



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

BETTER THAN WELL

BETTER THAN WELL ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Dr Ed Day

July 2023



BTW Project Manager Luke Trainor carries the Queen's Baton through the University as part of the Commonwealth Games celebrations in August 2022

Contents

Section 1: Processes and People	3
Timeline	4
BTW Project Management Team	8
Promotion and Engagement Activity	8
Internal to the University of Birmingham.....	8
Weekly Timetable.....	10
Section 2: The Students	11
Demographics.....	11
How did the students find BTW?.....	11
Active engagement with BTW	11
Year of Study	13
BTW Activities.....	15
New initiatives in 2022/23.....	16
RESET Program	16
Recovery Flat: Maple Bank	17
Student Bursaries to Attend ARHE Conference.....	18
Section 3: Reflections and Future Plans	19
Reflections	19
What has gone well?	19
Barriers to growth	20
Future Plans.....	21
Students in Recovery	21
Students on Campus.....	21
Prospective students	21
University of Birmingham staff.....	21
External universities	21
Revised goals for 2023/24	21
Evaluation Framework.....	22
Short-term	22
Longer-term.....	22
References.....	22
Appendix I.....	23
Demographics and other data.....	23

Appendix II.....	26
Social media analytics.....	26
Appendix III.....	30
Student feedback from the first RESET program.....	30

Introduction

As I write this introduction we are coming to the end of Better Than Well's second year of operation. When we prepared to launch in 2021, respected colleagues in the USA told us that starting a Collegiate Recovery Programme (CRP) was a slow process and required persistence over a number of years. They felt that building a community of five students in abstinent recovery by the end of year one would be a great achievement, and that five years were the minimum required to establish the programme. Year one (2021/22) therefore exceeded all expectations in terms of numbers of students, with 34 making contact and nearly half fully engaging in BTW activities. Similar numbers of new students made contact in year two (27), but with an increased proportion (52%) participating in weekly activities.

This second annual report shows that the BTW community had grown to 24 students by the end of year two. There has been a steady growth in levels of participation in our weekly timetable of events, with the number of students attending the weekly Friday evening Celebration of Recovery meeting often exceeding ten. All student participation was voluntary and had to be fitted in around their normal academic timetable, which contrasts with the situation in the USA where recovery seminars often form part of each student's taught academic program and are compulsory to attend. Furthermore, as shown in Appendix I, most of these students had little prior experience of recovery before joining university (over half had been in recovery for under a year at the time of joining BTW).

We strongly believe in the validity of any path to recovery and all methods to maintain it. The demographic data in Appendix I illustrates the diversity of the student members of BTW, including a range of ages, social backgrounds, ethnicity, religion, academic subject and year of study. Our students reported a wide range of substance or behavioural issues that had developed in a variety of ways, sometimes involving early trauma, coping with low mood, anxiety and other symptoms of mental ill health. We have therefore continued to develop new elements to the programme to meet these varied needs, and 2022/23 has seen the introduction of the RESET programme. This works to integrate mind and body strategies to understand and cope with the impact of trauma, and as shown in Appendix III it has had a big impact on participants.

However, numbers only tell a part of the story. For me, the truly remarkable thing about BTW is the students themselves. I have worked in the addiction treatment field for 25 years, and the focus of my work has always been helping people to unravel decades of alcohol or drug-related problems. Talking to the BTW students I can clearly see that the work they are doing to build their recovery capital as young adults will potentially change the whole trajectory of their life. BTW is now a genuine support network within the wider UoB community, with a 'secure base' (the Lodge) on campus and a 24/7 network of peer support through regular group meetings, sober social events and an active WhatsApp group. This community spirit is what will sustain BTW moving forwards, and seeing students who graduated in year one return to BTW meetings is inspiring and motivating for the group. The opening of the recovery flat on the Vale will add a further element of support for students as they maintain abstinence whilst enjoying the benefits of university life.

Birmingham now has a strong foundation on which to build other initiatives to help students at different points in the 'addiction spectrum'. The BTW group can help educate others about the issue, including staff and fellow students, the media and the wider population of Birmingham and the UK. Above all they present an inspiring image of the power of recovery to change lives and become Better Than Well.

Dr Ed Day, July 2023

Section 1: Processes and People

Timeline

This timeline presents highlights of the year, showcasing the range of activities offered by Better Than Well and the achievements of its student members.

September 2022

- BTW present in the Welcome marquee throughout Welcome Week. The stand is run by Project Manager Luke Trainor (LT) and BTW students
- Short film promoting BTW and featuring student members launched on university website and through social media: <https://youtu.be/XU266Qhj8fM>
- BTW featured in an article on the front page of *The Times* newspaper ('Universities fight spread of drugs on campus'), and LT pictured in feature inside about the proposed BTW student Recovery Flat.
- BTW advertised on 'digital totems' throughout campus in the first month of term



October 2022

- BTW awarded £7500 funding from the DARO Birmingham in Mind funding to support BTW students attending the 2023 Association for Recovery in Higher Education conference in Ohio, USA.
- First RESET programme starts for BTW students (see below)

November 2022

- BTW keyrings produce to celebrate abstinence landmarks (1 week, 1 month, 1 year etc):



- Ed Day (ED) speaks about Collegiate Recovery Programs and BTW at a 'Irish Recovery Summit' at Trinity College Dublin. He also meets with the Provost (Chief Officer) of the university about the benefits of peer recovery communities on campus, and contributes to a recovery summit with officials from the Irish Department of Health.
- ED gives keynote address alongside Prof John Kelly at the Lisbon Addictions 23 conference, the largest addictions research meeting in Europe. The session was entitled 'Re-imagining Recovery' and his presentation included details of the BTW programme: <https://youtu.be/gf5lGAbdy2c>

December 2022

- BTW contributes to UoB Student 'Wellbeing over Christmas' campaign
- ED is featured as expert commentator in BBC2 documentary *I'm an Alcoholic: Inside Recovery* www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001fyzd/im-an-alcoholic-inside-recovery
- ED was invited to visit the Texas Tech University Collegiate Recovery Community and spent 4 days with the staff and students on the Lubbock campus. He met key staff members responsible for developing and running the programme, and spoke to a range of students that have benefitted from its work.





ED also gave a speech at the annual awards dinner for graduating students.



January 2023

- ED and LT formed part of the Universities UK (UUK) Taskforce student support sub-group
- BTW Recovery Flat opens on the Vale – 2 students move in
- BTW ran 3 sessions as the university-wide UoBe Festival
 - 24th January: Understanding Behavioural Addictions
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asqdEF8_jxY
 - 26th January: Mindset Masterclass www.youtube.com/watch?v=guCJW0AYx5U
 - 26th January: Film Screening and discussion 'Resilience'
- LT has a paper published in a peer-reviewed academic journal entitled 'Being better than well at the university of Birmingham. [www.jsatjournal.com/article/S2949-8759\(22\)00020-0/fulltext](https://www.jsatjournal.com/article/S2949-8759(22)00020-0/fulltext)

February 2023

- Second RESET programme starts for BTW students
- 50th student contacts BTW since launch in 2021
- BTW presented at peer-to-peer support event for Welfare staff from all 5 Birmingham universities

- Visible Recovery (<https://www.visiblerecovery.uk/>) event held at the Exchange, the University of Birmingham's public engagement hub in central Birmingham, and facilitated by LT and BTW students.
- BBC Radio 4 documentary series 'Is Psychiatry Working' – episode 5 (Recovery) featured LT and one of the BTW students www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001jcbd
- Prof Adam Tickell, the university Vice-Chancellor, joined a BTW Celebration of Recovery meeting. The following week he included the message below in his weekly email to all staff and students

Message from the Vice Chancellor

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. Birmingham was the first UK university to adopt this model – but it isn't a competition and Ed and Luke are supporting other universities to set up similar programmes. The support that BTW can provide is for anyone with addictive behaviours and if you know students who could benefit from support, please do encourage them to make contact with Ed or Luke and details are at [Better Than Well - Addiction Recovery Program - University of Birmingham](#). You can also hear Luke and one of our students talk about BTW on last week's episode of BBC Radio 4's excellent series, Is Psychiatry Working, at [Is Psychiatry Working? - Healing and Recovery - BBC Sounds](#).

