

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Introduction

The Pirbright Institute regards the health and wellbeing of its staff and students as central to the delivery of its strategic objectives. Its ultimate goal is to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and to prevent work associated ill health arising from physical, mental and social impacts of operating within a high hazard and complex organisation.

The Institute remains committed in providing a healthy and safe working environment and culture, whilst improving the quality of working lives for all its staff members and those that work with us. **Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy** supports the Institute's overarching goals and core **PRIDE** values, recognising that the Institute's employees are its greatest and most valuable asset.

Through the planned integration of wellbeing across all work activities and practices, a positive environment can be created that supports our approach to staff engagement, performance and scientific and research achievements. Working in partnership with all areas of the Institute and external parties who share a common interest in promoting a culture of wellbeing, remains key to the success of this strategy.

The Institute's workforce is culturally and linguistically diverse. This strategy reflects this diversity and provides practical solutions to real and related issues and challenges faced every day.

Background

Against a backdrop of Institute change against services we deliver and how we deliver them, the Institute's **People and Culture Strategy** (aligned to the Institute's Science Strategy) sets out the general direction of travel in terms of a range of workforce issues ensuring employees feel engaged with their work, understand the Institute's challenges and priorities, and recognises the importance and value of their contribution and impact.

The Institute has done much to action its commitment to continuing to address potential barriers to health and wellbeing including the recent implementation of the new Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The Institute continues its approach in identifying ways in which it can enhance employee wellbeing, reduce workplace stress and anxiety and provide open and transparent support for employees suffering from mental and / or emotional challenges. This commitment is fully supported by the Trustee Board, SLT and wider Leadership community.

In addition we already have a number of policies, services and initiatives in place to support the development of a positive, healthy and motivated workforce. It also continues to provide a safe, secure and positive working environment and manage employees fairly and in accordance with their needs. In return, employees will be responsible for supporting and improving their own health and wellbeing, taking advantage of learning and development and other wellbeing opportunities.

We recognise that our employees are key to the delivery and support of the Institute's Science Strategy and future grant / funding generation. When our employees are healthy, motivated and have a strong sense of wellbeing, then the experience and outcomes for our customers and stakeholders improves.

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What are we aiming for?

The objectives of this Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy are to:

- Ensure the Institute fully complies with its regulatory and legal obligations towards its employees, stakeholders and customers.
- Demonstrate to employees the value the Institute places on their health & wellbeing by maintaining a safe and healthy working environment
- Continuously improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our workforce
- Encourage and support our employees to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Support employees with health conditions to remain in work and performing.
- Remove barriers that prevent employees with health conditions or impairments from achieving their potential
- Improve employee morale.

Delivery of these objectives will, in turn, support the provision of improved outcomes for the Institute's stakeholder group, improved customer experience and reiterating the Institute position within the market as a 'great place to work.'

What do we mean by "health and wellbeing"?

Previously, the link between health and work in the UK has been focussed on physical health. However recent research indicates the growing impact of mental health and impacts on absence, performance and retention of talent. This strategy takes an integrated approach to physical and mental health, with the actions identified aimed at supporting improved health and wellbeing in general.

Employees may have a range of health and wellbeing challenges, both mental and physical. The Institute's approach is about supporting individuals to look after their own health and wellbeing and each other.

What are the benefits of implementing a Health and Wellbeing strategy?

Benefits for the Institute;

- There is growing awareness of the impact wellbeing can have on individuals, organisations, the economy and society. Wellbeing acts as a leading indicator of financial performance and market value; research shows that organisations with effective wellbeing programmes outperform the market.
- It was identified as an Institute commitment following feedback from the 2015 employee engagement survey, ENEI review 2017 and successful Athena Swan bronze submission.
- The last review of the Attendance and Wellbeing policy included a commitment to further develop the principle of health & wellbeing and to consider the matter holistically.
- The Institute's People and Culture Strategy include this as a key theme needing to be built into everything we do and how we behave and supports the Institute values.

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- It supports employee engagement at a time of significant Institute change and wider political / economic uncertainty (e.g. Brexit, science and research funding pressures, freedom of movement, political and social instability).
- It reiterates the importance of the Institute's legal and moral duty as identified in our [Health, Safety and Biosafety Policy](#) and to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all.
- Enhances reputation and identity as a world leading centre of science and research.

Benefits to Employees;

- Increased engagement through a feeling of being valued, listened to and treated fairly.
- Opportunity to develop potential with access to learning and development, increasing skills and potential for career progression.
- Employees feel they are more engaged in decisions that affect them and the services that they provide.
- Provides employees with the ability to deal with stress in a more effective manner.
- Access to appropriate support and information to enable employees to have the opportunity to look after their own health and wellbeing.
- Reduced sickness levels thereby reducing costs which helps retain jobs.

Benefits to our Customers & Stakeholders;

- Improved access to excellence in science and research as a result of increased productivity and technological developments.
- Improved customer / stakeholder experience leading to greater trust and confidence around delivery.

How will we make this happen?

