In collegiate settings, the provision of support for students is split between the individual, broadly autonomous Colleges – who tend to take a wellbeing-focused approach – and the over-arching University which tends to deal with the more serious and high-level issues.
    - In other settings the issues can be very different – with one university in London saying that their primary concerns are homelessness and food poverty.

CREATING AWARENESS IN OTHER UNIVERSITIES

Key Findings – Continued

- None of the respondents – even the most expert - had any detailed awareness of CRP or the Better than Well Programme - although some had done some reading following the approach to participate in the exercise - but all were interested to hear more.
- All universities struggle to accept that students in active drug addiction can be accommodated within the University – for their own sake and for the sake of the community around them – and not least because of issues around legality.
- They cannot provide treatment, and rarely provide support, for those who are known to be in active drug addiction - they will refer to the NHS or to other partners – with a low degree of confidence in the offer that is available.
- However, most would be prepared to consider the concept of supporting students who are in recovery, even if they were to have episodes of relapse.
- Some simple and specific aspects of CRP are well received and seen to be easy to implement – in particular, sober accommodation – which some already provide for cultural reasons. Providing support in sober accommodation would be relatively straightforward and could be a pragmatic starting point.
- However most acknowledge that a full CRP initiative would require a high level of commitment – both in terms of financial and human resources – and therefore that it would need to be delivered at University level with the full support of the institution, rather than a low level 'wellbeing' exercise.
- The language around addiction and recovery is an issue for further consideration in the framing of the potential for CRP. Some – the more experienced - were comfortable with the language, but others felt that 'addiction' and 'recovery' would direct attention to substance abuse – which is problematic for universities – and that the language of wellbeing and 'problematic behaviours' would allow more Universities to engage with the issue.

In conclusion, the overall response was one of interest in the topic and a wish to be included in follow-up communication and activities as the work develops.

"We are all concerned about the wellbeing of our students, so you are knocking at an open door if you have solutions to offer."





EVIDENCE OF IMPACT



The BTW Programme at UoB is still in the early stages – and it will be some time until there is a substantive body of academic research to show evidence of impact. – but there is data to provide indicative and directional measures of impact.

Current and future sources of evidence include:

National Data

Contextual data on the scale and basic features of recovery in the UK population has been captured through the YouGov Survey findings.

Qualitative Insights

A qualitative exercise has been undertaken to explore the experience of students in recovery and their experiences of BTW. Initial insights from this work are provided here .

The US Example

The USA is more advanced in its implementation of CRPs – with over 170 programmes active in universities. There is a considerable body of research which demonstrates the impact of CRPs and lessons can be extrapolated to the UK.

Impact Evaluation

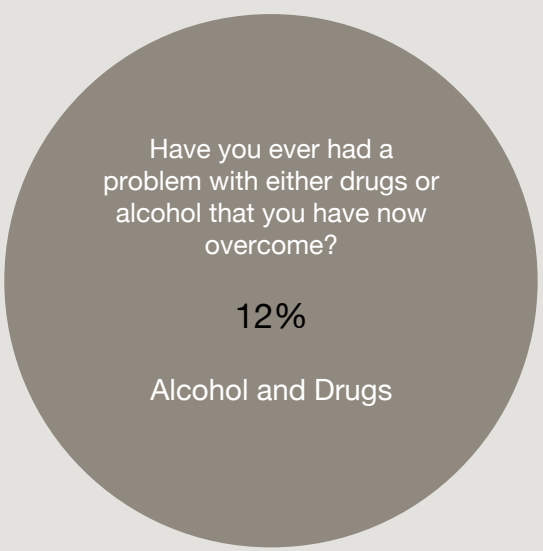
BTW has been established quicker than anticipated, and there is a need to build in an evaluation process to demonstrate the impact on students and the mechanisms of action of the programme. Work is in hand to build the necessary long-term evaluation programme to capture key measures of recovery and wellbeing from any student at a UK university.

UK RECOVERY LANDSCAPE

NATIONAL SURVEY DATA

The first national survey of problematic behaviours was undertaken by UoB - YouGov: Omnibus – A nationally representative sample = 2000

This data shows that recovery is significantly prevalent in the UK population – aged 18-24 - with 12% reporting to have overcome a problem with alcohol or drugs and 23% reporting having overcome a problem with other behaviours. These individuals can be considered to be in recovery.



