

# HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY

The University will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that support employee health and wellbeing.

University Health & Safety Executive  
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## **1. Policy statement**

The University has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. It aims to establish a positive health and wellbeing culture that includes awareness and understanding, effective processes, and positive behaviour by staff at all levels. The University recognises that mental and physical health and wellbeing are equally important and acknowledges the potential impact that work can have on both.

## **2. The purpose of the policy**

This policy provides a framework within which the University will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that support employee health and wellbeing; minimise wherever possible the detrimental impact of work-related stress on all staff and their work; and ensure that staff are appropriately supported in their workplace.

It is the policy of the University to:

- promote health and wellbeing through its management policies and support services;
- prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to health and wellbeing;
- provide a culture where all health and wellbeing issues can be discussed openly in a supportive way;
- provide a working environment free from bias and stigma, and where staff who have health difficulties receive appropriate support and adjustments to allow them to achieve their fullest potential;
- monitor and review indicators of organisational health and wellbeing, and to take steps to respond where issues are identified;
- seek to ensure that those who support or manage staff who are experiencing health and wellbeing issues are themselves supported as they respond to the needs of colleagues;
- improve understanding and awareness of health and wellbeing issues and the support available both within and outside of the University;
- consult with campus trade union safety representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of work-related stress.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed by the University.

While recognising that the University has a legal obligation to manage work-related factors that could harm employees' health and wellbeing, including work-related stress, the University acknowledges that majority of those who describe their wellbeing as poor attribute this to a combination of problems both at work and outside work in their personal life<sup>1</sup>. This policy, therefore, makes no distinction between work-related and personal factors in supporting employee health and wellbeing.

### 4. Definitions, terminologies and legal responsibilities

#### 4.1 Wellbeing and mental health

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community<sup>2</sup>. In order to avoid stigmatized terms which may deter staff from accessing the guidance and support required at work, in this policy the terms **health and wellbeing** are used as alternatives to **physical and mental health**.

#### 4.2 The law

The University has a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. The Act also places a general duty on the employee to co-operate with his/her employer to enable that duty to be complied with. The University will support and promote policies and practices which uphold this statutory duty.

#### 4.3 Stress

Stress is a physical and psychological reaction when pressures and demands are beyond an individual's ability to cope. In the workplace, it is important to distinguish between

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<sup>1</sup> CIPD Employee Views on Working Life July 2016

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organisation

excessive pressure and demands from those that are reasonable and provide stimulating and challenging work. Much will depend on an individual's ability to cope with the pressures and demands placed upon them and different individuals will have differing abilities to cope.

## **5. Interactions with other policies and guidance**

This Policy supports and is aligned with other University policies and guidance which offer further guidance to staff in relation to health and wellbeing, including but not limited to, Mental Health Support - [Manager's Guide for Supporting Staff](#), [Wellbeing Guide](#), and [Managing Wellbeing at Work](#).

The University's Health and Wellbeing Policy should be read in conjunction with other key University documents, including but not limited to, UEA Health and Safety Policy, Policy on Data Protection, Equality & Diversity Code of Practice, Disability in Employment Code of Practice, Recruitment & Selection Guidelines, Sickness Absence Guidelines, Flexible Working Guidelines and Capability Guidelines.

Particular attention is drawn to:

### **5.1 This policy and the University Data Protection Policy**

While all dealings with staff are subject to the University's Policy on Data Protection, confidentiality is often of paramount importance to those experiencing wellbeing difficulties. However, that confidentiality may be necessarily breached where the individual is deemed to be a risk either to him/herself or to other people. The safety of the individual and/or the safety of other members of our community must take precedence over confidentiality.

### **5.2 This policy and the Disability in Employment Code of Practice**

The University is committed to ensuring that it makes every reasonable effort to provide a supportive, inclusive environment for staff with disabilities and staff that acquire disabilities during the course of their employment. The aim of the University is to remove barriers and/or make reasonable adjustments to the working environment and/or policies, procedures and processes which could disadvantage staff with disabilities, and, wherever possible, support disabled staff in being retained

in the employment of the University.

