

## Department of Veterinary Medicine

### Wellbeing and Mental Health Oversight Group

#### Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023, 1-2pm Hammond Seminar Room and on Teams

Attendees: Dan Tucker (Chair), Sarah Voss, Julian Parkhill, Nick Bexfield, Jane Dobson, Sharon Chandler, Katheryn Ayres (notes)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from James Wood and Julie Ingham.

2. Conflicts of interest

There were none declared.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023

These were accepted.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting (not addressed elsewhere in the agenda)

**Actions from Item 5.2 of Minutes:**

NB and JD had sought clarification around staff wellbeing advocacy at a recent Clinical Services Advisory Group, as agreed. This led to the following updates:

- A 'Buddy' Scheme in the Hospital – NB had brought this up at a recent Clinical Advisory Group meeting. This is now in place for hospital appointments.
- Nicola Bull (Hospital HR) is the Hospital Wellbeing Advocate and was willing to join the WMHOG going forward.
- It was agreed to re-start the work on publishing a booklet for staff regarding wellbeing, which was started a few years ago. The digital version needed to be located but if it can't be found, the hard copy could be scanned with a view to publishing the booklet over the summer vacation.

**FURTHER ACTION: NB/DT and others**

A survey was carried by Julie (HR for Dept) and Nicola (HR for Hospital) to determine existing trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) and expressions of interest from other members of staff. *[Note subsequent to July WMHOG meeting: there are 9 existing trained MHFAs, approximately equally shared across Dept and Hospital. A further 17 expressed interest in training – 3 from Dept, 14 from Hospital].* Nicola had suggested that guidance was for 1 MHFA per 10 staff. DT noted that Judith Drinkwater had said that there is no available departmental funding this year, but DT may have a source of funds to enable some training places. To be discussed at the next meeting *[Subsequent to July meeting DT has made £1500 available from excess industrial grants/consultancy income towards this].*

**FURTHER ACTION: DT and others**

**Actions from item 5.3 of Minutes:** Final Year Rotation feedback, general student resilience training, and VSCS training in wellbeing support.

Final Year Rotation feedback.

It was noted that there is existing guidance on student feedback in the Teaching and Assessment Guide (section 3.7) with reference to the [Cause for Concern](#) document for final year students. The Training Scholars have a session on giving effective student feedback in their induction programme.

Resilience training

It was noted that there was a talk in the 6<sup>th</sup> year induction programme from a recent graduate (Sophie Mead), which was well received, and there were also talks in the Easter Term of 5<sup>th</sup> year on resilience.

VSCS training on wellbeing support/signposting

It was agreed that it was important to make sure we have good guidance for VSCSs on signposting students to appropriate support, while recognising the core role rests with Colleges. DT noted that there was a really useful document from the Mental Health advisers in the Counselling service that we could adapt for this purpose – we can do that with agreement from Anna Hollis. Further matters in relation to VSCS training arose later in the meeting (see 5. below).

**FURTHER ACTION: DT/AH**

It was noted that mental health awareness training had been provided for VSCSs under the RCVS Mind Matters Initiative in 2017 but it would be timely to have another ‘round’ of this training. JMD suggested that one of the forthcoming staff training mornings could be used to cover this topic – this session could include VSCSs but be offered to any member of staff who teaches, and could include an external trainer/speaker. The central University Student Wellbeing initiative was planning a staff training initiative during AY23-24.

**FURTHER ACTION: DT /JMD**

## **5. Main business (standing items): Opportunities or gaps identified by members.**

### **Upcoming dates:**

The group discussed the list of relevant dates that were coming up in the next months:

- 10 September : [World Suicide Prevention Day](#)
- 10 October : [World Mental Health Day](#)
- 10 October: [RCVS Mind Matters Initiative Research Symposium, Liverpool.](#)
- 2 – 6 October: [National Work Life Week](#)
- 18 October: [World Menopause Day](#)
- November: [Men’s Health Awareness Month](#)
- 2 November: [National Stress Awareness Day](#)
- 13 November: [World Kindness Day](#)

Agreed actions relating to these dates:

- To mark World Mental Health Day in October by holding a coffee morning: **Action DT to raise with JAD.**
- To request the Department to pay for one person to attend the RCVS MMI research symposium in Liverpool. **ACTION: DT to raise with JAD.**

#### **Webpage opportunities:**

Ollie Falconbridge has kindly offered to help support the WMHOG webpage and DT would be meeting him soon to discuss. Once his availability was confirmed there was scope to begin and advertise a blog. For example, DT could ask Sam Stevens and Hannah Almond to write a short report for the webpage related to the recent VetEd conference session on suicide prevention

#### **VSCS training and information:**

The following items were proposed for the upcoming annual meeting of VSCSs in Sept 2023.

- To better signpost/inform VSCS's about the need for Student Support Documents (SSD's) which will help to provide support for students who have mental health and other conditions
- To better signpost/info VSCS's about the college tutorial system

**ACTION: DT to liaise with Anna H**

### 6. Oversight group initiatives

#### 6.1 Web page – comments and ideas or offers

See above.

#### 6.2 Planning for annual Departmental W+MHOG event, Spring 2024

Feedback indicated that a more practical / 'tool-kit' type presentation would be welcomed and the group agreed to take this up. It was agreed to keep to the broad timings of the 2023 event (later in Lent Term), and DT asked all to think of some ideas for a speaker (SC has sent him details of someone who might be a good person to ask). Ideas put forward during the meeting:

- A senior member of the University's Mental Health and Wellbeing initiative or the University Counselling Service
- [Lennon Foo](#) - a veterinarian and author of a book just published regarding thriving and surviving in the veterinary profession.
- [Sharon – I think you also recommended someone....was this Helen Goldborough of [www.getmentalhealth.co.uk](http://www.getmentalhealth.co.uk) ?]

Plans would be settled at the next meeting.

#### 6.3 Upcoming events to bring to attention of Dept members

As noted above, these will be uploaded to the web page.

### 7. Any other business

There was none.