



## Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025

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### 1. Forward by Elena Rodriguez-Falcon – President and Chief Executive

‘As President and Chief Executive of NMITE, which works hard to be inclusive of our widely diverse institution, I am passionate about ensuring good mental health and wellbeing for all students and staff. Good practice is promoted throughout the organisation with all staff being regularly trained to try and spot any warning signs of stress and unhappiness.

We know well that attending University can be such a joyous experience, but it can come with many challenges and worries along the way. With tuition fees, general living costs and the worry of what career path will be available following graduation, these are all concerns that can build up if not dealt with in a timely manner.

NMITE has created a 3-year strategy which aims to address this now common issue in a meaningful way. Our main aim is to ensure an environment that is welcoming and free from prejudice of any type. With a culture of openness and transparency we hope that



concerns and worries, of any type, can be shared. Each individual will experience different issues which will manifest in very different ways. Our approach will be personal to each case but will always be dealt with in a structured but empathetic manner.

With our students going on to be game changers, helping tackle and solve real world issues, we have a duty of care to ensure they thrive whilst under our roof. Having taken such a long road to establish ourselves in the community, our staff are here because they care and want to make a difference. By providing the support highlighted in our strategy, I am certain that together we will succeed in helping create resilient, able, and highly talented individuals’.

## **2. Introduction**

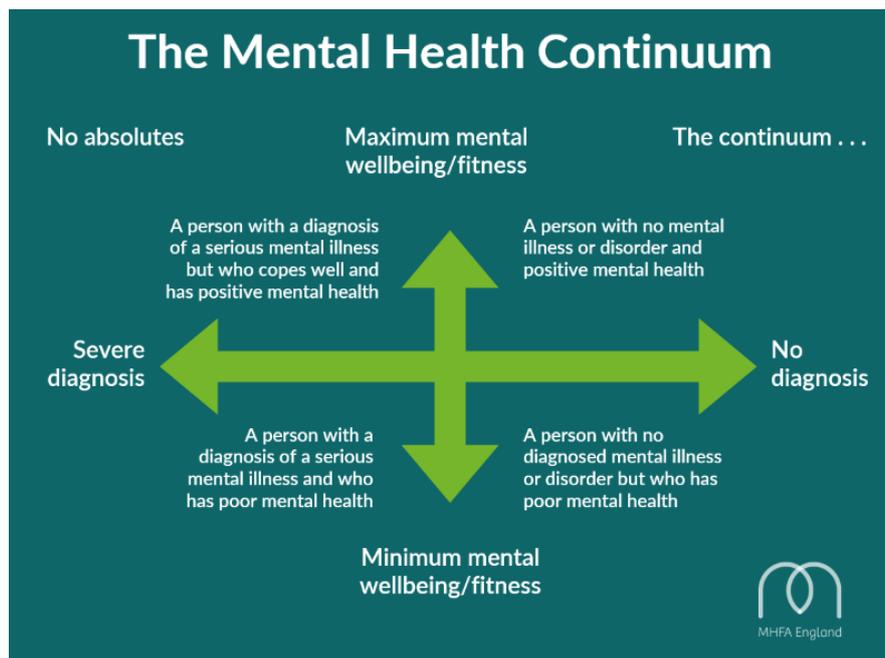
- 2.1 NMITE is committed to placing health and wellbeing at the heart of the experience of working and studying at NMITE and to ensure that all students and staff are able to study and work in a supportive, health-promoting, and caring environment, where they are valued and respected.
- 2.2 As a young institution NMITE has demonstrated this commitment by having a range of both student and staff focused policies in place prior to welcoming our first students in September 2021 – [Appendix 1](#). In the course of implementing this strategy, a full review of these policies will take place to ensure that they are fit for purpose, embedded throughout the institution, and contribute towards achieving best outcomes for students and staff.

## **3. Statement of purpose**

- 3.1 The purpose of this strategy is to create an inclusive environment that promotes well-being among its students and staff and to support students and staff experiencing mental health difficulties in order to help them have a positive and productive work life/student experience.
- 3.2 This strategy is aligned to NMITE’s Suicide Safer Strategy; both identify the key objectives and areas for development and address them through partnership working.
- 3.3 The objectives identified and measures already in place are the starting point in our journey that will continuously evolve. Working together with students and staff new initiatives will emerge that contribute to embedding a culture of acceptance, understanding and support that enables all members of the NMITE community to thrive.

