Wellbeing Assessment and Management of Stress Policy

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Purpose and Core Principles

The purpose of the Wellbeing Assessment and Management of Stress Policy is to set out the principles for how we assess organisational wellbeing at LBU and manage work-related stress. The Wellbeing Assessment provides a framework for Schools and Services to check in on what's happening to maintain or enhance wellbeing, and what's happening that poses a risk to colleague wellbeing, including work-related stressors. The approach encourages open and honest conversations and helps teams find solutions together. It is based on the following principles:

- What is happening that is helping to enhance or maintain our wellbeing? With a focus on good practice that could be continued and built upon.
- What is negatively affecting our wellbeing, causing stress or has the potential to do so? Focusing on improvements, mitigating actions and risk.
- Action planning – including accountability at both an individual, team and school/service wide level.
- Communication – of agreed actions planned and ongoing progress.

Scope

'Wellbeing at Work' relates to all aspects of working life including the safety and quality of the physical environment, the work organisation and culture, the working environment and work-related stressors. It is 'creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation' (CIPD 2022).

The University has a duty to provide a healthy and safe place of work and in doing so acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing risk through work-related stress. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'. This can arise from the following sources:

- **Demands** – The workloads, work patterns and work environment
- **Control** – How much say a person has in the way they do their work
- **Support** – The level of support provided by managers and colleagues
- **Relationships** – Not being subject to unreasonable behaviours
- **Role** – How well an employee understands their role and responsibilities
- **Change** – How well organisational change is managed and communicated

Responsibility

Every member of the University has a responsibility for health and safety; and improving wellbeing and reducing stress. In terms of the Wellbeing Assessment, every colleague should play an active part – providing and/or taking the opportunity to feed in, recognising success, identifying risks and developing improvement actions together.

It is the responsibility of each Dean or Director to ensure the School/Service Wellbeing Assessment takes place (at least every six months – please see 'When' section below).

- Essential - Wide participation from the School/Service.
- Recommended – Developing and agreeing improvement actions together. Open and timely

feedback about actions to be taken.

This enables oversight of key potential issues within the School/Service and ensures that actions are prioritised, progressed and reviewed. Where topics or issues are raised which are not in the control of the School or Service to resolve, these need to be escalated to Human Resources and Health and Safety.

In producing an action plan, data from Wellbeing Assessment discussions can be considered alongside Colleague Survey actions and other people metrics (e.g. sickness, turnover).

The completed Wellbeing Assessment and/or the themes and actions should be available to view by the colleagues working in that School or Service. It is best practice to keep the conversation alive through existing management structures and communications channels throughout the year.

Human Resources has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this Policy and its supporting procedures and will provide advice and guidance to managers and employees.

Review
This policy has been reviewed and updated in consultation with the Trade Unions and Health and Safety Representatives.
This policy and procedure will be monitored and reviewed every three years and/or amended in light of legislative changes and organisational requirements as appropriate.

Frequency

Wellbeing Assessments should be carried out and reviewed every six months (or more frequently where there are significant changes within the School or Service, significant changes to location or ways of working, or factors such as increased employee turnover, sickness absence or grievances). Deans and Directors should ensure that the most recent Wellbeing Assessment is available for reporting purposes and as evidence for any Health and Safety audit.

Where a Wellbeing Assessment has been undertaken for an individual subject group or team, it may be decided at the six-monthly review that it is no longer necessary to continue with this separate stress risk assessment. If this is the case, it should be noted on the summary action plan, and future comments/feedback should be fed into the overall Wellbeing Assessment.

Supporting the wellbeing of the University is an ongoing, year-round process. You could start by using One-to-Ones: Highlighting Wellbeing and PDR conversations with all staff. In large Schools and Services, team-based discussions offer an opportunity to assess which actions can be taken by a team and which need to be at School or Service level. All these conversations will provide a better understanding of the wellbeing and stressors of the School/Service and help with the ongoing completion of the Wellbeing Assessment.

Wellbeing Assessment Guidance

Further documents and resources e.g. form, staff and manager guidance can be found on the

[Wellbeing Assessment pages](#).

Further resources and information for managers and staff on wellbeing at work are available on our [Wellbeing webpages](#).

Reviewed April 2023.

Appendix 1: Supporting processes

Wellbeing Action Plans

Wellbeing Action Plans should be used on a team or an individual basis, where it is requested by the individual and/or where a manager wants to help improve wellbeing at work. They can be used both proactively to help maintain good levels of wellbeing across the team or individually, and also to support the team or an individual with declining levels of wellbeing. If there's an issue affecting an individual's wellbeing which is common to other colleagues' experience then this should be picked up through the Wellbeing Assessment e.g. a process change causing delays, inefficiencies etc.

Individual Stress Risk Assessments

On occasions where a manager becomes aware that an individual is experiencing stress, it is important to speak to the person involved, to find out what has led to the situation, and what can be done about it. The manager should attempt to engage with the individual and complete the Individual Stress Risk Assessment Checklist. The checklist is designed to help the manager have practical conversations to determine the exact nature of the issues, assess the individual's role and working environment, and identify any reasonable additional measures that may help. The individual stress risk assessment checklist relies on both managers and colleagues having an open and honest two-way conversation.

