



Connecting and developing  
HE professionals

2018 AUA Autumn Conference  
Thursday, 29 November 2018

# Building resilient professional services support for mental health and wellbeing

*Kate Jones, Head of Operations, Institute of Integrative Biology,  
University of Liverpool*

*Gedminte Mikulenaite, Policy Researcher, Universities UK*



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LIVERPOOL**

INSTITUTE OF  
INTEGRATIVE  
BIOLOGY



## Objectives of session

- **Sector Level:** Prevalence of poor mental health and wellbeing in the HE Sector & introduction to the UUK StepChange Framework
- **Institutional Level:** Strategic Approaches to Mental Health and Wellbeing
- **Departmental Level:** An example of best practice – UoL IIB PGR Catalyst project
- **Individual/team Level:** Interactive session using AUA CPD Wheel with a lens for “*supporting mental health and wellbeing*”

# Quick Pulse Survey





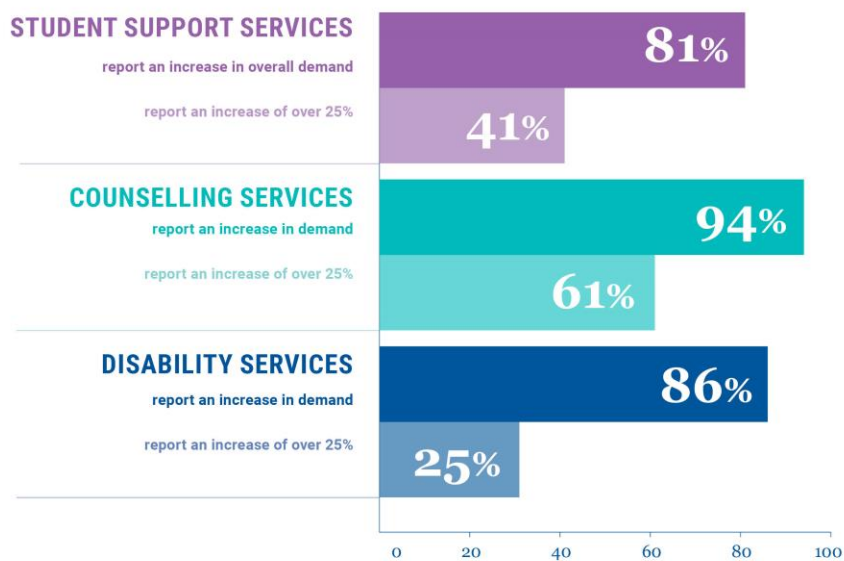
#stepchange

# MENTAL HEALTH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The onset of mood, anxiety, psychotic, personality, eating and substance use disorders peaks in adolescence and early adulthood: 50% by aged 14, 75% by aged 24.

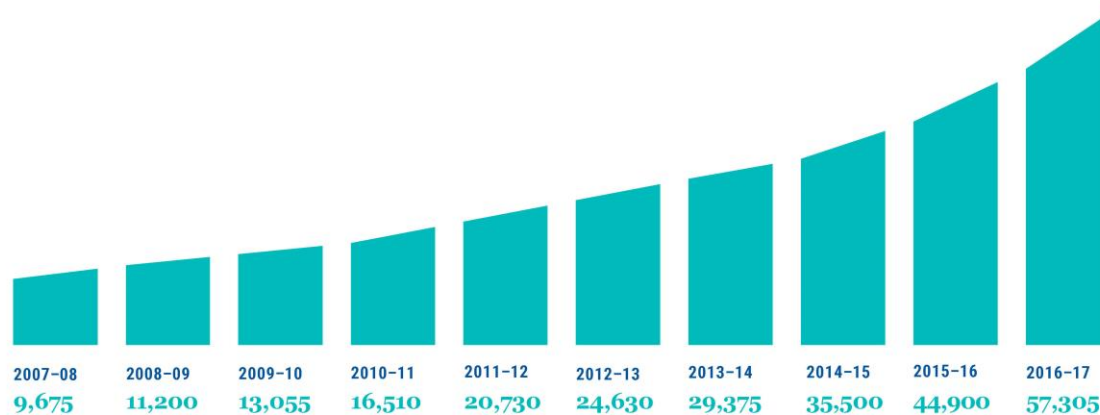


Higher education institutions have experienced significant increases in demand for (overall) student services, counselling services and disability services over the past five years:



Source: IPPR. Not by degrees: Improving student mental health in the UK's universities. 2017.

