



**Brunel**  
University  
London

# **BRUNEL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY FOR THE BRUNEL COMMUNITY**



**‘Healthier, happier people  
can do great things.’**

*(Professor Sir Cary Cooper,  
Professor of Organisational Psychology,  
University of Manchester).*

# Brunel Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Brunel community

Brunel University London is committed to delivering a whole-university approach to mental health and wellbeing. Good mental health and wellbeing enhances student and employee engagement, performance and achievement. It is essential to support the success of individuals through the attainment of their studies and throughout their career – both at Brunel and beyond.

The Brunel 2030 Vision states ‘we will celebrate diversity and further strengthen our culture of mutual respect and equality of opportunity, placing the health and welfare of individuals at the heart of our ethos’.

## Aims

### The University aspires to provide:

- greater awareness around mental wellbeing and opportunities to support mental health
- an environment, both physically and virtually, that promotes healthy lifestyle and work/life balance choices
- services to support individuals and groups with manageable health problems or disabilities to maintain access to their work and studies
- opportunities to enable all to improve their physical and emotional wellbeing.

### In order to achieve these, Brunel aims to continue enhancing our community which is:

- Committed
- Knowledgeable
- Caring
- Supportive
- Healthy
- Resourceful

Brunel will continue to offer initiatives enabling a whole university approach to mental health and wellbeing by prioritising the aims listed below and by regularly reviewing the progress of this work. An action plan will be continuously monitored with regular reporting to the Student Experience and Welfare Committee and the Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee. This work is jointly coordinated by the Student Services and Human Resources teams to enable and facilitate a joined up approach.

## Committed Community

Informed by the Universities UK Stepchange: mentally healthy universities framework and our obligations under the UK Equality legislation we are committed to provide sufficient opportunity, resource and strategic guidance to embed positive mental health and wellbeing awareness, communications and interventions into all areas of University life.

We are committed to nurturing an inclusive and supportive learning community for students as well as a supportive and progressive working environment for all employees by promoting good mental health and wellbeing and enabling everyone to achieve their full potential either in their studies or their work. We recognise the diverse needs of our community and that stigma and discrimination can lead to particular mental health and wellbeing challenges for some of these individuals. Additionally we will aim to work beyond the legal framework that protects members of our community with protected

characteristics, working alongside, and as part of, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: Social Justice for All. We therefore aim to develop an inclusive approach that builds positive wellbeing in all individuals regardless of their personal circumstances. We appreciate that wellbeing can be affected by many aspects of an individual's work or study, wherever they are located and however they are engaging with the university. Wellbeing does not stop at the physical boundary of our campus but extends along with the reach of our work. Brunel aims to build a community that sees positive mental health embedded in University life and promotes diversity and equality of opportunity for all.

We aim to promote a community with all members committing to others, where everyone sees mental health and wellbeing as a joint responsibility. The sections below will explore how we are already working towards this, and what we aim to do next.

## Knowledgeable Community

Providing appropriate information and education to our employees and students will enable a knowledgeable community to function and respond appropriately to all aspects of mental health and wellbeing. We will endeavour to provide accurate information to employees and students throughout their entire time at Brunel.

### We already:

- Have a dedicated wellbeing space online
- Have a suite of training and educational resources for students and employees which are accessible both on campus and virtually
- Run a wide variety of wellbeing campaigns throughout the year in line with national campaigns and local events
- Provide information to all about how to help someone who may need additional support along with easy referral routes
- Prioritise support for survivors of sexual violence and continue to develop our work in this area
- Have initiated a dedicated group of Wellbeing Champions to help promote wellbeing and to share best practice throughout the university

### We aim to:

- Define which roles should receive compulsory mental health training
- Ensure that the training offered is meeting requirements and demand
- Make it easier to identify who has received mental health training
- Improve our guidance for employees so that they can support their teams, their colleagues and their students
- Develop a digital wellbeing facility to support the communities in all areas of wellbeing

## Caring Community

Providing a community that cares about its members means including mental health and wellbeing awareness in all aspects of university life. We will consider the impact of strategic decisions on mental health and wellbeing, and will empower our colleagues to embed wellbeing into their work.

### We already:

- Promote initiatives and activities that reduce stigma about mental health and disability
- Employ highly skilled Security staff who can respond to any incidents all year round
- Have a holistic approach to individual cases of wellbeing
- Are a founding member of ProtectED – a code of practice scheme for security and student wellbeing in Universities
- Have a Dignity at Work Policy (for employees) and a Bullying and Harassment Policy

(for students) to help anyone who is subjected to bullying or harassment while at Brunel

- Have a suite of policies and guidance documents to support family friendly working, and to support students and employees in a range of situations
- Provide blended learning opportunities for our students, and flexible working arrangements for our colleagues so that all members of our community have more control in how they engage with their work and studies

### We aim to:

- Review relevant university policies and regulations to ensure consideration for mental and physical health is included
- Introduce wellbeing impact assessments into the university committee structure to ensure that all proposals have had due consideration to wellbeing
- Add wellbeing and mental health as a standard item on meetings at all levels throughout the university
- Improve the respect and dignity shown to all members of our community by others and eliminate discrimination by introducing a university wide bystander initiative

## Supportive Community

Brunel has a long and successful history of providing responsive and appropriate support services through a variety of teams and services. Building on this foundation we will develop a community where all of its members provide support to each other.

