



Wellbeing Committee Meeting

2 pm, Thursday, 29 April 2021
(via videoconference)

Agenda

Committee Members:

Prof Andy Rice (Chair, ACR)

Jo de Bono (JD)

Caroline Stewart (CS)

Celia Burns (Notetaker, CB)

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 are attached.

3. Situation Update

4. Update on Action Items

i) *Linkages with Wellbeing Initiatives in other Departments*

The Committee is continuing to share key points from our meetings with the Department of Physics. In addition, at the last meeting it was agreed that JD would also send the key points to Marie Edmonds at the Department of Earth Sciences. JD to report.

ii) *Second pulse survey*

It was agreed that JD would send a second survey early in the week commencing 1 March 2021, to close a week later. The questions would be the same as for the first survey except for a rewording of the stress and anxiety question. ACR would follow up JD's email with a reminder email, and Wednesday group members would be asked to encourage their students and research staff to complete the survey. ACR to report.

iii) *Proposed actions in response to the survey results*

- *Proposed discussion points:* it was agreed that ACR would create a Google document showing the three proposed discussion points (recognition, resilience, and complaints), for the Committee to contribute to. The final document would be

sent to the HoD Team for approval and then to the constituent groups for discussion and feedback. ACR to report.

- *Bystander training*: CS was going to look into what bystander training can be provided. CS to report.

5. Expected Reports

i) Research Staff Forum (RSF) wellbeing report

An excerpt from the minutes of the RSF meeting held on 22 February is attached.

ii) Postgraduate Students' Forum (PSF) wellbeing report

The Lent PSF meeting has been postponed to 29 April 2021. However, a separate wellbeing session was held on 17 March 2021 for PSF members to discuss the wellbeing situation in their cohorts and to put forward some suggestions on how to improve it. Additionally, PhD students who had agreed to lead a follow-up session for one of the Research Skills Programme units were asked if they could address wellbeing as well. The report is attached.

6. Discussion Item(s)

i) Feedback from the Pulse Survey and Proposed Wellbeing Initiatives

To discuss the feedback generated by discussion by the constituent groups of the pulse survey results and proposed wellbeing initiatives.

ii) Suggestion Box for Wellbeing

To discuss the suggestion from JD for a suggestion box.

iii) The University's Draft Mutual Respect Policy

To discuss.

7. Next Discussion Item(s)

8. Any Other Business

9. Date of Next Meeting



Wellbeing Committee Meeting

3 pm, Thursday, 25 February 2021
(via videoconference)

Minutes

Present:

Dr Andy Rice (Chair, ACR)
Jo de Bono (JD)
Caroline Stewart (CS)
Celia Burns (Note taker, CB)

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2021 were approved for publication on the Committee website.

3. Situation Update

Committee members each gave a brief update on how they were coping in relation to the coronavirus situation.

4. Update on Action Items

- i) *Pulse survey about Department members' current wellbeing*
The pulse survey was discussed under item 6, 'Discussion Item(s)' below.
- ii) *Linkages with Wellbeing Initiatives in other Departments*
The Committee is continuing to share key points from our meetings with the Department of Physics. Following our meeting with Marie Edmonds (see item 6, below), ACR has proposed that we include the Department of Earth Sciences.

Action: JD

5. Expected Reports

- i) *Research Staff Forum (RSF) wellbeing report*
Nothing to report. A recent RSF meeting was held on 22 February but the minutes were not available.
- ii) *Postgraduate Students' Forum (PSF) wellbeing report*
Nothing to report. The next meeting of the PSF will be held in March.

6. Discussion Item(s)

(i) **Pulse Survey**

Committee members had circulated the survey response charts for discussion by the various groups (Wednesday meetings, Research Staff Forum, Postgraduate Student Forum and Professional Support Staff). Committee members had also had a useful meeting with colleagues, Marie Edmonds, Department of Earth Sciences and Queens' College, and Tim Harling, Queens' College, to discuss the results of the first survey.

Committee members discussed the next survey and how to proceed in terms of gauging interest in areas that might be addressed following the results of the first survey.