The number of students disclosing a mental health condition to their higher education institution is increasing.



Source: IPPR analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency data. Not by degrees: Improving student mental health in the UK's universities. 2017.

**AT LEAST 95**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
**STUDENTS**  
**TOOK THEIR**  
**OWN LIVES**  
IN ENGLAND & WALES  
IN 2016-17

**NEARLY 1 IN 4** YOUNG PEOPLE WILL EXPERIENCE SUICIDAL FEELINGS AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIVES. 1 IN 20 WILL TRY TO TAKE THEIR OWN LIFE.

EACH SUICIDE AFFECTS A MUCH WIDER CIRCLE OF AROUND **135 PEOPLE.**

SUICIDE IS **THE BIGGEST** CAUSE OF DEATH IN YOUNG ADULTS.

STUDENT DEATH BY SUICIDE IS **A GLOBAL CHALLENGE** WITH REPORTED RATES **IN THE USA, CHINA** AND **OTHER COUNTRIES** BEING SIMILAR TO OR EVEN HIGHER THAN THE UK.

THE SUICIDE RATE IS **EVEN HIGHER** OUTSIDE UNIVERSITIES.

**ONLY 1 IN 3** PEOPLE WHO DIE BY SUICIDE ARE KNOWN TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

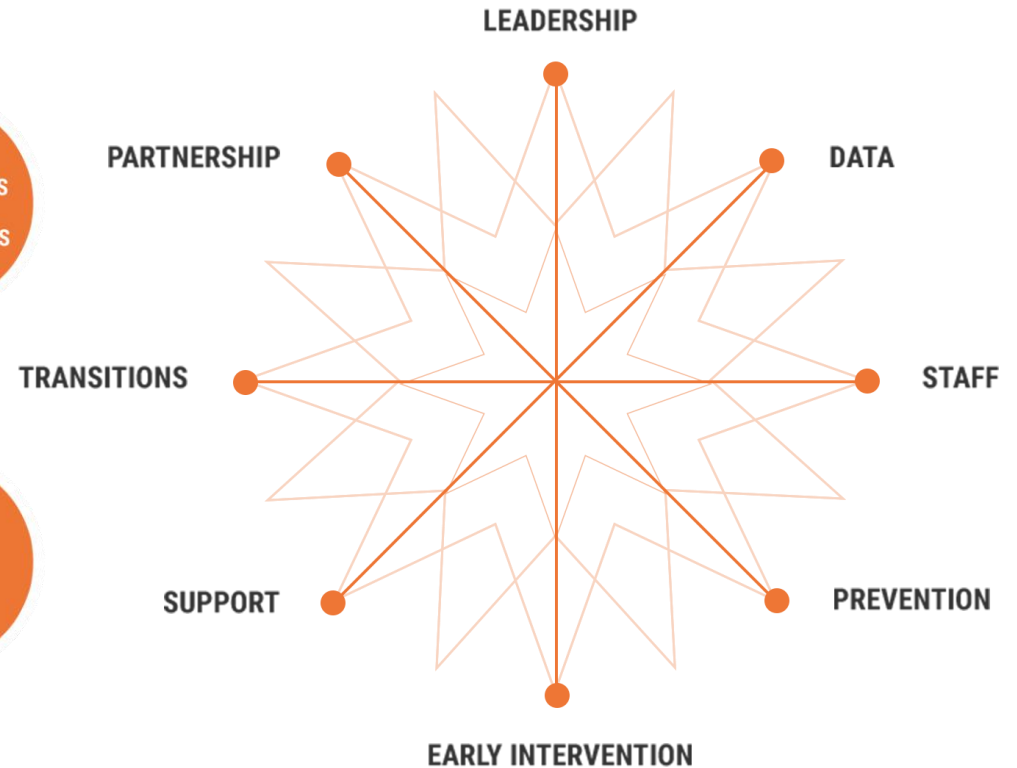


- » A Green Paper on Children and Young People's Mental Health
- » Mental health is a priority for the Universities Minister
- » Office for Students providing funding
- » University Mental Health Charter
- » Self-assessment audit tool
- » What works wellbeing in HE. Exchange platform.

