

LET'S STICK TOGETHER

Benefits of group activity

p20

STAY CONNECTED

A new way of operating

p32

TOTAL TRAINER

Megan Smiley

p45

S&PA Professional

ISSUE 35 AUTUMN 2019

 **CIMSPA**

THE SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

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G I R L S



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is changing
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"I set up the programme because I didn't see any others like myself playing sport. There were no role models. I always had it in mind that I wanted to help girls like myself." (p24)



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UPFRONT

EDITORIAL

► DeeDee Doke

The 3 Rs of success



As the excitement from CIMSPA's AGM lingers on, the institute presses on to lead the sector forward to even greater achievements

Speaking at CIMSPA's Annual General Meeting on 18 September, one audience member referenced the state of play at the sector's chartered institute as: "The end of the beginning." It was an exciting moment, and there was a real feeling of anticipation throughout the room about CIMSPA's next stages of development.

CEO Tara Dillon outlined "the three Rs" that are keys to CIMSPA's continuing success and further maturation: Reputation, Recognition and Regulation.

CIMSPA's reputation with allied professionals, with whom the institute must partner to achieve the goal of an

active, healthy nation, is improving by leaps and bounds. Until recently, Dillon said: "We didn't have a seat at the table. Now we have."

Recognition addresses acknowledgement of the sector as a profession and its members, through becoming trained and qualified, as career professionals. And regulation looms large in CIMSPA's role in sector risk management through becoming established as the sector's national workforce and training regulator, and developing and publishing workforce policy and regulation. As part of that second 'R', CIMSPA will also undertake a full scoping exercise around the concept of national workforce

registration, subject to proof of concept project outcomes.

Looking ahead to the next 12 months, Dillon said: "You've got to view CIMSPA as a start-up. The biggest challenge is, will the sector accept it? The real clever bit... is driving a brand-new culture onto a sector."



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CIMSPA

S&PA News

A round-up of the latest developments in the industry

GROWTH HIGHLIGHTS 'EXCELLENT YEAR' FOR CIMSPA

By DeeDee Doke

A rise in organisational reputation with allied professionals and nearly a 25% increase in membership were among CIMSPA's top achievements in the past year at the sector body's sixth annual Annual General Meeting on 18 September.

In addition, CIMSPA's employer partners have increased from 108 to 136 and education partners from 145 to 199, while the number

of education endorsements – qualifications, degrees and CPD – has risen from 800 to 1,183 from 2018 to 2019. The number of CIMSPA staff has more than doubled in the last three months to 31.

"It's been an excellent year," CIMSPA chairman Marc Woods told delegates at the organisation's Loughborough offices.

CEO Tara Dillon highlighted the receipt of new funding of £4.5m over two years from CIMSPA

partner Sport England as a "key achievement", as well as CIMSPA now being classified as the non-departmental public body's "expert partner".

"We are their 'go-to' partner in workforce training," Dillon said.

At the same time, CIMSPA's strategy for 2019 to 2023 includes an aim that CIMSPA will be financially independent by 2023, through reducing the core operating costs currently supported by Sport England year by year.

Other specific end goals for 2023 include:

- being the sector's regulatory body, protecting the sector's integrity and supporting its recognition as a profession
- providing membership services to individuals of specific occupations across the sector – those that don't currently have a 'home' or who wish to be recognised by CIMSPA
- providing partnership services to a range of

organisations across the whole of the sector to support their workforce and educational development

- being seen as "an exemplar organisation" within the sector in terms of their staff and members, governance and financial sustainability.

Of the last goal, the use of risk identification, assessment and minimisation tools is listed as a means of ensuring the strategy's delivery.

The strategy document notes "managing risk" as a key component of CIMSPA's organisation development and governance: "By the end of 2021 we will ensure that risk identification, assessment and treatment underpin our strategy and is a routine part of the decision-making process and support the delivery of our day-to-day objectives."

CIMSPA board trustees present at the AGM widely commented at the meeting's end about the positive shift in sector sentiment towards the organisation from cynicism to enthusiasm. Trustee Lisa Forsyth said she had seen the mood change from "an 'I'm not sure' situation to 'We want to be part of it'".

An audience member summed up the sentiment this way: "This feels like the end of the beginning."



UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

FOLLETT: PROMOTING PLAYTIME CAN IMPROVE YOUTH INACTIVITY LEVELS

By Patrick Appleton

Creating more active children requires a multi-dimensional approach that puts as much emphasis on play activities as organised sport and physical activity, an education expert has said.

Michael Follett, UK director at Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL), explained why “play is the answer” at Why Sports 2019 conference at the Royal Society of Medicine, where the theme was ‘Activating the Nation’.

“£2bn in funding has gone into PE, but zero has gone into improving active play,” Follett said. “That money has made an impact on children who were already sporty. There’s nothing wrong with that, but we need something

different - we need investment that doesn’t just target people who already like sport and PE.”

He added that play must be incorporated back into the physical activity programme to encourage children to become active regardless of whether they are sporty or not.

“We have taken the choice, freedom and self-directed behaviours away from children,” said Follett, adding that childhood is “probably not going in the right direction”.

The OPAL UK director also hit out at schools for their narrow-minded approach to the weather conditions, saying that children should be provided with the right equipment and clothing to be able to play outdoors when wet.

MESSAGE FROM CIMSPA CEO



TARA DILLON
ON CIMSPA'S
RESPONSIBILITY
TO ASSESS
APPRENTICESHIPS

CIMSPA has been appointed the external quality assurance body for apprenticeships delivered in the sports and physical activity sector.

The new role means that we will be responsible for the external quality assurance of end-point assessment organisations; those bodies who conduct the new assessments at the end of apprenticeships to test whether the apprentice has gained the skills, knowledge and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard.

Appointed by The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and nominated by the sector's employers (trailblazer groups), the role allows us to uphold the high standards of our new apprenticeships standards, which have been designed by employers and delivered by CIMSPA education partners.

The appointment is a great vote of confidence in CIMSPA and our sector. It is testament to the maturity of the industry, and demonstrates just how far we have come and the credibility we have gained. Five years ago, it would have been unthinkable for a government agency to put its faith into our chartered institute to uphold the standards of our sector.

Amid the day-to-day challenges we all face, it can be easy to forget the progress we have made, but this appointment is proof of the respect we now command among others. And this is entirely down to the sector embracing its chartered institute.

RAISING THE BAR

CIMSPA, with its partner Future Fit Training, is working on a two-year Sport England-funded project to improve the quality of training and education across the sector.

The partnership follows a series of ‘Raising the Bar’ reports by Future Fit Training in association with CIMSPA and ukactive between 2014 and 2018 to explore operator feedback around a decline in the level of training, qualifications and standards of people entering the industry. The reports highlighted a host of issues around methods of training, assessment standards and skills requirements, with employers often left to further train staff on the job.

Speaking about the new initiative, Tara Dillon, CEO, CIMSPA, said: “The work of our Raising the Bar Stakeholder Group will provide real solutions to the most pressing training challenges, and ensure the continued effectiveness of Sport England’s investment in our sector’s people development.”

As a result, Sport England is funding an employer-led Raising the Bar Stakeholder Group, as part of its sport and physical activity workforce development strategy.

Stuart Armstrong, head of coaching at Sport England, said: “As part of our desire to strive for a more customer focused workforce that is recognised for its professionalism, it is fantastic to be working in partnership with CIMSPA and Future Fit Training to take ‘Raising the Bar’ to the next level.”

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

VIEWPOINT

**DR CRIONNA TOBIN,
NUTRITIONIST &
HEAD OF SCIENCE
AND EDUCATION,
OPTIMUM NUTRITION
NUTRITIONAL TRAINING IN
THE FITNESS INDUSTRY**



An ever increasing number of Brits are engaging in sporting events, setting themselves goals and looking to increase their fitness levels. However, recent research by Optimum Nutrition has revealed that some people could be letting themselves down by not supporting their training with adequate diet and nutrition.

As a performance nutritionist, myself and many others in the industry are fully aware that nutrition is crucial when it comes to hitting those fitness goals and reaching peak performance.

Consumer understanding doesn't reflect this, as 80% of Brits who exercise regularly admit they're not confident about what foods they should be eating to support their hard work – something that needs to be addressed. Despite this lack of understanding and confusion, 30% of Brits polled would like to get more nutritional advice from PTs; therefore it's more important than ever that fitness experts, at the front line of consumer queries, are armed with solid evidence based nutritional knowledge.

With nutrition only forming a small part of the PT qualification, expanding the knowledge base is a valuable way that experts can stand out from the crowd and ensure their giving clients fully rounded and accurate advice. If you're a PT or fitness expert but you don't think you could accurately and clearly address the most common queries and nutritional myths, then you need to seek out a nutritional training course.



DON'T LET HEALTH CONDITIONS HOLD YOU BACK, SAYS CAMPAIGN

Sport England has launched a campaign to support people living with one or more long-term health conditions, promoting the benefits of physical activity in improving those ailments.

The We Are Undeatable campaign is designed to help those living with the likes of diabetes, cancer, arthritis and Parkinson's become more active in their lives.

According to CIMSPA partner Sport England, one in four people live with a long-term health condition in England. Those individuals are also twice as likely to be inactive. The non-departmental public body says evidence has shown

that being active can help manage certain conditions and reduce the impact of some illnesses.

"We are very proud to support our charity partners in delivering this new campaign because we know with the right support, sport and physical activity has the ability to change the lives of people living with long-term health conditions for the better," said Sport England CEO Tim Hollingsworth.

