University of St Andrews

Wellbeing & Engagement Group

Healthy Working Lives Strategy 2018 - 2021

1. Introduction
This paper sets out the approach of the University's Wellbeing & Engagement group to delivering its mission over the next 3 years. The aim is to build greater levels of employee wellbeing and engagement, which will be beneficial both to individual employees and to the University's business performance in pursuit of its strategic goals.

2. Background
Since 2014 the University Wellbeing & Engagement group has worked to address the health and wellbeing of staff.

The NHS Scotland Healthy Working Lives Award (HWL) has been used a framework to underpin this activity, and has produced significant progress in terms of:
- planning activities and campaigns, using a 'campaign calendar' with distinct monthly themes
- communication and dissemination of information, including redesigned webpages and a new e-newsletter (Well Now)
- expanding the range and scope of activities
- structure and focus, including the launch of the Passport to Health & Wellbeing Excellence

As a result, the HWL Bronze and Silver Awards have been achieved, with the aim to achieve the Gold Award in early 2018.

2. Wellbeing and staff engagement

Employers have a moral and legal duty of care for their employees. However, if this is the only driver for workplace wellbeing, this leads to a mechanistic health and safety-driven approach.

Our approach recognises the connection between staff wellbeing, levels of engagement of staff at work, and organisational performance.

This approach is recognised by the sector and supported in publications produced by cross-sector organisations.¹ There is much research evidence which shows that higher levels of staff engagement produce a range of benefits, including lower levels of absence, lower turnover, higher productivity, and improved business performance.²

While there are a number of recognised contributors to staff engagement, including leadership and management, pay and conditions, and job design, wellbeing is also a key driver.

Therefore, in order to deliver the expected benefits, our aim has been to:
- directly address health and wellbeing issues of University staff, such as mental health and sedentary behaviour

¹ Engagement and wellbeing framework for higher education, Universities Human Resources, September 2016
² The business case for wellbeing and engagement: Literature review summary report, Pangallo and Donaldson-Fielder, wellbeing.ac.uk (UCEA)

Improving performance through wellbeing & engagement: essential tools for a changing HE landscape, Shutler-Jones, wellbeing.ac.uk (UCEA), 2011
• provide a range of opportunities for staff to participate together in health and wellbeing activities which are supported by the University

In short, if the University directly addresses the health and wellbeing concerns and generates higher levels of participation, this will lead to staff experiencing higher levels of intrinsic wellbeing, contributing to higher levels of staff engagement, with benefits for both the employees and the University.

This approach is consistent with many findings in relation to workplace health and wellbeing, including the World Health Organization concept of the ‘health promoting workplace’.

The Universities Human Resources publication, ‘Engagement and wellbeing framework for higher education’ states:

‘Factors driving employee engagement and wellbeing have been found to overlap and interact; with connections between poor health outcomes impacting on engagement indicators such as commitment, morale and job satisfaction. Similarly, disengaged employees are more likely to have lower levels of psychological wellbeing and are more prone to burnout. This interrelationship has been described as a virtuous circle, suggesting a ‘two-way, possibly self-reinforcing relationship: healthy employees are more committed and committed employees are more healthy’.

It is also the case that poor employee health is associated with significant costs to employers, ourselves included. Improvements in health at work will therefore result in financial benefits to the University.

3. Strategic themes
The key themes, which will be reflected in delivery plans, will build on our achievements since 2014 and address the main issues that have been identified through this experience.

These are to:
• Promote more physical activity during the working week in order to support positive behavioural change and healthy work habits, improve fitness and combat sedentary behaviour
• Promote staff awareness of mental health issues and behaviours, and tools which help to protect and sustain positive mental health
• Increase participation in social and group activities

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3 http://www.who.int/occupational_health/topics/workplace/en/
4 As an example, HR records show that total days of sickness absence at the University fell by over 1300 days between 2014-15 and 2016-17. Based on average salary this represents a reduction in the cost of sickness absence of over £185,000.
• Improve engagement of staff groups with lower levels of participation, specifically men and academic/research staff
• Ensure that key health and wellbeing issues which are most relevant to the University are addressed, including sedentary behaviour and an aging workforce.