# Whole university approach



# Framework



# Co-production with students



- » “I feel like my degree is something that I would really enjoy and something I would thrive at, but being so unwell has meant that I haven’t been able to fulfil the experience as I would like to.”



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# Preparing for a Healthy PhD: An example of departmental best practice

*Institute of Integrative Biology, University of  
Liverpool*



# PGR Community at University of Liverpool

~2500 Campus Based

~35% OSI from  
83 Countries

52% Male  
48% Female

HLS = 1146  
S&E = 997  
HSS = 554

29 potential new  
starters in 2018

152 PhD/Mphil  
12 MRes

42% Male  
57% Female  
1% Non-Binary

3 Doctoral Training  
Programmes

**318 PGRs**  
registered with the  
**Counselling &  
Mental Health  
Advisory Service or  
accessed the drop  
in academic year  
17/18**

**~ 13%**



# Issues faced by PGR Students

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Limited formal disclosure routes; student or staff routes??



No formal peer support structures



Lack of mental health awareness & associated stigma



Don't want to talk to supervisors



Lack of training and support for staff = limited early interventions + over subscribed counselling services



No form



No



Lack



Do



Lack of  
+ over s



## Exploring wellbeing and mental health and associated support services for postgraduate researchers

May 2018



GHENT UNIVERSITY

ies institute for employment studies

Vitae in partnership with the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and the University of Ghent

stigma

interventions

*“Preparing for a healthy PhD: Piloting a multi-layered induction, training and development framework to support PGR mental health and wellbeing during transition into the early stages of doctoral study”*



*OfS lead on the project level monitoring (accountability of funding)*



*Research England lead on the policy evaluation of the programme, and will help to disseminate project outcomes.*



*Vitae are evaluating the programme and measuring impact across the sector*



*Providing further support in evaluation, and in the context of the UUK Step Change Framework*

# What we are going to do?

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Develop and pilot a training and development framework



CRISIS  
MANAGEMENT

REDUCING  
STRESSORS

INCREASING  
RESILIENCE

# Transition into Doctoral Study

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- 1. Ensure informed decisions about entering into high pressured research environment**
- 2. Prior to acceptance, applicants aware of support structures in place**
- 3. Ensure healthy PGR/staff relationships established from**

# PGR Students

Better inform  
**applicants** of  
pressure & support

Find out what's  
working – Vitae  
Wellbeing of  
Doctoral Research  
Questionnaire

Improve induction



More training  
available for PGRs  
and other staff to  
reduce stigma and  
increase support

Open new routes  
for **disclosure**

# Peer Ambassadors

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- Appointment of Peer Ambassadors with defined role description
- £500 personal award
- Bespoke training programme included:
  - Mental Health First Aid*
  - Initial disclosure (Sexual Misconduct, Hate Crime & Harassment)*
  - Bystander intervention*
  - Cross-Cultural Communication Skills*
  - Managing Boundaries*
  - Walking for Health*
- 17 direct approaches in the first two months (including 1 Undergraduate)
- Actively challenging inappropriate behaviour
- Supported by a dedicated counsellor providing space for reflective practice
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme



# Supervisors

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- Added mental health & wellbeing training to Postgraduate Certificate Academic Practice to be completed by all *new* eligible academic staff from 2018/2019



- Online training module & 'tool kit' to better equip supervisory staff

- Focus groups to feedback on supervisory experience

- Promote training opportunities [Mental Health First Aid; Suicide prevention e





# Student Facing Staff

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- Increase awareness and recognition of the role staff play in supporting PGR mental health & wellbeing
- Consider how this relates to the Association of University Administrators CPD framework
- Sector wide survey with the Science Council, Royal Society of Biology & Institute of Physics on the role technicians play
- Increase mental health and wellbeing training provided to student facing staff
- Online training module & 'tool kit' to better equip non-supervisory staff