## **4. Context**

- 4.1 The definition of ‘mental health’ is wide ranging and covers a spectrum from positive wellbeing to diagnosed conditions. 1 in 4 people experience mental health issues each year and the total cost of mental ill health in England is estimated at £105 billion per year<sup>1</sup>



1 Mental Health Taskforce NE. The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health. 2016 [cited 2017 May 23]; Available from: [england.nhs.uk](http://england.nhs.uk)

- 4.2 There have been a number of recent reports focussed on mental health in Higher Education as levels of mental illness, mental distress and low wellbeing among students and staff are all increasing and are high relative to other sections of the population. Reports include:
- [Student mental health and wellbeing – Insights from Higher education providers and sector experts \(Department for Education – June 2021\)](#)
  - [Step Change in Mental Health \(Universities UK, 2017\)](#)
  - [Institute for Public Policy Research - Not by degrees; improving student mental health in the UK's Universities - 2017](#)
  - [Higher Education Policy Institute - Pressure-Vessels-II - April 2020](#)
  - [HSE - Work-related stress, anxiety, or depression statistics in Great Britain, 2021](#)
- 4.3 Nationally, more higher education students than ever are reporting mental health conditions and it is important, therefore, that NMITE has a strategy in place which is pro-active at providing wellbeing and mental health support.
- 4.4 Students have a higher risk of experiencing poorer mental health and wellbeing, due to several unique factors that relate to academic, financial, and social pressures (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011). This is evident in the elevated levels of mental ill health reported by students. Over the past 10 years there has been a fivefold increase in the proportion of students disclosing a mental health condition to their university with 94% of universities reporting a dramatic increase in the number of students seeking counselling support (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2017). Poor mental health can lead to increased risk of students dropping out of university, or in the most severe and tragic cases, death by suicide.



4.5 The HSE report on work related stress, depression or anxiety published in 2021 estimated that in 2020-21, 822,000 workers were affected by work-related stress, depression, or anxiety and this accounted for 50% of all work-related ill health. In a sectoral analysis the report also identifies that stress, depression, or anxiety are most prevalent in education; across all age groups women are statistically more likely to experience such conditions.

## 5. Strategic objectives

NMITE has identified key strategic objectives under the following distinct areas:

### 5.1 Leadership

NMITE positions this strategy as a fundamental part of its wider institutional commitment stated in the Founding Declaration<sup>1</sup>. Through this, NMITE states that the mental wellbeing of its staff and students is a high priority and communicates its aim of maintaining an environment within which the NMITE community can thrive, flourish, and reach their full potential.

<sup>1</sup> The Founding Declaration can be found in the Student handbook and Staff Handbook



What NMITE is doing now:

- has an Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Mental Health Policy
- has a Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- has signed the Mental Health at Work commitment and is part of the #everymindmatters initiative.
- is working closely with the Mental Health & Productivity Pilot<sup>2</sup> to enhance the support available.
- Is reviewing and merging the documents listed above into this single strategy with related policies, and in so doing, demonstrating that NMITE is evolving as a reflective and progressive institution.
- has employed staff who have extensive experience of supporting people with mental health issues, in both in the Human Resources and Student Support Teams
- Implementing a policy that ensuring all staff receive Level 2 Mental Health Awareness Training during their induction, so they are able to identify those who may require assistance.
- Has trained a number of a number of employees from all levels within NMITE to act as mental health champions and receive Level 3 mental health training.

What NMITE will do next:

- The HR Director and Head of Student Experience will lead the operational delivery of the strategic objectives reporting to the Executive Board and other relevant committees.
- NMITE will improve communication around mental health issues and signposting to accessible and inclusive services.
- NMITE will create a Partnerships Panel of external experts and strategic partners to keep us informed of best practice and offer feedback on the institution's support systems
- Work to encourage regular mental health and wellbeing discussion are embedded within programme delivery and tutorial support.
- Identify opportunities to acknowledge and embed health and wellbeing themes into current work practices and procedures
- Work proactively with line managers to support and challenge staff in their areas of work. To ensure

## **5.2 Promotion and Prevention**

NMITE will work to destigmatise mental health issues and be proactive in promoting a mentally healthy environment. This will involve examining actions that would:

- reduce stress and anxiety for students and staff,
- enhance resilience in order to support students and staff dealing with the everyday stresses of academic and working life, and

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<sup>2</sup> University of Nottingham and the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust who together form the Institute of Mental Health Nottingham.



