



Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025

Taking a holistic approach to staff mental health and wellbeing

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1. Introduction

This Strategy sets out the approach that St Mary's University will take towards supporting and improving the mental health and wellbeing of staff. It states how the University will deliver its wellbeing aims as identified in our People Strategy.

Our People Strategy makes clear that people, both staff and students, are at the heart of everything we do. It recognises that St Mary's University only achieves what it does because of our exceptional people and that our University remains the unique place it is because of the talent and dedication of our people working together to a common purpose.

As the higher education sector becomes increasingly competitive both in terms of attracting students and talented staff, it is more important than ever that we have the very best staff to drive St Mary's forward in a challenging political climate.

This will be achieved by placing wellbeing at the heart of the employee life-cycle experience and encouraging and inspiring our people to look after their health and wellbeing, and that of others. Enabling St Mary's to be recognised as an employer of choice.

As well as this the business benefits¹ of developing a healthy and committed workforce are well established and can be seen below. By working towards the LHWA we can achieve these benefits whilst gaining recognition as a top employer in London.

To the organisation	To the employee
a well-managed health and safety programme	a safe and healthy work environment
a positive and caring image	enhanced self-esteem
improved staff morale	reduced stress
reduced staff turnover	improved morale
reduced absenteeism	increased job satisfaction
increased productivity	increased skills for health protection
reduced health care/insurance costs	improved health
reduced risk of fines and litigation	improved sense of well-being

¹ https://www.who.int/occupational_health/topics/workplace/en/index1.html

2. St Mary's Mental Health and Wellbeing Aims

Our wellbeing aims have been clearly set out in our People Strategy. They state that we will:

- Offer advice, knowledge and activities that inspire more staff to look after their health and wellbeing and come together with others to discover shared interests.
- Focus on the mental wellbeing of staff by encouraging conversations and dialogue and building on our commitments set out in our mental health first aider programme.
- Work with our occupational health service and other wellbeing providers to ensure we provide a proactive, preventative offer that connects managers and staff to very high-quality care and expertise.
- Promote and report on the levels and types of sickness absence to enable earlier intervention and better planning to ensure we are a healthy place to work.
- Review current working practices and support flexibility wherever possible to ensure that there is greater flexible working across the University while ensuring the needs of the business are met.
- Commit to supporting and achieving the Mayor of London's Healthy Workplace Award to demonstrate the importance we place on the wellbeing of our people and the environment in which they work.

The Healthy Workplace Award is a key enabler in achieving these aims.

3. London Healthy Workplace Award

3.1 Background

The University approach to achieving excellence in mental health and wellbeing will be to gain the London Healthy Workplace Award (LHWA).

LHWA is an accreditation scheme led by the Mayor of London's Office and is supported by Public Health England. The Award recognises London employers who invest in their staff health and wellbeing. It incorporates the latest evidence on how best to promote health and wellbeing in the workplace.

St Mary's will focus its mental health and wellbeing activity to meet the requirements of the awards over the next five years. As well as helping St Mary's to achieve its

wellbeing aims this will also help create a culture of continuous improvement in making the mental health and wellbeing of our staff a priority.

3.2 Awards structure

The LHWA is made up of a number of Awards, these are:

- **Foundation** – for larger organisations that have recently implemented health and wellbeing practices.
- **Achievement** – a higher level award for organisations that have a more advanced and comprehensive approach to employee wellbeing.
- **Excellence** – for organisations that demonstrate that health and wellbeing are embedded in their corporate culture and values.

The LHWA is structured around an evidenced-based model of workplace health and wellbeing, made up of three “pillars” and nine standards. Each standard is defined by a set of criteria. The pillars (outer ring) and standards (inner ring) are set out below:



To achieve the awards, organisations must show how they fulfil all the criteria under each standard at the relevant award level. A full overview of the Award can be seen at Appendix 1.

All LHWA awards are valid for four years after which organisations are required to re-apply. To maintain accredited status, organisations are also required to submit the following information every year*:

- Contact details of a named individual with responsibility for the award
- An overview of current health and wellbeing activities (within the last 12 months)
- A summary of progress on actions recommended in the feedback report
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*The first submission is required 12 months after accreditation.

4. Our attainment plan

The LHWA enables benchmarking against an independent set of standards for organisations to identify what is already in place and any gaps there may be in the health, safety and wellbeing of staff.

This enables the University to recognise all the good work already underway and to plan for continuous improvements whilst progressing through the Awards towards Excellence.

St Mary's will benchmark itself against the Foundation Award in 2020 and will aim to achieve Excellence status by 2025. The timetable below sets out the target dates for each of the Awards.

Foundation Award	September 2020
Achievement Award	September 2021*
Excellence	September 2023**

*This will depend on whether we are in a position to go for the Achievement Award by this time instead of updating progress on the Foundation level.

**This will depend on the date the Achievement level is attained.

5. Delivery and monitoring of the Strategy and Action Plan

Further work will be undertaken to develop an action plan, measures of success, priorities and delivery timescales. The action plan will be developed and monitored by the HR Team, however responsibility for this strategy is not solely that of HR but that of the entire organisation.

The delivery of the strategy and action plan will form part of the annual HR Operating Plan and will be reviewed quarterly by the University Operating Board.