Professor Adam Tickell
Vice Chancellor
University of Birmingham

March 2023

- Presentations to three different College Wellbeing Teams about BTW
- Meeting with Guild of Students student support team to present BTW
- ED publishes peer-reviewed paper about research into illicit drug use at UK and Irish universities which references the Collegiate Recovery Programme at UoB: <https://substanceabusepolicy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13011-023-00526-1>
- BTW stand at UoB Postgraduate Open Day
- 24th March – Film about BTW made by Phil Mackie, BBC West Midlands reporter. Aired on the Today program, BBC Breakfast and featured on BBC website www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-65055981

April 2023

- Presentation about BTW to UoB Disability Services team
- Four students in recovery attended a BTW Celebration of Recovery meeting, representing the first attempt to build a pan-Birmingham student support structure.

May 2023

- ED and LT ran a workshop on recovery at university at the Royal College of Psychiatrist Addictions Faculty Annual Meeting in London.
- BTW featured as best practice in Universities UK report on student drug use
- BTW student talks about his experience as a student in recovery as part of a plenary presentation at the Universities UK conference in London
- Accommodation Services shortlisted for UoB Campus Services Awards for the Recovery Flat project.

June 2023

- Celebration lunch held at the Edgbaston Park Hotel to celebrate the academic success of the student group and to thank our philanthropic donor.
- Three BTW students and LT spend 6 days in the USA attending the annual Association of Recovery in Higher Education conference in Columbus, Ohio, USA.

BTW Project Management Team

Better Than Well is a growing student community on the UoB campus, supported by a wide range of staff at the university. The management team has met on a weekly basis throughout the academic year:

Programme Director – Dr Ed Day, Reader in Addiction Psychiatry, Institute for Mental Health, School of Psychology

Project Manager – Luke Trainor, UoB graduate and person in long-term recovery

Communications Team – Lea Nakache, BTW Communications Assistant

Caroline Durbin, Research Communications Manager, College of Life and Environmental Sciences

Student Services & Wellbeing – Drew Linforth, Assistant Director Student Services (Wellbeing & Partnerships)

Accommodation Services - Esme Rybinski, Senior Accommodation Officer (Student Living)

Guild of Students – Welfare and Community Officer: Reeve Isaacs-Smith

Promotion and Engagement Activity

Internal to the University of Birmingham

BTW continues to embed into the regular communications process with students about welfare and wellbeing issues. A key source of dissemination are the University Wellbeing Teams. A presentation about BTW is made to the Wellbeing Managers in each of the five university Colleges at least once per academic year. Information about BTW and how to connect is then disseminated to students through regular email communication, presentations at the start of the academic year, and permanent information on the Wellbeing pages of the Canvas teaching platform.

Information about BTW has been presented on both the University of Birmingham external website and the intranet since July 2021:

- Launch in July 2021: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/2021/a-fellowship-of-abstinent-friends-to-be-created-in-university-campus-addiction-recovery-programme>
- Main University of Birmingham pages: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/study/student-experience/advice-support/health-wellbeing/better-than-well> [includes video, a downloadable version of the annual report and contact details for ED and LT]
- Birmingham Brief feature on Collegiate Recovery Programs: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/2021/collegiate-recovery-programs-for-addiction>
- Brum briefing for students: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/news/public/summer-2021/university-launches-new-recovery-programme-for-students.aspx>
- Article about BTW written for the 'Old Joe' magazine, distributed to all University of Birmingham alumni (<https://www.oldjoe.co.uk/article/new-initiative-supports-and-celebrates-students-recovery>)
- Institute for Mental Health pages: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/mental-health/better-than-well.aspx>
- University of Birmingham intranet pages: https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/taking-care-of-yourself/campus-recovery-programme.aspx?_ga=2.168467113.925165431.1660488716-1894429645.1611594603

Student blogs

Personal opinion pieces or blogs have been written by ten different students across the academic year. These cover a range of addictions and related issues, including substances and behaviours.

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/taking-care-of-yourself/blogs.aspx>

The blog is used to give a voice to our students, whether to share their own stories of recovery, or expressing their views on wider subjects linked with addiction (eg: how to cope during the holiday period, or dealing with an eating disorder). All the blog posts are anonymised, the students choosing an alias and a stock image to represent themselves rather than their own picture if they prefer.

One blog was featured in the university-wide Student News email and webpage in Feb2023: From Addiction to Recovery – Bea's story: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/news/public/feb-mar23/from-addiction-to-recovery-%e2%80%93-bea's-story.aspx>

The CRP was represented in the Wellbeing marquee through the first 'Welcome' week of term in September 2022, and several students made initial contact with us in this way.

The university gave the CRP permission to develop its own branding in October 2021, and to 'lock' this to the University of Birmingham logo for use in all engagement activities. Business cards and posters were created and disseminated across the university, and sweatshirts and hoodies made for BTW members. BTW branded key rings were created in late 2022 to celebrate major recovery landmarks for the students.

Every opportunity has been taken to promote BTW to the University community. ED and LT give yearly presentations to the five Colleges within the University (Medical and Dental Sciences, Life & Environmental Sciences, Arts & Law, Engineering, and Social Sciences), the Student Mentor program at the Guild of Students, various Student-led welfare groups (Uob Psychology Society, Health and Wellbeing Society, BreatheUni and Headucate), and other university supports services (e.g. Disability Services, Accommodation Services).

The UoBe festival is a week-long event incorporating research, wellbeing and sports and social events to enable UoB students to engage with university activities and each other. BTW ran three separate fact-to-face and online events at the 2023 festival, with over 1000 online 'hits' in total.

Instagram (@btw.uob) and Twitter (@BTW_UoB) accounts have been run by Lea Nakache since September 2022.

The BTW WhatsApp group has 44 members and daily activity.

Weekly Timetable

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	WEEKEND
Morning	Drop-in (the Lodge) 9-11	Drop-in (the Lodge) 9-11	Drop-in (the Lodge) 9-11	Drop-in (the Lodge) 9-11	Drop-in (The Lodge) 9-11 RESET group	Periodic social events Support via WhatsApp group
Afternoon	Drop-in (The Lodge) 12-3 Online SMART Recovery meeting		SMART Recovery meeting	Meditation & Dhamma Group 2-3pm (last Thursday of month) St Francis Hall	Drop-in (the Lodge) 12-3	Online or local recovery meetings (separate timetable)
Evening	Drop-in (The Lodge) 3-5		Sober Social (monthly)	Recovery Share meeting, 6-7.30pm (ERI)	Welcome to Recovery meeting 5-6.30pm (Beale Room)	
	Local recovery meetings (separate timetable) Online or face-to-face BTW member will accompany on request					

Section 2: The Students

Demographics

A total of 34 students made contact with BTW in its first year of operation (Sept 2021 – August 2022), and a further 27 between Sept 2022 and June 2023). Of these, 36 (59%) were male and 25 (41%) female.

