



Healthy Learning & Wellbeing Strategy

2017-2020
Making a Difference



1 Background

An institution performs better when its employees and students are healthy, motivated and focused. SRUC would be unable to deliver sector-leading research, education and consultancy skills and business support for Scotland’s land-based industries without the contribution of healthy employees, and its students would be unable to achieve their potential. When individuals feel they are valued and supported, they tend to have higher wellbeing levels, be more committed to their own and the institution’s goals and perform better. There is, therefore, a direct relationship between an individual’s health and wellbeing and positive personal and business outcomes. This relationship between wellbeing, motivation and business performance is often termed ‘employee engagement’ SRUC must therefore provide an environment with opportunities that encourage and support ‘active engagement’, and which enable employees and students to lead healthy lives and make choices that support their wellbeing.

Key Facts About Health

In a community of 100 people:



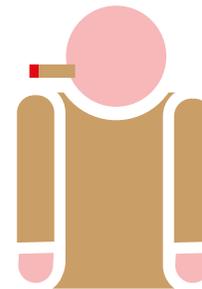
25 will experience a mental health problem in any given year



12 will have two or more symptoms of anxiety



25 drink at hazardous or harmful levels (more than 14 units per week)



25 are cigarette smokers



4 are affected by diabetes



65 are overweight, including 29 who are obese

SRUC is a community of approximately 6300 people – so the figures are startling.

Specifically, there is a 32-point difference between the percentage of disabled and non-disabled people in work – the ‘disability employment gap’; as part of our strategy, we are committed to reducing this gap. We along with other colleges and universities are also experiencing a growing number of students presenting with mental and emotional health issues, which potentially impacts on their success.

See [Appendix A, More Key Facts About Health](#) (p7), for more details.

3 Introduction to SRUC'S Strategy

The Healthy Workplace & Wellbeing strategy 2017-2020 outlines our mission to ensure that the SRUC community will have improved health and wellbeing. The strategy sets the direction of travel, provides a framework for future decisions, and has been designed to fit SRUC's history, culture, and the employee and student characteristics.

The strategy sets out our parameters and priorities for the next three years:

- **Wellbeing:** We will create an organisation where employees want to work and students want to study, because they feel valued and part of a supportive community
- **A healthy workplace:** We want staff and students to work in an environment where injuries and illness are prevented, and where older workers and students, or those with chronic illness or disabilities, are supported and accommodated
- **An effective strategy:** Our strategy is one that adopts a holistic approach to health and wellbeing, and its close association with sustainability, equality, inclusion and business performance

4 Why Are We Proposing This Strategy?

This strategy is fundamentally about promoting health, wellbeing, and a healthy workplace, as set out in *Section 3, Introduction to SRUC'S Strategy*. It draws on lessons from other sectors and identifies a holistic, proactive approach to managing health and wellbeing issues at work. It changes the focus from absence and illness management to wellbeing initiatives and connecting this to the health of SRUC as an organisation.

If we only manage absence, cases of illness and in the case of students under achievement and retention, our focus will always remain on reactive responses enquiry after the fact. It is more beneficial to link the health and success of our business and the education of others, instead, to the health and wellbeing of all our community.

Issues such as obesity, alcohol and drug abuse, and mental ill health have a negative impact on the institution, the individual and those around them. When people take responsibility for their own health through positive lifestyle changes, and are supported in this in their



workplace or place of study, their wellbeing improves and the likelihood of prolonged ill health and consequent absence from work and students' risk of withdrawal and failure is reduced. Awareness of these issues and recognising these in others will also lead to a culture of mutual support. Our strategy will enable our employees and students to perform to the best of their ability, every day, by helping more of them to choose active and healthy lifestyles, and improve their physical and mental health. This will, in turn, enable stronger employee and student performance, increased productivity, improved results and reduced sickness absence, all of which translates to better outcomes for the individual and the SRUC.

5 Who Leads the Wellbeing Strategy?

Key to successfully planning and delivering the strategy are:

- Corporate Health & Safety
- Human Resources
- Student Experience
- Learner Resources
- SRUCSA
- Trade Unions
- Occupational Health
- Wellbeing champions (one from SRUC and one from SRUCSA), who identify with, and demonstrates commitment to, health and wellbeing for all at SRUC.

The Health & Safety Policy Executive Committee oversees health and wellbeing in SRUC. Its role is to develop priorities to ensure we deliver the required outcomes.

We are determined that health and safety must be an integral part of the culture of SRUC, and that managers at all levels will take a lead in making this happen.



6 Strategic Objectives – Parameters and Objectives



The strategy is designed to improve both organisational and individual performances that maintain health and wellbeing.

Our overall objective is to build the capacity of individuals throughout the SRUC community to achieve better health and wellbeing, giving equal priority to physical and mental health.

The different aspects of health include the primary prevention of occupational risks, and the protection and promotion of health at work.

For line managers, the strategy also covers increasing their capabilities to:

- Manage teams
- Tackle issues relating to identifying stressors
- Deal with rehabilitation concerns
- Direct people to additional sources of support within a structure of support from Human Resources.

For our learning community, this strategy focuses on building awareness and confidence of the issues which impact on our student's ability to learn and achieve, and providing the appropriate information and signposting for support or self help.

The strategy has seven main priorities. These are listed in the following sections.

Priority 1

We will promote the wide range of health and wellbeing services already available to staff and students within SRUC.



Key Outcomes:

- To create a supportive environment for health improvement opportunities
- To recognise that every health care contact is a health improvement opportunity and that we all have a role to play with our managers, occupational health service provider and corporate stakeholders having specific responsibilities.