The process of completing the Individual Stress Risk Assessment Checklist will vary on the individual circumstances, for example, whether the individual is at work or absent from work. Completion of the form may require support from Human Resources and in cases where there is an underlying or long-term condition, advice should be sought from Occupational Health.

Referrals to Occupational Health

The University's Occupational Health team provides professional support and advice to mangers on work related and work-relevant aspects of ill-health. Where managers need to refer an individual to Occupational Health, managers should discuss the reason for the referral with the employee and complete the OH referral form before a referral to Occupational Health is made. Where this is not possible, the manager should contact a member of the Occupational Health team to discuss the case prior to completing the referral.

Referrals to Spectrum Employee Assistance Programme

Our employee assistance programme provided by Spectrum is available to colleagues across the University. Support includes self-help guides, 24/7 confidential helpline and specialist referrals. With the individual's consent, managers can refer members of their team directly to Spectrum so that they can get support when they need it. For details of how to do this please read the Spectrum Manager referral guidance and form.

Appendix 2: Definitions
(using recognised definitions from University Mental Health Charter)

Wellbeing at Work - Wellbeing is good for students, colleagues, the University and our wider community. Promoting wellbeing can help prevent stress and create positive working environments where individuals and organisations can thrive. Good health and wellbeing can be a core enabler of colleague engagement and organisational performance.

Mental health refers to a full spectrum of experience ranging from good mental health to mental illness.

Good mental health means more than the absence of illness. It will refer to a dynamic state of internal equilibrium in which an individual experiences regular enduring positive feelings, thoughts and behaviours, can respond appropriately to normal negative emotions and situations and is able to make a positive contribution to their community.

Mental illness will be taken to mean a condition and experience, involving thoughts, feelings, symptoms and/or behaviours, that causes distress and reduces functioning, impacting negatively on an individual's day to day experience, and which may receive or be eligible to receive a clinical diagnosis.

Mental health problems or poor mental health will refer to a broader range of individuals experiencing levels of emotional and/ or psychological distress beyond normal experience and beyond their current ability to effectively manage. It will include those who are experiencing mental illness and those whose experiences fall below this threshold, but whose mental health is not good.

The [Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 6 management standards](#) cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health, lower productivity and increased accident and sickness absence rates.

Demands – The workloads, work patterns and work environment
Control – How much say a person has in the way they do their work
Support – The level of support provided by managers and colleagues
Relationships – Not being subject to unreasonable behaviours (e.g. bullying at work)
Role – How well an employee understands their role and responsibilities
Change – How well organisational change is managed and communicated

Appendix 3: Wellbeing Assessment Form

The purpose of this activity is to identify and manage workplace stressors alongside activities that support positive wellbeing. To support your discussions, please refer to the Wellbeing Assessment guidance.

School/Service	
Group/Team (optional)	

Section 1 – Areas for discussion

1. What is happening that is helping to enhance or maintain our wellbeing? *Things that we may want to continue or build upon.*	
Notes	**Agreed action**
Example - Team meetings happen across the school/service and all colleagues have 1:1s in place.	Meetings to continue as scheduled.
Example - Regular cascades of information from management meetings to all colleagues are helpful and valued.	Updates to all colleagues following monthly leadership meetings to continue.

1. What is negatively affecting our wellbeing, causing stress, or has the potential to do so? *Things we may want to stop, change or mitigate.* For each theme, including a consideration of the control measures in place, what is the final risk rating? See guidance for risk rating definitions.		
Notes	**Agreed action**	**Risk Rating (High, Medium, Low)**
Example - Too many back-to-back meetings.	50min meetings to be adopted. Purpose of and attendance at meetings to be considered carefully by organiser.	L
Example - New project being initiated that will impact BAU and team resource.	Team meetings/1:1s to include discussions around priorities and managing timescales/expectations.	M

Section 2 - Action Plan Summary

Action	Who	By when	Progress
Example - Commitment to regular team meetings and 1:1s to remain in place.	Managers	n/a	
Example - Updates to all colleagues following monthly leadership meetings to continue.	Managers	Monthly	
Example - 50min meetings to be adopted across school/service. Purpose of and attendance at meetings to be considered carefully by organiser.	All	Beginning of May	
Example - Team meetings/1:1s to include discussions around priorities and managing timescales/expectations.	Whole team	July onwards	

Section 3 - Communication and next steps

A key principle of these discussions is that agreed actions are communicated to colleagues, along with any updates on progress. Some questions to consider are as follows:

- How do you plan to communicate your actions?
- How will you keep colleagues up to date with progress?
- How will you keep these conversations going between formal reviews (typically 6 monthly)?
- What is similar or different to your colleague survey results?

Section 4 – Authorisation and key dates

Completed by:	
Date completed:	
Review dates planned for:				

Section 5 – Additional information

Next steps:	• If using to support your local team discussions, send the completed form to your senior leadership team to consider when producing the overall School/Service Wellbeing Assessment. • The overall School/Service Wellbeing Assessment should be sent to your HR Business Partner (1 summary per School/Service).
Rating guide:	• High (H) Likely to cause harm and current control measures are inadequate and should be improved within a fixed timescale. • Medium (M) Some risk to employees, additional control measures should be considered. • Low (L) No significant risk to employees, current control measures are adequate.