The mean age of this group was 23.2 (range 18 to 43), and the students were studying over 20 different degree subjects (Computer Science, Liberal Arts & Natural Sciences, Medicine, Biomedical Sciences, English Literature, Creative Writing, Nursing, Philosophy, Psychology, Climatology & Applied Meteorology, Rivers Management, Mathematics, Theology, Marketing, International Relations, Educational Psychology, Religious Studies, Mechanical Engineering, Chemistry, Geography, Modern languages, Law, Physiotherapy).

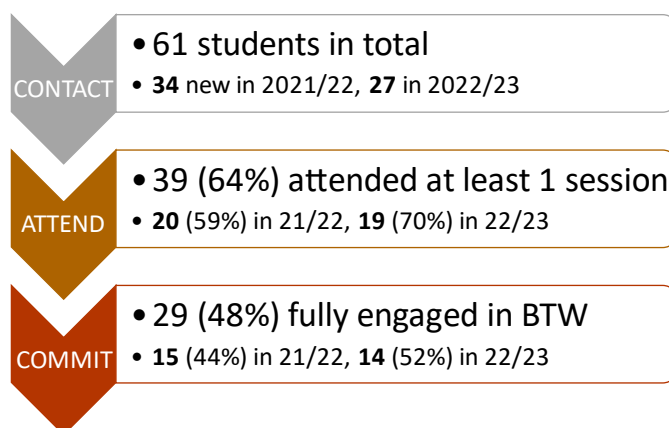
How did the students find BTW?

The majority of students emailed LT or ED directly having seen information circulated by the UoB Wellbeing Teams, including material on the Canvas teaching pages and the intranet. Some students first made contact at the BTW stall in the Wellbeing marquee in Welcome week, and others walked in to the BTW drop-in during the term. Several students first heard about BTW through various social media channels (Instagram, Facebook), and a significant number made contact through 12-Step meetings in the local community. There were spikes in student contact after the UoBe Festival event on behavioural addictions in January 2023 (4 students) and the national publicity around the recovery accommodation in March 2023 (3 students).

Active engagement with BTW

Some students make contact for help with active alcohol, drug or behavioural issues. Although BTW is explicitly for students in recovery, anyone requiring help with ongoing addiction problems is signposted to treatment or mutual help services in Birmingham or nearer to the student's home. Depending on the student's wishes this may involve liaising with their parents.

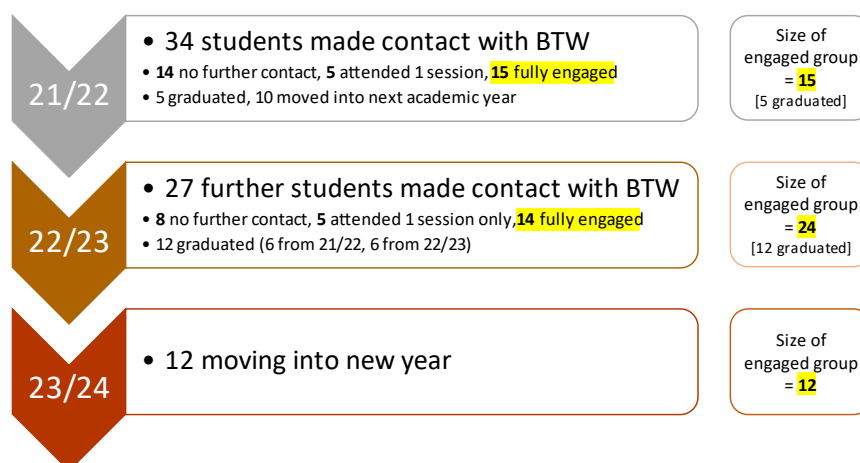
The flow chart below summarises the level of engagement of the 61 students across the two years of operation. Thirty-nine of the whole sample (64%) have participated in at least one face-to-face group meeting at some point, but just under 50% (29 students) have actively engaged in the BTW programme i.e. attended at least one meeting per week over a whole semester.



It is noticeable that the proportion of students who have moved beyond initial contact to active engagement has increased in year 2 (15/34 (44%) students in year 1, 14/27 (52%) students in year 2. In other words, the number of new student contacts was roughly the same in 2020/21 and 2021/22, but a greater proportion have received the full benefits of BTW support as the programme has developed.

The demographics of the 29 students that have engaged in the BTW programme over 2 years are shown in Appendix I.

The next flow chart below shows the flow of students into and out of the BTW programme. Of the 15 students that fully engaged in the program in 2021/22, 5 graduated in July 2021 and 10 rejoined BTW in 2022/23. With the 14 that engaged in 2022/23, this meant the community of students actively engaged with BTW in some way reached 24 in our second year of operation (up from 15 in the first year). Twelve students graduated in July 2023, and 12 will rejoin us for the new academic year in September 2023. Three students that graduated in 2022 periodically joined BTW groups, either in person or by video call (in one case from California).



Students were in abstinent recovery from a range of addictive behaviours, including use of alcohol and psychoactive substances (including prescription medication use), sex and pornography, over-eating, gaming, internet use, and self-harming.

Two students that had engaged with BTW subsequently relapsed back to heavy alcohol or drug use. Both students were actively supported into treatment outside of the university, and both took a leave of absence. Both will be returning in September 2023.

Year of Study

The table below summarises the year of study of each new student either making initial contact with BTW or fully engaging in the programme.

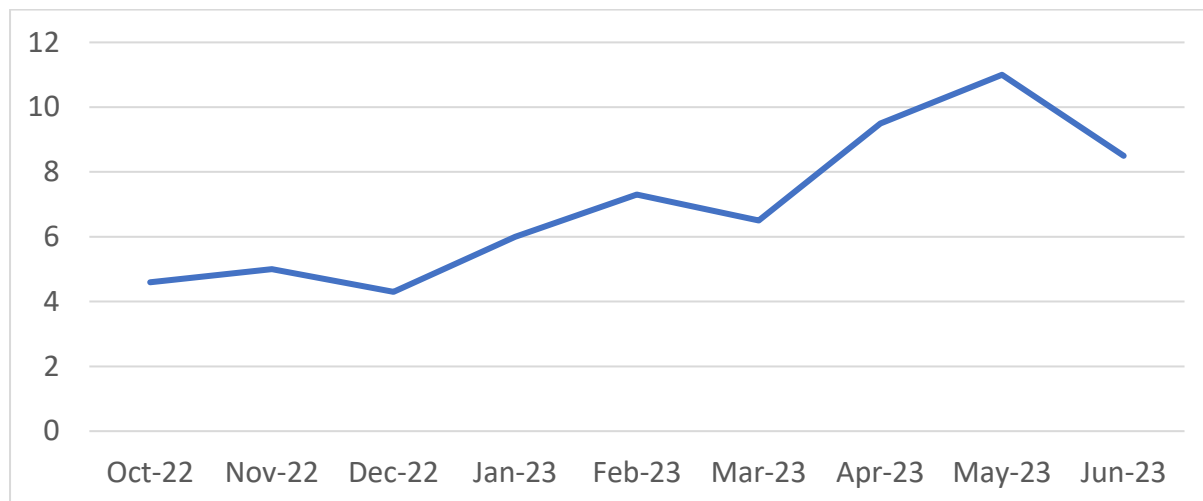
	All new students who have contacted BTW		New students engaging in BTW programme	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Undergraduate				
1 st year	3	4	2	2
2 nd year	9	4	4	1
3 rd year	7	4	3	2
4 th year	1	2	1	-
Unknown	4	3	-	-
Postgraduate				
Masters	6	6	2	7
Doctorate	4	4	3	2
TOTAL	34	27	15	14

The table below shows which students graduated in each year of the BTW programme, and which will return in the 2023/24 academic year. Each student is given a unique BTW number when they first make contact.

