WELLBEING POLICY

1. Policy statement

1.1. The Guild recognises the important contribution that employees make to the achievement of its strategic objectives. As such the strategy sets a positive agenda for working at the Guild and for the monitoring of employee wellbeing.

1.2. The Guild recognises that supporting and promoting employee wellbeing can deliver mutual value to the employee, the organisation and its stakeholders. Protecting the physical and mental wellbeing of employees encourages commitment, loyalty and success.

1.3. If an employee is concerned about their wellbeing or the wellbeing of a colleague they are encouraged to talk to their manager, the Health and Safety Manager, or HR and Payroll Services.

1.4. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2. Aim

2.1. This policy document provides a framework within which the Guild will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that support employee wellbeing. It aims to draw upon good practice and to be flexible rather than prescriptive.

3. Scope

3.1. It is expected that each employee, regardless of their role or status, makes a full contribution to the Guild, however, it is also recognised that flexibility and diversity of working practice derives mutual benefits. There is abundant evidence that a flexible approach to working patterns may have significant organisational benefits, including reduced absenteeism, improved morale and greater productivity.

3.2. This policy is applicable to all employees but recognises the diversity of   contractual and other working arrangements that exist

3.3. The implementation of this policy will also be supported by the Guild's Health and Safety Policy.

4. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

4.1. The Guild recognises that employees will sometimes need professional assistance in dealing with both practical and emotional life challenges. As part of its commitment to wellbeing the Guild ensures that employees have free access to Health Assured's Employee Assistance Programme.

This gives employees access to:

- 24/7 Telephone counselling - covering a wide range of work-related and personal issues
- including, but not limited to, finance, stress, bereavement, bullying, relationship difficulties, managing work life balance, drug and alcohol abuse, and childcare issues.
- The helpline number is: 0800 047 4097.
- Online Portal - employees have access to a dedicated portal for information and factsheets on a wide range of topics. The portal also provides further information on the services available and how to access them.
- The web address is www.healthassuredeap.co.uk/ Username: Peninsula / Password: EAP

4.2. Managers can direct employees with difficult and sensitive issues to the EAP for confidential help and advice. The employee can then contact the EAP if they so wish.

5. Alcohol and Substance Misuse

5.1. The Guild understands that there may be occasions where employees drink alcohol 'on the job' e.g. at a networking, 'meet and greet' or similar event. When this occurs the amount of alcohol consumed should be kept within reasonable limits and any misconduct (including inappropriate behaviour) will be treated seriously.
5.2. Employees with event management responsibilities, health and safety or operational event roles should not drink alcohol immediately before or during the event.
5.3. Employees should be aware that if they are deemed incapable at work by their line manager, or any other senior employee, due to alcohol or being under the influence of other illegal drugs it will be considered as gross misconduct and could result in dismissal.
5.4. The Guild is committed to supporting employees who have alcohol or substance misuse problems and will provide information for any employees wishing to seek help and support.

6. Smoking

6.1. All Guild offices and buildings are strictly no smoking areas, this includes the use of e-cigarettes.
6.2. The Students' Guild has adopted the University of Exeter Smoking Policy. Smoking will be permitted outside but at least five metres away the perimeter of buildings to ensure that tobacco smoke does not re-enter via doors, windows or air intakes.
6.3. It should be noted that refusal to desist in smoking in a non-smoking area in the University will constitute a disciplinary offence. Normally, for a first breach of the policy, employees and students will be reminded of the requirements of the policy, directed towards support for smoking cessation and advised that any further infringements may result in formal disciplinary action.
6.4. Where possible, the Guild will support employees who wish to quit smoking. Information on quitting smoking will be made available upon request.

7. Physical Activity

7.1. The Guild will work to support employees to be physically active as it recognises the benefits that physical activity has on mental wellbeing, productivity and physical health. If employees feel that their work is preventing them from being physically active they should speak to their manager in the first instance.

7.2. The Guild is committed to the Cycle to Work Scheme which aims to promote healthier journeys to and from work whilst at the same time contributing to the reduction in environmental pollution. Guild staff are entitled to use the shower and changing facilities provided by the University. Details can be obtained from HR and Payroll services.

8. Rest breaks

8.1. All Guild employees have the statutory right to one uninterrupted 20 minute rest break during their working day, if they work more than 6 hours a day. This could be a tea or lunch break.

8.2. Employees are encouraged to take their lunch breaks and breaks away from their desks/outlets to ensure they have a break from their immediate working environment and give themselves time to recharge. For full-time staff (36.5 hours per week) this amounts to one hour per day.

8.3. All Guild staff are entitled to use the staff room (located on the Top Corridor, Devonshire House) during office hours. This room should be kept clean and tidy at all times.

9. Mental wellbeing

9.1. The Guild recognises the importance of creating an environment which does not negatively impact on an employee's mental wellbeing. It encourages a culture of open communication and employees should speak to their line manager if they feel their work is having a negative impact on their mental wellbeing.

9.2. The Guild is committed to creating and promoting a workplace environment that supports and promotes the mental wellbeing of all employees. It acknowledges that certain working conditions and practices can negatively affect employees' mental wellbeing, including aspects of work organisation and management, and environmental and social conditions that have the potential for psychological as well as physical harm. Actions to achieve this include:

- Giving employees information on and increasing their awareness of mental wellbeing.
- Providing opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing, for example through physical activity, stress-buster activities and social events.
- Offering employees reasonable flexible working arrangements that promote their mental wellbeing (for more information please see the Guild's Flexible Working Policy).

