

Drink

Rethink

Piloting an Alcohol
Identification and Brief
Advice approach (IBA)
with students

Final report



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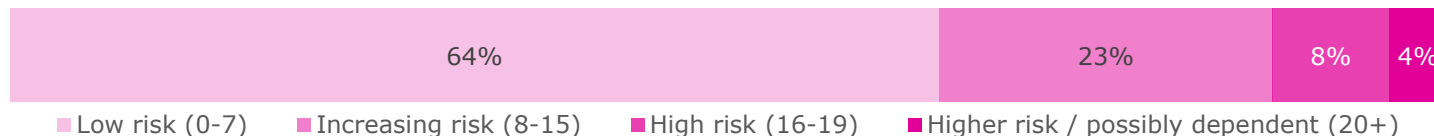
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Summary

Drink Rethink is a preventative approach which aims to reduce high-risk drinking behaviour among students by training student ambassadors to use an evidence-based behaviour change tool (Identification and Brief Advice - IBA) to deliver an alcohol intervention on campus.

Headline results

- 21 student ambassadors were recruited and trained to engage their fellow students and oversee the completion of the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), followed by the provision of brief advice through leaflets appropriate to the level of risk identified by the AUDIT.
- The ambassadors delivered a total of 250 hours of engagement across three weeks, at sites across the University of the West of England and Keele University.
- 576 students were engaged in completing the AUDIT and receiving brief advice through specific leaflets appropriate to their risk level. 149 students who opted not to participate in the AUDIT received general information leaflets, meaning a total of 725 students engaged at some level.
- The results from the 576 students who completed the AUDIT are as follows:



- 15 of 36 respondents to a follow-up survey completed with participants one week after the intervention said that Drink Rethink gave them information about their alcohol consumption they weren't aware of previously, and 12 agreed that Drink Rethink made them think about changing how they drink alcohol.
- 7 of 36 respondents to the follow-up survey said that Drink Rethink made them change how often they drink alcohol, and the same number attributed a change in how much they drink to Drink Rethink.

1. About Drink Rethink

Drink Rethink is a preventative approach which aims to reduce high-risk drinking behaviour among students by training student ambassadors to use a nationally recognised evidence-based behaviour change tool (Identification and Brief Advice - IBA) to deliver an alcohol intervention on campus.

IBA entails delivering brief advice after completion of the World Health Organisation-approved Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT). It's a preventative approach, aimed at identifying problem behaviours and providing guidance to increasing and higher-risk drinkers.

Drink Rethink has drawn on the experiences of project using a similar approach with members of the public in an everyday setting. [The London Challenge](#), commissioned by the Lambeth Alcohol Prevention Group, was delivered to the general public outside a busy London tube station. The project found that Alcohol IBA can effectively be delivered by newly trained, non-healthcare workers in a public environment. Feedback from participants who engaged in the project was also positive, and all but two participants (of 18 who consented to further research) reported lower AUDIT scores 6-9 weeks after the intervention.

Drink Rethink adapted the approach used by The London Challenge for a student audience, and also drew on evidence which suggests that interventions conducted within a university setting and by non-healthcare professionals show greater efficacy compared to similar delivery in other non-health-related settings.

