

# Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

## Introduction

LSE is committed to providing an inclusive working environment where the wellbeing of staff enables them to achieve their full potential and thrive. This commitment sits alongside, and in many ways complements, the School's health and safety obligations. Fostering a working environment that supports employee wellbeing will help to deliver a positive employee experience that encourages commitment and loyalty as well as enabling both personal and collective success. Supporting staff in this way is also integral to the success of the LSE 2030 strategy and delivery of LSE's objectives.

This policy will be implemented through a detailed action plan which is underpinned by the following key themes:

- Collaborating with key internal and external partners to create a shared understanding of wellbeing in the workplace and to develop appropriate wellbeing interventions.
- Promoting better wellbeing through an improved bank of information resources and encouraging participation in wellbeing initiatives at individual, team and School levels.
- Training and supporting School leaders and managers to manage staff effectively and compassionately, and, in doing so, create a healthy working environment.
- Creating a community of wellbeing volunteers to develop and coordinate a range of 'grassroots' wellbeing initiatives, whilst providing opportunities for the wider School community to contribute ideas and to engage and connect with other members of staff.

This policy is accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) which aims to identify the policy's impact in terms of protected characteristics as well as ways in which any negative impact may be mitigated. Further details about LSE's EIA process can be found on the EDI webpages.

## Policy Aims

Through this policy and its complementary resources, LSE aims to:

- Create a positive, healthy and inclusive culture where individuals are supported to perform to the best of their abilities and will, through this, be resilient and adaptable in the face of change.

- Create a working environment where potential work-related stressors are avoided, minimised or mitigated as far as possible through good management practices, effective policies, staff development and training.
- Develop line managers to understand how wellbeing impacts on individuals and teams, whilst equipping them to support their staff as their wellbeing needs change or are shared.
- Establish working arrangements where staff feel able to maintain an appropriate work-life balance and access wellbeing resources as required.
- Foster a personal and shared responsibility for wellbeing in which all staff contribute positively towards the School environment.

## Scope of Policy

This policy and its supporting guidance apply to all School staff, whether salaried or hourly paid. Outside these staff groups, LSE also has a duty of care to agency staff, contractors and other individuals on School business.

While this policy sets out ways in which LSE aims to meet its commitments to the wellbeing of the LSE community, it does not provide a formal procedure for addressing wellbeing concerns; these should be addressed under the relevant School policy depending on the circumstances (some of which are listed below).

## Complementary wellbeing resources

This policy informs, and is complemented by, a wide range of resources within LSE that also support aspects of wellbeing. The list below is not intended to be a comprehensive list and staff (and managers) should be open to considering other policies and resources as appropriate to address a particular situation.

Counselling and mental health support:

- LSE's in-house staff counselling services, which can be contacted by staff to discuss any work-related issues or personal difficulties affecting their wellbeing or mental health.
- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides confidential telephone counselling on all aspects of wellbeing; the EAP includes an out of hours' service in cases of emergency and is contactable 365 days a year.
- The Mental Health First Aiders Network, which can provide a first point of contact for an employee experiencing problems that are impacting on their wellbeing.

Wider wellbeing resources:

- The LSE Health and Safety Policy, which sets out how LSE will aim to create, as far as possible, a working environment where potential work-related stressors are avoided through good management practices, effective HR policies and staff development.
- The Wellness Toolkit, which provides in-depth advice and guidance to support the health and wellbeing of staff.
- LSE's sickness absence procedures, which apply when an individual takes time away from work for a wellbeing-related reason; other leave procedures may also be appropriate depending upon the circumstances.
- The staff wellbeing webpages which set out the full range of wellbeing resources available to staff.
- Since some staff are also LSE students, LSE's student wellbeing resources may also be useful.
- The Disability Policy, which sets out the support available to staff with a disability or long-term condition, both seen and unseen.

- The Alcohol and Drugs Policy, which aims to promote greater awareness of the ways in which alcohol and drugs dependencies (and their associated risks) may impact on employees and those around them, as well as signposting ways in which individuals may be supported. The policy includes a list of external resources that may be useful where an individual's wellbeing is being impacted by an alcohol and/or drug dependency.
- The Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy sets out the process by which staff (and other members of the LSE community) may take formal action if they feel that they have been subject to discrimination, harassment or other adverse treatment.
- LSE's Safe Contacts webpage provides support and resources for any form of bullying or harassment. Linked resources include Sexual Violence Support Workers and Report It. Stop It.
- The Etiquette Policy for Email and other Online Communication Tools, which focuses on behaviours and etiquette that support positive interactions when working and collaborating online.
- The Ethics Code, which provides a set of core principles of ethical integrity that are expected of the whole LSE community.
- The Dignity at Work Statement which applies to all LSE staff and clarifies expectations of behaviour, as well as setting out the means by which inappropriate behaviour which falls short of bullying or harassment can be easily identified, addressed and resolved.

