

University of Edinburgh - Staff mental health case study

The health and wellbeing of our staff is always a priority. Departments across the University provide staff and students with access to mental health and wellbeing services and support.

We acknowledge that everyone is different, and always strive to offer different support to address staff's individual mental health and wellbeing needs.

Background

In 2019 we received feedback from staff saying it could be challenging for them to know where to find the support and information they needed. To address this, we took the decision to create a Staff Wellbeing Hub, bringing together our mental health and wellbeing activities resources in one place. We worked with different departments which led to a better understanding of strengths in our offer and identify gaps.

Due to the work we had carried out in 2019, when we received guidance to review our services for staff and students as part of the Scottish Government Covid 19 Sector Guidance for Universities (June 2020) and Mentally Healthy Universities we were able to identify actions to take in the short and medium term.

Reviewing our services

Part of this review included setting out our University's commitments to Mental Health and Wellbeing:

- providing mental health and wellbeing services that support staff at work
- signposting staff to mental health and wellbeing support relevant to their needs
- promoting a healthy working environment and working practices
- encouraging staff to look out for each other
- creating a common language to understand mental health and wellbeing needs.

The review also helped us identify gaps. For example, we identified there was little information and support available for raising awareness of how to support others with their mental health. This led to us investing in Mental Health Awareness learning for all staff and developing wellbeing briefings for managers to lead wellbeing conversations in 1:1s and team meetings.

As a large institution we also realised that we needed to create some consistent messaging around mental health and wellbeing. We created a Mental Health and Wellbeing toolkit, to provide colleagues with an understanding of the mental health and wellbeing resources available, information and resources to enable confident discussion about mental health and wellbeing and resources to support with local communications around staff mental health and wellbeing including newsletters, emails, social media etc.

We use a national wellbeing calendar to plan a series of events around the calendar. For example, we organised a campaign to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Week, where departments across the University ran events and shared resources. A key focus for the week was sharing why our staff think it is important to support Mental Health Awareness Week. As part of this, our internal staff magazine ran a story with our HR Director talking about his experiences of mental health which received a lot of positive feedback from staff

Looking forward

We are now planning to run other events, hearing from our staff about their own experiences or research in this area, with our next focus being on Suicide Prevention Awareness Day in September. With the intention to continue to work across departments to build on the support

available and consider how we continue to take an organisational wide approach to mental health and wellbeing for the benefit of both staff and students.

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