Commitment:

We will:

- Use multi-strand approaches to promote and enhance health and include a combination of lifestyle and behavioural approaches
- Develop effective partnerships with specialists across local, regional and national organisations
- Continue to develop links with other agencies to support awareness raising and training for both staff and students in mental and emotional health, sexual health, wellbeing, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) issues and anger management.

Priority 2

We will promote ill-health prevention and early help with mental wellbeing, and will develop coping strategies that enable employees and students to return to work or study after an incident.



Key Outcomes:

- Improved levels of mental health awareness
- To minimise staff absences due to stress or anxiety
- To have healthier staff and reduce levels of sickness absence

Commitment:

We will:

- Ensure that we provide supportive mental health work environments and improve the retention and recruitment of people with mental health problems and mental illness
- Promote the practical support of mental illness and mental health problems, and their prevention, if possible

Priority 3

We want to empower staff and students to recognise and support others who might need help.

Key Outcome: To promote a culture where it is easy to seek help.

Commitment:

We will:

- Involve employees and students in promoting mental health, to increase their awareness of mental wellbeing and to give them the motivation and skills to support their peers
- Support employees and students to identify their own social and emotional skills, strengths, and areas they are interested in developing



Priority 4

We must listen to employees and students, and direct people to knowledgeable, experienced specialist services, as necessary.

Key Outcome: To foster a culture of wellbeing.

Commitment:

- We will improve overall performance with engaged and motivated employees and students who are encouraged to achieve their full potential.



Priority 5

At SRUC, we are committed to reducing the disability employment gap.

Key Outcome: To increase disability employment and the recruitment and retention of students with disability.

Commitment:

We will:

- Help employees to stay in work, and students to remain on their studies by proactively addressing causes of ill-health at work, and encouraging a cultural change on work and disability
- Actively seek to recruit from hard-to-reach groups to maximise opportunities for those with disability-related conditions



Priority 6

Our aim is to promote physical wellbeing, healthier lifestyles, and health checks, all of which have a positive impact on the general health of the workforce and student community.

Key Outcomes:

- Improved health-related behaviours and lifestyle choices
- Increased uptake of sport, physical fitness and active volunteering activities, particularly among the student body

Commitment:

We will:

- Help the employee improve their work-life balance and effectively reduce stress levels
- Create a consistent message for employees and students around alcohol consumption and safe drinking
- Ensure all relevant policies reflect our ambition for a safer drinking level
- Enable individuals to actively manage their own wellbeing
- Support the physical, intellectual, emotional and sexual health and wellbeing of all our students
- Develop and support campus initiatives which encourage staff and students to be physically active and to emotionally recharge/ switch off from work and study.



Priority 7

A key priority is to improve the capability of line managers to manage teams and tackle issues relating to stressors, rehabilitation and 'signposting'.

Key Outcome: To equip managers to be effective in managing stress risks and mental wellbeing at work.

Commitment:

We will:

- Clarify the manager's and others role in preventing stress
- Help with identifying early the key risk categories associated with stress at work
- Support managers in their support of their employees
- Provide managers with useful tools to assess and manage stress risks at work, including management of any returns to work
- Provide managers information to help them resolve issues relating to stress using a referral network



7 Making It Happen

The team set up to deliver the strategy will review the effect of initiatives, and the process for generating new ideas to excite and motivate employees.

There is a separate funding stream for the strategy and delivery is not dependent on business-as-usual investment.

The strategy will be implemented as a series of discrete sustainable projects, building on the success of each earlier project.

We will encourage student participation in the development and evaluation of health and wellbeing strategies, through 'learner voice' and student conferences, enabling SRUC and students to work in partnership.

8 Measuring Success

Our strategy considers key areas which incorporate work streams for tackling healthy workplaces and wellbeing, taking into account our listed priorities. These work streams are published in our *Implementation Plan 2017–2020*.

To understand the impact the strategy is having, and direct our efforts accordingly, our focus goes beyond what we have spent, and considers the 'outputs' (what we have done) and 'outcomes' (what has changed). The desired outcomes include a healthy environment in which to study and work, and strong, active staff and student communities who live active, healthy and safe lives, and who can positively manage their own health and wellbeing.

9 Evaluating Interventions

The Health & Safety Policy Executive Committee oversees performance monitoring, and performance information will be presented to the SRUC Board annually. This will include reports of performance against the Implementation Plan, and how we are performing against indicators set out in framework documents such as business plans and annual reports.

Appendix A: More Key Facts About Health

In the UK, **70 million days** are lost from work each year due to mental ill health (that is, anxiety, depression and stress-related conditions), making it the leading cause of sickness absence. In addition, the majority of smokers are found in our growing population of people aged 16-50 years. This same group makes up the bulk of our workforce, where smoking costs employers through higher sickness rates and reduced outputs.

In addition, almost **7 million people (17.5%)** of working age in the UK are disabled or have a health condition. Currently, only **48%** of disabled people are in paid work, compared with **80%** of non-disabled people. That's a difference of **32%** - the so-called 'disability employment gap'. The government wants this gap halved.

Professor Dame Carol Black's review reported the annual economic cost of working-age ill health at over **£100 billion**. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Absence Management Survey 2016 put the overall cost of absence per employee at **£522**.

In the UK, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) states that mental illness cost employers **£28.3 billion** per annum in 2009 and estimates that:

- Prevention and early identification of problems could save employers at least **30%** of this figure, that is, **£8 billion** each year
- For a 1,000-employee company, annual costs could be reduced by **£250,000**



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