

Guidance for line managers on wellbeing and mental health discussions

This document aims to provide line managers with a framework to help them discuss and agree ways to support the wellbeing and mental health of their staff, primarily through one-to-one meetings. For managers, one-to-ones are an important opportunity for you to check in with staff and for them to share any concerns or questions that they may have. You aren't expected to cover every point here in every one-to-one, but taken as a whole this guidance covers many of the main areas related to wellbeing and mental health that might come up during a one-to-one, so that you can be sure that you're supporting your staff.

1. **Ask how your staff member is doing generally** – this is particularly important if you have noticed any changes in their behaviour and/or performance recently.
2. **Explore whether the employee has any particular challenges that they are facing at this time** – these might be within or outside LSE. This conversation is a balance between encouraging an open dialogue with the employee, while also being careful not to ask too many questions in case there are areas that the employee wishes to keep confidential or is not comfortable talking about.

Discuss any work challenges and how to overcome them. This discussion will vary depending on the nature of the employee's role, but it might include talking about ways to manage their workload; prioritising work; what you as a manager or the wider team can do to help; any potential training or development; whether the employee is taking appropriate breaks (including booking annual leave); and whether anything is impacting on their mental health or general wellbeing. If the employee has a disability or chronic condition, the one-to-one is also an opportunity to discuss any reasonable adjustments and other support.

3. **Does the employee have what they need to work effectively** - this might include:
 - Having access to the appropriate technology, including the right hardware and software. You can contact the DTS Service Desk (Tech.Support@lse.ac.uk, Ext 5000) if you identify any gaps or issues. LSE also offers a range of [assistive technology](#).
 - Having an appropriate workstation set-up wherever they are working. If they've not done one recently, it might be helpful for them to complete an ErgoPro workstation assessment. Further information about workstation safety and assessments is available [here](#).
 - Whether they would benefit from any reasonable adjustments. If either you or the employee is unsure, you might find it helpful to refer to the [Reasonable Adjustments Pocket Guide](#).
 - Feeling that they can communicate effectively with others and have a sense of community/support from their colleagues.
4. **Discuss any concerns the employee has about their work-life balance.** Remember that LSE encourages reasonable flexibility so that staff feel able to manage both their work and outside commitments. As part of the discussion with the employee, you could agree an individual plan to help support them at work.
5. **Annual leave** – regular breaks are an important way for staff to keep on top of their wellbeing, so one-to-ones are an opportunity to encourage them to plan and take their annual leave. It's recommended to have these discussions early in the calendar year.
6. **5% time** - each employee should have a certain amount of time dedicated each month to their personal and professional development. What is covered here may vary depending

on the employee's role and other factors (such as the stage they are at in their career), but could include attending training sessions, networks, courses for their development. If the employee has recently been on a course, encourage them to report back on what they enjoyed and also discuss (if relevant) how their learning from the course might be applied to their current role and/or career path. Consider volunteering opportunities: LSE offers up to 5 days of volunteering leave per year (pro-rated for part-time staff) or even something more focussed on hobbies/interests (e.g. Learn for you at LSE for Bands 1-5).

7. **Have a standing wellbeing item during one-to-ones and team meetings** – allow suggestions and ideas on improving this: Establishing good working hours and practices. Breakfast catch-ups, coffee breaks and team socials- informal opportunity to catch-up and discuss any ideas (interesting courses, volunteering, events etc).
8. **Encourage good practice in how staff use Teams and Zoom** - this includes switching off or muting platforms after the employee's normal working hours so that they have time to unwind. You should also encourage the employee to take regular breaks during the working day, including a lunch break.
9. **Remember that one-to-ones are an important opportunity for you to check in on an employee** (and for them to raise any issues or concerns they may have) - so don't just spend the time covering only work tasks or to-do lists.

Management tools for Mental Health and Wellbeing

LSE has a wide range of tools and resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff. Some of the key ones are:

- a. The [Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy](#): this was updated in 2023 and will provide you with an overview of how wellbeing and mental health is approached and managed at LSE.
- b. The [Wellness Toolkit](#), which includes practical tools to support the management of any wellbeing or mental health issues or concerns, such as Wellness Action Plans. The Toolkit also includes an updated section about stress management and a stress risk assessment template.
- c. If the employee has a disability (or thinks that they may have), including neurodiverse, physical or mental health conditions, they may need help exploring support options and reasonable adjustments to remove any barriers. Line managers can:
 - Refer to the [Disability Policy](#) and [Reasonable Adjustments Pocket Guide](#)
 - Explore with the employee whether to apply to [Access to Work](#) for support, such as the free Mental Health Support Service delivered by [Able Futures](#) or [Maximus](#)
 - Consult with your HR Partner or LSE's new Staff Disability and Mental Health Adviser (Lucy Mu, l.h.mu@lse.ac.uk)
 - Utilise resources and [toolkits](#) (such as the Mental Health and Neurodiversity Toolkit) offered by the [Business Disability Forum](#) (any LSE employee can access their resources by registering with their LSE email address)
 - Contact the [Business Disability Forum Advice Team](#) for further support and guidance
- d. Mention [staff networks](#) and other support at LSE such as the Parents and Carers' Network, [EAP](#) scheme and [LSE wellbeing](#) initiatives.
- e. The [People Management Toolkit](#), which is coordinated by HR's Organisational Learning team, includes regular pieces that managers may find helpful to guide their awareness and management of wellbeing and mental health topics.

- f. Aside from our own internal training and the Mental Health First Aid training the School provides, there are other training and resources for managers that staff could take up:
- MIND – the ‘Managing mental health at work training’:
<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/training-consultancy/courses-for-anyone/>
 - Online training course through iHASCO:
<https://www.ihasco.co.uk/courses/detail/mental-health-awareness-training-managers>
 - [Mental Health First Aid England Line Managers’ Resource](#)
- g. The [Sickness Absence Toolkit](#) contains plenty of tools and useful information, including [guidance to support effective returns to work](#).

As well as the resources outlined here, remember that the Staff Wellbeing webpages contain a wide range of information and resources on different types of wellbeing. Managers and staff are welcome to contact Staffwellbeing@lse.ac.uk if they have any questions or feedback about anything they read on these pages.