4. Aims and objectives

Aims
The University Wellbeing & Engagement Group aims to:
• Deliver a ‘health-promoting workplace’ and align itself with local, national and international standards for employee health and wellbeing
• Raise levels of awareness about health and wellbeing initiatives and information provided by the University
• Increase overall levels of participation in health and wellbeing activities
• Increase participation rates for staff groups with lower levels of participation
• Increase reported levels of engagement and wellbeing as measured through survey data and other institutional metrics
• Create a culture of staff engagement and wellbeing, where health and wellbeing activity is normalised and perceived as an integral part of day-to-day practice for managers and staff
• Support the University in being recognised as an excellent place to work

Objectives
By 2021 the we will:
• Achieve an overall level of participation in the Staff Survey of 65% (57% in 2017)
• Achieve an overall staff satisfaction index (average positive response for all staff survey questions) of 85% (from 79.5% in 2017).
• Achieve an average positive response on specific staff survey questions as follows
  o Overall I derive satisfaction from my work in the University: 98% (94.6% in 2017)
  o My motivation at work is generally high: 94% (90.6% in 2017)
  o I would recommend the University to friends/family as a good place to work: 94% (90.7% in 2017)
  o I believe it is possible for me to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance in this employment: 80% (76.6% in 2017)
• Exceed the Times Higher Education (THE) University Workplace survey average positive response for work-life balance by 25 percentage points
• Reduce sickness absence levels by 10% on 2016 levels (if we are successful in delivering higher levels of staff engagement we would expect to see lower levels of absence, but any improvement to health and wellbeing generally will also contribute to lower levels of absence)
• Achieve and maintain a level of staff turnover below 10%
• Reduce Occupational Health referrals for musculo-skeletal disorders by 10% on 2016 levels
• Increase the perceived improvement in ‘University working environment’ associated with health and wellbeing activity to 85%, as measured in the HWL survey (from 80% of respondents who expressed an opinion in 2016)
• Increase participation in health and wellbeing activities by 5% annually
• Achieve and maintain the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award

5. Delivery
The activities, programmes, campaigns and dissemination of information required to deliver the objectives under the key themes will be coordinated and delivered as follows:

University Wellbeing & Engagement Group will:
Work within its terms of reference to:
• Review and update the HWL Action Plan
• Plan and review the annual campaign calendar
• Contribute expertise to the planning and delivery of specific events/activities
- Maintain oversight of HWL survey and analysis of results
- Review and contribute to HWL Awards submissions
- Share specialist knowledge and expertise to support delivery of this strategy

**Head of Organisational & Staff Development will:**
- Chair the University Wellbeing & Engagement group
- Coordinate with University departments to ensure implementation of the HWL action plan and other University engagement and wellbeing processes
- Directly manage CAPOD resources to ensure the planning, organisation, delivery and evaluation of health and wellbeing activities
- Liaise and collaborate with staff across the University and externally to ensure that the aims and objectives of this strategy are achieved.

**CAPOD will:**
- Support the work of the Wellbeing & Engagement group
- Deploy resources and processes to ensure that events and activities are delivered in line with agreed plans, records maintained and activities evaluated as appropriate
- Liaise and collaborate with staff within the University and externally to ensure that the aims and objectives of this strategy are achieved.

**Asset-based approach**
As a research-intensive University, we not only have colleagues in Service Units who contribute to staff engagement and wellbeing, but have many colleagues whose academic specialism relates to important wellbeing themes, such as public health science, dementia and sleep health.

These people represent 'credible messengers' and in the delivery of the aims and objectives of this strategy we will seek to involve such colleagues wherever possible.

6. **Review and evaluation**
On behalf of the Wellbeing & Engagement Group, the Head of Organisational & Staff Development will report on an annual basis to the Vice Principal Governance, providing a quantitative and qualitative assessment of progress and achievements against the aims and objectives of this strategy.

Regular updates will be provided via the Service Directors Group.

7. **Organisational environment and staff engagement**
This strategy is focused on generating higher levels of staff engagement and wellbeing through specific activities and targeted programmes to deliver improvements in performance.

It must be recognised, however, that staff engagement and wellbeing (as indicated in section 2 above) are influenced by a wide range of organisational conditions. This strategy therefore must be part of a broader range of strategies and initiatives to address organisational culture and values, recruitment and retention, induction, job design, autonomy and job meaningfulness, equality, diversity and inclusiveness, staff development and support, leadership and management, reward and recognition, and effective management of change.