The following issues were discussed:

- **Initial survey responses:** some constituent groups had not yet met to discuss the initial survey results.
- **Survey questions:** it was agreed that, except for a change of wording to the stress and anxiety question (to 'I am not overwhelmed by stress and anxiety due to work,' the same questions would be used for the second survey.

Action: JD

- **Proposed actions in response to the survey results:** Committee members proposed three discussion points it would be interesting to take further.
 - Recognition
 - Resilience
 - Complaints

Workload model was also identified as an important topic but, since this already has lots of support and is already being addressed, it was agreed that it would not be included in the list of proposed action items above.

Bystander training was also considered to be an important resource and CS agreed to look into what training can be provided.

Action: CS

It was agreed that ACR would create a Google document showing the three proposed discussion points, for the Committee to input their thoughts on questions that could be posed to each group. The final document would be sent to the HoD Team for approval and then to the constituent groups, for discussion and feedback.

Action: AR

- **Timing of the next survey:** it was agreed that the second survey would be circulated early in the week commencing 1 March 2021 (mid-term) and would be closed a week later.

Action: JD

- **Engagement with the survey:**

To increase engagement with the survey, it was agreed that Wednesday group members would be asked to encourage their students and research staff to complete the next survey. As was the case for the first survey, two invitation emails would be sent: the first from JD, and the second from ACR, the latter to include a request for the recipient to follow up with their students and teams.

Action: ACR and JD

- **Communicating the scope of the survey:** it was agreed that the scope of the survey should be made clear—that it relates to the entire work role and not just the Departmental role.

(ii) Other discussion items

Other discussion items (saying thank you, Mental health first aiders, and mindfulness taster sessions), which were included on previous agendas but not yet discussed due to lack of time, have been moved to a separate ongoing list of potential future discussion items.

7. Next Discussion Item(s)

Committee members agreed that the discussion at the next meeting would focus on the feedback generated by discussion by the constituent groups of the pulse survey results and proposed action areas.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place at 3 p.m. on Thursday, 25 March 2021.

Wellbeing initiatives

The wellbeing committee has now received feedback from all the groups involved in our survey. We also had a discussion with some colleagues within the University but external to the department for a neutral take on the results. Synthesising the discussions together we feel that three possible initiatives have emerged. We would be interested in your views to help decide what to do next.

Here are three topics which we feel have emerged from the discussions around the pulse survey. The motivation for each is based on the points that have been made to the committee as well as our own views.

Recognition

Positive feedback is important. Recognition refers to positive feedback in regards to things that someone does. There's also appreciation: recognition is about what you do, appreciation is about your inherent value.

1. What mechanisms are you aware of through which you have been recognised or appreciated either by the department, university or colleges?
2. What schemes do you know of from elsewhere? How well do they work?
3. Have you any suggestions as to what mechanisms for feedback would work well in the Department?

Stress and work-related pressure

1. What contributes significantly to your levels of stress (e.g. unrealistic expectations of workload, lack of resources, excessive admin, lack of support/good management). Any suggestions as to how these factors could be objectively measured or tracked?
2. Some amount of stress and pressure should be expected at work and study. Resilience refers to our ability to cope and respond positively to it. What input (if any) have you received that has helped you improve your resilience (directly or indirectly)?
3. Have you any suggestions as to what mechanisms the department could put in place to help improve personal resilience to stress in the workplace?

Complaints

An effective complaints/feedback procedure might allow us to respond to a growing issue or grievance before it becomes a major problem.

1. What mechanisms are you aware of in the department for giving feedback or raising complaints about something arising from work?
2. Do you know of any schemes from elsewhere? How well do they work?
3. If you had a complaint to make, what mechanism for dealing with it would you like to be in place?