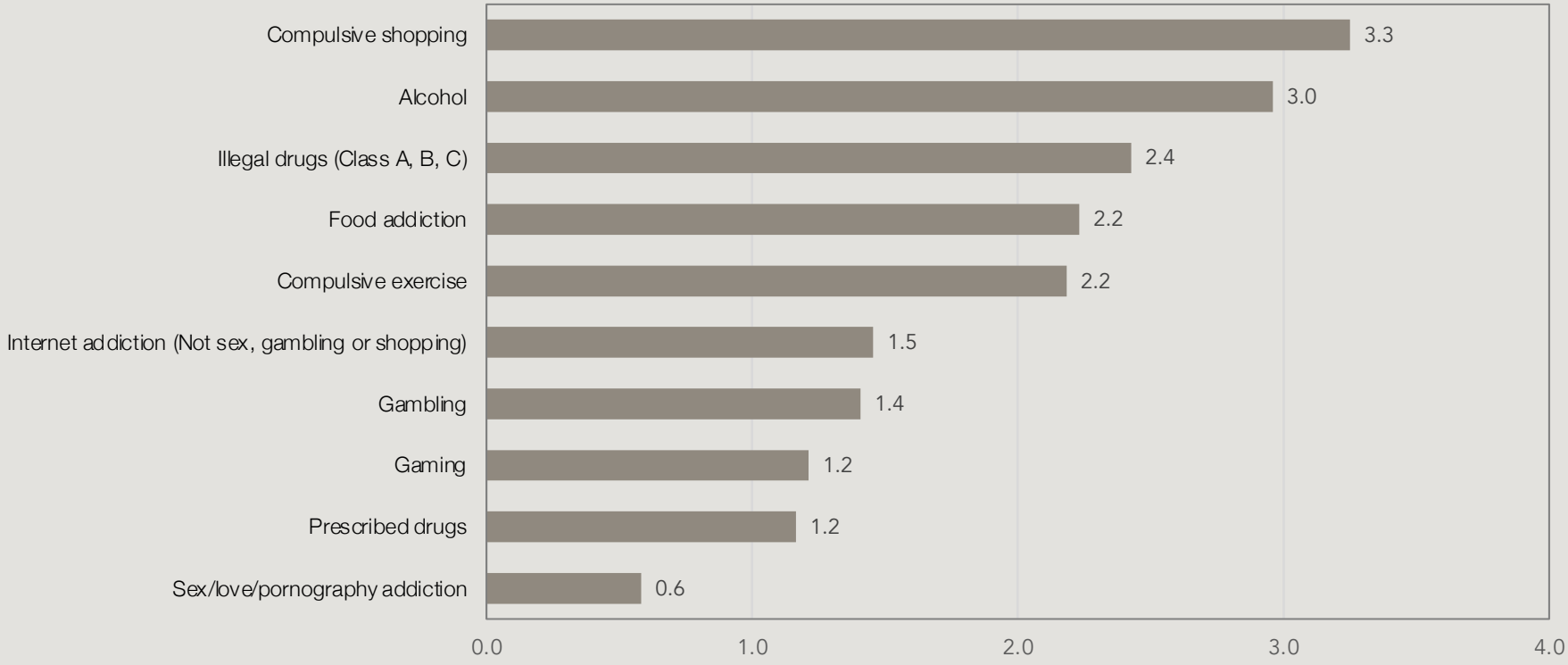


YouGov: Omnibus – Nationally representative sample 2000
Have you ever had a problem with either drugs or alcohol/ with any of the following behaviours that you have now overcome?
Respondents aged 18-24 years

PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOURS

BEYOND ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The data shows a range of behaviours that people claim to be in recovery from – it is not all about alcohol or drugs, but a broad range of behavioural problems.