# Impact beyond IIB



## Internal Partnership Working

- ✓ Liverpool Doctoral College
- ✓ The Academy
- ✓ Liverpool Guild of Students
- ✓ Student Advice and Guidance
- ✓ University Wellbeing Board
- ✓ Across faculties
- ✓ University Mental Health Day

## External collaboration

- ✓ UUK & AUA Conference (Nov 2018)
- ✓ Science Council
- ✓ Institute of Physics
- ✓ Vitae Conference (Sept 2018)
- ✓ UK Council for Graduate Education (Oct 2018 & Mar 2019)

# What is your role in supporting students and staff with mental health and wellbeing?



# What is the CPD framework?

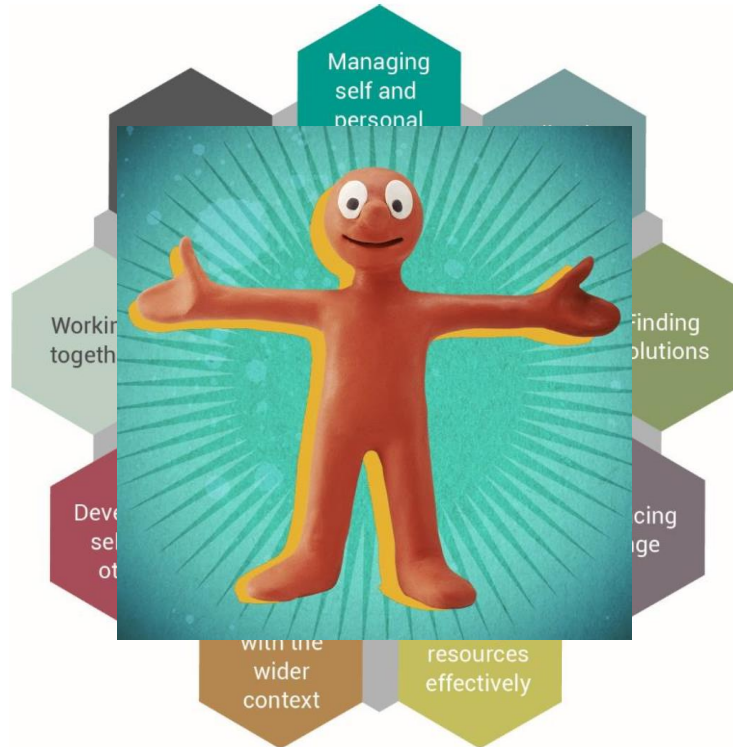


CPD  
FRAMEWORK



*How the job needs to be done and the behaviours that underpin effective performance*

# What is the CPD framework?



## What you will need:

3 different coloured pens

AUA CPD Wheel

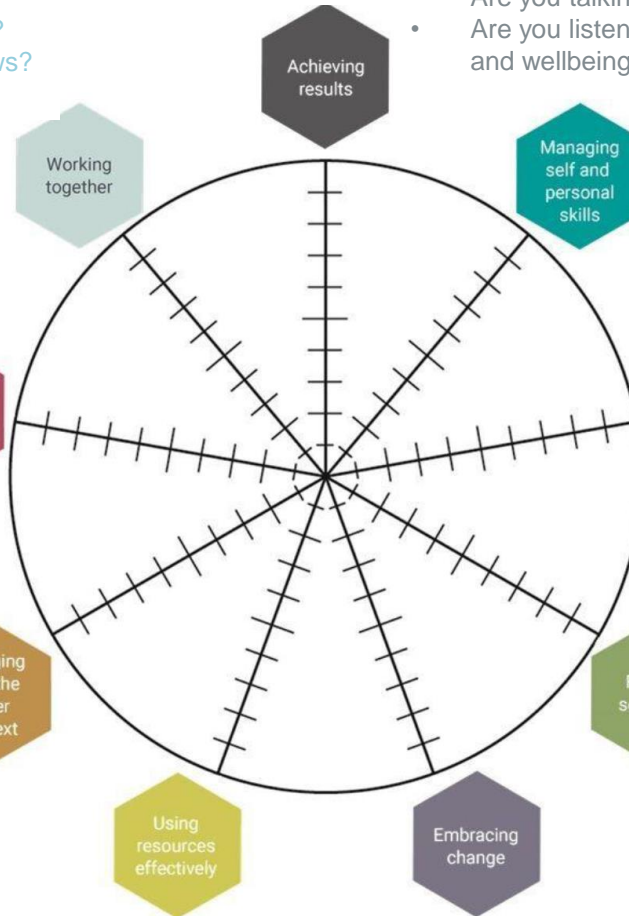
AUA Professional Behaviours Framework viewed in the context of supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