"This campaign forms part of a longer-term drive by Sport England to change cultural and social norms around long-term health conditions and physical activity."

Funded by the National Lottery, the campaign will be led by a collaborative approach featuring 15 of England's leading health and social care charities.

Juliet Bouverie, CEO of the Stroke Association and lead campaign spokesperson, said the campaign is focused on encouraging people to enjoy being active when they can, and persevering through the hard times.

Colin Huffen, CIMSPA head of regulation and standards added: "We welcome the campaign. People who are provided with tailored 'behaviour change' support are much more likely to make physical activity a lifestyle habit."

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

CIMSPA BECOMES ASSESSOR FOR NEW STANDARDS



CIMSPA has been appointed as the External Quality Assurance (EQA) provider for the end point assessment of five sport and physical activity (S&PA) sector apprenticeship standards.

The appointment places CIMSPA on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's (IfATE) Register of EQA Providers.

As an EQA provider, CIMSPA is responsible for monitoring and auditing the assessment that apprentices undertake at the end of their

learning, in line with IfATE guidance. The process ensures that end point assessment is fair, consistent and robust across different apprenticeship standards and between different assessment organisations.

CIMSPA said the move will enhance its ability to support those delivering S&PA apprenticeships and ensure that apprentices receive high quality learning experiences.

"This is an important step for CIMSPA," says Colin Huffen, head of regulation and standards at CIMSPA.

"We are now in a position to assess and guide the quality of both apprenticeships and higher education courses across the sport and physical activity sector."

The five standards are:

- Community Activator Coach
- Community Sport and Health Officer
- Leisure Duty Manager
- Leisure Team Member
- Personal Trainer

LEISURE SITES CAN AID AIR AMBULANCE

Leisure site operators are being urged to contact their local air ambulance service to discuss using their grounds as a potential landing site.

The call for action comes as part of special guidance produced for the industry after Place Leisure's head of safety Andy Read was taken to hospital by East Anglian Air Ambulance after a cardiac arrest last year.

According to Read, "it was pretty much touch and go" and that alongside the efforts of a first responder and access to a defibrillator, the fact that the East Anglian Air Ambulance were able to get him to Basildon Hospital in just 14 minutes rather than 45 minutes by car saved his life.

Following the incident, Read says he realised that leisure centre grounds were ideal places for helicopters to land.

However, recognising that leisure centre staff lacked the necessary knowledge and training to make this a reality, Read decided to act.

After working with the EAAA and health and safety experts Right Directions, the result is new guidance for leisure site operators.

■ To request a copy of the guidelines, please email info@rightrightdirections.co.uk

WAVE MAKER OF THE QUARTER: F45

Working together as a team and utilising technology for the benefit of members is the USP for fitness franchise F45, as **Graham Simons** reports

Fostering a unique community spirit among participants is one of the ways F45's latest franchise plans to stand out in the market.

The fitness franchise is set to open a site at CIMSPA partner Everyone Active's Little Venice Sports Centre in Maida Vale, London. Operated in partnership with Westminster City Council, the facility will adopt the usual F45 franchise model under franchisee holder, Annie Edmonds.

F45 is a global fitness community specialising in high intensity group workouts centred on three core pillars of motivation, innovation and result in a bid to ensure members get the best out of their training and experience.

And Edmonds told *S&PA Professional* this latest site will aim to stand out in the market by



providing "unrivalled training innovation, technology, and community spirit".

"There are several screens in the room displaying everything from your heart rate, through to a video demonstrating every class exercise," Edmonds says. "These screens support members and trainers by providing a constant visual reference throughout the workout. The Aussie 'community spirit' offered by every F45 studios worldwide is one of the keys to the concept's success. F45 encourages members to see fellow exercisers as team mates, working together, and sharing your own successes to inspire and motivate."

■ Is your facility making waves in the industry? Get in touch at sandpa@redactive.co.uk

UPFRONT

MOVERS & SHAKERS

CENTRAL YMCA

Arvinda Gohil has been named as the new CEO of Central YMCA. Gohil joins the health and wellbeing charity from Community Links, where she was also CEO. "I'm excited and delighted to be joining Central YMCA and look forward to contributing to its ongoing success and impact," said Gohil.

WOMEN IN FOOTBALL

Monique Choudhuri and **Lisa Parfitt**



have been appointed to the board of Women in Football.

Managing director of ENGINE Sport & Brand Experience Parfitt said the role will allow her to contribute ideas in the area of gender diversity in football at all levels.

"Unless you are part of the solution

you are part of the problem and this is my way of continuing to contribute to the progress of gender diversity in the sports industry," said Parfitt.

UKACTIVE

CIMSPA partner ukactive has appointed **Huw Edwards** as its new CEO.

Edwards has been acting CEO since Steven Ward departed in April to join Ingesport as chief transformation officer.

"I look forward to working with partners across the whole sector to champion the importance of physical activity," said Edwards.

Previously, Edwards was director of public affairs, communications and research at ukactive.



GOVERNMENT

Nigel Adams has been appointed as the UK's new sports minister. The North Yorkshire MP succeeds Mims Davies, who was removed from her post as part of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's cabinet reshuffle. Adams is the Conservative MP for Selby and is the third sports minister to take up office in nine months.

ACTIVE IQ

CIMSPA-partner Active IQ has appointed two additional directors to its senior management team.

James McPherson joins in a new role of commercial director with a focus on growing the business, including the development of Active IQ's new end point assessment service line.

In addition, **Georgina Shaw** joins the awarding organisation as director of quality and standards.

CONTRACTS AND DEALS

FUNDING GRANTED FOR OLDHAM LEISURE CENTRE

Oldham Community Leisure (OCL) will receive almost £300,000 in funding to promote physical activity locally.

Some £272,957 in funding will be used for the Oldham Active Communities Project, which aims to use physical activity to reduce levels of social isolation within the community.

£1.6M PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FUND FOR SPORT ABERDEEN

Sport Aberdeen has extended its partnership with sportscotland in a deal worth £1.6m to the local authority.

Funding will be split across four years and will enable the provision of sport and physical activity services across the city, supporting programmes such as the Active Schools initiative.

PURE GYM SIGNS UP PREMIER GLOBAL FOR PT TRAINING

CIMSPA partner Premier Global NASM has signed an agreement with Pure Gym to enhance the fitness provider's personal training offering.

The deal is aimed at creating a clear route to market for PT graduates and to offer continuing professional development.

ACTIVE IQ USES INVIGILATING TOOL FOR REMOTE EXAMINATION

CIMSPA partner Active IQ has partnered with ProctorU to provide remote invigilating for those taking exams and assessment under its auspices.

ProctorU provides invigilating services to help organisations with their assessment processes.

UPFRONT

Source:



ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

Fitness levels among young people often dominate the industry news agenda, but as these figures show, there is plenty of enthusiasm for fitness and physical activity among this group. According to the statistics from DataHub, going to the gym continues to lead the way as the youth population's main form of fitness. Naturally, teenagers are the most active group and their activity levels increase most starkly between the ages of 13 and 14. On the issue of gender, more males engage in youth fitness programmes but with nearly 40% of participants classed as female, there is a foundation to build on and edge closer to 50-50 equality.



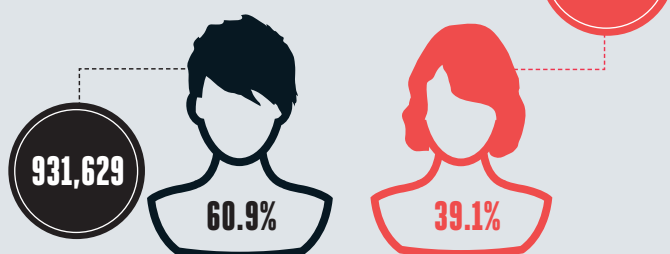
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SITES IN THE DATAHUB OFFER YOUTH FITNESS PROGRAMMES

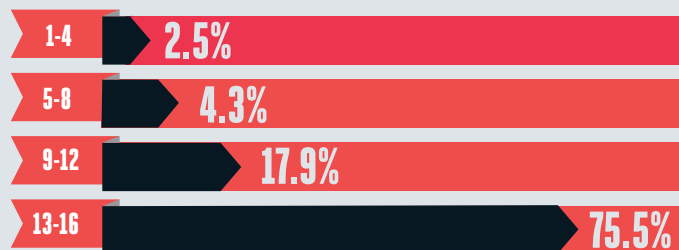


AGE RANGE:
16 AND UNDER

GENDER BREAKDOWN OF YOUTH FITNESS PARTICIPANTS



AGE BREAKDOWN OF YOUTH FITNESS PARTICIPANTS



TOP 5 YOUTH FITNESS PROGRAMMES WITH THE HIGHEST PARTICIPATION



Source: All figures taken from DataHub sites between September 2018 and August 2019

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

Vocational education has long been considered the poor relation when it comes to academic qualifications, so it was heartening to see TV presenter Steph McGovern championing vocational qualifications on BBC News earlier this summer.

The apprenticeship system should also help to fly the flag for vocational education by providing a solution to the skills shortages experienced by employers while giving people a valuable route into work.

Unfortunately, the system has been plagued with challenges that are regularly exposed in the press. These include apprenticeship funding shortages, a drop in the number of people starting apprenticeships and the complexity of accessing Apprenticeship Levy funds.