YouGov: Omnibus – Nationally representative sample = 2000

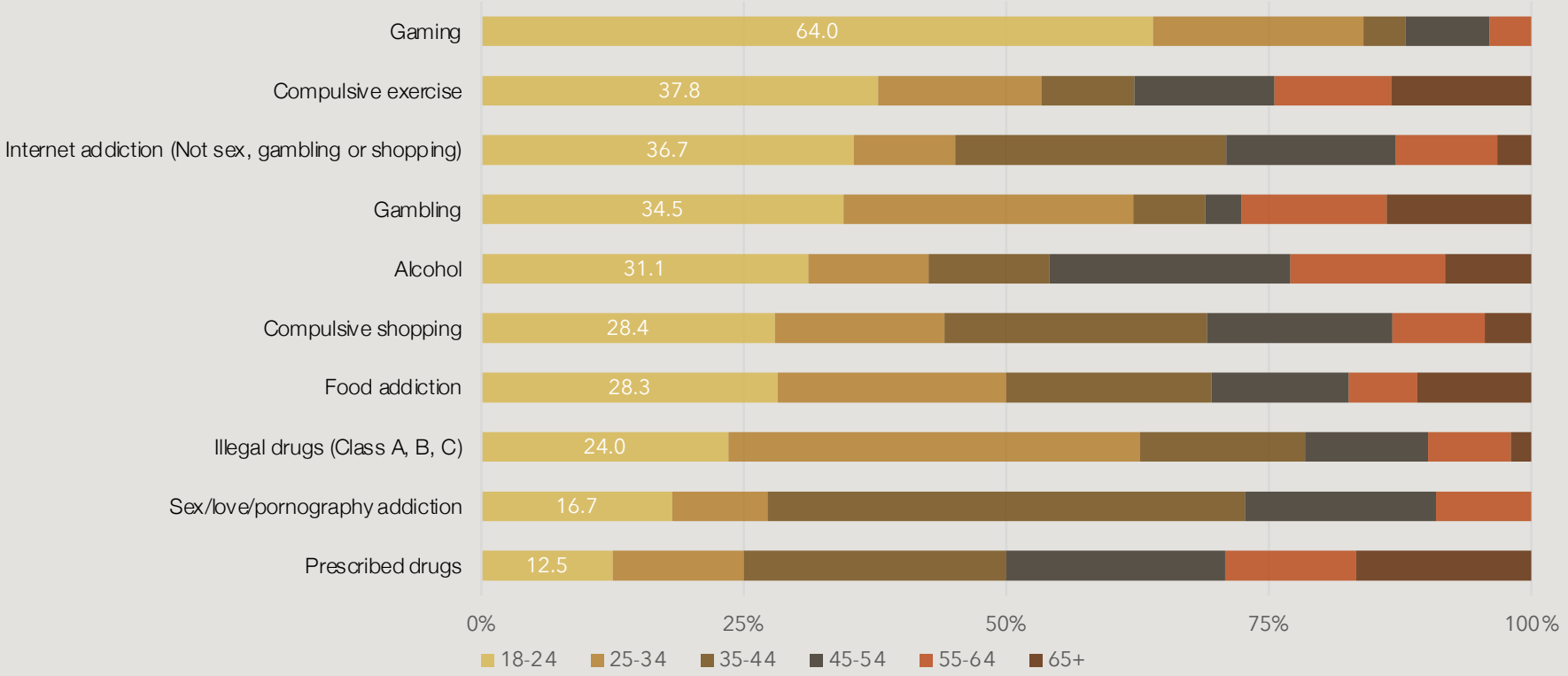
Have you ever had a problem with either drugs or alcohol/ with any of the following behaviours that you have now overcome?

AGE PROFILE

THE STUDENT AGE GROUP IS SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED

There is higher prevalence of those claiming to be in recovery in specific areas, amongst the student age group of 18-24 years.

It is worth noting that a problem with substances or behaviours is most likely to develop in the period 15-25 years, and the younger the persons starts, the more likely they are to develop the most severe problems.



