The Institution of Engineering and Technology

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Board of Trustees

WELLBEING STRATEGY

(Note by Morna Dason-Barber. If you have any questions on this paper before the meeting please contact Morna Dason-Barber on 07936341409 or by email mornadasonbarber@theiet.org)

1. Issue

To provide the Board of Trustees with an update on the wellbeing strategy and wellbeing activities across the IET.

2. Timing

Board of Trustees meeting, 11 June 2021.

3. For Note

The Board of Trustees is invited to note this report.

4. Background

4.1. The IET Executive Team recognises that to achieve the Institution's strategic ambitions it is vital that every colleague feels safe, well and enabled to do their best work for the organisation. We also believe that this extends to providing guidance and signposting support for the wellbeing of our volunteers and the wider membership. Wellbeing is therefore considered an important element of our culture and a strategic priority for the organisation and led to the creation of a wellbeing strategy and two-year road map launched in 2020.

4.2. The impact of the ongoing global pandemic on individual's mental health and wellbeing has been widely reported. The World Health Organisation has identified global rises in anxiety, stress, depression, harmful alcohol and drug use, self-harm and suicidal behaviour resulting from the pandemic[1] and expects the after-effects to continue for some-time.

4.3. The global pandemic highlighted the criticality of supporting our colleague's wellbeing and considerable focus and commitment was shown by the Executive Team towards ensuring colleagues felt safe and supported through an unprecedented and challenging time. This included: regular rapid communications tailored to location; online Town Hall meetings to bring together all colleagues and ask questions on any aspect of the pandemic response; rapid escalation routes through line management to the Gold planning team; access to dedicated support through our employee assistance programme; and working arrangements to help colleagues manage their work and home life.

[1] Mental health and psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, World Health Organisation, March 2021,

4.4. We have communicated to our volunteers and members our priority to protect their health and wellbeing. We primarily support this through Foothold, the IET Benevolent Fund, and the mental and physical wellness support they offer to individuals and their families. We promote this across all our communication channels.

4.5. During 2020, because of the pandemic, Foothold experienced a 79% increase in members accessing their services. The charity was able to provide support through the provision of £1.6m awarded in financial grants and 1,308 referrals to specialist services.[2]

4.6. Recognising that many of our members may have been adversely impacted by the global pandemic, we have supported our members by not increasing membership subscriptions.

5. Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2022

5.1. Our internal Wellbeing Strategy was launched in October 2020 and serves as an overarching plan that set out our vision, commitments, and the areas we need to focus on to achieve high level of organisation and individual wellness. Our Wellbeing Strategy is accessible here https://spark.adobe.com/page/2fKPZsO0z8bjM/

5.2. Our strategy is based upon the six dimensions of wellness as defined by the National Wellness Institute and a copy can be found in Appendix A. This provides a framework for us to consider all aspects of an individual's wellbeing and helps us ensure we are providing the right interventions that contribute to high levels of wellness. To achieve this our strategy focuses on five areas of Mental Wellness; Vitality; Environment; Culture and Financial Wellbeing.

5.3. Following the launch of the strategy, colleagues were invited to participate in a Wellbeing Champion Group which meets regularly to discuss and progress the wellbeing agenda. There are 29 colleagues from across the Institution, who we have trained, who actively participate in this group, many of whom are also part of other networks such as our Disability Confident network, or are members of our EDI Committee, ensuring our wellbeing agenda aligns with our broader EDI Strategy.

5.4. A summary of the some of the interventions and impact of strategy can be found in Appendix B.

6. Communication and Engagement

6.1. To ensure colleagues are aware about our wellbeing commitments and actions, regular updates are given at our Town Hall and a dedicated 'Wellbeing Hub' has been created on our intranet enabling colleagues to access a wide range of wellbeing resources such as online booklets, our Employee Assistance Programme, Webinars, Foothold and a suite of wellbeing training programmes.

6.2. Our Wellbeing Champions play an important role promoting our wellbeing activities and take ownership for updating the quarterly actions plans that are contained within the wellbeing strategy spark.

6.3. We regularly monitor employee engagement, participation and seek feedback on our wellbeing events, resources, and communications. Colleagues have reported being very positive about our wellbeing interventions and the wellbeing hub is one of the most active sections on the intranet and our wellbeing blogs are amongst the most viewed content.

[2] Information provided by Dr Dolores Byrne, Chair of Board of Trustees, Foothold, IET Members Annual Information Event, 12 May 2021.

7. Future Priorities

7.1. In April 2021 we signed up to be accredited to the 'Workplace Wellbeing Charter' as a demonstration of our commitment to the ongoing health and wellbeing of our people. This will enable us to measure the impact of our wellbeing strategy and identify any opportunities for improvement. We will use the Charter as a framework against which to undertake an online self-assessment across a range of evidence-based wellbeing performance indicators. The self-assessment is further supported by a workplace wellbeing culture audit. It is expected that the assessment process will take approximately three months at the end of which we hope to receive the nationally recognised 'Workplace Wellbeing Charter Award'. This will then form the basis to ensure our wellbeing programme is appropriate and delivering the right outcomes for the IET.