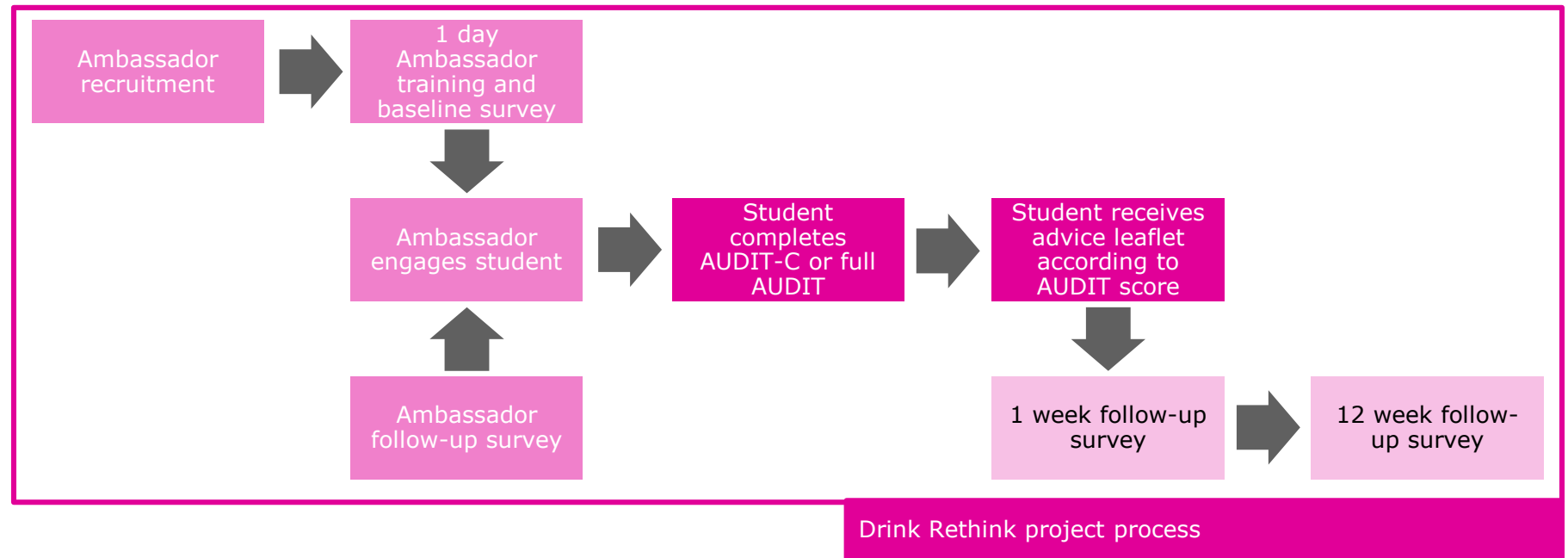
NUS worked with [Safe Sociable London Partnership](#) to deliver the project. Safe Sociable London Partnership (SSLP) are a social purpose consultancy focused on preventing health harms through public health approaches, and have particular experience in alcohol related harm. Drink Rethink expands NUS' work on responsible alcohol consumption across the tertiary education sector, which includes the [Alcohol Impact](#) accreditation scheme for universities.

Two university sites were chosen to pilot the project, both of which have previously participated in NUS' whole-institution responsible alcohol consumption accreditation scheme. At Keele University the project was supported by a member of university staff, and at the University of the West of England (UWE), the project was supported by a member of staff from The Students' Union at UWE. Both institutions have received the NUS Alcohol Impact accreditation.

The diagram below outlines the flow of the project.

Initially, student ambassadors were recruited and trained in delivering the IBA approach to be used during the intervention. Full details of the ambassador training can be found chapter 2. Ambassadors were also asked to complete surveys before and after their participation to assess how the opportunity enabled them to develop key skills, and also if there had been any impact on their own alcohol consumption.

From a participant perspective, after being approached by an ambassador and agreeing to take part, each student completed the three AUDIT-C questions. If a score of more than 5 was reached at this stage, students were then asked the remaining AUDIT questions. Students were then shown their total AUDIT score followed were given a leaflet tailored according to the AUDIT risk categories of alcohol dependency (low risk, increasing risk, high risk and higher risk/possibly dependent). Students were also signposted towards welfare and support services at their university for further advice. To evaluate the impact of the intervention, participants were invited to complete online surveys one week and twelve weeks after completing the initial AUDIT.



2. Ambassador training

NUS provided support and resources to the two university sites to recruit the student ambassadors. Social media templates were provided so the opportunity could be promoted online to students. This included a set of recruitment screener questions to ensure students with a range of characteristics were recruited.

At The Students' Union at UWE the role was advertised via their job shop, emailed to all current student staff and promoted on their social media. The university also advertised the opportunity via a newsletter and on their social media. More students applied for the opportunity than were recruited. At Keele University, the opportunity was advertised via social media and an email was sent to all students with the relevant information. More students applied for the opportunity than were recruited.

