

University of Sheffield - Staff mental health and wellbeing case study

Holistic approach to staff and student mental health

At the University of Sheffield we aim to create a positive environment that supports and encourages the wellbeing of our staff and students, whilst empowering individuals to be responsible for their own wellbeing.

We are currently working to develop a joint staff and student Mental Health Strategy that will align with the key principles of the Student Minds Mental Health Charter Framework. This work will drive our institutional mental health action plan for staff and students and for the first time will ensure a whole-university holistic approach to mental health at the University of Sheffield. This work will intersect with our Disability Equality Strategy and Action plan which is also currently in development.

One University vision

Our 'One University' vision emphasises wellbeing and mental health and our leadership structures have been reviewed and tailored to support key objectives. Our departmental planning cycle provides a clear opportunity for leaders to set key objectives around wellbeing and mental health over the next five years.

On University Mental Health Day in 2020 we confirmed our signing of the Mental Health at Work Commitment; these standards are helping to shape how we improve and support the mental health and positive wellbeing of our staff.

Mentally Healthy Universities pilot programme

Aligned with the Mental Health at Work Commitment, during the past two years the University has participated in Mind's Mentally Healthy Universities Pilot Programme. One of the key outcomes of the pilot is the new Mental Health at Work Commitment Guide for the Higher Education Sector. During this period, we have successfully trained a cohort of staff to become Staff Wellbeing and Mental Health Champions. Our Wellbeing Champions community continues to grow and we currently have 90+ champions. We have also designed an internal induction and continuous development programme and a produce a monthly newsletter containing key wellbeing initiatives and resources.

We are currently using Mind's expertise and research to pilot a mental health 'Peer Supporter' scheme. Peer supporters are staff with lived experience of mental health problems, who are well placed to provide support to their colleagues. Our cohort of staff are currently finalising their working model.

Mental Wellbeing Hub

Our dedicated Mental Wellbeing web pages include mental health wellbeing resources, signposting to relevant resources and provide guides and information for staff and managers alike on key themes such as supporting the menopause in the workplace, coping with change and supporting neurodiversity in the workplace.

We use the hub to promote local charities and partnerships, for example, Sheffield IAPT who have recently delivered a 'Life after Lockdown' webinar for staff during Mental Health Awareness week. Most recently we supported the Green Ribbon Campaign as part of our association with 'This is Me Yorkshire'.

Staff are encouraged to share feedback and ideas for wellbeing initiatives and, we encourage staff led networks and peer support opportunities, for example, staff have recently set up a cancer support group.

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