LACK OF FUNDING

The levy funding shortage is so acute that a survey found that three out of four apprenticeship training providers can no longer meet demand from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to train new apprentices.

This lack of funding is happening at the worst possible time, when thousands of 16-18-year-old school leavers are looking to earn and learn debt-free on an apprenticeship instead of pursuing another option such as a traditional university degree.

SMEs don't pay the apprenticeship levy and rely on funding being left over from it for their apprenticeships after large levy-paying employers have taken back their entitlement. The government has recently admitted that it badly underestimated how much of the levy the big employers would use up.

As a result, research by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has found that this year:



BRIDGING THE GAP

Despite the challenges surrounding the UK's apprenticeship system, vocational programmes are key to solving the industry's skills shortages says Sarah Edmonds



814,800

In 2017/18, there were 814,800 people participating in an apprenticeship in England, with 375,800 apprenticeship starts and 276,200 apprenticeship achievements

41%

In 2017/2018, 41% of the apprenticeships started were by people over the age of 24, 30% were started by 19-24-year-olds, and 71% were started by those 19 or older

25%

Of employment providers have cut back on apprentice recruitment for their employer customers due to lack of funding

51%

In 2017/18, 49% of apprenticeships starts were by women and 51% by men. This was the first time that more apprenticeships have been started by men than women since 2009/10

Source: researchbriefings.parliament.uk

- A quarter of apprenticeship training providers have had to turn away a prospective SME employer of apprentices
- 17% of providers have stopped recruiting apprentices altogether for new and existing SME employer customers
- 25% have cut back on apprentice recruitment for their employer customers due to a lack of funding
- A third of the providers need up to 25% of additional funding on their government funding contract to meet current demand.

POTENTIAL OF APPRENTICESHIPS

Despite the gloomy outlook, the good news is that the sport & physical activity (S&PA) sector is well prepared and has a fantastic opportunity to seize the agenda and reap the benefits of apprenticeships.

Developed by leading sector employers, apprenticeships are critical to delivering a future-fit, skilled workforce sector. They embed and reflect the most up-to-date knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for such a dynamic and important industry.

Looking at some of the sector's live apprenticeships – including leisure duty manager, community activator coach and leisure team member – it's easy to see the huge potential this training holds for the S&PA industry.

The community activator coach apprenticeship will go a long way to bridge the gap between sport and physical activity and other aligned sectors such as public health.

Apprentices learn how to promote, deliver and coach inclusive and engaging activities that help whole communities to change their behaviour, adopt a physically active lifestyle and stick to it. They will act as positive role models who build good rapport with customers – especially those who are

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

young, inactive or from low-income and marginalised communities.

The broad and varied nature of this programme gives apprentices the skills to work with a wide range of agencies including local authorities, sports clubs and housing associations, helping to foster respect and trust between the S&PA sector and others, which is vital to improving the health and wellbeing of the nation.

The sector employs more than 300,000 people in leisure facilities across the country, yet staff turnover is an enduring issue for employers, particularly at Level 2 roles. The leisure team member apprenticeship will help stem the loss of staff and give apprentices the experience of working across the whole range of the business in a wide variety of operational duties.

Performing the role of lifeguard, swimming teacher, gym instructor and group activity leader, apprentices learn to work both with customers and as part of a team, giving them a solid grounding for a career in the sector.

FIT-FOR-PURPOSE WORKFORCE

Staffing, as a percentage of turnover, is commonly around 50%, sometimes higher; this coupled with the sector's challenges in retaining staff makes the case that utilisation of the apprenticeships available to the S&PA sector is a brilliant solution.

CIMSPA has both the remit and funding to see through largescale reform, which will clearly set out career pathways across the whole sector for all specialisms, from student all the way through to Chartered Fellow. This has been missing in the past, particularly for those entering the sector in Level 2 roles such as fitness instructors, who could only see a pathway to a personal trainer or similar.

The role of apprenticeships in the sector is set to become even more



“CIMSPA has both the remit and funding to see through largescale reform which will clearly set out career pathways across the sector”

relevant with the advent of the new T Levels. Despite the possible governmental changes in the near future, the Department for Education is rolling out these new two-year courses, which have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses. Coming into effect in September 2020, the courses follow GCSEs and will be equivalent to three A Levels.

At present, there is no T Level for sport or fitness. Apprenticeships are the perfect alternative because they combine solid training with a useful earn-while-you-learn experience to make apprentices ‘work ready’ at the end of the programme.

During my career, I have seen countless changes; every 10 years there seems to be sweeping reforms in the education sector alone. People are resistant to change – they prefer to sit back and wait for someone else to take the first steps before getting involved. Apprenticeships are no different. It's easy to be apathetic, but if we employ some of the energy, focus, vision and commitment that is so widespread in the S&PA sector apprenticeships can be made to work for everyone. 

SARAH EDMONDS



At the forefront of quality assurance in standards of education and training in the sector for more than two decades, Edmonds started her career at Central London YMCA as a gym and group exercise instructor as well as a duty manager. She worked in the City of London and progressed to a personal trainer before becoming a tutor and assessor for YFit. Other roles included a period as fitness columnist for *Slimming Magazine* before she returned to education and the quality assurance of assessment standards in the sector.

Edmonds completed both a Cambridge University professional diploma and a masters degree in educational assessment at the Institute of Education at UCL and was director of quality and standards at Active IQ for five years. She was also a non-executive board director of the Federation of Awarding Bodies. Edmonds has established Artemis Associates Consultancy to provide expertise across these industries.



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IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

**KAY SIMNETT**

Director of finance

A qualified accountant, Simnett has more than 12

years of sports funding knowledge as well as a solid background in operations, governance and board management.

"It's such an exciting time to be joining CIMSPA to bring greater financial transparency to the organisation and to support CIMSPA's strategy and future sustainability," says Simnett. "The strategy is industry-changing and to be a part of that will be extremely rewarding as well as working with a great team."

Interests: Board member at Cerebral Palsy Sport, the national charity supporting people with cerebral palsy to reach their sporting potential. Also enjoys travelling, live music and Moto GP.

**SARA WRIGHT**

Project manager

Wright has worked in the sector for six years, in roles

including activity colleges coordinator at Kirklees College – where she helped students engage with extracurricular physical activity – and sports development for Erewash Borough Council. A love of the outdoors saw Wright become outdoor adventure manager at the National Water Sports Centre, where she was responsible for business development and strategy for all adventure activities, as well as managing a team of 50 staff.

"I am an agile project management practitioner and have a broad skillset including business analytics, business development and people management," says Wright. "I'm looking forward to contributing to CIMSPA's vision and implementing new processes whereby projects are managed to develop departmental working."

Interests: Surfing, rock climbing, SCUBA diving and running

**BEN HULSON**

Corporate partnerships executive

Before joining CIMSPA,

Hulson worked in leisure operations whilst studying at university, starting out as a recreation assistant and progressing to duty manager. He became a lifeguard trainer/assessor and worked for a training provider delivering work-related qualifications in sport and physical activity and associated sectors.

"Having always worked in sports and physical activity, my own ambitions of professionalising the sector aligns with what CIMSPA is working towards," Hulson says.

Interests: Huge sports enthusiast who "will give anything a go".

**JESSICA MELLING**

Corporate partnerships executive

After graduating from

Loughborough University in sport and exercise science, Melling took up a voluntary role at Loughborough Sport before joining CIMSPA as membership services officer last year.

"I want to develop a supportive working environment within the corporate partnerships team and build strong relationships with our existing partners, working to foster cross partnership links to support success," says Melling. "I also want to drive the onboarding of new partners to help grow CIMSPA's network and meet the needs of the sector."

Interests: Enjoys running and completed the London Marathon this year. Also coaches trampolining, "providing positive experiences for children".

**MORWENNA CRESPIN**

People development manager

Crespin joins CIMSPA after working at Pendragon, one

Introducing some of the new people to join CIMSPA's growing team, who will be instrumental in helping the organisation achieve its goals



MAKING

of the UK's largest automotive retailers, where she was responsible for embedding a people-centric approach for both external and internal customers. For the past two years, Crespin has worked in Japan, acquiring a new language and cultural skills.

"I have a pragmatic approach to people development," Crespin says. "I'm not afraid to challenge the status quo of how a company looks after its team members, and I enjoy creating new ways of working."

Her goal in the first year is to establish a full learning and development function, including a body of CIMSPA people training,



A DIFFERENCE

running alongside a people development platform threading succession planning into the wider sporting sector.

"I'm looking forward to being able to influence this prominent sector, which has a huge influence on health and is becoming more recognised across other sectors," adds Crespin. "Protecting both those who partake and work in the sector is a massive achievement that is only possible through the work of CIMSPA. I'm very excited to be a part of it."

Interests: Keen sailor with a bareboat skipper's licence. Also enjoys "a cross country hack on a warmblood".



NEVE BIRO-MOORE

Events officer

This new position at CIMSPA marks Biro-

Moore's first full-time role after completing her studies in business. Biro-Moore's primary focus will be to work alongside the marketing and communications team on the annual CIMSPA & Quest NBS conference.

"I want to help improve on an already successful conference by creating a more diverse offering and a greater number of attendees," she says.

Interests: Dog walking and the "occasional spending spree".



PHILL WRIGHT

Business transformation manager

Wright spent years in the British Army as an Arabic interpreter before entering the fitness industry with a passion for helping others with their health and fitness. He established a training business, which ran for six years, before setting up a gym and training academy. Since 2017, Wright has been consulting in the sector.