		BTW No.	Graduated 2022	Graduated 2023	Ongoing 23/24	Notes
2021/22	1	2				
	2	4				
	3	6				
	4	7				
	5	9				
	6	11				
	7	12				
	8	14				
	9	18				
	10	21				
	11	25				
	12	26				
	13	27				[In treatment]
	14	28				
	15	29				
2022/23	16	35				
	17	36				
	18	37				
	19	38				
	20	39				
	21	40				[leave of absence]
	22	41				
	23	44				
	24	45				
	25	47				
	26	48				
	27	52				
	28	54				
	29	58				
			5	12	12	

BTW Activities

There is also evidence that engagement with specific BTW groups has increased over the past academic year. For example, average numbers attending the weekly Celebration of Recovery meeting have steadily increased, doubling from an average of 4 per week to 8 per week over the course of 2022/23.



New initiatives in 2022/23

RESET Program

The RESET (Reprocessing Emotions/cognitions through Somatic and Environment Therapy) Awareness Programme was commissioned for the academic year 2022/23. This is a program that supports individuals wishing to overcome substance use/behavioural problems and related comorbidities.

Most clinical interventions treat either substance use or mental health difficulties (i.e. PTSD, eating disorders, psychosis, etc.) but very rarely both together. This is despite the fact that most studies highlight that interventions are more likely to succeed when implemented with an integrated approach.

Today we understand that trauma and neglect not only affect our mind, but also our body, our relationships with others, and our lifestyle (self-harming behaviours, disordered eating, homelessness, addiction, etc.). The implementation of an integrated approach that considers problematic behaviours, appears to be fundamental to the success of any intervention.

The RESET therapy is an evidence-based integrative psychotherapeutic model that combines a compassionate humanistic approach with cognitive/behavioural change techniques, somatic interventions (i.e. physical exercise, breathwork and mindful awareness largely derived from contemplative meditative practice) and a systemic approach (environment). This allows participants to process past experiences that are affecting their mental and physical health/ wellbeing and implement sustainable change to ultimately lead a more fulfilling life.

Moreover, the RESET approach believes in the power of connection and teamwork. We align our goals with your current service's goals and needs. Together we empower and encourage individuals to grow.

The RESET process sees change as a journey, not an event: in order to support real change, one-off training is not enough. Whether it is learning to speak a new language, play a musical instrument, or develop a new skill at work, listening and reading alone rarely get us there. Instead we need the opportunity to:

- Reflect on what we are experiencing
- Implement what we are learning to truly grow and change
- Practice how to use our skills and reach our goals with the right level of support

In **October 2022** the RESET Awareness Programme was started within BTW. This included 12 sessions of active learning as well as group support and refresher sessions throughout the year. The aim was to give participants a greater understanding of trauma and mental health and give them the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and implement tools to overcome their challenges. The programme was based on the latest research on what brings about wellbeing, trauma, and addiction recovery.

RESET program 1 ran between October 2022 and January 2023. Five students participated throughout, and feedback is provided in [Appendix III](#).

Based on feedback, RESET program 2 was run in a different format. As the BTW students are drawn from more than 20 different university courses, timetabling three sessions per week that everyone could attend was difficult. Therefore program 2 has run two identical sessions per week that each contain all three elements of the program (education about psychological, somatic and environmental elements of trauma and the human response to it). Four (different) students have engaged so far, and at the time of writing the program is halfway through.

Recovery Flat: Maple Bank

At the outset of Better Than Well there was an aspiration to create recovery housing as part of the university offer to students. All new students are guaranteed accommodation in university-run or university-commissioned accommodation. Most of the former is on the Vale site, a short walk from campus. Recovery-focused accommodation is a key part of many CRPs in the USA, allowing students to live a 'normal' life at the heart of the campus whilst maintaining a safe and supportive living environment. Recovery housing also allows both one-to-one and group recovery meetings to occur on a regular basis in the accommodation.



Working with Accommodation Services, we agreed that a flat in the Maple Bank block would be set aside for rental by BTW students. Maple Bank flats are mixed gender, 5-bedroom flats with shared kitchen/living space. They are currently priced at the lower end of the cost spectrum to ensure that they are affordable for all students. The flat opened officially in January 2023, and one of the existing BTW students with 7 years+ recovery time agreed to act as flat mentor. BTW paid his rent for the rest of the academic year, and plans were implemented to supplement the usual Accommodation contract with recovery-focused clauses (e.g. drug testing).

As students sign a contract for a whole academic year, we only expected to admit students who had run into difficulty with their existing housing in the first semester. One student moved in during late January 2023, and another plans to do so in the next month. However, now that the flat is up and running it has been easier to promote it to prospective students for 2023/24. Although most student accommodation is not arranged until after A-level results are released in late August, we already have 2 firm requests for recovery accommodation.

Student Bursaries to Attend ARHE Conference



A grant was received from the DARO *Birmingham in Mind* charitable fund to create three student scholarships to attend the Association for Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE) Conference. This took place on 25th-28th June 2023 in Columbus, Ohio USA, and was the largest meeting of students in recovery anywhere in the world (see <https://collegiaterecovery.org/2023conference/>). The students were accompanied by Project Manager Luke Trainor.

This scholarship represented a fantastic opportunity for the three BTW students to meet fellow students in recovery, learn about CRPs in the USA and Canada, and develop their knowledge about recovery and peer support. As the only students in attendance from outside North America the group achieved minor celebrity status, and many new friendships were forged. Students from the USA have subsequently attended BTW meetings by video call.

The group completed their trip with a journey to visit the birthplace of Alcoholics Anonymous in Akron, Ohio. A full account of the experience can be found on the BTW webpages: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/taking-care-of-yourself/blogs.aspx>

Section 3: Reflections and Future Plans

Reflections

What has gone well?

