



# Mental Health Strategy and Guidance

## 2023/24

*Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual is able to realise their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (World Health Organisation).*

## **1. Statement**

WM College is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive environment. This strategy states the responsibilities of WM College in relation to the wellbeing of staff and learners.

This strategy is in place to help ensure that the College embeds consideration of all individuals when carrying out day-to-day work and provides appropriate strategies that promote and support the mental and emotional wellbeing of learners and staff.

The College wishes to promote and maintain a healthy and safe environment in order that every learner and staff member may maximise the opportunity to achieve their goals. The college recognises the relationship between a healthy mind and a healthy body in order to achieve optimum individual performance. Furthermore, providing appropriate support and signposting for staff and learners with mental health difficulties, psychological challenges and wellbeing difficulties ensures the college promotes a healthy college community.

## **2. Scope**

This strategy applies to staff and learners, including those with mental health support needs who are enrolled at the College and potential learners with mental health support needs.

The College has statutory obligations under The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 Part 4 and DDA 2005, the Equality Act 2010, Equality Duty, Schedule 19 2011 and the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

The DDA and Equality Act 2010 ensure that people with protected characteristics, including disability whereby a person “has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect of their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”, are not treated in a less favourable way and that reasonable adjustments are made for learners with disabilities.

## **3. Aims**

The College will work to create a non-judgemental environment in which staff and learners feel free and comfortable enough to disclose mental health difficulties in order that they may be signposted to appropriate support.

As a College we will:

- Create an open and inclusive college ethos which includes respect for those with mental and emotional ill health.
- Ensure that wellbeing and mental health work is led by an appropriately trained senior manager (Director of Learner Services) supported by HR.
- Have a Mental Health Action Plan which is monitored regularly and reviewed annually by the Mental Health Working Group consisting of the mental health Lead, HR and the mental health first aiders.
- Promote equality of opportunity and challenge mental health stigma through curriculum teaching and promote wellbeing through tutorial programmes (where appropriate).
- Provide mental health training for staff with the opportunity for staff to identify additional training needs through the appraisal system.
- Implement a team of specially trained Mental Health First Aiders to respond to staff and learners experiencing mental ill health where they are unable to manage.

- Encourage and collect staff and learner views on mental health and wellbeing, which will feed into the Mental Health Action Plan.
- Endeavour to provide a consistent and positive approach to staff wellbeing.
- Provide signposting to external support services.
- Establish effective links with local health and voluntary sector mental health groups.
- Promote the benefit that physical activity and sport has on mental wellbeing.
- Promote understanding and recognition of staff and learner wellbeing through mental health awareness programmes and initiatives across the college.

#### **4. Learners**

WM College will provide a supportive environment that will assist learners with mental health difficulties to meet their course requirements and realise their academic potential and facilitate widening participation and social inclusion for prospective learners with mental health difficulties.

The college seeks to achieve these aims by:

- Plan a curriculum that supports the wellbeing of the local community.
- Anticipating the needs of learners with mental health difficulties through the effective collection of information during the enrolment process.
- Offering an assessment to ascertain learning support through effective referral systems.
- Intervening early and signposting learners with mental health needs to the appropriate external mental health services when necessary.
- Recognising that learners' circumstances change, and all staff and learners are made aware of the importance of sharing information with the College's mental health and safeguarding services.
- Providing a supportive process through other associated policies to ensure learners are provided with adequate support or flexible learning to continue to study at the College.
- Making appropriate recommendations where a learner's mental ill health becomes a barrier to learning.

#### **5. Staff**

All college staff will be supported through training and line management to understand and observe de-stigmatising and anti-discriminatory practices within the College community and to familiarise themselves with related policies and procedures.

All staff will have access to an external 24-hour Employee Assistance Programme, which will provide confidential support including access to professional counsellors on matters affecting emotional well-being such as stress, anxiety, bereavement and relationships.

All staff will be provided with access to online resources to support wellbeing via the Employee Assistance Programme

All staff have the opportunity to claim a staff discount against fees for courses they wish to join to support their own personal growth and/or well-being. Where is it possible, the College will endeavour to offer a limited number of free courses for staff.

The College will endeavour to plan activities for staff that will promote good mental health and wellbeing.

## **6. Confidentiality**

A confidential record will be maintained of all concerns raised with a member of the mental health first aid team. The records will be used for the purposes of monitoring wellbeing and escalating concerns where there are multiple reports relating to an individual.

Records of mental health first aid incidents involving learners will be shared and cross-referenced with the Safeguarding team. Designated Safeguarding Leads, all of whom are also mental health first aiders, will use this information to provide consistency of support and signposting.

Records relating to staff members will be accessible by the Mental Health Lead (Director of Learner Services and Executive Designated Safeguarding Lead) only. Contact with HR regarding an individual would only be made where it is believed their safety or those of others are at risk.

Where a staff member has experienced a life event that may affect their wellbeing (e.g. death of a family member), they will be supported and monitored by their line manager and HR. There is no requirement for this to be reported as a mental health concern to the Senior Mental Health Lead.

## **7. Associated Policies**

- Safeguarding & Prevent Policy & Procedure
- Fitness to Learn Policy & Procedure
- Special Leave Policy
- Family Friendly Policy
- Home Working Policy
- Flexible Working Policy & Procedure
- Prevention of Bullying & Harassment at Work Policy & Procedure