Staff Wellbeing Policy

Effective Date: 28.01.2026
Review Cycle: Annually

1. Preamble and Purpose

Saffron Kitchen Project (SKP) exists to serve communities with dignity, care, and integrity. In pursuit of this mission, we recognise that staff may experience periods of emotional pressure, stress, or burnout, particularly in service-oriented work involving vulnerability, responsibility, and secondary trauma.

Unaddressed wellbeing concerns can negatively affect individuals, team dynamics, safeguarding, judgement, and the quality of services delivered. SKP therefore considers staff wellbeing a core organisational responsibility, directly linked to effective safeguarding, ethical decision-making, and organisational sustainability.

This policy exists to ensure that staff wellbeing concerns, including stress and burnout, are identified early and addressed appropriately, sensitively, and responsibly. Where necessary, it also provides a clear and supportive pathway for staff to step back from work in order to rest, recover, or seek support.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all paid staff of Saffron Kitchen Project.

It should be read alongside SKP's:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct

3. Definitions

- Staff: Individuals employed by SKP in paid roles.
- Mental health concerns: Emotional, psychological, or physical pressures that result in distress, impaired wellbeing, or reduced capacity to perform duties safely and effectively.
- Burnout: SKP recognises burnout in line with the The World Health Organization defines burnout as: "A syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic

workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterised by feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy.

- Intervention: A supportive organisational response initiated when wellbeing concerns or burnout are identified, aimed at protecting both the individual and the wider team.

4. Principles

SKP's approach to staff wellbeing is guided by the following principles:

- Wellbeing is essential to safe practice and safeguarding
- Early identification is preferable to crisis response
- Wellbeing concerns are handled with care, discretion, and respect
- The organisation has a duty of care to both individual staff members and the wider team
- Staff will not be penalised for raising wellbeing concerns

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Wellbeing Oversight

Overall responsibility for staff wellbeing sits jointly with the Project Manager and the Director, who are responsible for:

- Monitoring workloads, stress levels, and team dynamics
- Ensuring regular opportunities for check-ins and feedback
- Responding appropriately to wellbeing concerns
- Initiating supportive interventions where needed

5.2 Staff Wellbeing Focal Point

Stella Elmatzoglou
Role: Project Manager
stella@saffronkitchenproject.org

Stella is the primary point of contact for staff wishing to discuss wellbeing concerns, stress, or support needs.

5.3 Safeguarding Focal Point

Where wellbeing concerns intersect with safeguarding (risk of harm to self or others, serious distress, or compromised judgement), matters will be managed in line with SKP's Safeguarding Policy.

Gabriella Herberstein - Board Member
gabriella.herberstein@hotmail.com

5. Supporting Staff Wellbeing

SKP recognises that wellbeing is influenced not only by workplace factors but also by personal circumstances that may affect an individual's ability to work safely and effectively.

Within its available resources, SKP seeks to support staff wellbeing through:

- Reasonable workloads and clear role expectations
- Regular check-ins and opportunities for feedback
- Encouraging rest, breaks, and annual leave
- Flexible working arrangements where operationally possible
- A culture of mutual respect, inclusion, and open communication
- Access to wellbeing support and signposting where appropriate

5.1 Additional Support for Staff Facing External Stressors

SKP recognises that some staff members may face significant external pressures that can affect their wellbeing, including matters related to migration, asylum processes, family reunification, housing insecurity, legal proceedings, or integration into a new country.

Where possible and appropriate, SKP is committed to supporting staff through these challenges by:

- Providing flexibility to attend appointments related to asylum claims, immigration procedures, family reunification, legal matters, healthcare, or other essential administrative processes

- Prioritising attendance at such appointments and ensuring staff are not disadvantaged for attending them
- Offering practical support with paperwork, applications, referrals, or communication with relevant services where this falls within SKP's capacity and expertise
- Signposting staff to specialist legal, social, health, or community support services where appropriate
- Recognising that uncertainty relating to immigration status, family separation, and other life circumstances can be significant sources of stress and anxiety

SKP acknowledges that supporting staff through these challenges contributes to both individual wellbeing and a healthier, more sustainable workplace. Any support provided will be handled sensitively, respectfully, and confidentially.

6. Identifying Wellbeing Concerns and Burnout

All staff are encouraged to remain attentive to signs of stress or burnout in themselves and colleagues.

Indicators may include (but are not limited to):

- Persistent exhaustion or disengagement
- Reduced concentration or impaired judgement
- Withdrawal from responsibilities or communication
- Heightened irritability, frustration, or emotional distress

No single sign automatically indicates burnout. However, patterns of behaviour or multiple indicators may prompt further discussion or assessment by the Project Manager and Director.

7. Support, Intervention and Response

Where wellbeing concerns or burnout are identified:

1. Initial Conversation
   A private, supportive conversation will be arranged with the staff member to understand concerns and needs.
2. Organisational Responsibilities Explained
   The staff member will be informed that SKP has obligations:

- To their personal wellbeing
- To the wellbeing, safety, and functioning of the wider team

3. Supportive Action
   This may include:
   - Temporary workload adjustment
   - Time away from duties
   - Flexible working arrangements
   - Referral to external support resources where appropriate
4. Time Away Where Necessary
   In cases of significant burnout or distress, staff may be asked to take time away from work to rest and recover. This is framed as a protective and supportive measure, not a disciplinary action.
5. Follow-Up
   A check-in will take place upon return to work to ensure the staff member feels supported and able to resume duties safely.

8. Regular Monitoring and Preventive Measures

To support ongoing wellbeing, SKP maintains:

- Weekly team meetings for regular check-ins, communication, and mutual support
- Quarterly one-to-one meetings focused on staff development, workload, and wellbeing
- An open-door culture encouraging early discussion of concerns

These mechanisms aim to reduce risk, prevent burnout, and promote sustainable working practices.

9. Annual Leave and Rest

SKP recognises that our work can be physically and emotionally demanding. All staff are required to take their full legal annual leave entitlement, as set out in their contract and in line with employment law.

SKP normally closes during the Christmas, Easter, and summer periods and provides an additional five days of leave for personal use. Where possible, SKP also offers additional time off throughout the year, reflecting its commitment to staff wellbeing, rest, recovery, and sustainable working practices.This reflects SKP's commitment to staff wellbeing and recognises the demands of the work, supporting rest, recovery, and long-term

sustainability. Taking annual leave is a legal requirement and an essential part of maintaining health, safety, and wellbeing at work.

Management has a responsibility to support staff in planning and taking annual leave in a timely and reasonable way, and staff are encouraged to raise any barriers that may prevent them from doing so.

10. Working Hours, Additional Time, and Time Off in Lieu

SKP does not expect staff to work overtime as part of their role. Where additional hours are worked, such as for evening or weekend events, these hours must be taken back as time off in lieu, at a mutually agreed time.

Both management and staff share a collective responsibility for:

- Monitoring additional hours worked
- Coordinating when time off in lieu can be taken
- Ensuring workloads are managed sustainably

SKP is committed to creating a culture where staff feel comfortable and supported in requesting time off in lieu, including in situations where extra hours may otherwise go unnoticed. Managers are expected to proactively check in with staff to ensure additional time worked is recognised and appropriately balanced.

This shared responsibility exists to protect staff wellbeing and to reinforce SKP's commitment to fair, sustainable working practices.

11. Confidentiality

All wellbeing-related discussions will be treated confidentially and shared strictly on a need-to-know basis, unless safeguarding or legal obligations require escalation.