7.2. The refurbishment of our Stevenage site has provided us with an opportunity to provide colleagues with a more collaborative and energising workspace. Throughout the coming months we will be rolling out our comprehensive change programme aimed at promoting healthy choices and embedding new ways of working across the whole organisation that supports wellbeing.

7.3. In June 2021 we will working with an organisation called 'The Wellbeing Project' to train twelve colleagues who have volunteered to become 'Mental Health First Aiders' as part of our ongoing focus on mental health. This investment will raise awareness of mental illnesses, encourage early intervention to aid recovery, increase confidence in responding to mental illnesses and help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

7.4. We are continuing to roll out our leadership development programme for both the Executive Team and our Extended Leadership Team and this work will continue through to the end of 2022. This programme is based on a 'strengths based' philosophy which encourages individuals to make the most of their strengths at work, thereby fulfilling their potential and engendering high levels of wellbeing.

7.5. In May 2021 we achieved our 'Disability Confident Employer' status which recognises the actions we have taken to ensure we are going the extra mile to make our workplace accessible and inclusive to future and current disabled colleagues. We are now working towards becoming a 'Disability Confident Leader'.

7.6. We will look to review how we currently support the wellbeing of our volunteers and wider membership and whether there are further actions we can take to extend the commitments already in place.

8. Resources

No additional resources are required.

Appendix A

The Six Dimensions of Wellness – National Institute

Appendix B

Wellbeing Interventions and Impact 2020 Q4 to 2021 Q1

1.1 Three global wellbeing challenges have been held during 2020 and in January 2021 with the plan to hold these quarterly through the remainder of 2021. The purpose of these challenges has been to promote the concept of 'Vitality', encouraging colleagues to participate in activities that support their physical and mental health. The events have also encouraged a sense of belonging for colleagues, ensuring that they remain connected to the organisation during the prolonged period of remote working. In total 351collegues have taken part from across the organisation and the feedback has been incredibly positive.

1.2 In response to the concern that colleagues were experiencing a sense of being 'over-whelmed' and fatigued from back to back meetings, we have implemented a mandatory 'no meeting' one hour to ensure colleagues take a break in the day and have respite from virtual meetings. This has been further supported by the provision of a 'Virtual Meeting Etiquette' to encourage healthy virtual meeting habits.

1.3 To encourage colleagues to take time to focus on their wellbeing, an additional half day leave was given in late summer 2020 and a further day has been given to coincide with our 150th anniversary.

1.4 Following the promotion of our flexible benefits 'Perks Portal' in the UK, 85% colleagues actively taking advantage of the benefits on offer.

1.5 Managers and colleagues have been continually supported through the provision of virtual training programmes and e-workouts as part of our core learning and development offer. These programmes have included 'developing healthy minds', 'spotting signs of stress', most recently 104 colleagues have taken advantage of a 'developing resilience' programme.

1.6 The creation of our dedicated 'Wellbeing Hub' provides colleagues with access to a wide range of useful resources and to date we have curated content of more than 30 articles, e-learning and Adobe Sparks covering our five wellbeing focus areas.

1.7 During 2020 we recognised several key national and international wellbeing days, including World Mental Health Day, National Stress Awareness Week and World Menopause Day and used these opportunities to promote our wellbeing programme to colleagues. We have developed a calendar of monthly events in 2021 to coincide with national and international awareness days/weeks, including National Mental Health Awareness Week in May.

1.8 To coincide with World Menopause Day, we launched our new Menopause Guidance aimed at removing stigma associated with the menopause and to raise awareness, understanding and support for colleagues going through the menopause. We have also launched a menopause support group.

1.9 Since the launch of our strategy, 77 colleagues have participated in our regular 'Coffee Chats' designed at encouraging open conversations about mental health and providing an informal opportunity for colleagues to remain connected and supported through the pandemic.

1.10 In November 2020, we ran a 'Financial Wellness' assessment survey aimed at helping colleagues identify any changes they may need to make in respect of

developing financial health and followed this up with a Financial Awareness Webinar and promotion of the wide range of benefits on offer.

1.11 We have undertaken a DSE Assessment through our Health & Safety Advisor to ensure colleagues have the right equipment and support whilst working remotely.

1.12 In June 2020 we changed our health insurance provider to BUPA, providing colleagues with improved health care benefits including access to an online GP service. As a result, we have seen an 8% increase in the number of colleagues joining the scheme.

1.13 We monitor the number of lost working days due to sickness absence as one indicator as to the impact of our wellbeing interventions. The past 12 months have shown a marked reduction in number of working days lost.

May 2019 – May 2020	**May 2020 – May 2021**
2460 working days lost	1609 working days lost
320 colleagues absent	171 colleagues absent

1.14 As part of our commitment to Wellbeing we provide colleagues and their family with access to a helpline and website available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, to access confidential, free advice and support on a range of matters impacting their wellbeing. This is our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) currently provided by BUPA. 17 colleagues took advantage of our EAP between May 2020 and April 2021 of which 7 were due to mental health.