University of Oxford – Mindful Employer Action Plan 2018-19

1. Mapping Oxford against the Mindful Employer Charter **Data**: establishing baseline data and supporting evidence on staff mental health, including the following sources of data: - Staff Survey: EDU is recruiting a Business Analyst who could be asked to look at responses from people reporting having mental health problems or mental health conditions. - Stress survey: (normally an annual report from Occupational Health and Personnel Services, although no report was provided in 2017-2018). - Updated equal opportunity data from CORE HR system after the launch of employee self-service. It is suspected that current data do not accurately reflect levels of disability, including mental health, so it is anticipated that levels of reported mental health conditions would rise following a targeted publicity campaign to encourage staff to update their information. - Sickness absence data: the University does not currently capture full sickness absence data at University level, however individual departments have local sickness absence recording systems such as TeamSeer. Sample data from departments using this system could provide an indication of likely overall sickness levels due to mental ill-health. - University data will be compared with national data, such as the CIPD annual absence management survey. **Gaps analysis** - An analysis will be carried out of the gaps between current provision at Oxford, and the desired outcome of an organisation where members of staff feel able to seek support for mental health problems from managers who are competent and confident to manage people with mental health problems. - MESG will also be looking at possibilities for self-referral to support, since some members of staff may be reluctant to disclose problems to their line manager, for example if they are approaching the end of a fixed-term contract. - The experience of different staff groups will be explored, to identify any groups with an increased risk of experiencing mental health problems and consider appropriate support.	OUTPUT: an annual review of Oxford staff mental health data published. Responsibility: EDU. OUTPUT: a report identifying gaps in provision, and possible strategies.

One group that has already been noted is that of academics and researchers at risk of experiencing secondary trauma related to their fieldwork, for example those working with genocide survivors, refugees or victims of sexual assault. MESG is concerned to reduce the number of mental health problems directly attributable to work, or to which work is a contributory factor. • MESG has started to identify examples of current practice, which can be shared with other parts of the University. • Models of support for staff mental health in other Russell group universities will be explored to assist in identifying effective approaches.	
2. Developing a communications strategy for mental health A communications strategy on staff mental health will be developed, with assistance from the Public Affairs Directorate. The group seeks a planned approach to the regular provision of information, signposting sources of support, and raising awareness of mental health. Communication would include: • Information on the Mindful Employer commitment, including in recruitment webpages; • Clarity that Mindful Employer is not about mindfulness; • Signposting to current sources of support within the University; • Signposting to external sources of support, including GPs, and to free sources of high quality information and advice; • Developing confidence in speaking about mental, as well as physical ill-health; • Showing that people can combine a successful career at Oxford with living with a mental health condition, given appropriate adjustments. • Normalising mental health problems and reducing stigma. • Ensuring that mental health is explicitly mentioned in University HR policies and guidance, e.g. on recruitment, flexibly working, sickness absence management. • A clear articulation of the links between the MESG work and the work on the University's Wellbeing Agenda, being led by the Director of Occupational Health and Safety. • Providing information on support for mental health at key points in the employment cycle, including at recruitment and induction.	OUTPUT: a communications strategy developed, and implementation started.

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3. Exploring the case for increased dedicated resource for staff mental health • MESG identified that resources were a key priority. The work on a gap analysis and exploring different models of support will enable MESG to develop a more accurate picture of the resources required to ensure an appropriate level of provision. • A detailed comparison will be made with provision and resourcing at other Russell group universities. • Initial work will be done within available resources of the Equality and Diversity Unit. • Funding has also been obtained through the Diversity Fund for project work to support the Mindful Employer work, including a pilot staff peer supporter scheme. • MESG will look at evidence for the costs and benefits of having an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), using examples within the University such as the Saïd Business School, support following the closure of the Tinbergen Building, and (formerly) the Bodleian Libraries.	OUTPUT: the gap analysis will include costs, and a variety of approaches depending on available resource.
4. Developing online training on mental health for line managers Many managers report that they feel out of their depth and lack the knowledge and skills to support members of their team with mental health problems. Providing training is essential to help managers develop their skills in this area. MESG will explore some of the available external training, through organisations such as Mindful Employer, Mental Health First Aid England and ACAS. Some departments have already used these training providers for face to face, and we will be seeking their feedback, which we will make available to other departments. • The University does not currently have the capacity to provide face-to-face training for all managers. Therefore online training is seen as vital in enabling managers to develop their skills in this area. • Members of the University have explored some of the available external online courses, including one devised by Mindful Employer and ACAS, but these appear to be of poor quality. • MESG will develop a more nuanced internal online course, with the assistance of the Oxford Learning Institute, EDU, Personnel Services, the Occupational Health Service, departments, divisions and members of staff with lived experience of mental health	OUTPUT: development of a pilot course for testing with users; final version of course available by June 2019.

problems. This will enable us to develop an Oxford-specific course that recognises the pressures that come from being a world class organisation. • Including case studies and suggestions from line managers and staff will contribute to developing a more inclusive culture, and a recognition that this is a shared issue. This will also enable us to identify and share existing good practice which has been shown to work in an Oxford context. • MESG wishes to develop freely accessible resources on mental health, which can be accessed by line managers and individuals, and which will contribute to greater awareness about mental health problems. • MESG also wishes to support managers in developing an inclusive work culture. MESG notes that much mental ill-health at work is caused/worsened by interpersonal dynamics and inappropriate expectations/behaviour/culture at work, and that this is often a factor in harassment and bullying complaints.	

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