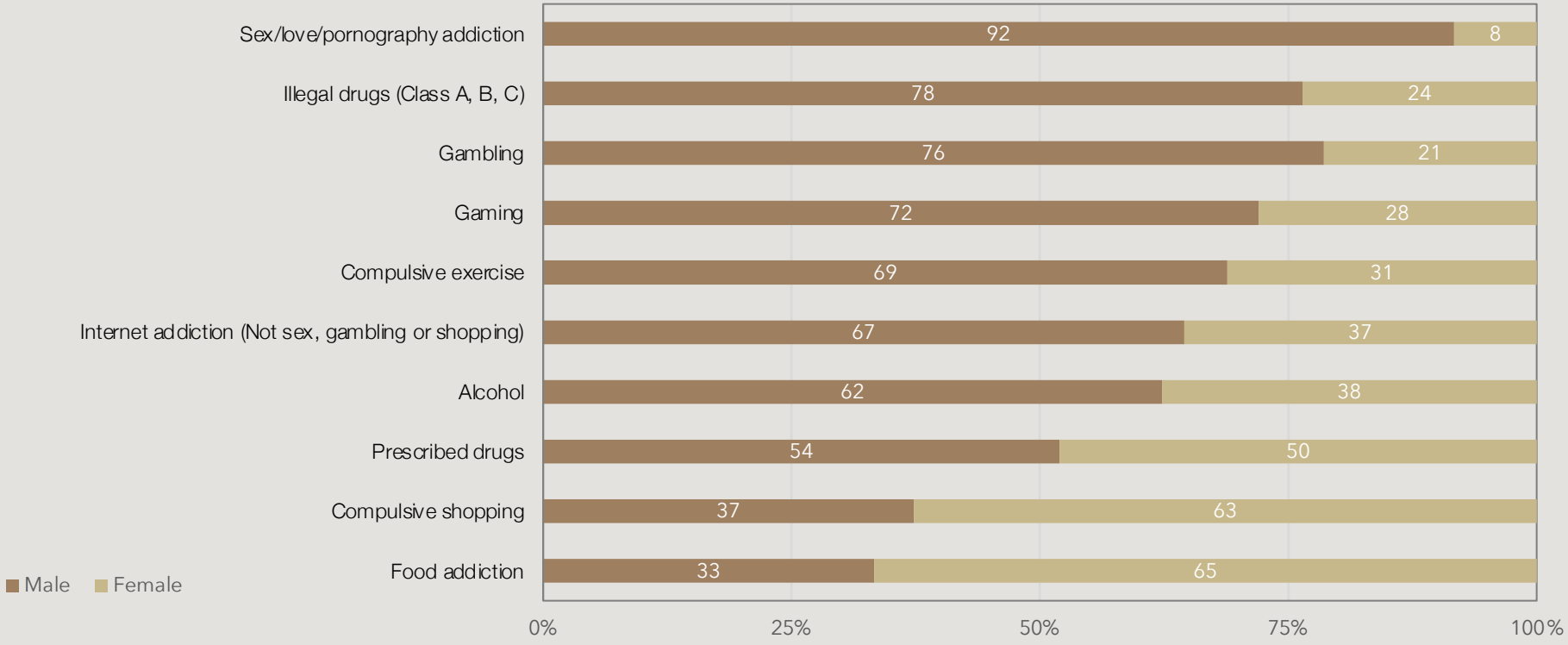
YouGov: Omnibus – Nationally representative sample = 2000

Have you ever had a problem with either drugs or alcohol/ with any of the following behaviours that you have now overcome?

GENDER

PREVALENCE OF PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOURS VARY BY GENDER

Considerable and interesting variation between genders can also be seen from the data, with males more likely to have had problem with sex, pornography, illegal drugs, gambling and gaming – while female respondents cited food, shopping at higher levels.



YouGov: Omnibus – Nationally representative sample = 2000

Have you ever had a problem with either drugs or alcohol/ with any of the following behaviours that you have now overcome?

SCALE OF RECOVERY

QUANTITATIVE ESTIMATES VARY

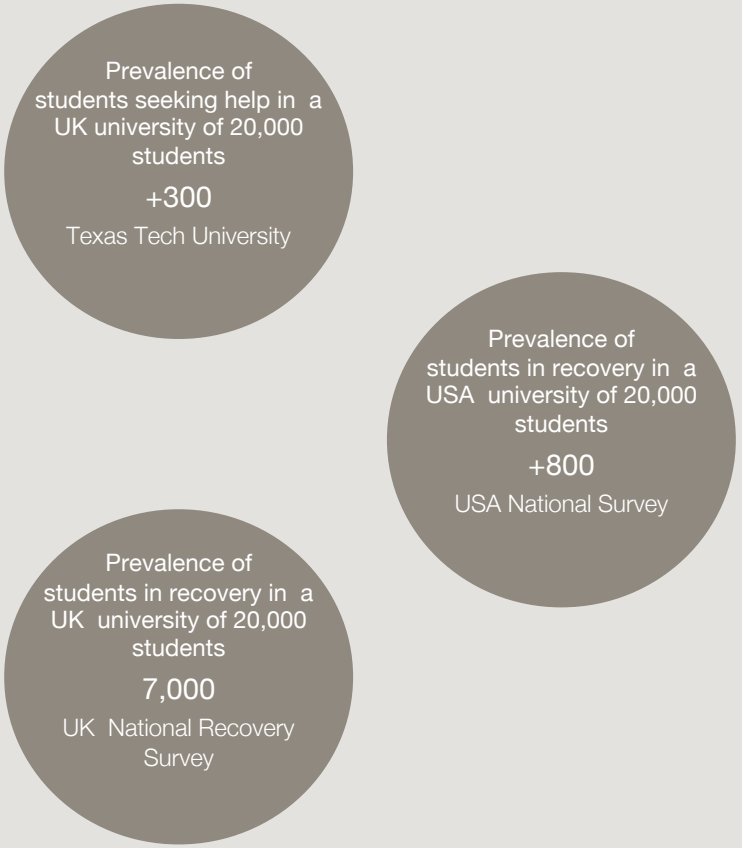
Accurate estimates of the scale of the potential audience for Collegiate Recovery Programmes are difficult to find as there is little reporting. However, it is possible to put together estimates by drawing on the data that exists. There is considerable variation, but the scale of the issues is clearly significant.