- **Steady growth in student numbers throughout the year.** We have learnt that we need to promote BTW in as many ways as possible on a weekly basis to ensure we make contact with students. This academic year has seen enhanced website provision including use of the student voice through blogposts, physical advertising on the campus (e.g. digital totems), and increased frequency of posting on twitter and Instagram. Presentations on behavioural addiction at the UoBe festival brought an increase in student contact, and several pieces of national publicity have also been important.
- **Integration into existing Welfare and Wellbeing Services.** BTW has had extensive support from Drew Linforth and his team, and the service sits comfortably under the umbrella of university wellbeing provision.
- **The utilisation of one-to-one support.** LT's wide personal experience of recovery and strong links to a range of local recovery activity has provided an individually-tailored service for BTW members. He has provided one-to-one meetings, helped create individual recovery plans, and personally linked students to other recovery supports.
- **Strong peer support.** Although the structure of the programme is set out by the Project Manager, the BTW community has started to support each other through formal and informal routes on a daily basis. This confirms the power of peers in providing 24/7 recovery support. The new recovery flat has allowed us to test the concept of a Peer Mentor, who has also covered for LT during annual leave.
- **Linkage to local recovery community.** Although students have reported struggling to access meaningful treatment for addiction in the local community, many have benefitted from linkage to peer-led recovery support outside of the university. The creation of both 12-Step Recovery meetings for young adults in the city is likely to be the next step in this evolution.
- **An evolving programme driven by student needs.** The BTW programme now has activity on every weekday and support at weekends if required. The RESET programme has engaged students interested in understanding the impact of trauma and developing better ways of coping with stress. A BTW SMART Recovery meeting has been started online.
- **Continued engagement with students who have graduated from the university.** Two graduate students have participated both in person and online to weekly BTW meetings.
- **Stronger support for students in recovery from behavioural addictions.** The numbers of students experiencing behavioural addictions has increased strongly, particularly after the UoBe Festival event on gambling/sex/porn addiction. A useful link has been formed with Paula Hall, a leading psychologist who specialises in the treatment of sex/love/porn addiction. UoB students can currently access a high quality 6 week online treatment program for free as part of an evaluation project.

- **BTW has a national profile.** Our initial communication strategy has led a wide range of online and in-person presentations to local, national and international audiences about addiction, recovery and the CRP. BTW is recognised by the UK Government, a Universities UK Task Force and other universities as a pioneering initiative to benefit students by supporting wellbeing, improving mental health, maximising academic achievement and broadening participation in university life.

Barriers to growth

- **The stigma of addiction.** When talking to BTW students it becomes clear the extent that the stigma of addiction impacts on all areas of their life. Most were reluctant to discuss their addiction with even their closest friends and family, and everyone was wary of 'getting into trouble' by revealing details to the university. This increases the challenge of engaging students in the programme, and prompts us to develop strategies to counter stigma at both an individual and institutional level.
- **Communication.** Such is the impact of stigma, our efforts to communicate the benefits of BTW need to be both intensive and extensive. There is no one strategy that works, and it requires experience and local knowledge to harness the communications networks in a large organisation like a university. We will employ a communications lead in the new academic year and develop a social media strategy.

Future Plans

From 2021/22 Report	Activity in 2022/23
Students in Recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTW delivers yoga & other body awareness/fitness classes • BTW provides access to quality psychotherapy • BTW transfers key roles to students over time • BTW supports students to become future recovery leaders 	RESET programme RESET programme First student role created in Accommodation (senior peer in recovery flat) Maintained contact with BTW graduates
Students on Campus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTW provides recovery ally training 	Remains an aspiration
Prospective students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTW seeks funding for a funded recovery scholarship • BTW provides information to school/college staff at UCAS events 	Continue to seek funding Information provided to teams at UCAS events Presentation of BTW at UoB Open Days (UG and PG)
University of Birmingham staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory welfare training includes recovery/BTW • BTW info included as part of staff induction • BTW holds celebration events on campus 	Remains an aspiration Remains an aspiration End of year Celebration event planned for 9 th June 2023
External universities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTW launches a targeted LinkedIn campaign • BTW runs a national survey on recovery with other universities and shares the findings 	Revised marketing plan for 2023/4 Bid for funding with other UK CRP to develop materials to promote CRPs UUK document and plans to take forward research

Revised goals for 2023/24

ED has been working with Kate Wilson to develop a plan for the next two years of BTW operation. This has included discussions with the University of Birmingham about potential funding, and the Development and Alumni Office (DARO) about seeking further philanthropic funding. The attached document (*Two-year Perspectives, Brand & Communications Plan*) is accompanied by a proposed draft budget including everything required to continue the growth and development of BTW.

Evaluation Framework

Short-term

Basic (anonymised) demographic data is currently captured from each student that contacts BTW, and combined data is presented in this report.

In 2021/22 ED conducted end of year interviews with most of the participating students, and the findings were summarised in the annual report. In 2022/23 we propose taking this process a step further. ED and LT have received UoB research ethics permission to undertake a more detailed qualitative analysis of the experience of students in recovery and their experiences of BTW. This will be analysed and written up for publication in academic peer-reviewed journals.

Longer-term

BTW has been established quicker than anticipated, and there is now a need to build in an evaluation process to demonstrate the impact on students and the mechanisms of action of the programme. As outlined in the 2021/22 BTW Annual Report, Emily Hennessy and colleagues have proposed a recovery capital perspective in evaluating the CRP (1), measuring both strengths and barriers at the outset of CRP engagement and changes in personal, social and community recovery capital over the course of their university life.

ED is working with a team of academics at the University of Birmingham (Dr Stephanie Burnett-Heyes, Dr Amanda Farley, Dr Gerald Jordan and Dr Ifigeneia Manitsa) alongside Dr Hennessy to build a long-term evaluation proposal based on the Medical Research Council Process Evaluation of Complex Interventions (2). This will include a web-based research registry that could capture key measures of recovery and wellbeing from any student at a UK university. The intention is to apply to the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Public Health Research Program for funding to support this work (stage 1 closing date August 2023).