- further build a positive environment for mental health and wellbeing.

What NMITE is doing now:

- Promoting information and services via MyNMITE for both students and staff
- Including awareness of internal support mechanisms to students during welcome week and to staff during onboarding
- Providing access to RightSteps, which hosts a menu of awareness modules
- Engaging with national and sector-specific awareness campaigns
- Raising awareness of the importance of looking after mental health and wellbeing and encourage students and staff to take action to do so.

What NMITE will do next:

- Continue to create an inclusive environment that promotes mental wellbeing amongst students and staff
- Build awareness of wellbeing and mental health through improved engagement with national and sector specific campaigns
- With external partners, develop a series of wellbeing workshops to be available to students and staff
- Proactively manage the content of current online and social media platforms to promote positive messaging around mental health
- Research appropriate awareness training for mental health, safeguarding, consent, and sexual violence
- Develop a monthly health and wellbeing campaign cycle to aid promotion and engagement with preventative services

### **5.3 Suicide prevention**

NMITE has a Suicide Safer Strategy which through identified prevention, intervention and postvention objective aims to create a suicide safe community.

What NMITE is doing now: Refer to NMITE Suicide Safer Strategy

What NMITE will do next:

- Engage with ongoing research including sector specific in order to identify evidence-based best practice in suicide prevention.
- The Safeguarding Panel will oversee the operational delivery of the Suicide Safer Strategy; reporting bi-annually to the Academic Council on progress of strategic aims and objectives identified.
- The full Suicide Safer strategy document will be reviewed in 2025.

### **5.4 Early intervention**

We will continue to encourage early disclosure of mental health issues, deliver appropriate supports, and enhance digital and other communication of available services.



What NMITE is doing now:

- Encouraging students and staff to disclose mental health issues from application stage
- For students, NMITE offers early engagement from the Student Support Team for individuals as soon as any mental health issues is disclosed.
- The Student Support Team has an open-door policy, welcoming students to drop-into the office as well as accessing this service via e-mail, telephone, or on-line meetings.
- NMITE provides mental health awareness training to staff at all levels of the institution so they are able to identify those who may require assistance.
- Members of Human Resources are available for staff to approach for support or further signposting.
- NMITE has student and staff facing Mental Health Champions who have received a higher level of mental health first aid training.
- NMITE has a consultancy option with a mental health professional through Yeleni, which provides the counselling service.
- NMITE has in place a student status alert system with regular dialogue between the student support team and lead tutor which allows for early intervention with regard to academic engagement.

What NMITE will do next:

- Develop an anti-stigma campaign linked to encouraging students and staff to seek support before crisis points which can have wider impact.
- Further develop self-help resources and widen awareness of self-evaluation tools available.
- Re-visit its partnership with Hereford Medical Group to identify a named medical professional for support/consultation and referral and consider a model of shared care/support.

## 5.5 Support for Students

As part of this commitment NMITE recognises the importance of creating a positive environment whereby students feel able to talk openly and with trust about mental health problems and seek help if necessary. We will provide clearly signposted and accessible support services. NMITE believes that no student should be disadvantaged from succeeding in their studies due to mental health difficulties or conditions.

What NMITE is doing now:

- Offering pre-entry support to applicants and offer holders who have disclosed a mental health condition, offering a single point of contact within the Student Support Team, the option to develop a mental health support plan pre-arrival and information about DSA.
- The Student Support Team offers a confidential drop-in and appointment service to all students for any aspect of student life.
- Team members are NMITE mental health Champions and can offer:
  - individual 1:1 support,



- signposting to information including regarding Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs),
  - advice on application for reasonable adjustments under the relevant policies,
  - mental health support plans,
  - monitoring of students with mental health difficulties
  - where appropriate referral and liaison with external agencies.
- Where appropriate and with the student's permission the Student Support Team may also assist, advise, and liaise with relevant academic staff on how best to support their mental health.
  - MyNMITE resources
  - Offering a volunteer Chaplain accessible to provide emotional and spiritual wellbeing support to students and staff of all faiths.
  - Partner counselling service
  - Providing access to Rights Steps, an on-demand wellbeing and mental health platform designed to create long-term behaviour changes to help reduce stress, anxiety, and low mood, providing support to help live a happier life. Right Steps offers the latest information and advice about a wide range of health and wellbeing topics.
  - Offering a discount for staff at a local holistic therapies' charity.
  - Monitoring via Student Status meetings in liaison with lead personal tutor