Evidence from the US suggests that 37.6% of university students meet the criteria for substance abuse or dependence and 4% of this population seek help each year. Therefore, the Center for the Study of Addiction and Recovery at Texas Tech University estimates that an average UK university with 20,000 students will have 301 students requiring recovery support.

In-depth interviews about alcohol and drug use in a US Survey with a nationally representative sample aged 18-23 classified 4% as recovering addicts. Applying this 4% figure to the same average campus of 20,000 students gives a figure of 800 potentially benefitting

In the UK, the UK National Recovery Survey asked a nationally-representative population whether they had “ever had a problem with alcohol or drugs or a range of problematic behaviours but have now overcome it’’. Just over 12% of the group aged 18-24 answered positively to the drugs and alcohol question and 23% to the problematic behaviours question.. Using these figures, the average campus would have 7,000 students who would benefit from recovery support.

Whichever of these calculations is considered, these statistics suggest that a significant number of young adults may be trying to maintain their recovery in UK universities.



QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

BETTER THAN WELL STUDENTS

Student Feedback on Impressions of Better than Well

Students were asked about their thoughts on BTW:

- Many described the culture at university as unhelpful if you are trying to remain abstinent.
- They found it hard to tell their peers about their issues and feared being ‘thrown out’ if they asked for help.
- Making contact with the group could be intimidating, but having made contact with the Programme Manager were reassured.
- All the students described the peer support of BTW as helpful:
    - Weekly sharing of experiences was helpful and ‘it was helpful to meet people who understand me.
    - The length of time in recovery varies and this was helpful in learning from others experience.
    - Weekly Celebration of Recovery meetings were felt to be the most useful – with a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere which allowed everyone to share their thoughts in depth.
    - Some described “the overwhelming emotional release of meeting a group that completely understood their issues, struggles and successes.”
    - Attitudes to different approaches to recovery vary and the provision of alternative approaches – 12 Step and SMART Recovery - was felt to be positive and offer students the option to find their own preferred method. "It is good to know that regardless of differences there is a common thread that gives everyone a mutual respect and understanding."
    - One-to-one meetings with the Project Manager were also highly valued, and several students had utilised this option on a weekly basis.

Some interesting differences in the attitudes of those whose recovery was from behavioural addictions were identified:

- The students whose recovery was from behavioural addictions described how much more difficult it is to talk about issues such as food or sex. This was true of talking to fellow students in general. “No one understands it over-eating and it is very hard to talk to others about it” but also in speaking openly about it at BTW groups.
- One student had chosen to talk in generalities about his addiction, judging that it was better to wait until others knew him better before being more specific. However, he was aware that getting specific was also important as “You will not get as much progress if you don’t.”
- Students with behavioural addiction were aware that their issues “Don’t usually make life so bad that you cannot cope” and this might explain why there are less students presenting to BTW with these issues.



PROOF OF IMPACT

THE USA EXAMPLE

In looking for data-based evidence of the effectiveness of CRPs on student outcomes there are various studies from the USA that point to tangible impacts from participation in CRPs.

Research evaluating program me outcomes is still in the early stages, but preliminary evidence suggests that CRPs contribute to both better academic outcomes and successful recovery.

Members perceive CRP services as helpful, stating that the recovery support services are fundamentally critical to their ability to stay in school, succeed academically, and maintain their well-being, especially for students who are at an earlier stage in their recovery.