"I'm looking forward to working within a fast-paced environment with an incredible team of people to enhance how well we understand and respond to the needs of the sector," says Wright.

Interests: Spending time with family, dog walking and "binge-watching" TV box sets.



DANNY ROSS

Corporate partnerships executive

After graduating from Loughborough University in 2017 with a degree in sport and exercise science, Ross worked as a freelance personal trainer before becoming programme coordinator of the Cancer and Rehabilitation Exercise (CARE) programme in association with Notts County Football Club.

"I used exercise to rehabilitate groups of individuals living with and beyond cancer – an incredibly rewarding job," Ross says.

"I want to establish myself as a reliable and trustworthy point of contact with all the partners I visit. I would love to represent CIMSPA at various industry events across the UK.

"The ultimate aim is to work hard in supporting all the company partners to the very best of my ability. Consistently delivering high quality work is a big priority for me."

Interests: Tottenham Hotspur fan. Also plays cricket and is "a lover of music".

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

CIMSPA RECEIVES SPORT ENGLAND FUNDING

As a key delivery partner of Sport England, CIMSPA recently received a two-year funding award

The Sport England funding recognises the value of CIMSPA and our work, as well as the close alignment of the Sport England and CIMSPA workforce strategies. It also cements our relationship with Sport England, and the projects the funding will enable are a key element in our steady progression as a sustainable professional body to service and advance the sport & physical activity (S&PA) sector.

This investment allows us to accelerate the speed, scope and scale of our work. More than 50% of the award will go towards servicing and supporting our members.

We will expand our activity and engagement with new partners to support other areas of the sector, including sport, coaching and health & wellbeing.

We are growing our workforce by 40% to deliver this work and to achieve our goals. Our key areas of focus over the next five years are outlined below. There's a lot to do, but with these funds – and an expanded and high-performing CIMSPA team – we can do it.

- **Insight** We will standardise insight in our sector to gain a greater understanding of the workforce including the current skills gaps, customer perceptions and employment trends affecting the industry; and make sure we fully understand individual development needs across different sector roles.

- **Professional standards** We will complete the sector's professional standards framework, support the implementation of these standards and ensure they are having the desired impact.

- **Endorsement and quality assurance** We will increase our number of education partners and support the transition of qualifications from previous models to align to the new, quality-assured, professional standards framework.

- **Supporting employers** We will support employers around work-based training and provide suitable infrastructure for a more accessible, demand-led and coherent approach to funded training.

- **Policy and regulation** We will become the national workforce and education regulator for S&PA, develop workforce policy and regulation, and lobby around workforce issues.

- **IT infrastructure** We will create a learning community for leaders and managers; enable easy validation of qualifications against professional standards; and allow individuals to manage their career progression and professional status using new digital platforms.

- **Members** We will continue to improve and innovate our value proposition for our members and partners, and expand the pathway to chartered status for members.

- **Equality** We will gain the National Equality Standard at foundation level and increase applications from underrepresented groups into both CIMSPA-endorsed training and employment with our partners.

- **Engagement** We will raise our profile among the general public, and across the sector and its stakeholders, to influence policy from government and other industries that have an impact on our sector.

- **Governance** By 2021 we will be an exemplar organisation regarding our governance structures within the sector.

Together, these 10 work areas will provide us with the competencies needed to deliver the CIMSPA vision and mission on behalf of the whole S&PA sector. 🌟





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PPRENTICESHIPS
by **Active IQ**

IN DEPTH

AGENDA

ALL TOGETHER NOW

When it comes to group workouts, winning isn't everything; it's often the taking part that counts, as Dean Gurden discovers





United we stand, goes the old adage and it turns out we exercise more effectively as a unit too. A new study by Penn State University has highlighted the compelling role that exercising in a group has on positively influencing an individual's workout experience. Building on the given that human beings are social animals, the report set out to analyse this group effect.

Bryce Hastings, head of research at Les Mills and one of the authors of the study, explains: "Previous research had clearly shown that people do better and adhere to exercise more effectively when they are in group situations than when they do it alone. There's something about exercising in groups that people like – there's a social connection and the reassurance that comes with being with others."

In looking to find a measure of the impact the group was having on people's experiences, the researchers came up with the term 'groupness', which varied from class to class. "You can't just assume that because you are surrounded by people you are going to get the full effect of having a group experience," says Hastings.

So what affects this level of groupness? According to Hastings, the instructor's behaviour and

language are central to creating a sense of 'we' and 'us', instead of 'you' and 'I'. And it can be as simple as reminding people that they are all there together in the same room.

"It's getting them to give each other a little nudge to help each other out," he says. "I think instructors often assume this is happening, but we need to be more specific. It's as basic as beginning a cycling class with 'Hello everybody, we're all here to work on our cardiovascular fitness today, so let's try and give each other a bit of encouragement when it gets tough', instead of 'Welcome to the class, let's get started'."

Steve Tansey, head of research & development and a trainer and presenter at Les Mills UK, is a firm believer that groupness can be engendered in any group activity – it's just down to the experience and willingness of the instructor.

"There are so many different ways that we try and be inclusive," he says. "We concentrate on duration, intensity, options and adaptations, and we have a coaching model that is dedicated and different in each programme to make sure we're addressing the audience's different needs. If somebody comes to me at the start of a class and says they can't do a certain exercise, I need to

"When you start out as an instructor, you're obsessed with getting the mechanics right. Advanced training is focusing on the experience, how you are getting the group to connect with each other"

BRYCE HASTINGS,
Head of research at Les Mills

IN DEPTH

AGENDA



immediately think about what they are able to do to make them feel included.”

Hastings also cites simple eye contact, encouraging instructors to learn names and using meaningful praise as really important. “Instead of a general ‘You guys are awesome’, which admittedly is great throw-out for the energy in the room, actually looking at someone and saying ‘your squatdecks are so much better’ is much more powerful for the person at the end of that praise.”

As an organisation, Les Mills recognises that interactions with the instructor and between attendees before and after classes are sometimes more powerful than what happens in the class. Les Mills focuses on establishing these connections, as the operator knows it has a real influence on retention levels.

“Talking to people beforehand and getting them to focus on different aspects of their exercises is really important,” says Tansey. “We try and get them to concentrate on how it feels to be exercising rather than just purely on how it’s changing their bodies. We even encourage people to go and have drinks and socialise together afterwards.”

If there was one

mistake that Tansey sees other instructors make that causes a deficit of groupness, it’s focusing too much on technique. “When people come to a class we want them to experience feelings of success and feel valued so that they continue with the classes,” he says. “If you have a group that is completely fixated on technique, it fuels their insecurities. They are so focused on doing it ‘right’, they are not concentrating on feeling valued and [being] successful.”

As Tansey adds, technique

80%
of success is
just showing up

Key points

- Previous research indicates people are more likely to stick to exercise programmes when they work out in groups
- The level of impact that the group has on the workout varies – known as groupness
- Higher levels of groupness are associated with increased satisfaction and positive feelings towards the experience
- Exertion also increases with higher levels of groupness
- Most importantly – the intention to return to that workout is higher when levels of groupness are elevated
- Instructors and operators can use this information to ensure they enhance levels of groupness by:
 - increasing cohesion – reminding group members they are all there for the same purpose
 - getting the members working out in unison
 - creating a sense of “us” with the instructor as the role model for the group

Source: Les Mills



is really just a vehicle for what you should be trying to achieve, which is creating a class that is a medium for social inclusion and change. “What we’re really working towards is improving these people’s serotonin levels, their confidence, and their mental health and wellbeing,” he says.

Fostering groupness also involves the instructor looking beyond his or her own technique as well. “When you start out as an instructor, you’re obsessed with getting the mechanics, your coaching and the choreography right,” says Hastings. “And rightly so. But

advanced training is where you now focus on the experience you’re delivering, involving how you are using, maximising and connecting with the group and getting them to connect with each other.”

Getting any group of people to connect together is always going to see a degree of competitiveness develop among them. But

competition can still work towards groupness, believes

Tansey. It’s just a matter of how you present it to the class.

“If it’s a competition of who’s going to get to 10 reps first and an individual’s finished, then encourage that person to help the others still going,” Tansey says. “There can still be a community feel with competitions. Unfortunately, there are classes out there that foster a real sense of elitism and no inclusivity – you get a lot of injuries in them.”

A sure sign that a good level of groupness has been established is when an individual is missed when they don’t turn up for a class. “That’s when you

“If it’s a competition of who’s going to get to 10 reps first and an individual’s finished, then encourage that person to help the others still going”

STEVE TANSEY,

Head of research & development,
trainer and presenter at Les Mills UK



know you’re on the right track,” adds Tansey. “It’s often not what people do in the session, it’s the fact that they will let others down if they don’t go and do it.”

Which brings to mind another old adage: 80% of success is just showing up. What happens in a workout session might pale in comparison to the motivation it took for the individuals to be there. But that then puts them in a routine that becomes habitual. A healthy level of groupness can only help with this journey. 🧘

Creating the right environment

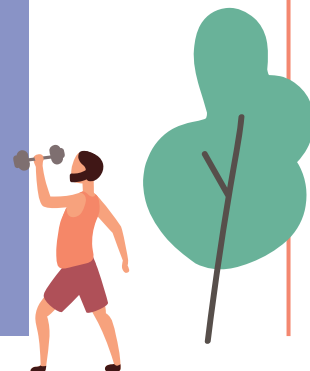
Lotty Somers, instructor and retail & community manager at boutique fitness group Barrecore, doesn’t set out to create a sense of togetherness, but she does work hard to create an inclusive community and believes the two go hand in hand.