21 students were trained in total across the two university sites (13 at The Students' Union at UWE, 8 at Keele University). More students were recruited than initially planned to allow for drop-outs and increased flexibility for students who were fitting in delivery of the intervention around their academic timetables and other commitments.

9 out of 10 Ambassadors who completed a follow-up survey agreed with the following statement:

"I felt prepared to take on the role of ambassador at the end of the training."



Drink Rethink Ambassadors at The Students' Union at UWE

Ambassador training in detail

The training, designed by SSLP, provided ambassadors with an opportunity to learn about the project as well as how to deliver alcohol IBA. It also gave them a chance to practice conducting the intervention, ensuring the intervention was delivered appropriately and effectively. Training was updated in between delivery at UWE and at Keele to take into account feedback received from ambassadors. Changes included allowing additional time for practical role play exercises. During this pilot, the training was delivered over a full day however on reflection, both trainers and ambassadors reflected that a condensed version would be possible and as effective.

The one day training was designed as an interactive session that provided ambassadors with information about the approaches and tools they would be using in their role followed by an opportunity to put their learning into practice through practical activities.

Initially ambassadors were provided with some background information on alcohol consumption in the UK and also about alcohol misuse. Following this, ambassadors were introduced to the online Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Tool (AUDIT) they would be delivering to their student peers during the intervention. Ambassadors spent time going through the AUDIT, familiarising themselves with the questions and also learning about the purpose of each question. This session also included a chance to practice delivering the tool on each other.

Next, the ambassadors focused on the leaflets to be handed out after student participants completed the AUDIT. The leaflets were designed to give brief advice, targeted to the alcohol use disorder risk level identified by the AUDIT. Four leaflets were used in the project (low risk, increasing risk, higher risk and high risk/possibly dependent).

Finally, the ambassadors were trained on engagement techniques, helping to ensure the intervention was delivered in a consensual, non-judgemental and non-confrontational way. Again, ambassadors were able to trial these techniques on each other during the training.



Drink Rethink Ambassadors at Keele University

All 10 Ambassadors who completed a follow-up survey agreed with the following statement:
"The training was relevant to the role."

3. Drink Rethink delivery

The group of ambassadors at each site were allocated 120 hours to deliver the intervention. Each site had the flexibility to develop their own timetable for delivery, based on local knowledge of what would work best in terms of engaging student participants but also meet the requirement of ambassadors as discussed previously.

At Keele University, ambassadors delivered 116 hours of engagement across three weeks (16 April-4 May) with three students at a time delivering shifts of various lengths between 10am and 5pm. Three locations were chosen to engage students in the project based on the likely footfall and willingness to participate (outside the students' union building, outside the library and in a large food outlet and lecture hall site).



Example Drink Rethink leaflets

At The Students' Union at UWE, the ambassadors delivered 134 hours of engagement over 18 shifts from 16-27 April. At least two ambassadors delivered each shift but in some instances up to four ambassadors were involved in delivery. The intervention was delivered in two locations, inside the students' union bar and also the main restaurant on campus.

A total of 576 students completed the AUDIT process. Full details of their results can be found in section 4 of this report. Additionally, some students who did not want to engage fully with the intervention and complete the AUDIT were handed a general leaflet with information about alcohol consumption. 149 of these leaflets were distributed by ambassadors meaning a total of 725 students were engaged in some way.

Reflections on delivery – successes and challenges

The following aspects of the intervention worked well to engage students with the intervention:

- **Groups:** Groups worked in two ways to enable engagement of students. Firstly, ambassadors worked in small groups to deliver the intervention rather than doing so individually which meant they were able to support one another. Secondly, ambassadors reported that engaging students to participate as group meant they often compared their AUDIT scores and discussed the results with each other, potentially engaging more with the results than if they have received the information individually. Ambassadors at The Students' Union at UWE also reported participants often sitting down and reading the leaflets together.

