

## Mental Wellbeing Procedure

<b>Enabling Policy Statement; Executive Owner; Approval Route:</b>	Our Colleagues – Chief Operating Officer – Operations Committee
<b>Is the Procedure for internal use only (Non- disclosable) ?</b>	Disclosable
<b>Associated Policy Statements:</b>	Our Safety
<b>Authorised Owner:</b>	Human Resources Director
<b>Authorised Co-ordinator:</b>	Associate Director (People Services)
<b>Effective date:</b>	13 January 2026
<b>Due date for full review:</b>	13 January 2029
<b>Sub documentation:</b>	Management Guidance on supporting Mental Wellbeing

### Approval History

Version	Reason for review	Approval Route	Date
1.0	Migration to the POPP structure Full review	Operations Committee	13.01.26

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the University's approach to promoting and supporting the mental wellbeing of its staff and managing stress in the workplace. We recognise that a healthy and supportive working environment is essential for the wellbeing, engagement, and productivity of its employees. This procedure aims to:

- Enable a positive, healthy and inclusive culture where individuals are supported to perform to the best of their abilities.
- Foster a working environment where potential work-related stressors are avoided, minimised or mitigated as far as possible through good management practices, effective policies and staff development and training.
- Support line managers to understand how wellbeing and mental health 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.
- Ensure that appropriate support mechanisms and wellbeing resources are in place and accessible to all staff.
- Fulfil the University's legal and ethical responsibilities in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.
- Encourage a shared approach to wellbeing, where all staff feel able to contribute positively to their own wellbeing and that of others.

This procedure forms part of the University's wider commitment to nurturing a positive, respectful, and psychologically safe working environment for all employees.

## 2. Scope and Exceptions to the Procedure

This procedure applies to all University and subsidiary employees.

It covers the identification, prevention, and management of work-related stress and the promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing across the University community.

Members of staff may also wish to read this in conjunction with the following [procedures](#) and processes:

- **Sickness Absence Procedure** - seeks to ensure employee health issues are managed fairly whilst supporting recovery as needed and maintaining operational efficiency.
- **Disability and Neurodivergence Procedure** - sets out the support available to staff with a disability or long-term condition, both seen and unseen.
- **Tailored Adjustment Plan** - an ongoing record of agreed workplace adjustments between an employee and their Line Manager. Its purpose is to guide discussions on reasonable adjustments.
- **Substance Misuse Procedure** - aims to promote greater awareness of the ways in which alcohol and drug dependencies (and their associated risks) may impact on employees and those around them, as well as signposting ways in which individuals may be supported.
- **Flexible Working Procedure** - aims to promote work-life balance by allowing staff to request to adjust their working hours or pattern to suit their individual needs.
- **Health and Safety Procedure** - sets out how we will aim to create a working environment

where potential work-related stressors are avoided through good management practices, effective HR procedures and staff development.

- **Management of Change Procedure** - seeks to support wellbeing by ensuring that any transitions are handled transparently and thoughtfully, reducing stress and uncertainty and promoting resilience in periods of change.
- **Bullying and Harassment Procedure** – sets out the process by which staff may take formal action if they feel that they have been subject to discrimination, harassment or other adverse treatment.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended from time to time, following appropriate consultation with recognised trade union representatives.

### 3. Definitions and Terminology

As defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who is the UK national regulator for workplace Health and Safety.

#### 3.1 Stress

Stress is defined as *'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other type of demand placed upon them'*. It arises when the person perceives that they cannot cope.

It is important to note that stress and pressure are not the same, as it is recognised that pressure can be a positive state if managed correctly.

#### 3.2 Stressors

*'The aspects of work (or the environment) that have the potential to cause stress'*

These include things like lack of support, excessive workload, unclear roles or poor relationships at work.

Any events, circumstance or demand (external or internal to the individual) which places pressure on the individual and may result in stress. Different people respond differently to different stressors.

#### 3.3 Mental Health

The HSE take a broad understanding of mental health, describing it as a *'person's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing'*. It affects how individuals think, feel and behave.

#### 3.4 Wellbeing

The HSE defines wellbeing at work as *'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.'*

Wellbeing is seen as a positive state related to both mental and physical health and includes factors like job satisfaction, work-life balance and a sense of purpose at work.

#### 3.5 Crisis

A situation where an individual's mental health poses an immediate risk to themselves or others.

## **4. Procedural Principles**

### **4.1 Principles**

The University 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 procedure 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.

The University'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 University.
- 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.

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 will be regarded 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 should be recorded and managed separately from other categories of sickness absence (see the University's Sickness Absence Procedure).

