NFTS Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Vision

The National Film and Television School (NFTS/the School) is committed to fostering a supportive, inclusive, and inspiring environment where all staff and students can thrive creatively and personally. We recognise that mental health and wellbeing are integral to achieving this goal. The demands of studying and working within the creative industries bring unique challenges, including high expectations, tight deadlines, and a need for collaboration. This strategy seeks to address these challenges by embedding mental health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

At NFTS, we understand that a proactive and comprehensive approach to mental health is essential. This strategy outlines our commitment to promoting wellbeing, preventing mental ill-health, intervening early when challenges arise, and providing support that meets the diverse needs of our community.

Our vision is to create a community where everyone feels supported and valued, where mental health is openly discussed, and where stigma is actively challenged. By working collaboratively with students, staff, and external partners, we aim to ensure that every individual has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and transition into leaders who drive positive change within the creative industries.

This strategy is underpinned by the School's commitment to achieve the University Mental Health Charter[1] which promotes the whole-institution approach defined in the Charter.

Our strategy recognises and seeks to build on the existing good practice within the School that currently supports staff and students' mental health and wellbeing.

Key aims and objectives

The strategy is built around five core aims and associated objectives:

1. **Leadership and Culture**

    - Adopt a whole institution approach, and ensure senior managers and governors recognise the importance of good mental health and their role in fostering wellbeing, and are well-informed about the support available to students and staff.
    - Build a culture of openness and reduce stigma through visible leadership commitment and campaigns.
    - Ensure mental health and wellbeing is always considered when developing strategies and policies and regularly review these to adapt to evolving challenges and circumstances.
    - Seek to embed the principles of compassionate communication in all our dealing with staff and students.

[1] https://hub.studentminds.org.uk/university-mental-health-charter/

- Ensure our students become ambassadors for changing approaches to mental health within the creative industries

2. Transitions

- Provide tailored support for students entering, progressing through, and exiting the School, recognising the unique pressures at each stage.
- Encourage and enable students to build social relationships through extracurricular activities including networking events and creative workshops to promote a sense of belonging.
- Focus on the challenges faced by diverse groups, such as international students, mature students, and those from underrepresented backgrounds.

3. Prevention and Environment

- Inform staff and students about the Codes of Conduct and expectations of behaviour, and promote values of respect and inclusivity within the School community.
- Provide financial advice and support to students to mitigate stress related to funding.
- Promote healthy lifestyle habits, including physical activity and substance use education.
- Embed mental health considerations into course design, assessment schedules, and feedback processes.
- Ensure that physical spaces and their use effectively support good mental wellbeing and help create a sense of community.
- Encourage a positive work life balance to prevent burnout.
- Highlight and celebrate mental health awareness through events, campaigns, and partnerships.

4. Early Identification and Support for Mental Health Challenges

- Strengthen pathways for staff and students to disclose mental health concerns before starting at the School and throughout their time at the NFTS.
- Train staff and students to recognise early signs of mental distress and direct individuals to appropriate resources.
- Ensure everyone at the School knows how and where to seek help.
- Provide accessible, culturally appropriate mental health services for those experiencing challenges.
- Ensure staff and students with ongoing mental health needs receive individual reasonable adjustments

5. Partnerships and Staff Development

- Ensure all staff understand their roles in supporting student wellbeing and provide them with appropriate training.

- Work closely with the Students' Union and with students to access the voice and experience of underrepresented groups, ensuring that support services are accessible and effective for them.
- Offer support for staff assisting students with mental health challenges, ensuring they are aware of and can easily access appropriate resources and assistance.
- Maintain our collaborative links with external agencies including Bucks Mind and one Recovery Bucks to ensure we can offer staff and students specialist support when required.

Implementation and Accountability

1. **Action Plan**

    - Develop a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan in partnership with students with measurable objectives to track progress against delivery of the Strategy.
    - Regularly communicate outcomes and updates to the School community.

2. **Resources**

- Allocate sufficient resources, including funding and staff, to implement this strategy effectively.

3. **Feedback Loops**

- Create channels for students and staff to provide ongoing feedback on mental health services and initiatives.
- Actively involve and consult with students and staff in the production and evaluation of this the strategy.

Support for students and staff

- Mental Health and Wellbeing Support for Students

- Mental Health and Wellbeing support for staff, including guidance for staff supporting students with mental health difficulties is available through the HR team and through WorkVivo.

Approved by ASC in May 2025