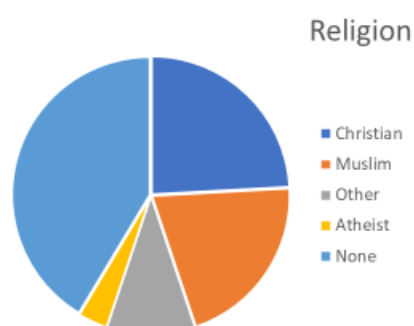
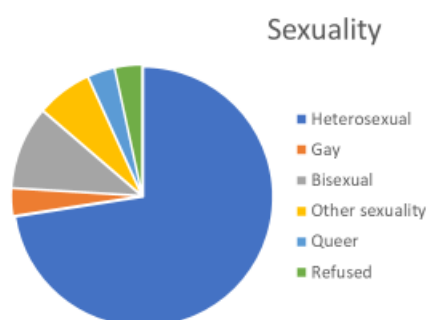
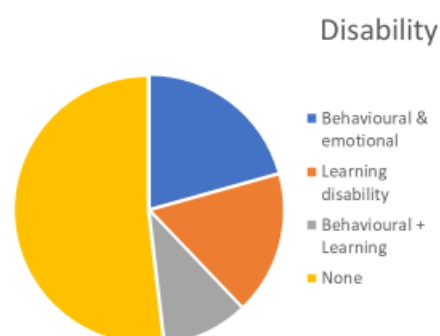
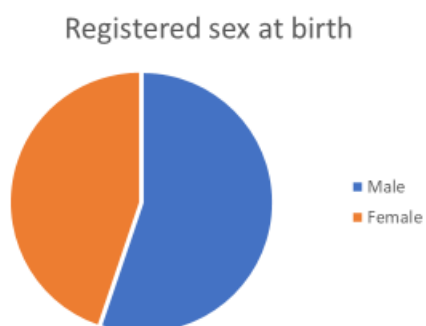
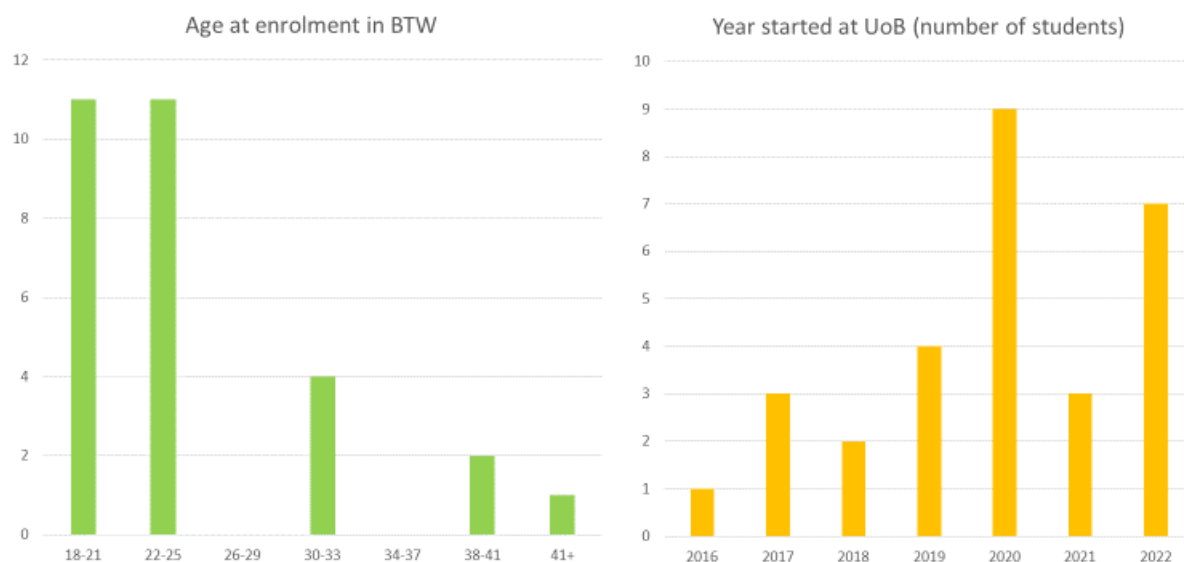
References

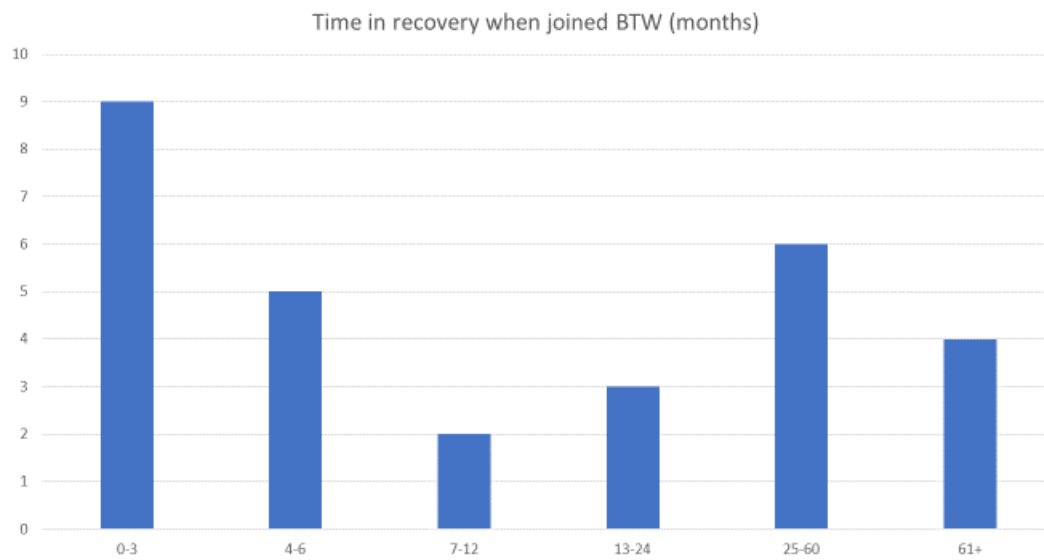
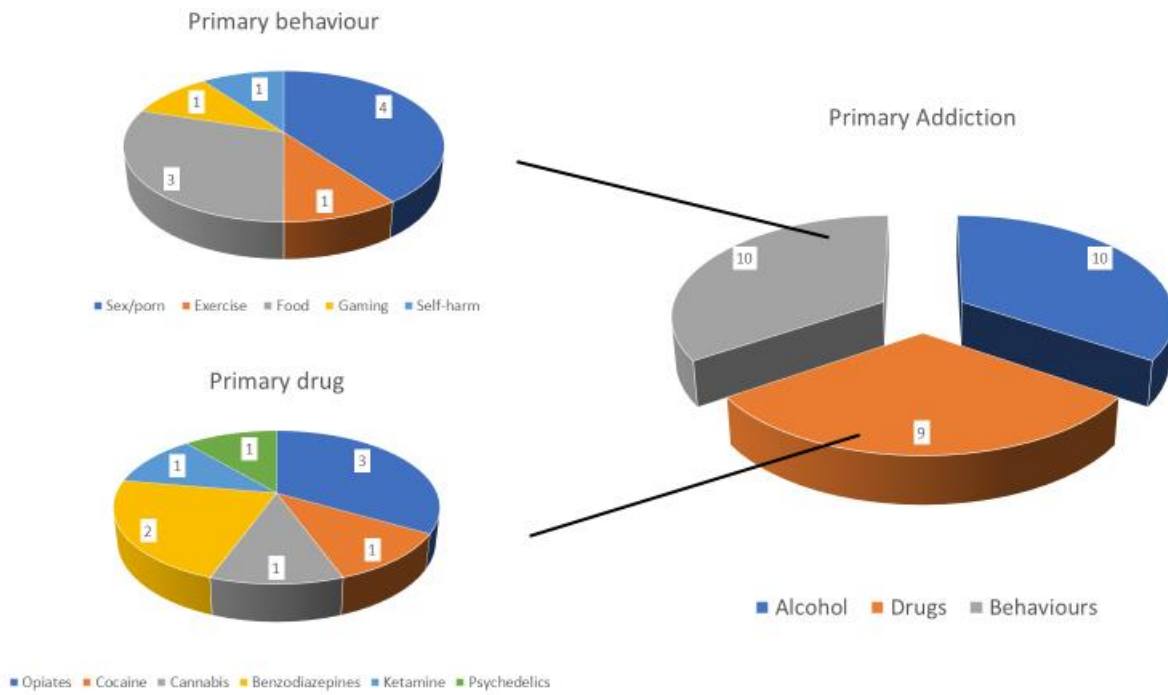
1. Hennessy EA, Nichols LM, Brown TB, Tanner-Smith EE. Advancing the science of evaluating Collegiate Recovery Program processes and outcomes: A recovery capital perspective. *Eval Program Plann.* 2022;91:102057.
2. Moore GF, Audrey S, Barker M, Bond L, Bonell C, Hardeman W, et al. Process evaluation of complex interventions: Medical Research Council guidance. *BMJ : British Medical Journal.* 2015;350:h1258.