#### What NMITE will do next:

- Further develop and deliver a framework of support that is accessible and relevant to students and staff.
- Consider differing needs and expectations of various student groups as its demographic grows, e.g international students, ethnic minority groups, faith groups, mature students - and plan resources and services accordingly.
- Recognise transition and pressure points to provide focused support in key areas for example during arrival and when leaving.
- Help students and staff to build resilience to deal with everyday stress and to recognise when stress levels become greater, and they need to access further support.
- Continue to monitor engagement with MyNMITE resources and access to RightSteps, reporting bi-annually to the Academic Council.
- Identify mental health awareness training appropriate to students
- Pursue a partnership with the Hereford Recovery Service to build awareness of drug and alcohol support available.
- Work to improve and develop communication of existing services and clear signposting to relevant policies and resources.

## 5.6 Support for staff

As part of this commitment NMITE recognises the importance of creating a positive environment whereby staff feel able to talk openly and with trust about mental health



problems and seek help if necessary. It is also key to empower staff to recognise and support students, colleagues and peers who may require help to achieve mental health and wellbeing goals through integrating this approach within existing structures, procedures, and values of NMITE.

What NMITE is doing now:

- Promote current mental health and wellbeing platforms that are available to NMITE staff.
- Promote discounted gym memberships to all staff.
- Promote the Cycle to Work Scheme provision that is available to staff.
- Provide training at the appropriate level to all staff
- Work proactively with line managers to support staff in their areas of work.
- Offer a discount for staff at a local holistic therapies' charity.
- Provide a volunteer Chaplain accessible to provide relevant support
- Provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which includes confidential health assessments, counselling and a 24-hour hotline for personal crisis

What NMITE will do next:

- Proactively manage the content of current online and social media platforms. to promote positive messaging around mental health aimed at staff.
- Continue to monitor engagement with MyNMITE resources and access to RightSteps and allocate resources accordingly.
- Review the current delivery of support in order to deliver a cohesive framework of support that is accessible and relevant to staff.
- Identify opportunities to acknowledge and embed health and wellbeing themes into current work practices and procedures.
- Work to improve and develop communication of existing services and clear signposting to relevant policies and resources.
- Develop clear protocols for staff dealing with crisis and risk.

## 5.7 Partnerships

As a new institution the participation of a strong stakeholder network is an integral part of this strategy. NMITE commits to cultivating and extending partnerships both internally and externally to deliver the best possible mental health support for students and staff. A list of supporting organisations: contacts and resources that can support the achievement of strategic objectives can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

What NMITE is doing now:

- NMITE has established initial links with the stakeholders identified below:



What next:

NMITE will do

- Continue to build and strengthen our links with third-sector organisations that will enhance the provision of mental health and wellbeing support to student and staff.
- Seek to be a voice for higher education in the development of local authority strategies such as the Herefordshire Suicide Prevention Strategy and Wellbeing Strategy.

### 5.8 Data and Monitoring

NMITE commits to the ongoing evaluation of needs of staff and students as the evidence base for considering appropriate responses and, further, commits to measuring their effectiveness over time.

What NMITE is doing now:

- Analysing usage of resources available digitally to students and staff.
- Recording student engagement with the Student Support Team with a coding system in place that identifies areas of support sought.
- Including a question regarding mental health support within the end of module survey.
- The Human Resources Department monitors staff mental health and wellbeing through staff absence rates, staff satisfaction surveys, and staff performance

What NMITE will do next:



- As data capture grows, NMITE will align reporting periods to specific academic module delivery to identify high stress points, this will allow proactive intervention focus moving forward.
- Collect data and elicit feedback from students and staff to improve student experience and staff support services.
- Plan future financial resources in line with identified need.