### **4.2 Performance and Wellbeing**

The organisation recognises the close relationship between employee wellbeing and sustained job performance. Employees are expected to understand the requirements of their role and will be provided, where reasonably practicable, with appropriate support, resources, and guidance to enable them to perform effectively.

Line managers are responsible for monitoring performance and conduct and for addressing any concerns at an early stage in a supportive and constructive manner. Early intervention aims to minimise potential negative impacts on employee wellbeing, including work-related stress, and to promote timely access to appropriate support.

Risk assessments, including those relating to workload, work environment, and working arrangements, will be used where appropriate to inform actions that support employee wellbeing alongside performance expectations.

Where employees work in blended or remote arrangements, managers and colleagues should take reasonable steps to maintain regular communication, inclusion, and oversight. Managers should ensure that employees working remotely feel supported and are encouraged to raise any wellbeing or performance-related concerns.

#### 4.3 Stress identification and Management

It is reasonable to assume that:

- Employees are psychologically capable of withstanding reasonable pressures at work
- Employees may experience periods of pressure at work
- Short periods of pressure are not necessarily of concern

However, sustained and/or excessive pressure over long periods of time can result in anxiety, depression and poor lifestyle patterns.

This is commonly referred to as work related stress and can lead to serious illness (HSE website).

In seeking to support the mental health of staff, this procedure 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.

This procedure 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 procedure also recognises that workplace stress which is not successfully managed can lead to burnout. As part of its duty of care, the University 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 the University's control.

The Health and Safety Executive 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.

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.

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.

#### **4.4 Stress Risk Assessments**

Where required, individual stress risk assessments should be undertaken in conjunction with the affected employee(s). This could also be accompanied by a Wellness Action Plan. Please ask your local HR Advisor for more information.

The University also offers a variety of resources to help managers better identify and manage wellbeing issues (including stress) in their team(s), where possible at an early stage (see Section 4.5).

The University also maintains an institutional-level Stress Risk Assessment which aligns with the expectations of the Health and Safety Executive in relation to the management of work-related stress. This assessment provides the overarching framework for identifying, managing and mitigating work-related stress and mental health risks across the institution.

In implementing this procedure, the University will use a range of information and data sources to identify stressors and emerging risks. These may include, but are not limited to: staff surveys, sickness absence data, staff turnover information, occupational health referrals, incident reports, and feedback from trade unions, staff networks and line management.

The institutional Stress Risk Assessment will be reviewed on a regular basis, and additionally where there are significant organisational changes or emerging issues, to ensure it remains current and effective.

Analysis of the above information will also be used to identify areas of the University where work-related stress or mental health concerns may be a particular issue. Where such areas are identified, the University will require the completion of local/area-specific stress risk assessments and the development and implementation of proportionate, area-specific action plans to address identified risks.

#### **4.5 Roles and responsibilities**

##### **4.5.1 Executive Board and Senior Management**

Senior leaders are responsible for:

- Supporting measures to develop a culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect within the University.
- Championing good management practices and establishing a work ethos which encourages a healthy work-life balance.
- Promoting effective communication that enables an open and constructive feedback culture, both University-wide and locally.

- Encouraging University initiatives and events that promote wellbeing.
- The Executive Board is committed to the effective management of work-related stress and mental health risks and provides oversight and approval of the University's institutional Stress Risk Assessment and any associated actions, ensuring these are regularly reviewed and acted upon.

#### **4.5.2 Line Managers**

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 issues and seek 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.
- 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 risk assessments and implementing any actions.
- Seeking further advice in a confidential and appropriate manner 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.
- Having sought advice, 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).
- Ensure all employees who are absent from work with 'work-related stress' are referred to Occupational Health, regardless of the period of time absent.
- Evaluate and implement appropriate recommendations made by Occupational Health where the health of an employee is identified as being at specific risk from work-related stress

#### **4.5.3 Employees**

Employees are expected to:

- Cooperate with Managers, Human Resources, Health & Safety and Occupational Health personnel in discharge of their duties relating to this procedure.
- Raise areas of concern at the earliest opportunity to their line manager
- Attend Occupational Health appointments when encouraged to do so
- Take responsibility for their own wellbeing and access the University's resources where required.
- Inform their line manager (or suitable person) if they are suffering from stress at work; and
- Follow appropriate regulations with regards to managing health and safety in the workplace.