Appendix I

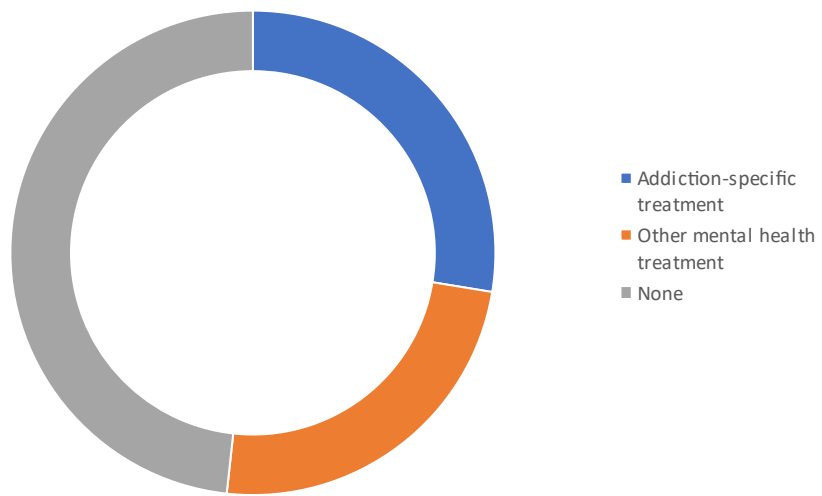
Demographics and other data

This data relates to the 29 students that have fully engaged with the BTW programme over the past 2 years





Experience of Treatment prior to joining BTW



Appendix II

Social media analytics

Lea Nakache

Instagram

Instagram is used mainly to share visuals and reels (videos). Posts are often branded (eg: with quote of students).

Number of followers (as of 03/05/23): 122

Number of posts: 60

Reach (ie: the number of unique accounts that saw any of our posts or stories at least once)

Facebook Page reach ⓘ

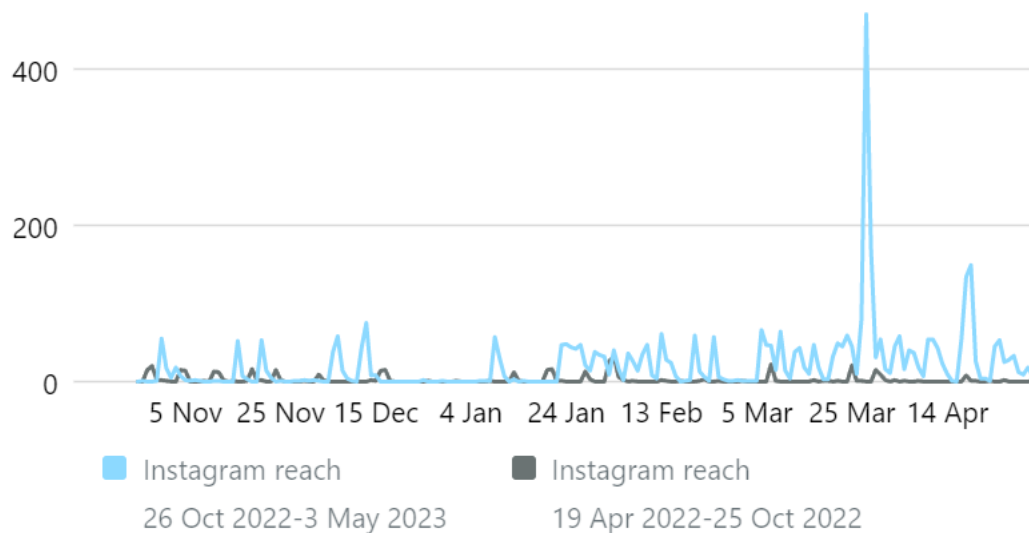
2 ↑ 100%

Instagram reach ⓘ

1,147 ↑ 847.9%

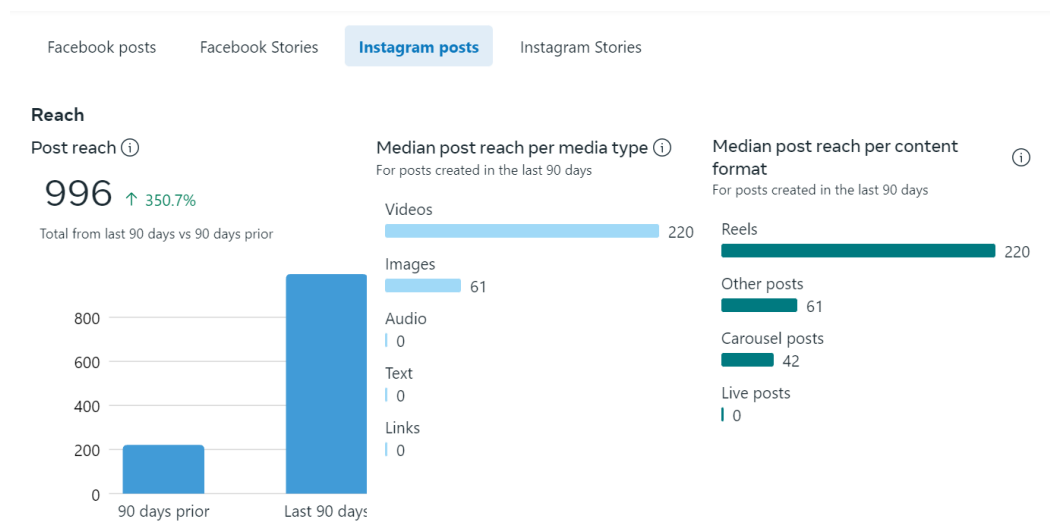
Daily

Cumulative



Instagram

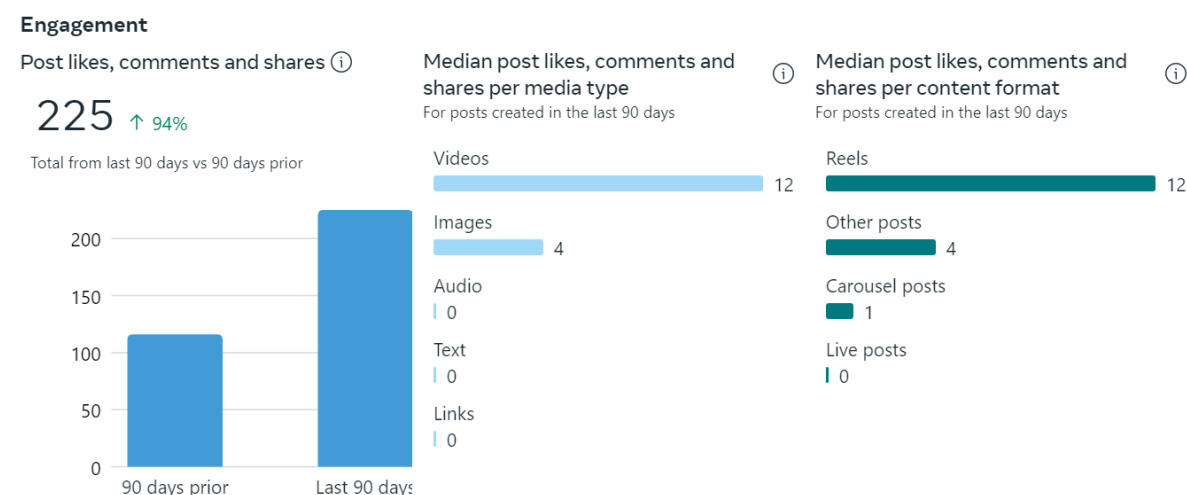
reach (the number of unique accounts that saw any of our posts or stories at least once) from 26/10/22 to 3/05/23



Instagram reach (the number of unique accounts that saw any of our posts or stories at least once) from the last 90 days (02/02/23 to 03/05/23)

Engagement (ie: like, comments and shares)

Posts



Engagement from the last 90 days (from 02/02/23 to 03/05/23)

Twitter

Twitter is used to share information in a quicker, “snackier” way. It is also used to re-share posts and videos from other recovery accounts.