It is proposed that an annual [Health & Wellbeing Action Plan](#) will be developed in conjunction with Trident Medical Services, HSBS, QA and HR, delivered and communicated throughout the Institute. Key responsibilities are as follows:

| Senior Leadership Team (wider leadership community) | Managers | Employees |
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| Continuing support of an environment that supports employee engagement, health & wellbeing (as specified in the People and Culture Strategy) | Promoting an environment that encourages employee engagement, health & wellbeing and flexible working. Engaging with employees to promote and improve health and wellbeing. | - Participating in the Institute's employee engagement, health & wellbeing and flexible working agendas. |
| Continuation in implementing safe systems of work to safeguard employee health and wellbeing. | Risk assessing work related stress and implementing necessary control measures to prevent harmful stress and consider the necessary support mechanisms at work. Supporting employees through a changing and challenging economic climate – enhancing coping capacity and developing a more flexible / agile work | - Managing their own health and wellbeing to enable them to participate fully at work. - Engaging with management to work together to enhance employee wellbeing. |

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| Accountability for their Directorates' health, behaviour and performance. | <p>environment. Recognising work related stress amongst employees and offering necessary support and putting in place control measures.</p> <p>Creating a culture that where problems arise, they are quickly identified and solutions considered.</p> <p>Monitoring workload and working hours in relation to health and wellbeing. Implementing effective early intervention mechanisms relating to employee absence from work.</p> | <p>- Reporting stress and ill health to management as early as possible.</p> <p>- Sharing ideas for promoting health and wellbeing in workplace.</p> <p>- Taking breaks, rest periods and annual leave in accordance with legislative and Institute policy requirements.</p> |
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How we will measure the impact of what we are doing?

We will measure the effectiveness of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy through:

- Monitoring changes in levels of sickness absence including work related stress – OH Dashboards
- Identifying increases / decreases in turnover levels as potential indicators of wellbeing issues.
- Numbers and outcomes of employee relations cases.
- Response and feedback to the introduction of any new wellbeing initiatives.
- Response to health & wellbeing question in future Employee Engagement survey.
- Reviewing data including sickness absence, stress related absence, occupational health referrals and EAP hits etc.
- Feedback from various sources: network forums, Intranet site activity.

What support and information is already in place for employees?

1. Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice

- Attendance & wellbeing (including Special Leave)
- Stress Policy and risk assessment
- Alcohol & substance misuse
- Smoking control
- Range of flexible working policies/procedures
- Reasonable Adjustments policy - Ergonomics
- Dignity at Work- including bullying & harassment and grievance policies
- Salary sacrifice: childcare vouchers
- Dignity at Work Policy

2. Services and Advice:

Occupational Health Services (Trident Medical)

- Regular Health Surveillance testing.
- Access to Physiotherapy services.

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- Mental Health Referral Partnership.
- Health / Wellbeing Campaigns.
- Pre-employment Screening
- Vaccinations
- Management Referrals

Employee Assistance Programme – EAP (Options)

- Professional advice and guidance surrounding marital, financial, mental health and emotional
- Counselling service

Institute Provision

- Free eyesight tests and contribution towards glasses for regular IT Users.
- Meeting/support forums e.g., ENEI
- Mediation Services.
- Trade Union Membership (where applicable)
- Signposting to external organisations e.g. MIND, Health & Safety Executive Standards.
- Employee forums aimed at improving workspace environment.
- Data gathering on overall health and wellbeing of the Institute employees.
- Access to Training Courses e.g. Stress Control, Risk Assessing for Stress.
- 1 to 1 Health & Wellbeing sessions.
- Prayer and Reflection Rooms.
- Showers available.
- On-site gym.
- Range of e-learning modules.

What will we do next?

1. Overall

- Encourage a network of health & wellbeing groups, with support from managers, HR and Trident Medical Services across the Institute.

2. Accessibility

- Ensure that information is widely available in an accessible format to all employees on health & wellbeing matters, initiatives , updates and services
- Improve the accessibility of health & wellbeing activities for all employees

3. Health promotion

- Promote the benefits of a physically active life

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- Facilitate a number of health improvement activities
- Promote national and local health campaigns

4. Health Surveillance

Maintain and further develop the Institute's health surveillance approach in joint partnership with HSBS, HR and Trident Medical Services allowing for:

- Detection of ill-health effects at an early stage and implementation of appropriate controls to prevent escalation.
- Provision of data to aid the Institute in evaluating health risks.
- Employees to raise concerns about how work affects their health.
- Highlighting of lapses in workplace control measures providing invaluable feedback to the risk assessment.
- An opportunity to reinforce training and education of employees (e.g. on the impact of workplace health effects and the use of personal protective equipment)

5. Mental Wellbeing

- Support the MIND initiative in tackling mental health stigma and discrimination, encouraging a culture to openly discuss mental health issues.
- Re-introduce Mental Health First Aiders across the Institute, in conjunction with Trident Medical Services.
- Provide appropriate training to help Mental Health First Aiders, managers/colleagues to spot signs and offer support to those with mental health/drug/alcohol related issues.
- Continue to promote availability of support and information services through Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health.

6. Communications & Engagement

- In partnership with Trident Medical Services hold scheduled events to raise awareness of health & wellbeing for employees.
- Develop a delivery and communication plan to maintain on going awareness of health & wellbeing issues.
- Use existing forums / committees, share information across the Institute and seek feedback.
- Hold a series of health & wellbeing focus groups with employees (including employees working in restricted area) to inform priorities for the 2018/19.action plan.

These actions will be collated into an action plan which will be monitored regularly, reviewed annually and revised priorities identified as necessary.

Equality statement

The Institute recognises that employees thrive in an environment where they are accepted and supported. To achieve this, it is important that strategy initiatives should be responsive to the

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specific requirements of protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion & belief, sex, sexual orientation.