Overall

1. Which of the above would you prioritise and are there any you would dismiss?



Research Staff Forum Meeting

2 p.m. on Monday, 22 February 2021
(held via videoconference)

Excerpt from the Minutes

Present:

Matt Danish (MRD) (Chair)
Daniel Bates (DB)
Celia Burns (CB) (Secretary)
Andrew Caines (AC)
Helen Francis (HJF)
Heidi Howard (HH)
Jasmin Jahic

Eva Kalyvianaki (EK)
Angeliki Koutsoukou-Argyragi (AKA)
Zohreh Shams (ZS)
James Sharkey (JPS)
Sergei Skorobogatov (SS)
Caroline Stewart (CS)

5. Results of the Pulse Survey

The Wellbeing Committee had invited Forum members to discuss the results of the initial pulse survey. The Forum noted that it would be important to encourage a greater turnout from research staff and PhD students in the next survey. There was concern for the high number of respondents disagreeing with the 'Stress and anxiety arising from work are rarely overwhelming' question, but there was also uncertainty about the validity of the statistic for research staff due to the low turnout.

6. Wellbeing – Departmental Announcements

MRD encouraged Forum members to participate in the fortnightly Town Hall meetings. A suggestion was made to hold the meetings in a different slot occasionally to allow people who were not available for the regular slot an opportunity to attend. CS said she would pass this suggestion on to the Head of Department.

Action: CS

7. Wellbeing – Report for the Wellbeing Committee

Forum members discussed wellbeing under the Results of the Pulse Survey item (item 5) above.

Wellbeing Report from Postgraduate Students Forum

Wellbeing report 18 March 2021

General comments:

A lot of students said that being able to go back into the lab is great

Working from home is very challenging ("what used to take 8 hours takes 12 hours") and students by now feel isolated. However, they start to see the light at the end of the tunnel with the weather turning and lockdown easing.

The PSF members felt positive about Lise's idea to replicate Hopin in organising regular, department-wide activities every so often.

One individual suggested we shorten the wellbeing surveys and make the whole process more efficient: "Make it shorter. Ask single questions via email requiring only a "reply" to respond. Send reminders. Use the hierarchy of the department to encourage individuals or groups to fill out the forms instead of just dept wide emails. Explain better why I want to open yet another Google Form or Doodle Poll."

It's hard to find out what's happening in other groups

Suggestions from PSF:

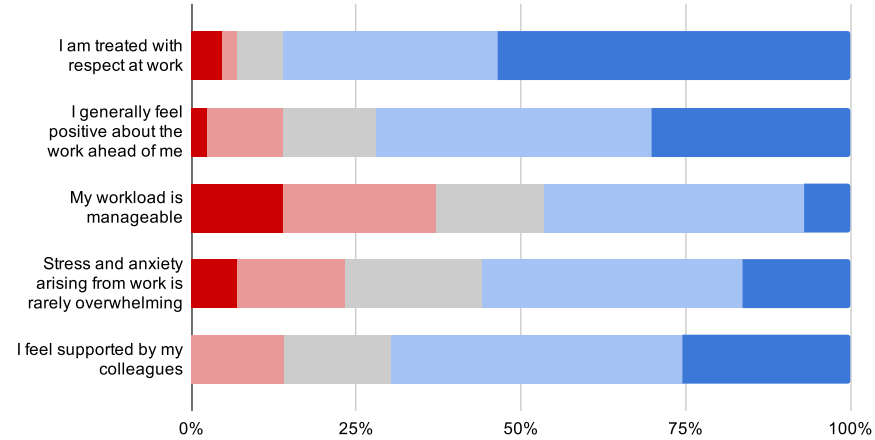
Bring back Games Fridays (once a month) – some suggestions for activities:

- Treasure hunts around Cambridge (in groups of 6)
- Virtual Escape rooms (Macmillan) – team game
- Virtual Murder mystery – team game
- Departmental Quiz

(virtual cooking or book club was also mentioned but didn't seem to be as popular)