AUA Personal Development Plan Template

# How confident do you feel currently in supporting those with mental health and wellbeing issues?

- Working across structures to provide support?
- Active listening to others expressing their views?
- Do you challenge inappropriate behaviour?

- Are you talking about the problem?
- Are you listening to the student/staff voice re: mental health and wellbeing?



- Am I really a role model?
- Take personal responsibility for mental health
- Feel equipped to support others?

- Developed own understanding of issues and interventions?
- Know how to support team members?

- One size fits all approach?
- Blind eye when help needed?
- Don't know where to refer to?
- Don't understand boundaries?

**Centre = 0**  
**Outer edge = 10**

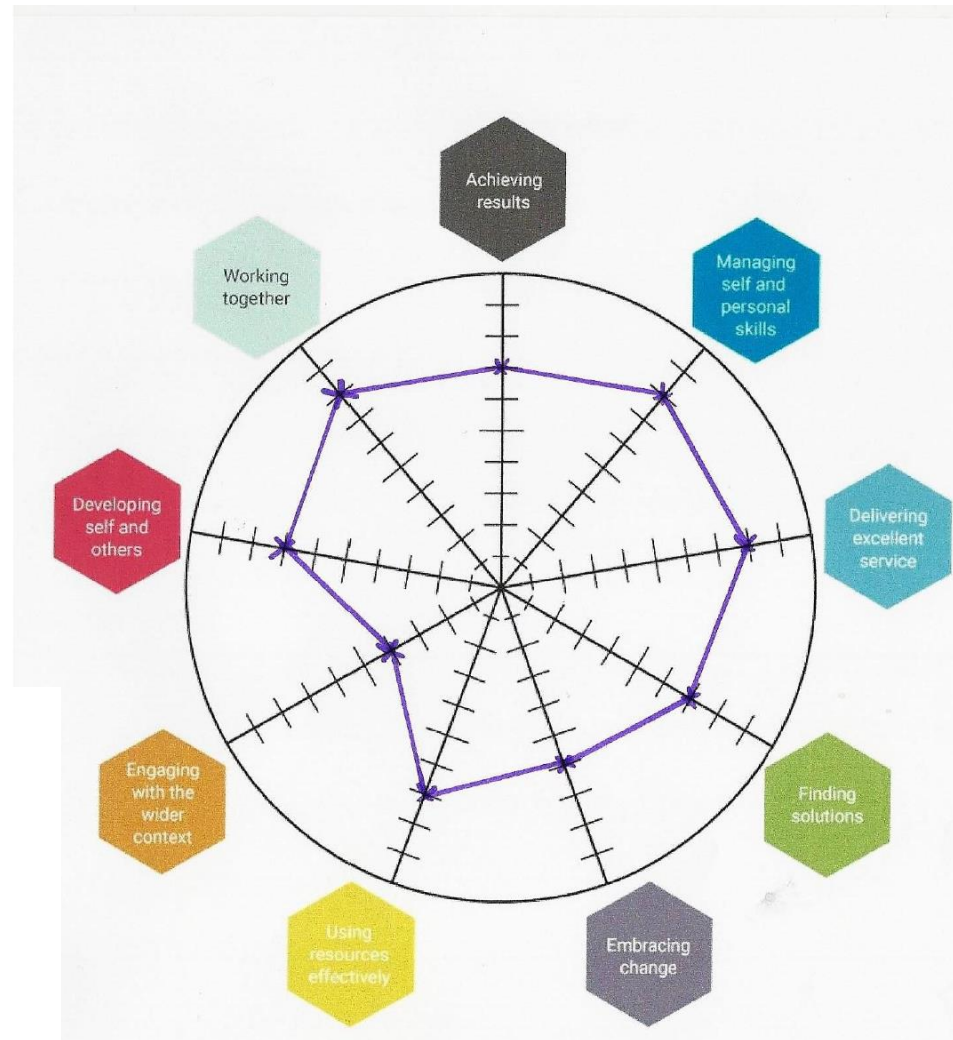
- Organisational values?
- How own role links in?
- Why spotlight on mental health?

