

Inspire Education Group

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

2021-24



Inspire
Education Group

*Peterborough and Stamford,
Thriving Together*

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CONTEXT

In England, the Association of Colleges (AoC) has identified mental health as a priority and challenges education providers to consider how they support staff and students’ mental health and wellbeing. In 2019, the AoC launched its Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter that allows colleges across England to affirm their commitment to staff and students by signing up. The 11-point document was created by the AoC in conjunction with mental health experts, and includes commitments to promoting equality of opportunity and challenging mental health stigma, providing appropriate mental health training for staff, and providing targeted individual mental health support where appropriate. Inspire Education Group (IEG) are proud to have been signed up to the charter since 2019.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

A mental health crisis was developing before Covid-19. The pandemic has deepened this development, exacerbating known causes, creating new ones and storing up those which are yet to be known.

The pandemic has more than ever, highlighted the need for IEG to amplify strategically its commitment to the health and wellbeing of its whole community. It has also raised the importance of mental health support and development for all. The short-term impact of Covid-19 has resulted in significant health and wellbeing issues and the indicators are that there will be considerable long-term effects of Covid-19 which have yet to be determined.

Responding to these challenges has required significant innovation as well as external expertise, critical partnership work and sharing of practice, and the development of key, sustainable relationships. All of which, have informed the development and implementation plans for this Wellbeing@IEG strategy.

NATIONALLY

- 83% of colleges state that mental health referrals were up in September 2020 compared to September 2019 (AoC, 2021)

- 28% increase in the number of U18s referred to mental health services in the last year up to March 2021, compared to previous 12 month period (Daily Mail, 2021)
- Post lockdown 1.0, over two thirds (68%) of young people in the UK felt their mental health had worsened (Mind, 2020)
- 23% stated there was less mental health support in their educational setting than before the pandemic, while only 9% agreed that there was more mental health support (Young Minds, 2020)
- 65% of colleges have seen an increase in staff accessing services with the greatest factors in this increase linked to return to work post-Covid, recurrence of existing mental health conditions and workload (AoC, 2021)
- More than half (53%) of young people think their career prospects are getting worse (TES, 2021)
- In 2021, there was a 450% increase in the number of young people who submitted a UCAS application declaring they had a mental health condition (UCAS, 2021)
- 68% of LGBTQ+ young people say their mental health has ‘got worse’ since the pandemic, compared to 49% of their non-LGTBQ+ peers (Just like us, 2021).

WELLBEING@IEG: OUR STRATEGY

Wellbeing@IEG focuses on people and is a key part of the Inspire Education Group's strategic objectives. Wellbeing@IEG aims to optimise the health and happiness of the whole College community by placing wellbeing at the heart of all we do.

With its focus on people, the Wellbeing@IEG strategy sets out our approach to enhancing and developing an inclusive and caring environment at Inspire Education Group. We want our staff and students to feel supported and able to reach their potential. This strategy applies across the whole college group and has been created in collaboration with a range of stakeholders.

Many students and staff experience good wellbeing most of the time, but others may sometimes experience mental health problems and compromised mental wellbeing. Mental health challenges may exist prior to and on arrival at Inspire Education Group, or may develop during the period of study/work at the College.

The strategy focuses on future actions and improvements to our current service for staff and students to be implemented over the next 2 years (2021-23). It has been designed with collective ownership across the whole group and as such, all are responsible for ensuring its successful delivery.

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES

- Create an environment that empowers students with the internal resources to become adaptable, resilient, independent and work-ready
- Create an environment compatible with workforce wellbeing that results in personal and organisational benefits and success
- Develop a community that shares responsibility for mental health, identifying difficulties early, to accelerate targeted, effective and timely interventions
- Ensure that wellbeing naturally permeates all aspects of College life to ensure our community can fully embrace and enjoy their learning and work.

Inspire Education Group has identified four key pillars that will provide the foundations and drivers for positive mental health and wellbeing through the Wellbeing@IEG whole college approach:

- 1 Leadership**

To have a consistent and coordinated approach to wellbeing through effective leadership that ensures wellbeing permeates all aspects of College life.
- 2 Prevention**

To make a significant shift from reactive to prevention approaches to wellbeing, which focus on empowerment.
- 3 Intervention**

Develop a community that shares responsibility for mental health, identifying difficulties early, to accelerate targeted, effective and timely interventions.
- 4 Partnerships**

To establish a seamless and sustainable provision of care through effective collaborations with external partners.