“We’re all about enjoying yourself in a friendly, buzzing environment where you’re welcomed by name and feel part of a community of like-minded individuals,” she says. “It makes you want to keep coming back and before you know it, you’re hooked.”

Barrecore endeavours to keep its classes fun and light-hearted with upbeat music and ever-changing choreography. “Our instructors will throw in some friendly competition, but we also want clients to feel like they can work at their own pace and their own level,” adds Somers. As the classes are low-impact forms of exercise, they can be adapted to all body types.

“Yes, we want you to work hard and feel uplifted by the energy of those around you, but you have to work for yourself,” she says. “We will never single anyone out and the onus always has to be on you as the client to work as hard as you wish.”

“There may be other fitness activities that are more suited to ‘moving as one’ or ‘working as a team’, but for me, togetherness comes from the shared enjoyment of what you are doing with those around you and that’s what we try to achieve at Barrecore.”



IN DEPTH

PROFILE

By Colin Cottell

KNOCKING IT

In a park high up above the West Yorkshire town of Batley, cries of 'No ball! no ball!' ring out as a bright yellow ball flies

through the clear blue air. Her short white bat flailing at the ball, the batter turns around in exasperation in the direction of the umpire. But to no avail. The ball is good.

It may only be a practice session but as the demeanour of batter and the frequent exhortations made to fielders to get the ball quickly to base indicate, the 20 or so members of the Batley Ninjas, who have come to Hyrstlands Park on this sunny Sunday autumn afternoon, take their training seriously.

So far so ordinary. However, Batley Ninjas are no ordinary rounders team. Set up in 2015, the club is primarily made up of women from South Asian – mainly India and Pakistan – heritage. Some of those training today wear the Muslim headscarf, the hijab, some sport a niqab covering the lower part of the

“Their attitude is ‘They are girls, they are not really going to go far’, but if we were taken seriously, we could go a lot further”



face and some participate without a veil. Almost all cover their legs with black jogging pants.

Not only that, but Batley Ninjas are one of the six teams made up of women from a predominantly South Asian background within the district that play in the Ready Steady Active (RSA) Rounders League. Standards are on the rise. As well as fighting for promotion, in August a team made up of players from Batley Ninjas and other local rivals combined to win the Plate competition at Burnley Rounders Fest.

Today's session is more serious than most. In a week's time the team faces Bradford-based Drighlington Dragons Blue in a crunch fixture to decide who is promoted to the second division of the Leeds Rounders League. This is the last chance for the players to prepare.

Defeated by their opponents on the last two occasions the teams met, Sabina Chaus, one of Batley Ninjas' star players, is optimistic that this time the tables can be overturned. "Third time lucky? I hope

so," she says, before running off to take up her key position of backstop.

The RSA Rounders League was set up by local woman Rashida Salloo, as part of her efforts to encourage women within the South Asian community to take part in physical activity. After beginning with general fitness classes, Salloo now organises a range of sport and fitness activities alongside rounders, including netball, football, tennis and running – all under the RSA banner.

"I set up RSA because of the barriers I faced growing up as a teenage girl; I didn't see any others like myself playing sport," says Salloo, watching today's training session intently from the sidelines. "There were no role models. I always had it in mind that I wanted to help girls like myself."

She admits it has been a difficult journey. Not only did Salloo face parental opposition from wanting to take her own tennis seriously, she says her early efforts to run casual

For a team of South Asian rounders players in West Yorkshire, getting things started in the face of community disapproval was the first step on the road to success

OUT OF THE PARK



IN DEPTH

PROFILE

football sessions for girls at a local community centre in 2001 were rebuffed. "At the time, I didn't understand why and felt it was because I was a girl and the community were not happy with women playing sport," she says. She still feels there was an element of this, but accepts that she didn't have the right qualifications.

Not willing to give up on her dream, while working as a chemist Salloo gained coaching qualifications and experience in her spare time before returning 10 years later, her resolve only strengthened by her experience of

playing tennis. "Despite playing matches across the district in areas which were highly populated with South Asian communities, I noticed there wasn't anyone like me playing on court," she says. And so the idea of RSA was born.

While RSA has made a real difference to the lives of women from the South Asian community (see box), Salloo says this has been in the face of barriers that make it difficult for women of this background to participate in sport and physical activity. This is borne out by the figures that South Asian women are more likely to be physically inactive.

Salloo says the low rate of participation in sport and physical activity is partly historical. "Our parents came here to the mill towns of the 1960s, so there was more focus on making sure your foundations were right rather than setting up sports clubs," she explains.

Lack of parental support is also an issue. "There is a battle between the academic side and leisure activities, and some parents don't see sport as that important,"

she says.

Batley Ninjas team captain Sofiya Makda agrees there is an attitude among some in the community that sport is not something that women

should be encouraged to take seriously. "Their attitude is 'They are girls, they are not really going to go far', but if we were taken seriously, we could go a lot further," she says.

Makda says another issue is equitable access to venues and facilities for practice. "Men's sport takes precedence," says Makda.

Salloo says many of the barriers to women from South Asian communities participating in sport and physical activity are cultural, often with a basis in their faith. "They want segregation from men, somewhere they can feel comfortable, and where people aren't looking at them." She says this is difficult in mainstream sports facilities, such as sports halls.

According to Salloo, the result of all this, alongside a focus on their family commitments, is that many women from South Asian backgrounds haven't played sport or done much physical activity since school.

Chaus, despite being "really sporty at school", is one such example, explaining

25%

South Asians are less physically active than the White British population (31% vs 25%)

"Our parents came here to the mill towns of the 1960s, so there was more focus on making sure your foundations were right rather than setting up sports clubs"





she says “is all about connecting communities through rounders” and their recognition that they need “to grow participation within the game”.

She is also pleased to see the

governing body recognise that in order to take the sport “to the next level, we need coaches from this demographic”. To that end, a number of Batley Ninjas players have taken coaching courses.

With the support of the governing body, and with Salloo, Batley Ninjas and RSA in the vanguard, the signs are encouraging that participation in sport and physical activity among women within the UK’s South Asian community is on the cusp of achieving transformational success. 🌟

Having a ball

Sofiya Makda, a businesswoman from Batley who joined Batley Ninjas in 2015 before taking over as team captain, says the club has made a huge difference to her life and to that of other women in the local South Asian community.

Although Makda liked sport before, she says “I wasn’t fit and healthy.” Having started playing rounders, she has since taken up basketball and boxing, and goes to the gym five days a week. “I have never been fitter,” laughs Batley Ninjas’ team captain. Makda says that many of her teammates have also been inspired to take up other sports as well as rounders. “Once you have found sport is for you and that it is doable, it opens up all other sports as well,” she says.

Along with the fitness and health benefits, Makda says the club has also helped people, some who may have experienced social anxiety and isolation, to build friendships and to bond with others in the community.

how her participation levels “fizzled out at university”, and were only revived two years ago, after she attended a training session run by Salloo. “I wanted to play rounders because it brought back childhood memories,” Chaus says.

Confidence is also a big issue, says Salloo, with many doubting they have the ability and uncertain “whether the level at which they play is okay”.

Salloo is open about wanting to use sport and physical activity “as a tool”. Not only to bring people together, but for physical and mental health too. She says one of her key aims is “to change mindsets”, something that she believes is already starting to happen, especially since entering the Leeds league. “There has been a huge impact on their belief that they can achieve,” she says.

The strategy to make women more active has several strands, explains Salloo. One strand is “to encourage them to set up their own teams and move on from there”. Another, “to look after those that are the strictest [in a religious and cultural sense] in the belief that it will open up doors”.

Despite concerns that wearing the hijab or niqab could gain unwanted attention from unpleasant groups when playing, Makda says this hasn’t caused any real issues. One incident when some comments were made to the team’s players in Leeds “was more to do with the fact that we were winning and they were losing than racism,” she says. A second incident of jeering by

teenagers practising cricket nearby “was shut down very quickly by the umpire, and they moved on”.

Chaus says that concerns about being accepted by other teams have proved unfounded. Referring to the successful tournament in Burnley, she says, “Everyone was so welcoming, so lovely,” adding, “not once did we think that we shouldn’t be there.”

The team captain says the fact that Batley Ninjas are playing against teams from different backgrounds than their own helps, “because it makes people aware that diversity exists. A lot of the barriers are in our own minds”.

Salloo praises Rounders England for putting its weight behind the RSA league, by helping to promote it, and even coming to her for advice. She also favours its new strategy, which

28%

South Asian women
more likely to be
inactive than South
Asian men (35% vs 28%)

IN DEPTH

CASE STUDY

The sport & physical activity sector hopes a new multi-skilled apprenticeship standard could see an influx of fresh workers to the industry

By Roisin Woolnough

WHEN

A consortium has recently formed to deliver the new Leisure Team Member Apprenticeship Standard, enabling operators to drive up standards while using the levy funding available to them.

CIMSPA partners Creative Sport & Leisure, the Institute of Swimming (IoS) and Future Fit Training have joined forces with the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) to provide the CIMSPA-backed standard, which was launched in February.

The idea is that having a multi-disciplinary approach to training will lead to more rounded and better trained professionals with experience in key aspects of the leisure industry, rather than just one area.

Rob Johnson, managing director of Future Fit Training, says the

consortium approach means the training delivered will be of the highest quality, benefitting both individuals and operators.