- Not my role to find solutions
- Failing to seek/share best practice ?
- Don't really understand the extent of the consequences if fail to help

- Know the breadth of support available?
- Understand best ways of communicating?
- Ethical consideration of duty of care?

- Know the extent of the problem?
- Subject don't really talk about?

How confident do I feel now?

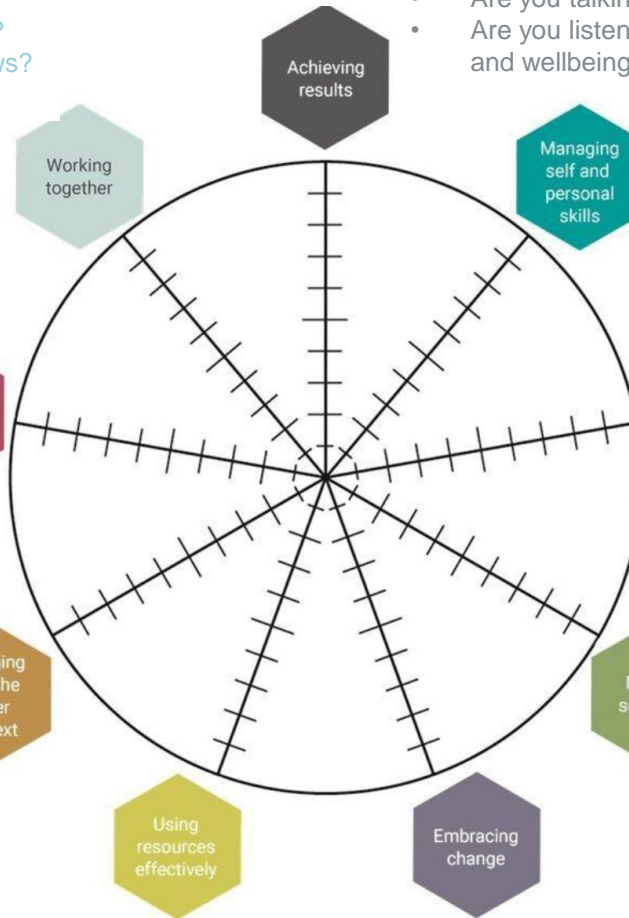


Using the black pen

# How confident would you like to feel in supporting those with mental health and wellbeing issues? (Need / Just in case / good citizen...)

- Working across structures to provide support?
- Active listening to others expressing their views?
- Do you challenge inappropriate behaviour?