#### **4.5.4 Human Resources**

Human Resources are responsible for:

- Providing support and advice to line managers and staff in line with this procedure and related resources, including 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), including where stress may be a contributing factor.
- Assisting and supporting managers to undertake local stress risk assessments and Wellness Action Plans, where required.
- Collating management information to enable assessment of the University's performance in relation to staff wellbeing in general and stress management in particular.
- Seeking the views of employees on the effectiveness of this procedure, and the University's wellbeing support in general, through staff surveys and other appropriate feedback mechanisms.
- Advise on appropriate training courses as required.
- Ensure all employees who are absent from work with 'work related stress' are referred to Occupational Health.
- Make recommendations to access the Employee Assistance Programme and any other support services as needed.

#### **4.5.5 Other key services and their responsibilities include:**

- The University's recognised trade unions have an important role to play in supporting any wellbeing concerns or issues as identified by their members.
- Health and Safety and HR support the Institutional Risk Assessment and provide support and advice which may inform the management of individual wellbeing issues or problems
- Occupational Health provide specialist advice including supporting individuals who report stress issues.

#### **4.6 Wellbeing Resources**

This procedure informs and is complemented by a wide range of resources within the University



that also support aspects of wellbeing. The list below is not intended to be a comprehensive list and staff (and managers) should also be open to considering other policies and resources as appropriate to address a particular situation.

#### 4.6.1 Internal sources of information and support

Support Service	Description	Contact and Link details
<p>Employee Assistance Programme</p> <p>Including:</p> <p><i>24/7 confidential advice and support</i></p> <p><i>24/7 GP appointments</i></p> <p><i>24/7 legal information</i></p> <p><i>Free access to MyMindPal App</i></p> <p><i>Face to Face counselling</i></p> <p><i>Support for carers</i></p>	<p>BHSF RISE is the University EAP and offers free 24/7 wellbeing, financial and legal support and advice.</p>	<p><a href="#">BHSF Portal</a></p> <p><b>0800 285 1538</b></p> <p><b>Code: 208431</b></p> <p>Free access to a mental fitness app called MyMindPal. Register using <b>BHR2SFSE</b></p>
Occupational Health	<p>Advises managers and employees on health-related matters which may affect employees at work. Please speak to your line manager or local HR representative for more information.</p>	<p><a href="#">Occupational Health - Human Resources   Surreynet</a></p>
Report + Support	<p>A confidential service which enables you to report an incident of harassment or abuse and access support. It enables you to report anonymously or with your contact details.</p>	<p><a href="#">Report + Support - Report + Support - University of Surrey</a></p>
Wellbeing Champions	<p>A staff-focused initiative to help embed wellbeing into the fabric of our community.</p>	<p><a href="#">Wellbeing Champions - Wellbeing Support   Surreynet</a></p>
Wellbeing Hub	<p>‘Let’s Talk’ staff hub which provides a central place to outline all the services offered at the University and how to access them.</p>	<p><a href="#">Surrey Staff Wellbeing Hub</a></p>
Individual Stress Risk Assessment	<p>Based on the HSE Management Standards, this helps assess the level of stress and associated and triggers and helps employees find</p>	<p>Please contact your local HR Advisor</p>

	ways to minimise or reduce these.	
Wellness Action Plan	A proactive tool to support an employee's mental health and overall wellbeing whilst at work, including how to recognise triggers and early warning signs of poor mental health and steps to take in response.	Please contact your local HR Advisor
Tailored Adjustment Plan	Provides a structure for colleagues to have a confidential conversation with their line manager about workplace adjustments for a disability and/or long-term health condition. Please speak to your line manager or local HR representative about this.	<a href="#">Disability &amp; Neurodivergence Procedures and Guidance - Human Resources   Surreynet</a>
Staff Training and Development	'Develop Yourself at Surrey' offers a range of topics to support wellbeing, including training on Mental Health First Aid and personal resilience. See the link for more courses and further information.	<a href="#">Develop Yourself at Surrey - Learning and Development   Surreynet</a>
Staff Networks	Enabling staff to connect, socialise and discuss issues relevant to their communities.	<a href="#">EDI Team, Governance and Committees - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion   Surreynet</a>
Grief Café	A safe and confidential space for colleagues to discuss issues around grief and help to foster a better understanding of the grieving process.	<a href="#">22 May 2025 - Grief Café   Surreynet</a>
Religious Life and Belief Service	Supporting the faith and belief aspects of all members of the University Community.	<a href="#">Religious Life and Belief Centre (RLBC)   MySurrey student website   University of Surrey</a>
Dedicated wellness areas on campus	There are wellbeing and sensory rooms available on campus, offering a place for colleagues to go to boost their wellbeing and productivity. See link for locations.	<a href="#">Announcing the introduction of new family friendly spaces and wellbeing rooms across our campuses   Surreynet</a>
Staff Benefits including discount at BUPA and Surrey Sports Park and the purchase of additional annual leave	A range of benefit designed to support and promote wellbeing.	<a href="#">Reward &amp; Benefits - Human Resources   Surreynet</a>