Number of followers: 211

Number of posts:

Impressions (number of times our Tweets have been seen on Twitter)

Number of impressions (October 2022 – April 2023): **212517**

Monthly impressions (January – April 2023)

Your Tweets earned **13.0K impressions** over this **31 day** period



January

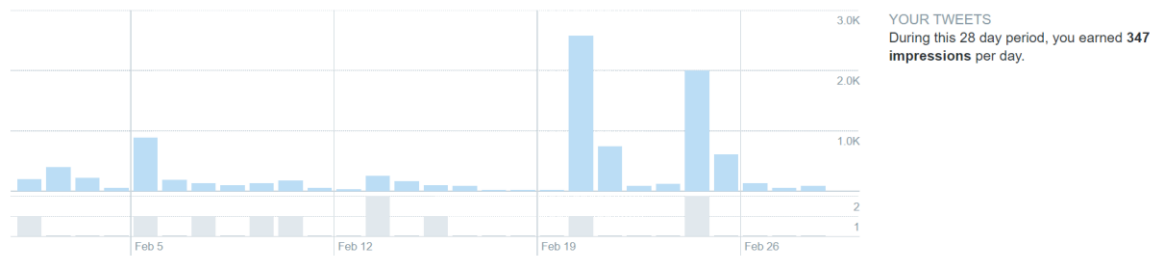
2023

Tweet activity

February 2023

Export data

Your Tweets earned **9.7K impressions** over this **28 day** period



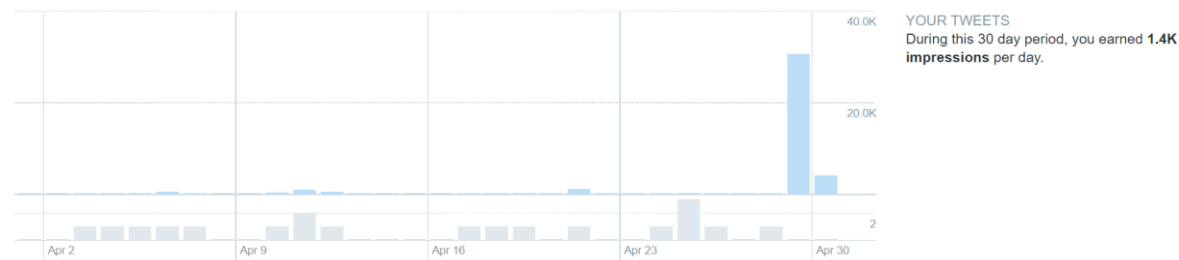
February 2023

Tweet activity

April 2023

Export data

Your Tweets earned **42.4K impressions** over this **30 day** period



March

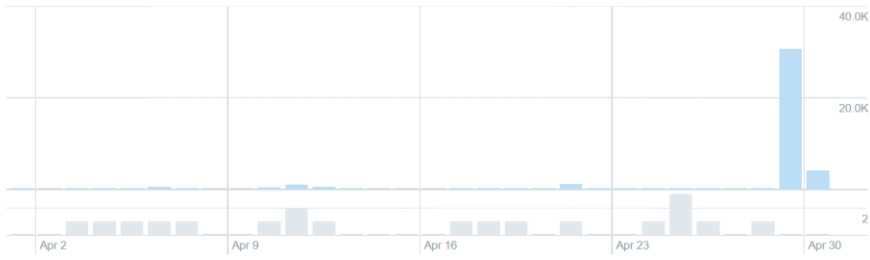
2023

Tweet activity

📅 April 2023 ▾

📄 Export data ▾

Your Tweets earned **42.4K impressions** over this **30 day** period



YOUR TWEETS

During this 30 day period, you earned **1.4K impressions** per day.

April 2023

Appendix III

Student feedback from the first RESET program

Feedback regarding what BTW students enjoyed about the mind, breathwork and gym sessions in the 12-Week RESET Awareness Programme...
<p>"The sessions worked well together and I could see how they built on each other."</p> <p>"I liked how interactive it was in terms of reflecting but not having to disclose too much."</p> <p>"I liked some of the print outs which made sessions easier to follow, e.g. different types of thoughts."</p> <p>"The good attitude of the staff goes a long way. When dealing with RESET staff I found them to be caring, approachable, friendly and respectful, if that's not there then it won't go anywhere."</p> <p>"Learning new gym techniques that I now know for the rest of my life, the PT was great"</p> <p>"Some of the topics in the 'mind' sessions provided different ways of looking at things, they were very beneficial and I really enjoyed them."</p> <p>"Thank you to the whole team for their passion, care, integrity and understanding."</p> <p>"Continue integrating more with BTW, this will help BTW too with publicity as they are also growing."</p> <p>"Even in BTW engagement is up and down that is the way it is with addiction or mental health but it works well just pitching up."</p>

Feedback regarding how BTW students thought the following 12-week RESET Awareness Programme could be improved...

"I liked it more when there were a few of us (in the groups) like 5 or 6, but this was harder when there were only 2 or 3."

"Emails can be difficult, where stuff is etc. tends to be posted on WhatsApp and this is the platform for the general BTW programme."

"I can see how well this would work in an addiction treatment centre but it can be hard to keep up with attending groups as a student there are a lot of hours involved, almost like a whole module in undergraduate."

"I've never done meditation, maybe start with 5 minutes. Mind sessions are good at 1 hour and a half long but students are used to 50-minute lectures."

"It can be difficult having both groups in one day, which uses a lot of time."

"I'm used to sharing, I am comfortable but sharing is not recorded normally."

"I am the type of person who likes to do things in groups, when not many people come I don't enjoy it as much. More the merrier, especially when people (RESET) are coming out to deliver groups. Maybe start better advertising for the programme, or give some kind of incentive to attend at first. Society is very unhealthy and sometimes people need to be incentivised, we're a very individualistic society so need to appeal to this side."

"There has to be a solution (to the timing of the group). Don't know what this is as everybody is on different programmes and couldn't attend because of that. Earlier on in recovery, this may be easier for people but as I have a robust framework in place already I had other things I had to do i.e. attending lectures."

The above feedback was taken into consideration and actioned by...

- Continuing to strive to boost student engagement by RESET staff attending BTW groups and join the WhatsApp group to better communicate with students
- Combined all 3 groups into one session to make it fewer hours for students to be able to attend and not miss any content
 - Shorter sessions components of meditation, breathwork and mind groups, to better suit students' normal university schedules
- Sessions are no longer recorded (for BTW students who have missed the session) to allow more of a safe space to share freely for students