We will measure the impact of the Wellbeing@IEG strategy by using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data obtained from various College data sources, including student and staff surveys and student and staff feedback.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The commitment to supporting both student and staff mental health and wellbeing is shared by managers and leaders at all levels including the governing body. Good health and wellbeing are recognised by the corporate leadership as essential to supporting staff productivity and morale. One of our key strategic objectives 'Value our people' is at the heart of what we do; 'Supporting and investing in our people and their wellbeing, creating an exceptional working environment where colleagues feel valued and empowered'.

This strategy will be driven forward by the Vice Principal Student and Staff Experience with the support of the Assistant Principal for Student Experience and Support, Group Director of HR and other key strategic leads across the group.

The key strategic leads are responsible for ensuring that provision for students needing specialist or targeted support / intervention is in place and is working effectively. In addition, a Wellbeing@IEG working group will ensure that all key stakeholders are involved and contribute to the education and initiatives that will help learners/staff implement preventative measures and ensure a proactive not reactive model so that less of the College's community is at risk of developing poor mental health and wellbeing.

This working group consists of the following:

- Welfare and Pastoral Support Services
- Mental Health Team
- Student Engagement
- Human Resources
- Students' Union
- Curriculum representation
- Student representation from the Student Council

The table on page 7 summarises the other College stakeholder groups who play a significant role in successfully implementing this strategy.

WELLBEING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Wellbeing Implementation Plan focuses on future actions and improvements across IEG (see Appendix 1). This is underpinned by IEG commitment towards the AoC Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter and the DfE Education Staff Wellbeing Charter. The progress of this is monitored regularly by the Wellbeing@IEG group and reviewed annually.

Governors

College governors are responsible for ensuring that all objectives are adhered to and that a positive ethos of mental health and wellbeing exists to meet the needs of students, staff and stakeholders.

Corporate Leadership Board and Senior Leadership Group

Responsible for communicating and reviewing this strategy and the performance of all related activities, as well as ensuring a consistent high quality 'whole College' approach is delivered.

Wider College Management Team

Making sure each subject area or team delivers their responsibilities set out by this strategy and any supporting documents.

Staff (Curriculum and Support Services)

College staff are responsible for making sure the student need is met as well as taking ownership for their own wellbeing and assisting in the delivery of a positive mental health ethos.

Students

Students are encouraged to engage with wellbeing services and initiatives in order to develop resilience for themselves and for their peers.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Association of Colleges Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter (AoC, 2019)
- The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter (DfE, 2021)
- Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper (DHSC and DfE, 2018)
- Supporting Mental Health in Schools and College (DfE, 2017)
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing – a whole school and college approach (Public Health England, 2015)
- Improving Mental Wellbeing in Colleges Through Physical Activity (AoC Sport, 2018)
- Inspire Education Group College Safeguarding Policy
- Inspire Education Group College Human Resources policies
- Mental Health & Wellbeing in FE (FE Week 2021)
- The Mental Health at Work Commitment

WELLBEING & MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We recognise that Inspire Education Group has a responsibility to create an environment that promotes student and staff wellbeing and that proactively supports student and staff mental health.

STEPS TO POSITIVE WELLBEING

- ✓ Raising awareness of mental health.
- ✓ Offering targeted support to staff and students.
- ✓ Unified approach through building positive internal and external partnerships.
- ✓ Training and development of our staff in relation to understanding and being mindful of mental health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Embed a culture and environment whereby staff and students promote and use 5 ways to wellbeing approach.

HOW WE VALUE OUR PEOPLE

As outlined in our Strategic Plan, we support and invest in our people and their wellbeing, creating an exceptional working environment where colleagues feel valued and empowered.

AS A COLLEGE GROUP WE WILL...

- Ensure that wellbeing and mental health work is led by a senior manager supported by a member of staff with particular responsibility for mental health
- Have a wellbeing and mental health policy accompanied by a clear implementation action plan which is monitored regularly and reviewed annually
- Create an open and inclusive group ethos which includes respect for those with mental ill health
- Promote equality of opportunity and challenge mental health stigma through curriculum teaching and also promote wellbeing through tutorial programmes
- Provide appropriate mental health training for staff
- Encourage and collect student views on mental health and wellbeing by working with the Students' Union and other student representative bodies
- Ensure a consistent and positive approach to staff wellbeing
- Provide targeted individual mental health support where appropriate or alternatively signpost to external support services
- Provide relevant information to parents and carers
- Establish effective links with local health and voluntary sector mental health groups
- Promote the benefit that physical activity and sport has on mental wellbeing.



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