- Give all employees the opportunity to influence how they do their jobs, scope for varying their working conditions as far as possible, and opportunities to develop and fully utilise their skills.
- Set employees realistic targets that do not require them to work unreasonable hours.
- Ensure all employees have clearly defined job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities and provide them with good management support, appropriate training and adequate resources to do their job.
- Manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism (for more information see the Guild's Dignity at Work and Equality and Diversity policies)
- Establish good two-way communication to ensure employees involvement, particularly during periods of organisational change.

9.3. The Guild will work with all employees to foster a culture which supports positive mental wellbeing:

- Employees will take reasonable care of their own health and wellbeing and be mindful of how other persons may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- Line managers will regularly discuss with employees the demands of the employee's role, including workload, work patterns and working environment.
- Discussions will be held around the amount of autonomy an individual has in the way they do their work.
- Line managers will be strongly encouraged to take training to better support employees with their mental wellbeing, and will know who to contact should they need help.
- Positive working relationships will be promoted to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- The organisation will ensure that people understand their role within the organisation and that people do not have conflicting roles.
- Organisational change will be managed and communicated well.

9.4. The Guild will strive to support employees with longer term mental ill health as much as is reasonably practicable. It will ensure that line managers are equipped to manage conversations with employees regarding this. This can include advising using the Employee Assistance Programme (outlined in section 4).
9.5. The University's Counselling Service may also be accessed where appropriate and subject to availability. The Guild will refer staff to the University Counselling Service and will cover the associated costs where appropriate. Please contact HR and Payroll Services for further information.
9.6. The procedure for applying for appointments should reflect those for all other medical appointments (see sections 6 and 7 of the Guild's Special and other leave policy).

10. Mental health support

10.1. The Guild commits to providing support and assistance for employees experiencing mental health difficulties. Such support includes:

- Ensuring individuals suffering from mental health problems are treated fairly and consistently and are not made to feel guilty about their problems.
- Encouraging employees to consult the occupational health department, their own GP, or a counsellor of their choice.
- Investigating the contribution of working conditions and other organisational factors to mental ill health and remedy this where possible.
- In cases of long-term sickness absence, put in place, where possible, a phased return to work.
- Make every effort to identify suitable alternative employment, in full discussion with the employee, where a return to the same job is not possible due to identified risks or other factors.
- Treat all matters relating to individual employees and their mental health problems in the strictest confidence and share on a 'need to know' basis only with consent from the individual concerned.

11. Stress management and support.

11.1. The Guild recognises that everyone is different and people's tolerance of stress varies. What is important is that there is the capability and support mechanisms to ensure employees know where to go and what to do if they are having a stress reaction.

11.2. There is a clear difference between pressure (which can be motivating) and stress (which is always a negative experience).

11.3. Defining stress

11.4. Stress is not the same for everybody. What is stressful for one person may not be stressful for another. Everybody needs a certain amount of pressure to keep sharp and motivated.

11.5. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), stress is defined as "The adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them".

11.6. Causes of stress

11.7. There are many potential causes of stress and not all of them will be work-related. Potential 'stressors' can include:

- difficulties with relationships (at home or at work)
- lack of job security
- work overload
- financial problems
- long-term illness/medical condition

11.8. Symptoms of stress

11.9. Sometimes people aren't even aware that they are not coping. Recognition of a

problem means that appropriate coping mechanisms can be sought at an early stage, before a negative physical or emotional effect is experienced. The cause may be home, work, personal life, or any combination of these.

11.10. The first signs that indicate employees may be suffering from excessive pressure or stress are changes in behaviour or performance. Some of the kinds of change that may occur are listed below:

- Work performance
- declining/inconsistent performance
- uncharacteristic errors
- loss of control over work
- loss of motivation/commitment
- indecision
- lapses in memory
- increased time at work
- lack of holiday planning/usage
-
- Regression
- crying
- arguments
- undue sensitivity
- irritability/moodiness
- over-reaction to problems
- personality clashes
- sulking
- immature behaviour
-
- Withdrawal
- arriving late to work
- leaving early
- extended lunches
- absenteeism
- resigned attitude
- reduced social contact
- elusiveness/evasiveness

- Aggressive behaviour
- malicious gossip
- criticism of others
- vandalism
- shouting
- bullying or harassment
- poor employee relations
- temper outbursts
-
- Other behaviours
- out-of-character behaviour
- difficulty relaxing
- increased consumption of alcohol
- increased smoking
- lack of interest in appearance/hygiene
- accidents at home or work
- reckless driving
- unnecessary risk-taking
-
- Physical signs
- nervous stumbling speech
- sweating
- tiredness/lethargy
- upset stomach/flatulence
- tension headaches
- hand tremor
- rapid weight gain or loss
- constantly feeling cold

11.11. Support with stress

11.12. A person's ability to deal with stress and excessive pressure is not limitless and while a reasonable level of pressure may help them to become more alert and focused, excessive stress can have serious long-term effects on both health and work performance.

11.13. If excessive stress is identified the following courses of action may be taken as appropriate (by Line Managers & supervisors if required supported by Guild HR & H&S staff).

- Identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- Provide training in good management practices, including those related to health and safety and stress management.
- Provide confidential counselling for employees affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the organisation's agreed Wellbeing Policy.

11.14. Support with stress

11.15. A person's ability to deal with stress and pressure is not limitless and while a reasonable level of pressure may help them to become more alert and focused, excessive stress can have serious long-term effects on both health and work performance.

11.16. If excessive stress is identified the following courses of action may be taken as appropriate:

- Identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- Provide training in good management practices, including those related to health and safety and stress management.
- Provide confidential counselling for employees affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the organisation's agreed Wellbeing Policy.