He explains: "We are very good at delivering fitness, Creative Sport & Leisure are excellent at making apprenticeships, the IoS is very good at making swimming teachers and RLSS UK at delivering lifeguards.

"Together, we are all delivering what we are good at and the industry will get better skilled individuals as a result. As time goes on, I believe more and more that if people stick to what they are good at, the customer gets a better experience and comes out better qualified, knowing more and happier at the end."

The Level 2 Leisure Team Member Apprenticeship will upskill people in operational duties as well as requiring them to work in five key leisure areas: leisure and fitness operations, lifeguard ▶

THE LEVY BREAKS

IN DEPTH

CASE STUDY



duties, swimming teaching duties, gym instruction and leading group activities.

The apprenticeship has been specifically designed to ensure that individuals can work across all of these disciplines, rather than being restricted to just swimming, for example, or just gym instruction. It will also develop team working and customer-facing skills.

Johnson says this will hugely benefit the industry as it will result in a more skilled, more rounded workforce. “The Leisure Team Member [Standard] provides the industry as a whole with multi-skilled, multi-disciplined individuals,” he says. “It’s almost going back to where we were many, many years ago, when we had people that could work in the gym, that could be a lifeguard, that were first-aid trained... That is a very good thing.”

In theory, this should enable operators to make better use of their workforce, rather than being lots of people performing one role in one area. Johnson says it will improve workforce planning and ease rota restrictions.

He also thinks it will benefit individuals who want to work more hours, because they will be able to perform a greater range of functions. Rebecca Cox, managing director at the

IoS, says the standard has been created because the industry was crying out for multi-skilled individuals.

“It is the first time that there has been any one standard apprenticeship,” she says. “Historically, apprenticeships would have given you a swimming teacher or a lifeguard with first aid or a

receptionist and they would be pigeon-holed into one area of the facility.

“This apprenticeship allows the operator to use the levy to train someone to work across key areas in a centre.”

After the apprentices have worked in those five key areas, they can choose to specialise in one particular area if they want to. Cox thinks the standard is a perfect entry-level route into the sector as it gives individuals a good grounding in overall leisure offerings, helping them to build a strong career in the industry.

“Employers have been asking this for a very long time,” she says. “Let’s make the most of it and get as many through the programme as we can.” Cox would like all leisure operators recruiting new people into their business through the standard, creating a constant pipeline of apprentices, all levy-funded.

David Kreyling, CEO at Creative Sport & Leisure, says there is a strong demand for the new standard, which is why it has been created. Such apprenticeships are designed around employer needs, making them very industry specific.

“It is truly demand-led,” says Kreyling. “The apprenticeship standard is designed by employers in the sector for skills training that they need. That is the whole purpose of what we are doing.”

While the premise of apprenticeships sounds very good on principle, levy funding is complex and confusing, which has deterred many employers from using it, even though they are still required to pay into the levy if they have an annual pay bill of over £3 million. Cox says that operators have been asking for a standard that will enable them to use their funding.

CIMSPA partner Impulse Leisure has already signed 10 people up to the new standard and wants to roll it out more widely across its existing workforce. Jamie Clarke, group HR adviser at the operator, says it’s a great way to upskill and professionalise the workforce.

“It’s a fantastic new standard from an apprenticeship perspective and is excellent for the industry,” she says. “It’s a qualification that the sector is screaming out for and is a really good way to enter the industry at entry level.” Clarke hopes it will help alleviate skills gaps in the industry by helping operators to develop the workforce the sector needs.

Shelley Austin, regional manager at CIMSPA partner InspireAll, thinks the new standard will help recruit greater numbers into the sector and widen out the demographic. She says it will

“It is truly demand-led. The apprenticeship standard is designed by employers in the sector for skills training that they need. That is the whole purpose of what we are doing”

DAVID KREYLING,
CEO at Creative Sport & Leisure

Virgin Active UK/Active IQ apprenticeship programme

CIMSPA partner Virgin Active UK is running a new apprenticeship programme for departmental managers. Over 100 managers across the business are going through the new Level 3 Team Leader Supervisor training, with the first group of 14 having successfully completed their assessments earlier this summer.

The managers come from a cross-section across the business, including sales, personal training, operations, group exercise and assistant general managers.

The company embarked upon the new programme after identifying certain skills gaps. "Almost two years ago, we did a deep dive into the business regarding managers," explains Sean Marcs, learning and development manager at Virgin Active UK. "We wanted to have a look at what skills gaps we had and the opportunities for managers to develop and how we were developing their capabilities and skills."

What Virgin Active UK found was that a significant number of people who had progressed into management roles were lacking core skills around managing people, self-awareness, communication and building relationships.

Marcus says the feedback has been very positive, from both participating apprentices and from the teams they lead.

"There are lots of changes they have seen in themselves and how they approach managing their teams. We have seen an impact on teams' performance, which was one of the objectives we had."

Several of the apprentices have also been promoted into new roles and retention rates have improved. "The impact has been incredible," says Marcs. "It's the very beginning of what we will be doing with apprenticeships and we are seeing the learning culture shift."

Leading awarding organisation and CIMSPA partner, Active IQ, is involved with the programme.

demonstrate to prospective recruits that leisure provides good career opportunities, as well as improving the skills of existing employees.

"Fundamentally, it's about building a productive workforce, which is a really positive move," says Austin. "If you invest in your workforce then they feel happier and have more purpose. This should reflect in how they deliver, so customers benefit too."

And when individuals see that their skills are being invested in and that there is a definite career path, they are much more likely to stay with their employer and stay in the industry. Cox thinks that the influx of apprentices who arrive in the industry with a diverse range of skills and are able to work right across the spectrum of leisure facilities will also result in better service provision to customers.

"From a swimming perspective, hopefully operators should see a reduction in the number of swimming programmes they have to cancel and will be able to grow swimming programmes." 🌊

£3m+

Even if they don't gain recruits using the levy, employers are required to pay into the apprenticeship levy if they have an annual pay bill of over £3 million

For more on the Leisure Team Member Apprenticeship Standard, visit: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/leisure-team-member>; <http://www.creativesportandleisure.co.uk/apprenticeship-standard/leisure-team-member>



IN DEPTH

TECH

THINKING

OUT



INSIDE THE BOX

GETTY

Checking how many steps or calories burned throughout the day has become as habitual as looking at their text messages or email for many people. Fitness is no longer an activity that individuals dip into once or twice a week when they go to the gym, but is rather something to which they are continually connected.

This mindset change has major benefits for gym owners and operators, dovetailing with the growing range of connected solutions and devices.

CIMSPA partner Matrix launched its Connected Solutions range from a member perspective to help tackle the barriers they faced to staying engaged with their fitness journey.

"Technology is now an undisputed part of our daily lives, playing an increasingly key role in our fitness and health," says Matt Pengelly, managing director at Johnson Health Tech UK,

whose brands include Matrix.

"Users like that they can stay connected with their gym or trainer, anytime, anywhere. You don't have to be in the gym to be motivated about your fitness; you can now take it with you in your daily life."

Connected technology offers many benefits for the gym operator, as well as the member. It is key to increasing levels of usage and member retention; it allows operators and trainers to gain more insight into an individual's customer and training needs; and, crucially, it helps to build a relationship beyond the bricks and mortar gym, which will be increasingly important with the rise of ever-more sophisticated at-home equipment.

In June 2019, Eden Fitness, a premium private health club and spa in Ealing Broadway, London became the first site in the UK to install the new, fully connected Matrix Fitness equipment.

"Eden Fitness is a premium site and our members have come to expect connectivity in all aspects of their lives, including their fitness journey," said Charlie Bourne, managing director of Eden Fitness. "Through the Matrix technology, we can now engage with members outside of the four walls of the gym, integrate with third party apps and offer a more personalised service."

Another major player in the connected market is CIMSPA partner Pulse Fitness. Pulse Move can be used by members to track their activity through the app alone or as a fully connected solution within a club or chain to track and plan everything the member does.

Ben Steadman, business development director for Pulse Fitness, explains that connected solutions provide members with an additional source of interaction. "They provide motivation to the member, allow them to make the most from their in-gym time and, with

Consumers want a more connected user experience from the leisure industry whether they're in the gym or not, reports Sue Weekes

IN DEPTH

TECH

“Moving forwards, gyms will become lifestyle hubs, physical spaces supported by a vast array of connected solutions”

the better solutions their time out of the gym too.”

Pulse Move is also among the solutions that enables users to bring in information from members' own personal tracking gadgets such as FitBit, Strava, Apple Health and Google Fit, enabling all aspects of the fitness journey to be collected in one place. While important to the member on an individual level, it is also significant in the bigger picture as it builds another connection to the gym even when the user isn't there.

Kerstin Obenauer, country director of eGym UK, says building such a bridge between the gym and home enables fitness to become an integral part of life rather than “an interruption” to it. “The more straightforward and convenient fitness content is to access, the more likely a user is to remain engaged and focused long term,” she says.

eGym's Netpulse app is used by more than 10,000 gyms worldwide and aims to help facilities optimise key member touchpoints. “Our entire solution is based on driving user engagement and influencing behavioural change to support a long-term commitment to an active lifestyle,” Obenauer says.

Connected solutions also help to make physical activity fun as well as more competitive and compelling. Obenauer says that what users like most is the fast-track towards goal achievement and the regular feedback on performance and health benefits associated with their activity level. The software also uses gamification (the use of gaming techniques such as badges and leaderboards in non-game environments) which further motivates individuals.