### We already:

- Provide a variety of support services to our students to respond to their individual needs
- Have a number of active employee network groups and student peer support groups providing support on a variety of topics
- Provide spaces on campus for those of faith, or of none
- Offer the support from providers in respect of emotional and financial wellbeing for employees with Care First (Employee Assistance Programme) and Neyber (Financial Wellbeing)
- Have links and referral routes with external and additional services available in the local community, including specialist organisations
- Work with individuals to ensure that support is provided to them in a format of their choosing either in person or through online tools
- Deliver a range of programmes to assist students with their transition to Brunel and to the UK; e.g. International Orientation, Headstart, Mind the Gap
- Have a Suicide Safer plan to support prevention, intervention and postvention
- Provide a safe space for students that may need it through our permanent Sensory Room
- Work with trade union representatives on campus to support members
- Have guidance to provide support to employees and students during the menopause

### We aim to:

- Develop more comprehensive out of hours guidance for employees
- Provide tailored and specific support for our Doctoral Researchers
- Remove barriers to disability disclosure to encourage more individuals to access support which they may need
- Inspire our community by sharing stories from individuals of lived experiences
- Review our health and attendance guidance to support those with long-standing health issues

## Healthy Community

Building a healthy community which empowers healthy choices. Encouraging all to take a role in their own wellbeing during their time both on and off campus.

### We already:

- Provide information, workshops and webinars to all about self-care and their role in their own wellbeing
- Provide access to physical activities both virtually and on campus
- Ensure free drinking water is available at all times on campus
- Provide extra-curricular activities through Brunel Arts
- Facilitate sexual health provision through free access to contraception and sexual health testing on campus
- Provide a Santander bike scheme linking campus to Uxbridge town centre and Hillingdon Hospital
- Continually work to improve our outdoor spaces on campus
- Support colleagues that would benefit from physiotherapy to aid their recovery and return to work
- Provide an exercise referral pathway as an intervention for students identified as needing wellbeing support

### We aim to:

- Provide mental health and wellbeing messages within each learning environment and embed wellbeing into our education delivery
- Use technology to better promote healthy studying and lifestyle choices
- Embed wellbeing into Careers provision to prepare students for life at work
- Develop a mental health in sport project
- Introduce interventions to promote smoking cessation
- Expand our offering to our community that are not on campus
- Review the healthy eating offering on campus

## Resourceful Community

Brunel University London will provide suitable frameworks and guidance to respond in times of crisis. Strengthening our internal and external referral pathways will provide for a more consistent and supportive response to any individual. Providing a resourceful response to situations where ill health is interrupting healthy academic and career progression, student experience and work-life balance.

### We already:

- Provide guidance for cases of Fitness to Study through Senate Regulation 11
- Provide guidance for crisis situations through the University Incident Management Plan
- Work with Public Health England in cases of transmittable diseases and infection outbreaks
- Are a Meningitis Aware University providing appropriate awareness and response to this illness
- Have robust health and safety processes
- Have strategic links with the NHS
- Provide an Occupational Health Provision aimed at supporting colleagues

### We aim to:

- Implement post-trauma support for members of our community
- Redraft Senate Regulation 11: Fitness to Study to better support our students through periods of ill health
- Review our responses to and preparation for pandemic and health crisis's

## Impact and evaluation

Implementation of this University wide strategy will be overseen by the Student Experience and Welfare Committee and the Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee, both of which will receive an annual report on the outputs and outcomes of the work outlined here. A summary will be provided to Senate and the Executive Board.

Development outputs from this strategy will be monitored by the Committees to ensure that they are completed in time and to budget. Any stipulated targets will be monitored here.

Impact of the strategy will be monitored by collecting data and feedback from students and employees to demonstrate improvements in the awareness and recognition of the impact of this work against student attainment and retention and employee engagement and satisfaction. Data available through sickness reporting will be monitored as well as usage of the rewards portal.

The strategy will be reviewed bi-annually to expand and further improve the strategic priorities in relation to mental health and wellbeing.


## Communication

This Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Brunel will be available online externally to demonstrate Brunel's commitment to this work.

A comprehensive communications plan will be developed to ensure continuous, meaningful and appropriate messages are communicated about this work to all members of our community.

## Continuous development

All members of Brunel are encouraged to engage with this strategy and to suggest areas for expansion and development. All comments and suggestions should be made to the Head of Student Wellbeing or the Associate Director Reward & Wellbeing (HR).



**‘Health is created and lived by  
people within the settings of  
their everyday life; where they  
learn, work, play and love.’**

*(World Health Organisation,  
Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. 1986).*

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