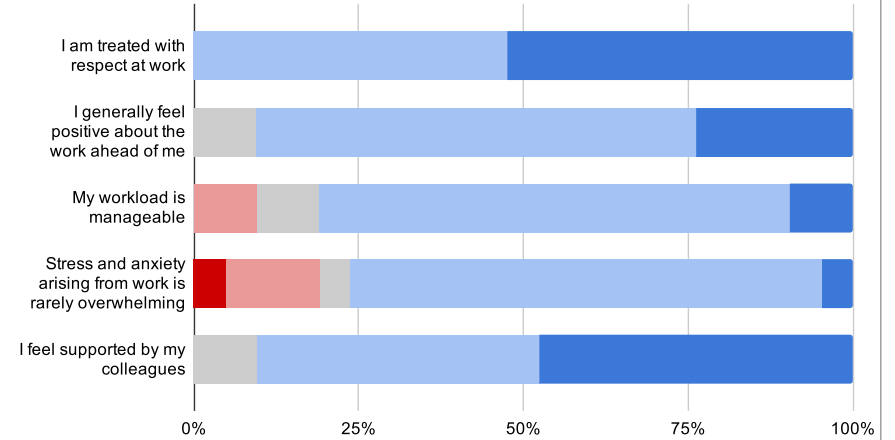
Academic Staff (~80% turnout)

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly Agree



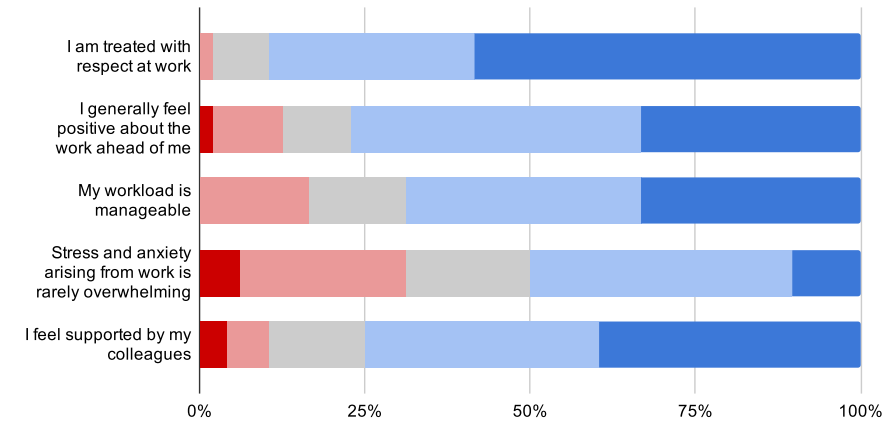
Professional Services Staff (~60% turnout)

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly Agree



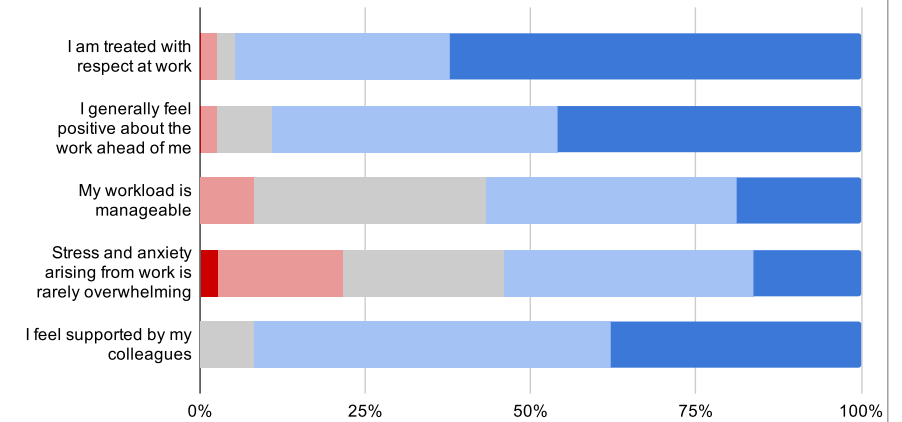
PhD Students (~30% turnout)