In addition, LSE works with a number of external organisations to develop and promote wellbeing resources and initiatives for staff.

Wellbeing resources developed within LSE and signposted from this policy are intended to help staff and managers to manage wellbeing and performance within a work context. Internal School wellbeing resources – including Staff Counselling – are not an emergency or crisis service and staff should contact medical professionals as appropriate. The NHS webpages include details on getting urgent help regarding mental health and other emergencies.

## Policy responsibilities

LSE's senior management will:

- Support measures to develop a culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect within LSE.
- Champion good management practices and establish a work ethos within LSE which encourages a healthy work-life balance.
- Promote effective communication that enables an open and constructive feedback culture, both School-wide and locally.
- Encourage LSE initiatives and events that promote wellbeing.

Employees:

- Should treat colleagues and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity.
- Are encouraged to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and to access relevant School resources where required.
- Are encouraged to share with their line manager (or another colleague) if work (or other) issues are causing them stress or otherwise having a negative impact on their wellbeing.

Line managers are responsible for:

- Promoting positive work relationships by treating individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity, promoting a culture of mutual respect in the team(s) they manage, and for taking appropriate action when issues are brought to their attention.
- Ensuring that individuals whom they line manage are clear about the requirements of their role(s) and that they have the necessary tools and support to perform to the best of their capability.

- Incorporating discussions about wellbeing into one-to-one meetings and catch-ups with staff, including prompting employees where (for example) there has been a sudden and/or unexplained change in performance or conduct.
- Ensuring that there is good communication within their team(s), that there are opportunities for staff to raise wellbeing-related concerns, and seeking advice at an early stage where concerns are raised.
- Checking in with staff who are working remotely and taking steps to ensure that all staff feel included and involved, including both work and social events.
- Spotting the signs where it might reasonably be ascertained that an employee may be struggling with their wellbeing, e.g. if there is a sudden and/or unexplained change in appearance and/or mood.
- Where an employee shares that their wellbeing is being negatively impacted (due to factors in and/or outside work, taking timely and appropriate steps to support them. Depending on the circumstances, this may include seeking medical advice to inform the most appropriate support.
- Escalating appropriately where work-related stressors or other identifiable factors may be negatively impacting an employee's wellbeing.
- Working with HR on the undertaking of individual and department-level risk assessments.
- Seeking further advice in a confidential and appropriate manner (e.g. from their HR Partner) before taking formal action in relation to wellbeing concerns, e.g. where there has been an unexplained change in an employee's conduct and/or performance.
- Taking appropriate action where an employee's performance and/or conduct may be negatively impacting on the stress or general wellbeing of others.
- Engaging with relevant wellbeing-related training and resources (and encouraging staff to do so), including that focused on the causes and effects of work-related stress.

Human Resources (HR) are responsible for:

- Providing support and advice to line managers and staff in line with this policy and related resources, including working with staff and managers where supportive measures are required.
- Treating information shared in relation to a wellbeing problem confidentially and only sharing on a strictly 'need to know' basis.
- Working in conjunction with line managers to seek specialist advice (such as via an Occupational Health referral) where required, including where stress may be a contributing factor.
- Assisting and supporting managers to undertake local stress risk assessments, where required.
- Collating management information to enable assessment of LSE's performance in relation to staff wellbeing in general and stress management in particular.
- Working with relevant areas of LSE to develop and deliver relevant training, including on stress, to staff and managers.
- Maintaining LSE's institution-level risk assessment, based on the Health and Safety Executive's 'Management Standards for Work-related Stress'.
- Seeking the views of employees on the effectiveness of this policy, and LSE's wellbeing support in general, through staff surveys and other appropriate feedback mechanisms.

Other key services and their responsibilities include:

- LSE's recognised trade unions have an important role to play in conveying any generic wellbeing concerns or issues as identified by their members to the School via the JNICC. In addition, union-appointed safety representatives contribute to identifying and raising awareness of local wellbeing issues.
- Health and Safety provide a template to be used for department-level health and safety risk assessments.

LSE also uses both external services to provide additional support and advice which may inform the management of individual wellbeing issues or problems, including Occupational Health and the Employee Assistance Programme.

# Policy principles

LSE is committed to creating a culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect where all individuals are treated with dignity and where wellbeing is an organisational priority.

This policy acknowledges the potential impact that an employee's work can have on their mental health or another aspect of their wellbeing, taking into account that wellbeing is both personal to the individual and is likely to fluctuate over time. There is a persuasive business case, as well as a moral and legal duty, for promoting employee wellbeing as far as reasonably practicable.