- Are you talking about the problem?
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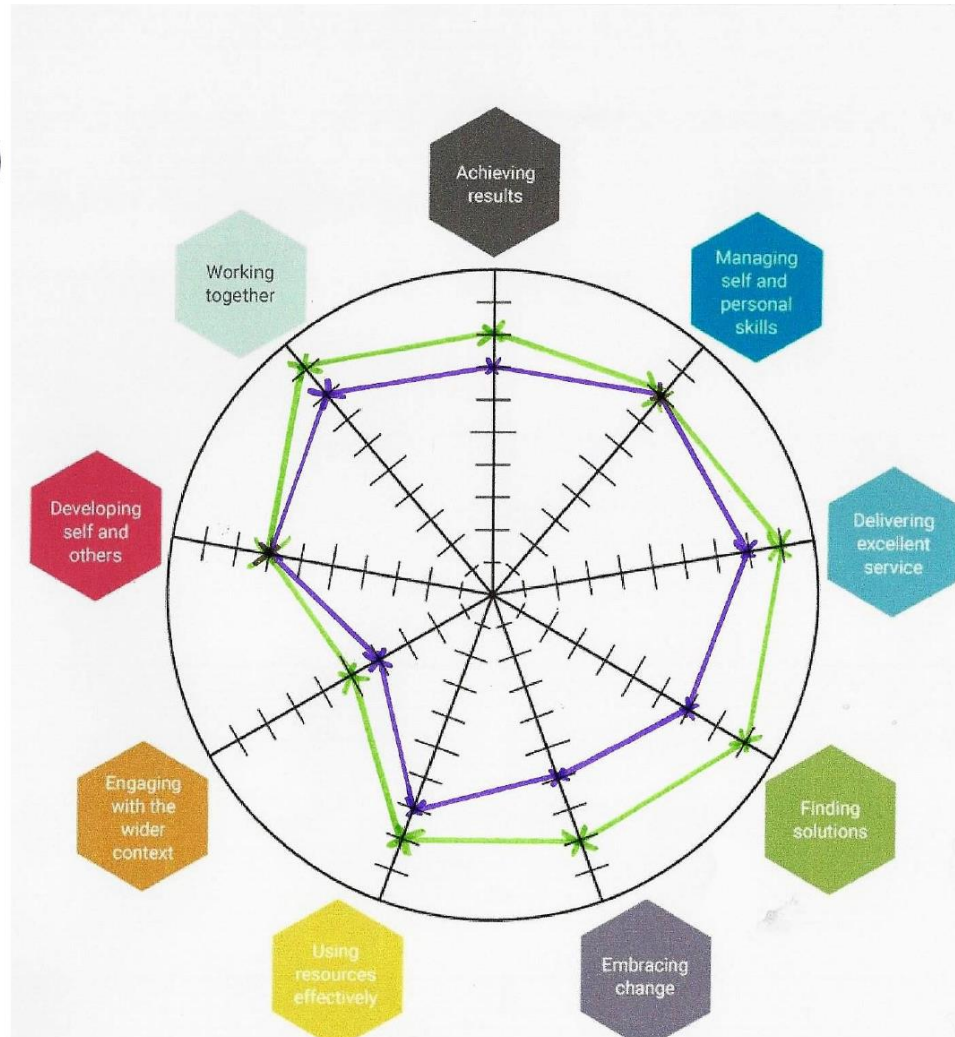
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How confident would I like to be?

What timescale?

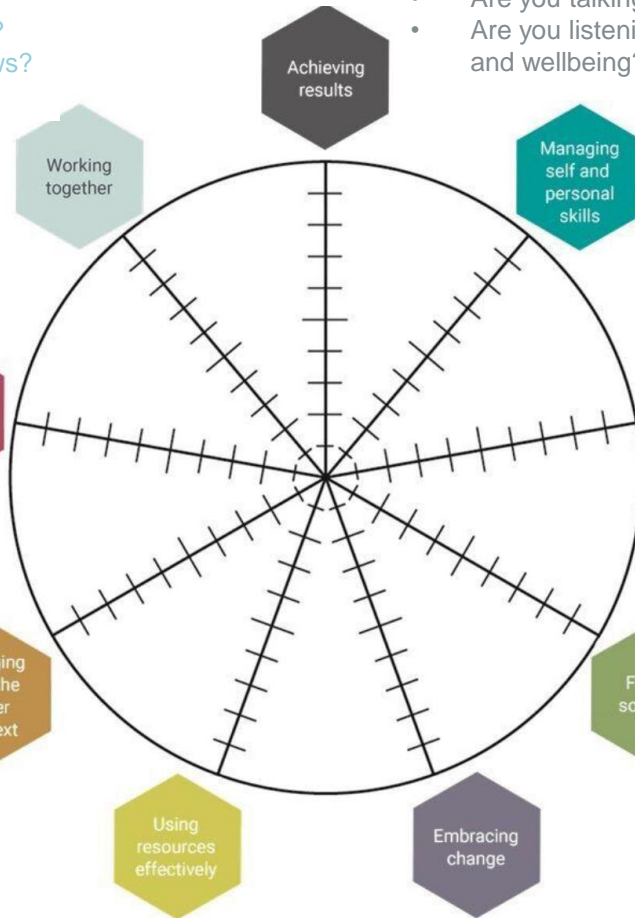
# Using the red pen



# Where does your organisation need or want you to be? Do you know?

- Working across structures to provide support?
- Active listening to others expressing their views?
- Do you challenge inappropriate behaviour?