## 6. The Pathway Forward

- 5.1 The HR Director and Head of Student Experience will oversee the operational delivery of the Strategy.
- 5.2 Progress of strategic aims and objectives identified will be reported to:
- Executive Committee bi-annually for information
  - Resources Committee as required for approval of identified resources
  - Safeguarding Panel for information
  - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Advisory Group for information
  - Audit and Risk Committee annually for risk review
- 5.3 The full strategy document will be reviewed in 2025.

## 7. Appendix 1 – Related Policies

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy interacts with other established policies:

### **Student related:**

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

Fitness to Study Policy (once approved)

Leave of Absence Policy

Student Bullying and Harassment Policy

Student Drug and Alcohol Policy

Student Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Student Mental health and Wellbeing Policy

Student Sexual Misconduct Policy

### **Staff related:**

Agile Working Policy

Employee Bullying & Harassment Policy

Employee Mental Health Policy

Equality, Diversity and Dignity in the Workplace Policy



Managing Health and Absence Policy

Family Friendly & Leave Policy

Flexibility when Working from Home Policy

Menopause Policy

Onboarding Policy

Reasonable Adjustment Policy

Sickness Policy

Stress in the Workplace Policy

Employee Assistance Programme



## 8. Appendix 2 – Support organisations: contacts and resources

### Local Resources

Local medical resources:

- Hereford Medical Group – 01432 272175
- [NHS 111](#)
- [Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust](#) (Via the 24-hour mental health helpline on 0808 196 9127)

### Stay Alive app

The [Stay Alive app](#) is a suicide prevention resource, which is full of useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis. You can use it if you are having suicidal thoughts or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.

You do not have to struggle with difficult feelings alone, as there is lots of help and support available, both locally and nationally, if you need it.

### Local support

[Healthy Minds](#) is a free and confidential service, run by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, which can help if you are feeling stressed, anxious, or depressed.

→ 01432 220507

[Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust](#) provide a 24-hour helpline for anyone living in Herefordshire, who experiences a mental health problem for the first time or a sudden deterioration of an existing problem.

→ 0808 196 9127 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

[Herefordshire Mind](#) provide a range of mental health related services and activities in the county.

→ [info@herefordshire-mind.org.uk](mailto:info@herefordshire-mind.org.uk)

[Herefordshire Samaritans](#) offer a telephone and drop-in service, if you're struggling and need help.

→ 116 123 / 0330 094 5717 (local call charges apply)

[Strong Young Minds](#) support young people aged 10 to 24 years old to address any issues which affect their mental health and wellbeing, including anxiety, depression, cyberbullying and low self-esteem.

→ 01432 269245 • [symproject@theclldtrust.org](mailto:symproject@theclldtrust.org)

### National support

[BACP \(British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy\)](#) ([British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy](#)) can support you to find a counsellor in your area using their



online register of qualified therapists.

→ 01455 883300 • [bacp@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bacp@bacp.co.uk)

[CALM \(Campaign Against Living Miserably\)](#) help men who are thinking about suicide.

→ 0800 58 58 58

[Mind](#) offer a helpline, which can help with mental health problems and finding support.

→ 0300 123 3393 • [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

[Papyrus](#) provide confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide and anyone worried about a young person.

→ 0800 068 4141 • [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

[Rethink Mental Illness](#) help those who are severely affected by mental illness to improve their lives.

[Samaritans](#) is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year if you're struggling and need help.

→ 116 123 • [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[SANE](#) provide a mental health helpline, which offers specialist emotional support, guidance and information to anyone affected by mental illness, their family or friends.

→ 0300 304 7000 • [info@sane.org.uk](mailto:info@sane.org.uk)

[Shout](#) offer 24/7 crisis support via text, if you're struggling to cope and need immediate help.

→ 85258 • [info@giveusashout.org](mailto:info@giveusashout.org)

[Side by Side](#) is an online support community run by Mind, which offers a safe place for you to listen, share and be heard.

[Stay Alive](#) is a suicide prevention app, which can help you if you're having suicidal thoughts.

[The Mix](#) is a support service for under 25's and can help with a range of issues, including mental health, relationship breakdowns and drugs.

→ 0808 808 4994

[Young Minds](#) support young people who are experiencing a mental health crisis and also offer a parents' helpline.

→ 0808 802 5544 • Text YM to 85258



[Zero Suicide Alliance](#) offer free online suicide prevention training.