"All students I spoke to didn't mind discussing their drinking habits in front of friends and actually encouraged their friends to get involved and stimulated discussion around alcohol intake."

Drink Rethink Ambassador

- **Incentives:** During some of the shifts, incentives were available to encourage passing students to engage with Drink Rethink. Ambassadors reported that small incentives such as hot drinks vouchers or sweets encouraged initial engagement.
- **Branding and identity:** Having consistent and visible branding and identity were also found to be important, with leaflets, banners and ambassador t-shirts all featuring the Drink Rethink logo. University and students' union logos were also included on materials, providing participants with familiarity and also ensuring the project was seen as 'official'.
- **Flexibility:** Ambassadors were able to choose where to deliver the intervention from a range of locations, meaning they could adapt to different levels of footfall at different times of the day.

"The incentives and rewards, such as vouchers and sweets [made it easier to engage students]." Drink Rethink Ambassador

Delivering the intervention also raised some challenges that will be considered in future rounds of delivery:

- **Groups:** Despite the benefits of engaging groups of students outlined previously, some ambassadors noted that there could also be downsides to this approach. Ambassadors feedback identified instances where student participants who had received a higher AUDIT score than their friends seemed embarrassed, whilst in other cases, the relative scores turned into the subject of jokes suggesting that participants had not meaningfully engaged with their results.
- **Framing participation:** Ambassadors reported that some students interpreted engaging with the project as being only about completing a survey and therefore were not expecting to receive the IBA leaflet that followed.
- **Locations:** Some locations where Drink Rethink was delivered were found to be less suitable for meaningful engagement. For example, outside the library was found to be a difficult place to engage students as they were on their way to study and had less time to stop. The same experience was reported outside of lecture theatres. Whilst flexibility of location was reported as a positive, it could also be seen as a negative with staff involved in the project at Keele University feeling that delivery in the same location would mean students would know where to find the ambassadors.



Ambassadors delivering Drink Rethink

"Some students seemed to find it embarrassing if they got a higher score than their friends but some students were laughing at their score and joking around if their friend received a high score." Drink Rethink Ambassador

4. Results

Ambassador experiences

Ambassadors were asked to complete baseline and follow-up surveys to help understand the personal development outcomes associated with participating in the project.

Of 10 respondents completing both baseline and follow-up surveys we found:

- 1 increased their belief that they can make a difference when working with others
- 1 increased their belief that they're able to have an impact on the world around them
- 2 felt they had improved their ability to apply different styles of communication
- 2 felt they were more able to ask for help and advice when solving problems
- 3 said their confidence when meeting new people had improved
- 4 said they felt more confident working with other people as part of a team
- 4 said they were more confident putting their ideas forward

Ambassadors also completed the AUDIT questions both before and after their participation in the project. Three of 10 respondents completing both baseline and follow-up surveys showed a lower AUDIT score at follow-up. The remaining seven scores were the same in both instances.