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly Agree

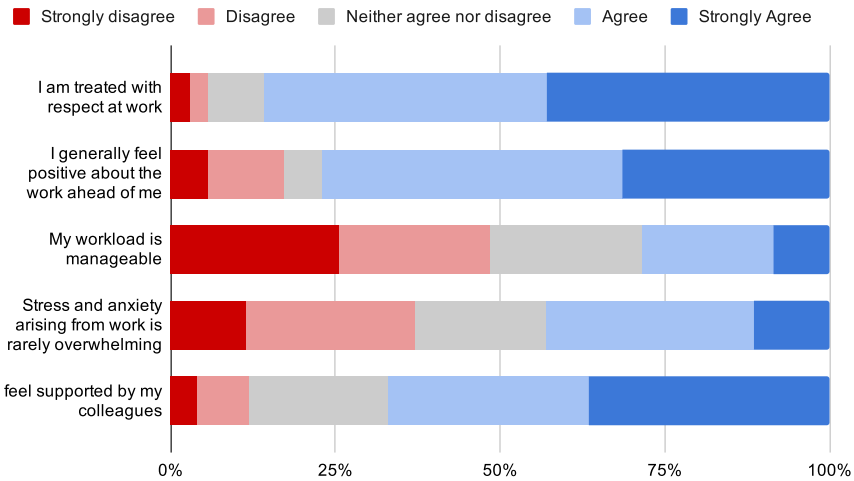


Research Staff (~34% turnout)

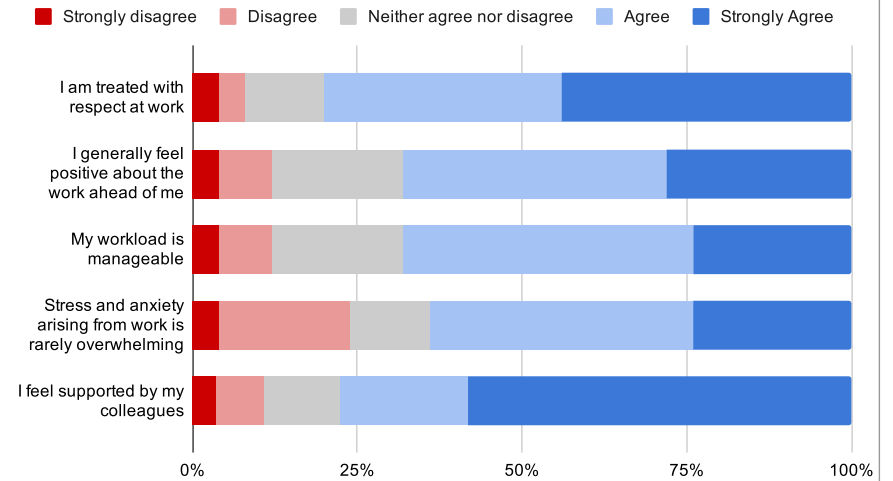
Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly Agree



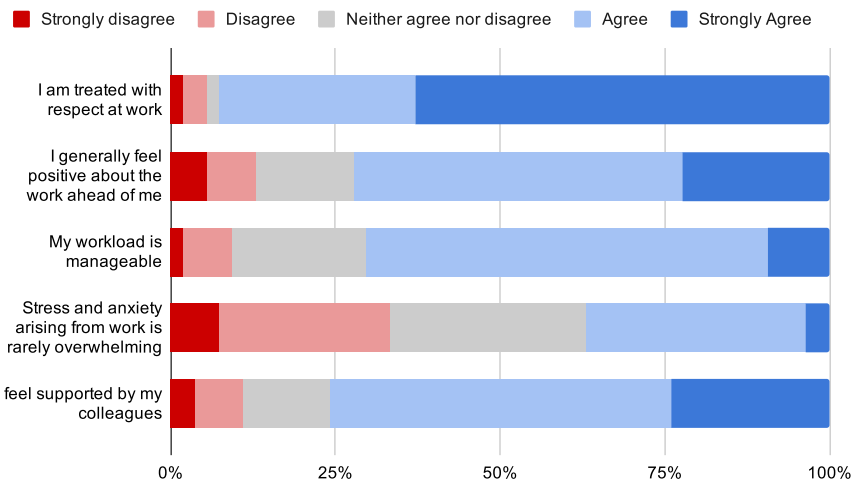
Academic Staff (~65%)



Professional Services Staff (~71%)



PhD Students (~34%)



Research Staff (~37%)