#### 4.6.2 External sources of information and support

Support Service	Contact Details
24 hour NHS advice and support helpline	0800 915 4644  <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/">https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/</a>
Samaritans	Call 116 123 to talk to <a href="#">Samaritans</a> or email <a href="mailto:jo@samaritans.org">jo@samaritans.org</a> for a reply within 24 hours
Shout Crisis Text Line	Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the <a href="#">Shout Crisis Text Line</a>  <a href="http://giveusashout.org">http://giveusashout.org</a>
MIND	The mental health charity MIND has information on <a href="#">ways to help yourself cope during a crisis</a> , including calming exercises for immediate use.  Mind Infoline Call: 0300 123 3393  Website: <a href="https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/">https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:info@mind.org.uk">info@mind.org.uk</a>
Mental Health Foundation	<a href="#">Mental Health Foundation   Everyone deserves good mental health</a>  <a href="http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk">http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk</a>
Access to Work	<a href="#">Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK</a>  <a href="http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work">www.gov.uk/access-to-work</a>
Health and Safety Executive	<a href="#">HSE: Information about health and safety at work</a>  <a href="https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/resources.htm">https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/resources.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk">www.hse.gov.uk</a>

Rethink Mental Illness	<a href="#">Advice, information and support from the experts</a>  <a href="http://www.rethink.org">www.rethink.org</a>
SOS – Silence of Suicide	Call: 0300 1020 505 - 4pm to midnight every day Email: <a href="mailto:support@sossilenceofsuicide.org">support@sossilenceofsuicide.org</a> Visit: <a href="https://sossilenceofsuicide.org/">https://sossilenceofsuicide.org/</a>
Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)	Call: 0800 585858 (5pm-midnight 365 days a year) Visit: <a href="https://www.thecalmzone.net/">https://www.thecalmzone.net/</a>
Calm Harm App	<a href="#">Home - Calm Harm App</a>  <a href="http://calmharm.stem4.org.uk">http://calmharm.stem4.org.uk</a>  For individuals who experience thoughts of self-harm, and when combined with the right support, it can help many people stay safe.
Education Support Helpline - 24/7 support for teachers and education staff including support staff	<a href="#">Education Support helpline - free and confidential emotional support for teachers and education staff</a>  <a href="http://www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/help-for-you/helpline/">www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/help-for-you/helpline/</a>  (between 8pm and 8am you'll receive support from outside the UK) Call: 08000 562 561 Email: <a href="mailto:support@edsupport.org.uk">support@edsupport.org.uk</a>

## 5. Governance Requirements

### 5.1 Implementation: Communication Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published and is available on SurreyNet (HR Procedures Page) for all staff to access.

### 5.2 Implementation: Training Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published. Further support will be provided to colleagues implementing the procedure when required.

The University also offers the following training programmes:

- The Resilience Advantage: Less Stress More Happiness
- Mental Health First Aid
- Mental Health Awareness for Managers

Full information can be found on Surreynet: [Develop Yourself at Surrey - Learning and Development | Surreynet](#)

### 5.3 Review

This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required by a change in legislation or

practice.

## 5.4 Legislative Context and Higher Education Sector Guidance or Requirements

### 5.4.1 Applicable Legislation

This procedure complies with the following legislation.

- Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999
- [USHA Guidance on Stress](#)

## 5.5 Sustainability

This procedure supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting good health and well-being (SDG 3), fostering inclusive and productive workplaces (SDG 8), and reducing inequalities (SDG 10) through accessible mental health support for all.

## 6. Stakeholder Engagement and Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on 17 December 2025 and is held by the Authorised Co-ordinator.

6.2 Procedure communicated to all subsidiaries.

a.) Stakeholder Consultation was completed, as follows:

Stakeholder	Nature of Engagement	Request EB Approval (Y/N)	Date	Name of Contact
Governance	Review of V1.0	N	03/12/2025	Kelley Padley, Governance Officer
H&S	Review of V1.0	N	18/12/2025	Matt Purcell, Director of Health and Safety
Sustainability	Review of V1.0	N	06/01/2026	Martin Wiles, Head of Sustainability
Freedom of Speech & Academic Freedom	Review of V1.0	N	06/01/2026	Joshua Andresen, Academic Lead for Freedom of Speech