## **6. Responsibilities**

### 6.1 Responsibility of the University

The University is responsible for:

- promoting a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;
- providing support and advisory services on campus through the Staff Counselling and Occupational Health Service;
- providing information on resources and services external to the University;
- ensuring that there is advice and guidance on procedures to support staff experiencing health and wellbeing issues, and their colleagues/line managers;
- ensuring that wellbeing awareness training is available for staff;
- encouraging a non-stigmatizing work environment for all staff within the University;
- ensuring sensitivity in disclosure and maintaining confidentiality unless it is clearly unsafe to do so.

### 6.2 Responsibility of heads of function, managers and supervisors

The Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Faculty, Directors and other senior University Officers are responsible for ensuring that safety issues reported to them, as line managers, are addressed at the appropriate level and in a timely manner. In the day-to-day management of safety matters within the various schools, departments, divisions or centres, the responsibility lies with the senior managers (i.e. in a school of study, it is the Head of School).

These senior managers are responsible for:

- risk assessing work-related stress within their department;
- instructing managers and supervisors in stress prevention;
- providing staff with wellbeing awareness information;
- defining clear roles for employees and ensuring that the employees are competent to undertake their roles;
- treating team members with consideration and dignity, and supporting steps taken to promote a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;
- ensuring that any member of their staff who is affected by health

- and wellbeing issues is appropriately and sensitively supported;
- ensure that they are aware of guidance, policy and available support and advisory services in relation to health and wellbeing;
  - ensure that they, and appropriate members of their staff, attend training on health and wellbeing;
  - encouraging staff to participate in events and initiatives undertaken by the University to promote wellbeing;
  - supporting and encouraging flexible working practices wherever practical to do so;
  - taking action where the performance and/or behavior of a staff member may cause stress to their colleagues.

### 6.3 Responsibilities of all staff

All employees have a responsibility to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions. This includes:

- taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing;
- informing their manager of health and wellbeing difficulties so that appropriate support can be put in place;
- raising concerns with their manager about work-place pressures and asking for help;
- participating in appraisals and responding to training and development opportunities;
- treating all team members with consideration and dignity and supporting steps taken to promote a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect;
- contributing towards a non-stigmatizing culture;
- upholding confidentiality (wherever safety is not compromised);
- supporting peers within appropriate limits and boundaries.

### 6.4 Responsibility of Human Resources

The Human Resources Division is responsible for:

- ensuring the provision of appropriate networks to support staff;
- supporting the management of sickness absence and monitoring employee turnover.

- providing advice and guidance to managers and employees and signposting support for health and wellbeing issues.
- managing the Occupational Health referrals process and assisting managers with considering and implementing adjustments;
- facilitating appropriate arrangements to support individuals experiencing health and wellbeing issues; and their managers.
- supporting managers experiencing problems with employee performance and attendance;
- collating management information on wellbeing-related sickness absence for the University Health & Safety Executive; and facilitating action where issues are identified;
- providing stress awareness and prevention courses via the CSED training programme.

## 6.5 Responsibility of Safety Services

The Director of Safety Services is responsible for:

- providing guidance on risk assessments;
- conducting audits on the management of stress through the Safety Services audit programme;
- ensuring the H&S Consultative Committee provides opportunities for discussion of health and wellbeing issues.

## 6.6 Responsibility of Occupational Health

The Occupational Health Service contracted by the University is responsible for:

- advising on health and wellbeing issues (including work-related stress);
- advising on the provision and content of health, wellbeing and stress awareness training;
- undertaking management referrals at the request of Human Resources.

## 6.7 Responsibility of the University Health & Safety Executive

The governing body responsible for safety in the University is the Council, which has



established a Safety Executive to act on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor in all matters concerned with occupational health and safety. Its responsibilities include:

- reviewing annually the management information provided by HR and monitoring factors that might suggest there is a problem with stress-related illness;
- reviewing audits on the management of stress through the Safety Services audit programme; and ensuring that recommendations are considered and taken forward as appropriate.

7. Monitoring & Review

The University Health and Safety Executive has lead responsibility for reviewing this policy and reporting as required to the Executive Team and Council. This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

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