In particular, LSE's working environment will be one where staff:

- Can work safely, comfortably and with minimal risk to their health.
- Feel valued and supported.
- Are confident that their health and wellbeing are important to the School.
- Have an appropriate work-life balance.
- Feel confident, equipped and supported to demonstrate resilience and respond flexibly and positively to both temporary increases in workload and an evolving work environment.
- Are provided with advice, support and a working environment that encourages healthy lifestyle choices.
- Feel able to seek support from their line manager, work colleagues or other sources of assistance in relation to stress and other mental health issues.

Whilst there is a particular focus within this policy and many related resources on mental health support, LSE seeks to support all strands of wellbeing in the workplace, including though not limited to: mental, physical, professional, social, financial and environmental wellbeing.

In seeking to support the mental health of staff, this policy accepts the Health and Safety Executive's definition of work-related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between "reasonable pressures" that are an accepted part of the working environment (and which can also be stimulating and motivating) and "stress" where an individual feels that they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them. Further information is set out in Section 8. Stress identification and management.

This policy recognises that good management practices can enhance and promote staff wellbeing. These include the areas of:

- Recruitment and selection procedures, including clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the 'right' person is recruited for the job.
- Effective job design which ensures that a role's workload is both reasonable and realistic.
- Appropriate learning and development opportunities to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies for their role.
- Required knowledge, skills and behaviours for managers, to be cascaded through to all levels of management and supervision.
- Effective promotion and reward procedures.
- Performance management procedures.
- Capability and absence management, including return to work procedures, to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following periods of absence.
- Timely and effective disability support.
- Policies and procedures that relate to the conduct of staff.
- Flexible working and leave procedures.
- Formal accreditations that have a bearing on wellbeing, e.g. London Healthy Workplace Award.

This policy acknowledges the link between job performance and wellbeing. In particular, it is important that employees are clear about the requirements of their job(s), and are provided with the appropriate tools and support to enable them to perform to the best of their capability. Line managers have a key



role to play in proactively addressing performance and/or conduct concerns at an early stage so that any negative impacts on wellbeing (e.g. stress) are minimised as far as possible.

Risk assessments have an important role to play in guiding appropriate actions to support the wellbeing of staff (among other aspects). Where required, risk assessments should be undertaken in conjunction with the affected employee(s), with support from HR.

Many LSE staff work in a blended way which means a mixture of on-campus and remote working within the working week. Whilst remote working can bring benefits for an individual's wellbeing (for example, by allowing them more freedom to manage their time and more control over their work environment), it can also mean that staff feel more isolated from colleagues in addition to there being less oversight if an individual is struggling. Line managers (and indeed all staff) have a role to play in checking in on colleagues working remotely so that they feel included and able to share any wellbeing concerns or issues.

Any employee who raises a wellbeing concern, or otherwise shares information related to their wellbeing, will be treated in a compassionate and supportive manner. Any such information shared be treated with appropriate confidence and normally only shared on a 'need to know' basis, for example for the effective implementation of agreed support measures (including where relevant with third parties, such as Occupational Health and other medical professionals). Information may also be shared where there is an immediate and/or apparent threat to someone's health and safety. Where information needs to be shared in relation to a particular case, the person who initially disclosed the information should be advised that this is being done.

Absence related to an individual's wellbeing (e.g. sickness absence) should be addressed and managed under the appropriate procedure. Where an employee's condition constitutes a disability, any related absence is (and must be) recorded and managed separately from other categories of sickness absence, as set out in the Disability Policy.

LSE will endeavour, via HR, to collate management information to assess performance in relation to staff wellbeing in general and stress management in particular, including:

- Sickness absence data
- Information from staff turnover, including exit questionnaires
- Referrals to Occupational Health
- Referrals to Staff Counselling and the School's Employee Assistance Programme
- Grievance and harassment cases

## The role of risk assessments

### Institution-wide level

At an LSE-wide level, HR maintains a risk assessment which identifies whether the School's policies and procedures are compliant with the HSE's 'Management Standards' in relation to the management of work-related stress.

Where gaps are identified, HR will liaise with relevant areas so that the necessary action can be taken to address any shortcomings; any changes or updates to the institution-wide assessment should be signed off by SMC.

### Departmental level

A standard departmental health and safety risk assessment may identify that a further specialist risk assessment is required, for example if stress is identified as a significant hazard. Where the departmental assessment indicates that a stress risk assessment is required, the HR Partner can support the department in the undertaking of the stress risk assessment as well as any actions that

may result, such as the management of any work-related stressors and appropriate changes to local management practices.