Indeed, connected solutions are about sharing success with

10.8x
Premium users are visiting 10.8 times per month compared to 6.5 times by eGym Classic users and 5.8 times by non-eGym users

Keeping people engaged



A study conducted by an experienced independent retention specialist has highlighted the significant positive impact the eGym training solution has on member usage and member retention.

Over a period of three months, Guy Griffiths, founder of GGFit, worked in close collaboration with four operators to examine the attendance and usage data of more than 10,000 members.

Sites selected to participate in the study were: Crook Log Leisure Centre managed by Parkwood Leisure; the Waterfront Leisure Complex, managed by Inverclyde Leisure; King's School, an independent, dual use school facility; and ESPH, a private gym and physiotherapy facility.

“The sites selected to participate in this three-month retention coaching programme were chosen to provide diversity and to explore whether usage habits are mirrored in different environments,” Griffiths explains.

“In each scenario, we studied de-personalised data of members who joined in 2018. Whilst this is only a small study, the evidence, across the board, concludes that eGym users work out more and stay longer than non-eGym users.”

In the case of the two leisure centres, eGym users stay, on average, a month longer than those not using the platform.

“The improvement in the length of stay also directly correlates to the level of ongoing engagement. In all examples, eGym users work out more times per month than non-eGym users. At Kings School, for example, eGym users visit on average 2.2 times more per month than non-eGym users.

“It was also interesting to dig a little deeper into the data and look at the impact eGym Premium has on engagement.”

eGym Premium offers an even more bespoke automated training experience than eGym Classic and is an upgrade option. Crook Log Leisure Centre has yet to introduce Premium, so at the time of this study, data was only available across the other three participating sites.

On average, at these sites, Premium users are visiting 10.8 times per month compared to 6.5 times by eGym Classic users and 5.8 times by non-eGym users.

“The study suggests, the more bespoke an experience a training system can offer, the more engaged the user will be,” Griffiths adds. “Better engagement leads to more visits per month and a longer period of stay. This is all great news for operators who will reap the financial benefits resulting from a higher yield per member.”

peers and comparing performance with others too. For example, a single repetition strength test is combined with some additional personal data in eGym to calculate a biological age. “The aim is to achieve a biological age less than the chronological age,” explains Obenauer. “This statistic provides a snapshot of health status and is perfect for social peer sharing.”

Connected solutions also enable operators to build on the community aspect. Matrix’s Connected Solutions create a community of users who can connect and share progress and data, while trainers can set competitions for members to create team engagement through the club.

A major advantage for operators is that features within the Matrix solution allow both mass targeting (such as push notifications to promote classes) and tailored individual contact. “And data captured through these touchpoints provides the operator with a level of insight and business intelligence into their membership base that allows them to keep each and every customer on track, thus supporting business objectives,” says Pengelly.

While the more forward-thinking gym owners and operators are putting technology in place to stay connected to members, there is still more work to be done. The sector as a whole increasingly faces the threat of the growing home fitness market that now encompasses its own connected solutions from the likes of Peloton and Zwift.

Gyms can use technology to fight back and evolve though. Obenauer acknowledges that in today’s busy world, users want to be able to access fitness content anytime, anywhere, in whatever way they want, but providing people with positive engagements with a trainer will always be rewarding and encouraging for people.

“Moving forwards, gyms will become



10,000

eGym's Netpulse app is used by more than 10,000 gyms worldwide and aims to help facilities optimise key member touchpoints

lifestyle hubs, physical spaces supported by a vast array of connected solutions,” she says. “Training will become much more user-centred, with users employing a vast array of devices and online tools to create totally bespoke training regimes, all held together by a connected solution.”

Steadman explains that Pulse Move is

going through a transformation that will go live in 2020, and part of this project has considered the impact on home-connected solutions and how this may impact gym activity.

“Home-connected solutions are amazing, but gyms are not only for fitness. They are a place for interaction and socialising. They are community hubs and a place where people engage with each other,” he says, stressing that this also has important social and mental health benefits.

“A great workout at home on your bike with someone on a screen is never going to match up with an amazing live group class, an incredible instructor, and a room full of real people who sweat hard, swap great banter and all leave with a great feeling of camaraderie.” 🏆

“The more bespoke an experience a training system can offer, the more engaged the user will be. Better engagement leads to more visits per month and a longer period of stay”

TECH TOOLKIT

PRODUCT ROUND-UP

FULLY EQUIPPED

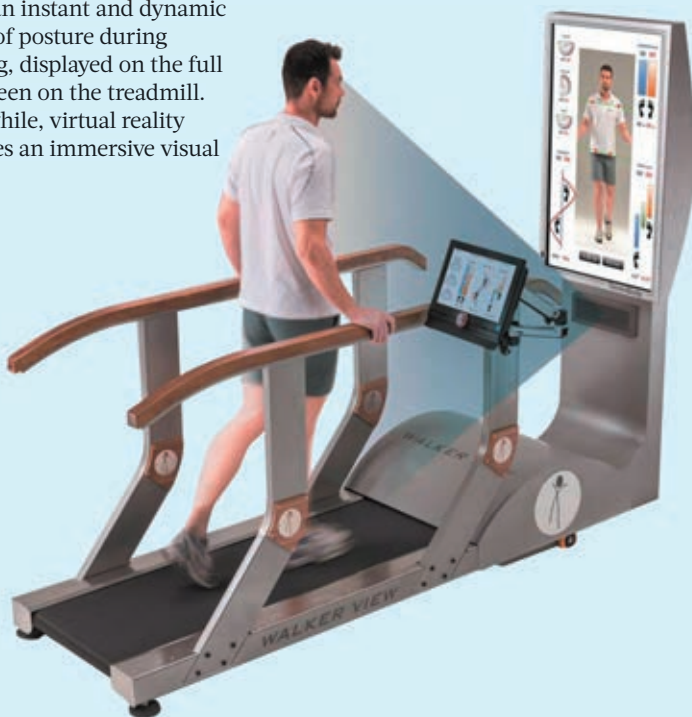
From AI coaching tools to e-bikes, catch up with the latest technology in the leisure industry

FITNESS IN FULL VIEW

Products from the Italian fitness and rehabilitation equipment supplier are now available in the UK from distributor Tecnosport. It includes the latest Walker View 3.0 treadmill which provides a postural analysis report on how a person runs and their gait. It describes itself as a "laboratory" of walking and running analysis. At its heart is a 3D camera that makes it possible to see an instant and dynamic image of posture during training, displayed on the full HD screen on the treadmill. Meanwhile, virtual reality provides an immersive visual

experience and allows the user to choose where to set the training such as in the city or countryside. Other products available include the D-Wall digital mirror, which similarly provides feedback on each movement performed in a range of exercises.

Price: On application
www.tecnosport.co.uk



Igniting improved performance

Ignite is a waterproof fitness watch from Polar with advanced heart rate features and integrated GPS. The company describes it as a "next-generation workout partner". It aims to take an individual's group exercise experience to the next level, and features include Nightly Recharge, which tells a wearer how well they have recovered overnight from the day and a comprehensive view of how a heart behaves during the day. The continuous heart rate monitoring also provides a more accurate calorie burn and other activity data. It can be used for a range of activities including swimming, where it detects swimming style, distance, pace, strokes and rest times, while the Running Index provides an estimate of an individual's VO2 Max and how their running performance is developing. It also allows users to stay connected with their phone, by receiving alerts for incoming calls, messages, emails and calendar events.

Price: From £174.50

WHEN RESISTANCE ISN'T FUTILE

AirBike has been specially designed by the Pulse Fitness team to use air resistance technology to provide users with a total body, cardiovascular workout. The handlebars move as users pedal, and Pulse claims this dual action provides improved results. The resistance is created by a large flywheel and, like an air-rowing machine, the harder the workout the greater the resistance. It comes with a 7in LCD console and provides a manual training mode alongside 12 pre-set programme options. Pulse says the AirBike is ideal for gym floor use or as part of HIIT training sessions. It is also environmentally friendly, with zero electrical consumption.

Price: On application
www.pulsegroup.co.uk



CHAT TO COACH ONLINE

Interactive fitness company FunXtion is aiming to help personal trainers train more effectively, as well as increase client contact time with its new Online Coaching tool. The advanced platform provides 24/7 connectivity to all members, a training plan editor, chat option and a database of nutritional recipes. Trainers can monitor clients' progress through the platform, enhance training plans to ensure progression and spot when a member may need extra support. Content can be tailored and adapted to members with the platform linked to the FunXtion Workout Creator tool. The platform can be white-labelled and branded in company colours with products included as an up-sell option, adding an extra revenue strand for the operator.

Price: On application
www.funxtion.com



SWITCH TO ELECTRIC

Swytch, a London-based start-up, is unveiling its latest hand-held electric bike (e-bike) conversion kit, which claims to turn any bicycle into an e-bike with up to 40 miles electric range. Momentum is building in the e-bike sector with the bikes seen as an accessible way for more people to enjoy exercising outdoors and offering flexibility for cyclists at all levels to enjoy longer rides. Increasingly, they are seen as an important part of helping towns, cities and individuals lower their carbon footprint. The kit includes a 1.5kg power pack – 70% smaller than the original one that was developed. The company have made the changes following feedback from 3,000 'Swytchers' who are already using the kit.