Ambassador engaging Drink Rethink participants

Intervention results

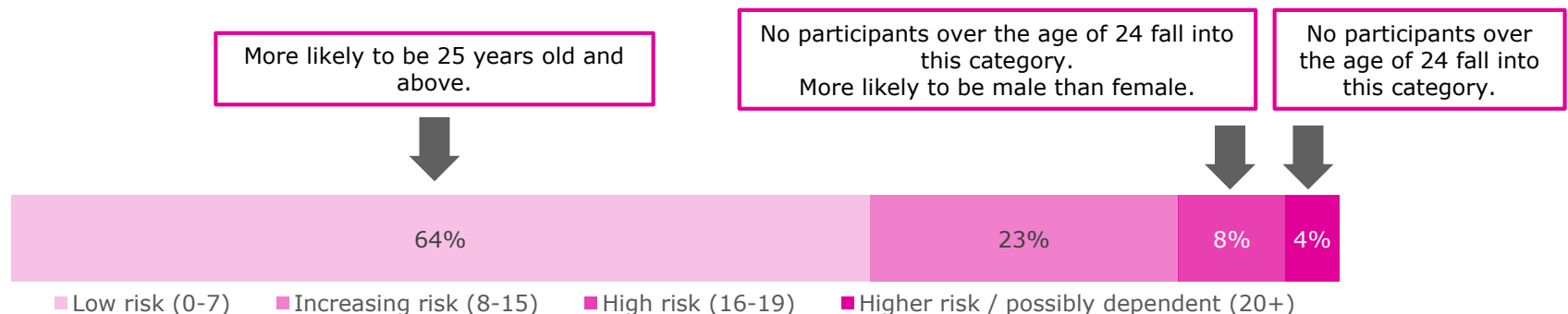
Data was collected from Drink Rethink participants at three points. During their participation in the intervention, their scores for AUDIT were recorded. After completing the AUDIT, participants were given the option of providing their contact details to participate in further research associated with the intervention. 277 students agreed to be re-contacted, and these were sent invitations to complete two further surveys one week and twelve weeks after participation in Drink Rethink. The one and twelve weeks surveys included attitude and experience questions related to alcohol consumption alongside a repeat of the AUDIT questions allowing any changes in drinking habits and related experiences to be assessed.

36 students responded to the one week survey (a response rate of 13%) and 18 students responded to the twelve week survey (6% response rate). Given the low number of responses received to one week and twelve week surveys only feedback related to their experience of participation in Drink Rethink has been presented here. Despite offering incentives to respondents, the responses received were not substantial enough to meaningfully comment on the impact of participation on participants AUDIT scores or drinking behaviour. This experience mirrors that of the London Challenge delivery team. In addition to a low response rate, those that did respond tended to be low risk drinkers, again making it difficult to meaningfully comment on the impact on participants drinking behaviour. Suggestions for improving this area of the intervention going forward are included in section 5 of this report.

The remainder of this chapter looks in detail at the responses given by participants to the AUDIT, as well as their feedback on participation.

Intervention AUDIT scores: overall

The intervention AUDIT scores revealed that almost two thirds of students engaged fell into the 'low risk' category. 4% of those engaged fell into the 'higher risk / possibly dependent' category. Significant differences (at 99% confidence level) in terms of demographics are shown between each segment below.



Intervention AUDIT scores in detail

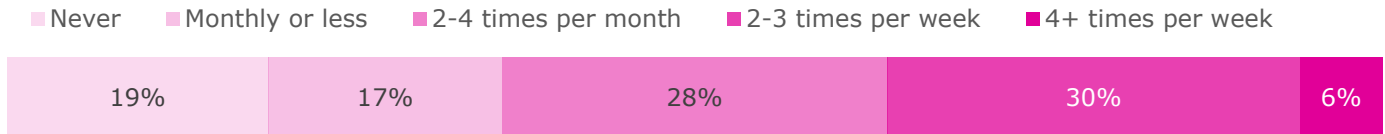
The next few pages provide the detailed responses that make up the AUDIT overall score.

An initial score is calculated based on the first three questions below, with respondents progressing to further questions if a score of 5 or more is reached.

AUDIT-C

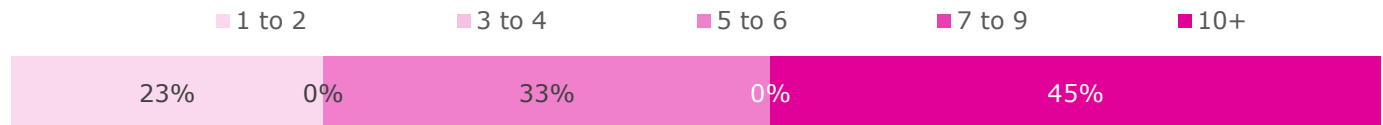
The first question was asked to all respondents.

How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? (n=534)



The next two questions were asked to all participants apart from those who indicated at question one that they do not drink alcohol.

How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking? (n=355)



How often have you had 6 or more units on a single occasion in the last year? (n=287)



This is one unit of alcohol...