Where a department level risk assessment is undertaken, the affected employees should be consulted. Any safety representatives appointed by LSE's recognised trade unions who work in the affected area will also be consulted.

## Individual level

HR also has an individual risk assessment (IRA) template which allows for issues that are affecting an individual's wellbeing to be identified and addressed. Whilst IRAs are typically used where LSE may need to take specific measures in the form of reasonable adjustments (e.g. where an employee has a disability), they may also be considered where there are more general concerns that have been raised by, or relate to, an individual employee.

## Stress identification and management

This policy recognises that there are many sources of work-related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of one or a number of individuals. This policy also recognises that workplace stress which is not successfully managed can lead to burnout. As part of its duty of care, LSE is required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' wellbeing, including work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors that are work-related and within LSE's control.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have produced a number of Management Standards that cover the primary sources of stress that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.

LSE's performance on stress management will be assessed in the context of the HSE Management Standards. These Standards are:

- **Demands** – i.e. workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control** – i.e. how much say the person has in the way that they work.
- **Support** – i.e. the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships** – i.e. promoting positive working to avoid conflict and addressing any unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation, and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting responsibilities.
- **Change** – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation.

Stress can manifest in different individuals in different ways, which can make it difficult to identify when someone is stressed. This may be exacerbated by the nature of an individual's role and their working arrangements, e.g. if they are working remotely for part of the week and are therefore less visible. In addition, stress may only become apparent at certain times, such as during especially busy work periods or when work deadlines are approaching.

LSE offers training to help managers better identify and manage wellbeing issues (including stress) in their team(s), where possible at an early stage. More details are available on the HR Organisational Learning webpage or via the Training and Development (TDS) system. Managers can help by being aware of particular work peaks and encouraging a regular feedback culture from staff through one-to-ones and regular catch-ups. Where workloads are identified as a contributing factor to stress and other wellbeing issues, managers should be mindful of ways in which measures to address this may impact on others – in particular, redistributing work may simply move the problem elsewhere rather than address the underlying causes.

Further guidance about stress management is available in LSE's Wellness Toolkit, which includes a dedicated section to help staff understand whether they are experiencing stress as well as ways to manage it and/or seek help.

## Monitoring wellbeing

It is expected that line managers will monitor absence rates in their team(s) as part of their normal managerial responsibilities. Managers should be aware that increased absence rates, or a high absence rate sustained over a period of time, may be linked to a wellbeing issue which is not especially visible in an individual's performance or general behaviour.

Line managers can also keep an eye on the general wellbeing of staff by checking in with them during the working day; this may be particularly important where staff are working remotely and casual social interactions are less frequent. Such catch-ups should not be intrusive and should (where possible) be agreed in advance with the employee.

## Implementation and review

This policy and its complementary resources will be implemented and promoted via relevant training for staff and managers, the onboarding process for new staff, and wellbeing events and initiatives, among other means.

This policy and its accompanying EIA will be reviewed in line with HR's policy schedule as well as any changes in the statutory environment. The review process will include an examination of relevant management data as collated by HR, feedback from relevant surveys, contributions from relevant School committees and groups, and the findings of relevant LSE risk assessments.



## Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
3 years	17/11/2025	17/08/2025

## Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	28/04/2022	HRMB	
2	17/11/2022	JNICC	

## Links

Reference	Link
Staff Counselling Services	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/staff-counselling">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/staff-counselling</a>
Employee Assistance Programme	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Human-Resources/Wellbeing-Pages-2020/Employee-Assistance-Programme">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Human-Resources/Wellbeing-Pages-2020/Employee-Assistance-Programme</a>
Mental Health First Aiders Network	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/Mental-Health-First-Aid-Network">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/Mental-Health-First-Aid-Network</a>
LSE Health and Safety Policy	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/heaSaf.pdf">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/heaSaf.pdf</a>
Disability Policy	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/schPolDis.pdf">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/schPolDis.pdf</a>
Alcohol and Drugs Policy	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/alcDruPol.pdf">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/alcDruPol.pdf</a>
Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/harPol.pdf">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/harPol.pdf</a>
Safe Contacts	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/Making-a-choice/Safe-Contacts-and-Support">https://info.lse.ac.uk/Making-a-choice/Safe-Contacts-and-Support</a>
Etiquette Policy for Email and other Online Communication Tools	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/emaEtiGui.pdf">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-and-procedures/Assets/Documents/emaEtiGui.pdf</a>
Ethics Code	<a href="https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Ethics/Ethics-Code">https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Ethics/Ethics-Code</a>

## Contacts

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## Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	Yes
Will training needs arise from this policy	Yes/ No
If Yes, please give details	

Training for line managers will be delivered as part of the LSE Manager: Bringing Policy to Life programme