- Are you talking about the problem?
- Are you listening to the student/staff voice re: mental health and wellbeing?



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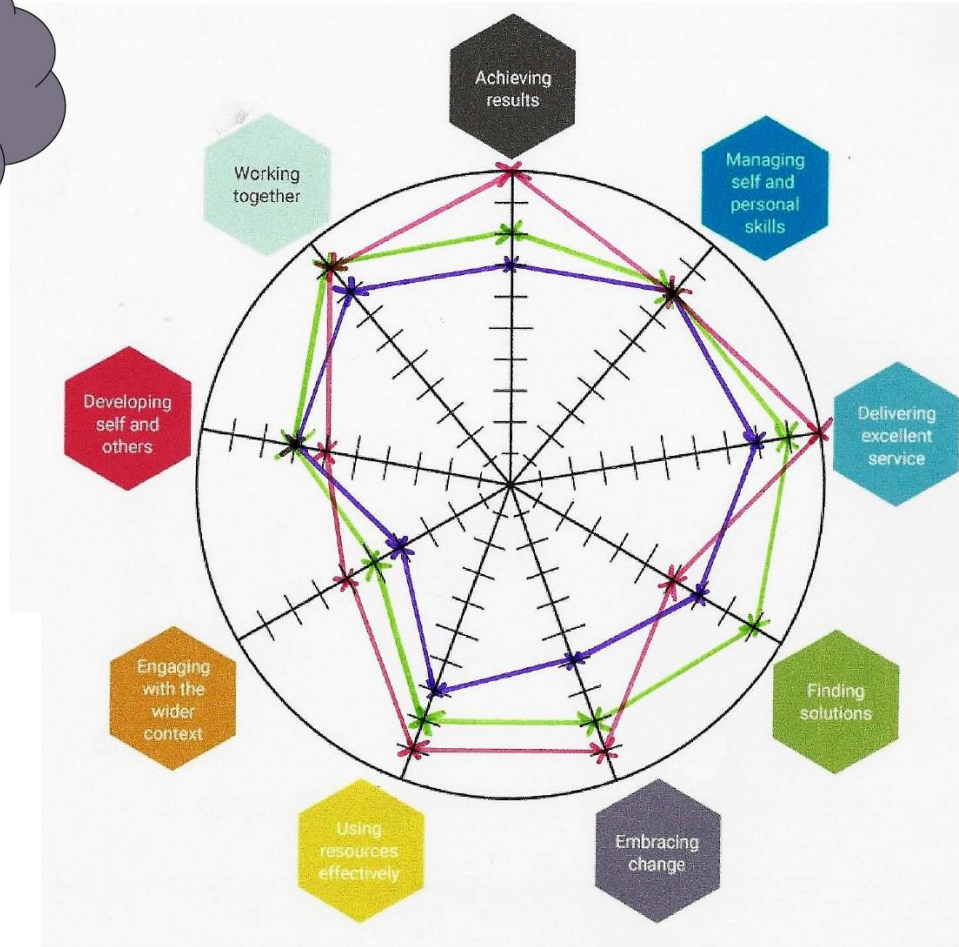
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# Using the blue pen



# Quick Pulse Survey



# Thank You

**Kate Jones**  
Head of Ops & Project Lead  
Institute of Integrative Biology  
University of Liverpool  
[Kate.Jones@Liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Kate.Jones@Liverpool.ac.uk)

**Gedminte Mikulenaite**  
Policy Researcher  
Universities UK  
[Gedminte.Mikulenaite@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:Gedminte.Mikulenaite@universitiesuk.ac.uk)

**Maizy Jenner**  
PGR Catalyst Project Manager  
Institute of Integrative Biology  
University of Liverpool  
[M.Jenner@Liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:M.Jenner@Liverpool.ac.uk)

