

Wellbeing champions guide

Welcome

Thank you for joining our team of Wellbeing Champions. You play a vital role in helping us achieve our wellbeing aspirations. By supporting our wellbeing activities, and helping your colleagues to do the same, you can make a huge difference.

This guide is designed to help you in your role as a Champion and signposts all of the information available to you.

If you need any further information or help, please contact wellbeing@manchester.ac.uk

A word from our Lead Champion, Professor Sir Cary Cooper

Wellbeing at work is now top of the agenda for many private and public sector bodies. It has moved from a 'nice to have' to a 'must have' as the costs associated with poor mental wellbeing at work (e.g. sickness absence, presenteeism and poor productivity) has reached around £26b in the UK workforce, which doesn't count the enormous cost of the NHS treating people with the common mental disorders of depression, anxiety and stress. Indeed, lack of mental wellbeing in the workplace now represents over 45% of all lost working days, with 24 working days lost per employee (£11.7m in total). The productivity costs are difficult to calculate but with the UK 7th in the G7, it is a worrying problem.

We know from extensive research what depletes and enhances the wellbeing of employees; manageable workloads, realistic deadlines, flexible working, being managed by praise/reward and not fault-finding, having control and autonomy over their job and feeling valued, trusted and supported. The challenge for universities in this context is to ensure that people in managerial roles, from department heads and upwards, are selected for their social and interpersonal skills, are properly trained and rewarded for the role and have some tenure in it.

But the psychological contract between employer and employee demands the employees also look after themselves as well; that employees look after their physical and psychological health, and take the opportunities the employer provides to do this. Wellbeing programmes abound in many workplaces, from employee assistance programmes (e.g. counselling services), to physical health facilities to corporate social

responsibility activities to personal development training. All of these can help the individual cope better with the pressures of his or her working life, as more is demanded of all us in a less job secure, under-resourced and overloaded work environment in most of the public sector.

The employer has an obligation as well, indeed, a duty of care to ensure that the working environment doesn't create ill health, that people with problems outside of work are supported and that the wellbeing of all is a major 'people objective'. As John Ruskin, the British social reformer, wrote in 1851 "In order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed; they must be fit for it, they must not do too much of it, and they must have a sense of success in it." That is the challenge for the organisation and the individual, as we both strive to create a healthy and productive workplace.

And this is the challenge we have at the University of Manchester over the coming years to create the right kind of 'people culture', to provide opportunities for individuals to grow and develop and to minimise as much as we can the uncertainties in an ever changing higher education landscape.

**Let's work together
to make this happen.**



The role of wellbeing champion

If you are a Wellbeing Champion, we ask you to.....

- Understand Manchester's Six Ways of Wellbeing and help us to promote them.
- Champion and promote relevant wellbeing messages and events at the University.
- Signpost colleagues to University wellbeing opportunities and services.
- Help us to promote a culture of wellbeing across the University.
- Organise your own activities where possible.
- Contribute where possible to the Wellbeing Blog if you have a story to tell.
- To attend relevant training and our Champion network meetings.
- Develop and share knowledge of the Staff Support Services within the University (Counselling, Wellbeing Rooms etc.) and be able to advise and direct colleagues where necessary.
- Encourage discussions on wellbeing and promote working with wellbeing in mind.
- Feedback to the Staff Wellbeing Team on your activities

Getting started as a wellbeing champion

- Make sure that you are on our email list so that we can share relevant updates with you.
- Join our Yammer group where we also share updates and information, and encourage champions to share ideas and activities.
- Run your own event – we can help you with materials, recommendations or facilitation support.
- Check to see if there are any other Wellbeing Champions in your area. You can find our full list here. <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=40628>
- Register for our next training and induction session. Email wellbeing@manchester.ac.uk for details or check the Yammer page.
- Read our blog and sign up to our receive our blog updates at <https://wellbeinguom.com/>
- Check out our calendar on a monthly basis to see what university wide activities are ongoing. Help us promote them!
- Attend our regular wellbeing champions meetings where we will share plans – we will let you know about these via the email list.
- Check out our existing resources on our wellbeing StaffNet pages.

Wellbeing Champions – what you can do

Our Wellbeing Champions help to promote wellbeing in variety of ways. Here are just a few examples:

- Organising charity activities
- Running a book club
- Setting up a team hiking group
- Department step challenge
- Christmas film screening
- Supporting our University wellbeing fair
- Delivering local wellbeing workshops

Contact us at
wellbeing@manchester.ac.uk
for further information
and support.