Interpersonal support and a safe, healthy environment are seen as two of the most helpful benefits of CRP involvement.

The benefits of CRP involvement appear to be enduring, in that CRP alumni continue to exhibit success in both academics and recovery.

Some experts believe that the benefits of a CRP extend beyond its membership to the entire student body. A strong campus-based infrastructure of recovery support services might nudge some students toward abstinence and recovery if they are already contemplating it. Moreover, students in recovery are likely to have a positive influence on reducing their peers' substance use, because their personal experiences represent authentic "cautionary tales" that can deter others.

Source: Collegiate Recovery Programs: A Win-Win Proposition for Students and Colleges. University of Maryland



Impact Measures

In a study based on the Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC) at Texas Tech University (TTU) the following outcomes were identified:

Completion

Higher Graduation Rates

70% of CRC members graduate compared with 60% of general student population

Attainment

Higher Grade Point Averages

CRC Members have a mean GPA of 3.18 compared with 2.93 among the general student population

Relapse

Low Relapse Rate

Each semester fewer than 1 in 10 CRC users relapse

COST / BENEFIT ANALYSIS



Policy paper

Independent review of drugs by Dame Carol Black: government response

Details the government's response to parts 1 and 2 of Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs.

The National Picture

The Government's Independent Review of Drugs - Part two: Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery (2 August 2021) considers the cost of drug misuse and potential benefit of harm reduction and treatment:

"Part 1 of the review showed that the societal costs of drug misuse are £20 billion each year, in 2020 to 2021 only £650 million was spent on drug treatment. **Every £1 currently spent on harm reduction and treatment gives a combined health and justice return on investment of £4**. Failure to invest will inevitably lead to increased future pressures on the criminal justice system, health services, employment services and the welfare system."

And concludes that:

"Failure to invest will inevitably lead to increased future pressures on the criminal justice system, health services, employment services and the welfare system.

The report calls for additional investment to provide a range of services, importantly for consideration of the work around CRPs including:

"Expansion of local areas' support for peer-led grass-roots recovery communities and peer mentoring, complementing professionally led services."

BETTER THAN WELL

Cost Benefit of Collegiate Recovery and Better than Well

There are significant cost/ benefit advantages to CRP if participation in a programme is successful in supporting students to maintain their recovery.

In the USA, research into collegiate recovery programmes concluded that the interventions were cost-effective and could be calculated for specific programmes.

For the first two years of Better than Well, the ongoing basic operational cost per student of delivering the programme is estimated at at less than £500 per student per year actively involved in the programme.

Whilst hard to estimate accurately, the cost of relapse is significant to the student and their family in terms of fees and accommodation and to the university in terms of time and resources and the impact on other students in the community.

Importantly, the personal cost of failing to achieve a degree significantly impacts an individual's job prospects as well as self-esteem and mental health.

By contrast, the operational costs of the BTW programme are modest when compared to the cost to the individual and the institution.

Approx. cost per Active Student Better than Well

Operational Costs

>£500 p.a.

RETURN ON PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT



Evaluation of the impact of philanthropic giving is often not an exact science – and this is true of the funding provided for the Better than Well Programme at University of Birmingham – but there is directional evidence of considerable impact from this generous gift:

Individual Success Stories	"The Better Than Well community has enabled me to speak openly and honestly about my addiction and I am hopeful and excited about what life beyond will bring me without addiction holding me back."
Active BTW Recovery Community at UoB	"Better than Well is now a genuine support network within the wider UoB community and this community spirit is what will sustain BTW moving forwards."
Increased Awareness across UoB	"The support that BTW can provide is for anyone with addictive behaviours and if you know students who could benefit from support, please encourage them to make contact."
Growing Interest from Other Universities	"We are all concerned about the wellbeing of our students, so you are knocking at an open door if you have solutions to offer."
Growing Academic Interest and Profile	"We can now speak with authority on the international platform and the academic research that will come out of the programme will add to our shared understanding."
Media Interest and Awareness	"Seeing Better than Well in the news helps to grow understanding and the profile of recovery – it chimes with the concerns around the mental health and wellbeing of students."
Catalyst for Further Future Philanthropy	"This has been a brave initiative in philanthropy, but we are confident that more will follow once more people understand what can be achieved with this group of students who are so much in need of support."

THANK YOU!

SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN RECOVERY
Impact Report

If you would like further information, please contact Kate Wilson: kate@katewilson.org