...and each of these is more than one unit



Unit guidance provided to participants

Full AUDIT: asked to participants scoring 5 or above at AUDIT-C

■ Never
■ Less than monthly
■ Monthly
■ Weekly
■ Daily or almost daily

How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?



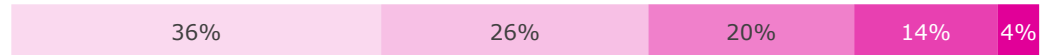
How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected of you because of your drinking?



How often during the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?



How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?



How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because of your drinking?



■ No
■ Yes, but not in the last year
■ Yes, during the last year

Have you or someone else been injured because of your drinking? (n=205)



Has a relative, friend, doctor or other health care worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down? (n=203)



Participant feedback: Drinking behaviour

In the one week follow-up survey, respondents reflected on the impact participating in Drink Rethink had had in terms of their awareness of their own alcohol consumption as well as their desire to make changes to their drinking behaviour.

Of 36 respondents...



15

Agreed that Drink Rethink gave them information about their alcohol consumption they weren't aware of previously

12

Agreed that Drink Rethink made them think about changing how they drink alcohol

7

Agreed that Drink Rethink made them change how often they drink alcohol

7

Agreed that Drink Rethink made them change how much alcohol they drink

Participant feedback: Intervention delivery

In the one week follow-up survey, respondents were also asked for their feedback on their experiences of participating in Drink Rethink. Of the 36 respondents...

24

Rated the project overall as excellent or good

30

Rated the appropriateness of the location they took part in as excellent or good

27

Rated the ambassador's style of communication as excellent or good

21

Rated the resources they received as excellent or good

Specific recommendations for improving delivery from participants were mainly focused on the AUDIT tool and the framing of the questions. It is possible that further training for ambassadors on deliver of the statements, or in providing information on why they are included would help address these issues.

"Factual, informative, but came across as strongly prejudice in asking questions."

Drink Rethink participant

"The responses that you were able to give didn't always apply, especially in regards to alcohol consumption, they almost jumped one extreme to the other, which made it hard to choose an option as neither really applied."

Drink Rethink participant

5. Future plans

To continue the project, NUS will be integrating Drink Rethink within a city-wide pilot of Alcohol Impact taking place in Manchester. In this instance, staff members will be trained as ambassadors rather than students to understand how the project can be delivered in a range of capacities. Precise delivery of this iteration of the project is still being developed, however it is likely that NUS will provide training for students' union and university staff working across the three Manchester-based universities in welfare, support and advice roles in the autumn term of the 2018-19 academic year.

Also continuing the work of the Drink Rethink pilot, the Students' Union at UWE are planning to deliver Alcohol IBA with their students in the year ahead, integrating it within their successful [Late Night Do It Right](#) harm reduction campaign. They hope to build this into the campaign as part of their standard work by training Late Night Do it Right staff and Welcome Week Representatives.

Other students' unions and universities that are part of the Alcohol Impact have also expressed an interest in the Drink Rethink approach. NUS plans to seek further funding to test the approach, either through training student ambassadors or staff as outlined in the Manchester example described above. This will develop a more detailed understanding of how the approach works with different arrangements and in different contexts, with NUS providing ongoing with intervention delivery and monitoring and evaluation.

The project will also be integrated into NUS' Alcohol Impact accreditation programme, for example embedding the approach within the criteria for participating institutions and students' unions. Alongside this, training packages will be offered to equip students and staff with the knowledge and skills needed to deliver the project. Additional resources will also be provided, such as information flyers and evaluation surveys used during the pilot.

Monitoring and evaluation

Going forward, our recommendation is to focus evaluation on a single follow-up survey three weeks after delivery of the intervention. This replaces the one week and twelve week surveys delivered in this pilot. Allocation of resources to ensure a better response rate is also recommended, alongside invitations to complete an online survey. Whilst a prize draw was offered as an incentive to drive participation in the surveys during the pilot, additional promotion such as a telephone ring round may secure a better response. Additionally, sending the invite to participate in the research from the students' union as a trusted, familiar organisation rather than an unfamiliar contact at NUS may also drive a better response.