Price: TBC
www.swytchbike.com



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EXPERT ADVICE

KEEPING YOUR BUSINESS AND CLIENTS ON TRACK

*Tracking technology has a big role to play for PTs looking to engage clients, says **Tiina Hoffman** of data analytics company Firstbeat*

In the past 10 years, there has been significant development in the technology market, especially in terms of fitness tracking technology. Counting steps and calories is old news.

Not only is data getting more accurate, it's getting more detailed and bespoke, providing a sophisticated level of personalisation for the wearer. It's more than just workout data. Today's fitness tech is measuring everything from exercise intensity to sleep quality, stress and recovery.

But what does this mean for personal trainers (PTs) and exercise professionals? How can they leverage fitness tech to create better exercise programmes for their clients? And, can PTs use this information to create more loyal, engaged clients?

Whilst there are many benefits to using tracking technology, the key one from an operator or PT point of view is that it provides personal insights. Regularly taking a deep dive into your performance is empowering as it enables you to prioritise your attention and make focused changes to your habits and lifestyle.

Being able to identify your personal stress triggers, track your activity and visually see how much recovery you get during the day and whilst you sleep, provides tangible data that's personal to



“PTs and operators need to embrace tracking technology. When done well, it will mean faster, better fitness results and happier clients”

you and can be measured and adjusted on a continuous basis. Having access to this data allows you to take preventative action to improve your health and achieve the desired results.

Similarly, it enables PTs and operators to add more value to their service and help their clients to achieve optimal health. By assessing at the beginning of your client's journey and measuring

throughout, you are able to create a clear picture as to how they are currently performing and create a bespoke programme to help.

For example, you may notice that your client has a strong stress reaction following evening workouts that causes disruption to their sleep. As a result, you can create a plan prioritising earlier or weekend workouts to optimise their performance.

Reassessing at regular intervals allows your client to monitor their progress and stay motivated, and provides you as the trainer with the opportunity to make any relevant changes. It also reinforces how the investment with you will enable them to achieve the results that they want.

At present, tracking technology is very focused on specific data points: calories burned, heart rate, steps. But in the future, we will see greater emphasis on holistic data. This means providing users with information on their overall wellbeing (sleep quality, stress) and tying this into activity tracking and sports-related features.

This way, users are also getting better, more tangible information, which allows them to make changes to their habits. For example, the data may reveal that a person slept poorly and their stress reactions are high in the day. Therefore, they should go for an easy workout or rest day, regardless of what might be on the training plan that day.

Overall, PTs and operators need to embrace the developments in tracking technology and figure out ways to incorporate it into their services. When done well, it will mean faster, better fitness results, and happier, more engaged clients. 📊

***Tiina Hoffman** is exercise physiologist and master trainer at Firstbeat, a data analytics company that provides sports wearables data for the likes of Garmin*

WORKPLACE

FOCUS



There comes a time when overwork becomes counterproductive and staff need help to recalibrate their lives, advises Jenni Wilson

WORK SEPARATION ANXIETY: A GROWING EPIDEMIC

We all know the benefits of sport and physical activity: improved mood, decreased chances of depression and anxiety, and a better and more balanced lifestyle. However, it can be hard for those in sports management to practise what they preach.

For many of us, work is an important part of our lives; it makes up part of our identity and some attachment to our job is normal, but working non-stop without taking time off to reboot has led to a growing epidemic of what is called work separation anxiety.

UNDER PRESSURE

The pace of today's workplace and society's 'always on' culture means many of us are putting pressure on ourselves to be 'busy' all the time.

Work separation anxiety is when employees are so consumed by their jobs that they experience distress when away from a professional environment. Other factors such as unreasonable deadlines, workloads or company culture can also drive overworking.

It can exacerbate negative behaviours such as 'leavism' – when an employee uses annual leave to catch up on work, and burnout, now recognised as a legitimate medical concern by the World Health Organisation. There's nothing wrong with pursuing

“Encourage teams to prioritise their exercise routines. Consider a lunchtime walking club or yoga”

excellence, but overworking without breaks leads to an increase in stress-induced emotions. In turn, healthy habits can become less of a priority, meaning less exercise and a poor diet.

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SIGNS

A key point about work separation anxiety is many people won't realise their symptoms are getting out of control. So, those in senior positions should receive the right training to spot the signs and offer support.

Those at the severe end of the spectrum will rarely delegate tasks and become highly stressed when they do not have complete control of a project. They will either avoid booking annual leave or cancel it at the last minute.

Physical health signs include heart palpitations, shortness of breath, headaches, tiredness and dizziness. You might notice heightened emotions and tearful outbursts. According to research, anxious emotions can be

contagious, so if worry and concern is spread across the office this is a sign your culture needs to change.

WORKPLACE SUPPORT

To provide the right support, it's crucial to thoroughly evaluate the work environment. Combine hard and soft objective measures, such as monitoring sickness absence rates with feedback from satisfaction surveys to gain an overall picture of employee wellbeing.

Managers should establish a culture where employees are encouraged to take their work-life balance seriously. Lead the way by avoiding sending emails outside of work hours, taking your full lunch breaks and trying to leave on time.

Encourage teams to prioritise their exercise routines. Consider starting up a lunchtime walking club, or short yoga sessions facilitated by experts. Invite health experts to discuss how to mitigate the impact of overworking.

It's not only important to communicate the importance of self-care, but also to publicise the options available from your company's own wellbeing policies. Offer your staff a variety of communication channels about work benefits – print, email, text messaging, phone or online chat.

Introduce external services such as employee assistance programmes (EAPs) that offer direct, confidential contact with experts. They've been shown to reduce the cost of presenteeism in staff suffering from work-related or financial problems, addiction and mental ill health. ☺

Jenni Wilson is a corporate director at CIMSPA partner Nuffield Health



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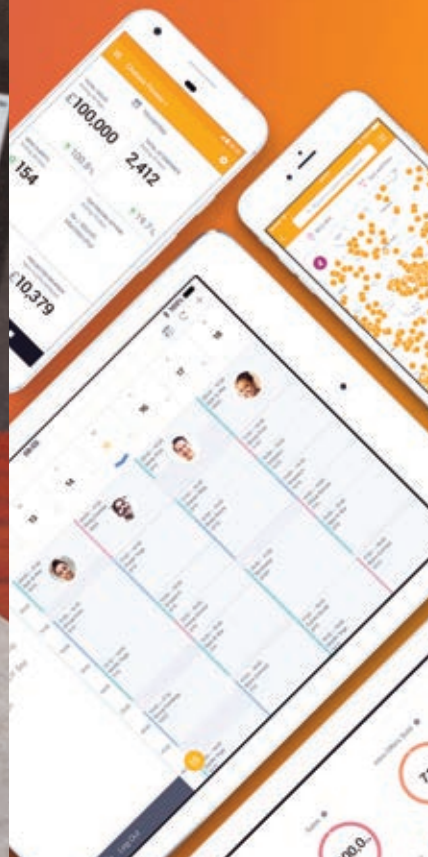
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LAST WORD

SPORT AMBASSADOR



Wendy Hall, founder of the Inclusive Fitness Academy and FUNction Fitness, has battled back from a fall, which left her paralysed, to provide inspiration for people with disabilities and those coaching them

TAKING POSITIVE ACTION

Having been paralysed from the neck down in 2008 following an accident, I went on a journey to become a group fitness instructor through the Aspire InstructAbility, which aims to get more disabled people instructing.

The class became much bigger than I had imagined because I didn't realise how many people want to do something together. Everybody has different abilities. We have stroke patients, amputees, newcomers in need of rehabilitation... it means there's a genuinely inclusive group fitness class.

It's a mixture of cardio, strength, flexibility for dexterity and mobility work, but really it is a whole-body experience. At the moment it's taught at a Sandwell Leisure Trust facility in Tipton in the Midlands, and it's one of their biggest classes. I've had people contact me from the borders of the next county who just want to come for that class. I'll often have emails asking: "Can I come?" and my answer is always the same. "Yes, of course you can."

I fought my corner for that class to be on a timetable – it's every week, and I want people to see that we need this every week.

There's someone who has been with me from the start, an amputee who had been in a horrific traffic accident with a

lorry. This man had always gone to the gym with a friend who helped him. I found out that the friend was his carer, but unfortunately was moving abroad to the States, and the guy was resigned to being on his own and in quite a predicament. He had all but given up.

I didn't dwell on it, but weeks passed and this client still turned up – even when the carer had moved on. I was aware that people enjoyed the classes, and in an unrelated move I asked how they felt we were doing as training providers and what we could do better. "I'll write something down and bring it next week," said the client. When I read his note a week later, it said: "Thank you for saving my life. If you hadn't been doing this class, I would have given up."

He is still a client, he's lost weight, he's gained ace friends within our community and works out with people who are going through the same physical issues. You can't buy that.

I've got meetings prepared to get the Academy up and running for the end of the year so we can get people in doing their CPD, learning through

workshops and so on, and then for other instructors to come and see what we do. We don't have to change things a lot – but we do have to change things a little. As an industry if we all do a little bit then I'm sure we can make a huge difference together. ♻️

Wendy Hall was speaking to S&PA's Graham Simons

"As an industry if we all do a little bit then I'm sure we can make a huge difference together"





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LAST WORD

SPORTING LIFE



Megan Smiley, personal trainer, gym instructor, massage therapist and nutrition adviser at Total Training, discusses her passion for physical activity and the good it can do for others

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

WHEN DID YOU KNOW YOU WANTED TO WORK IN THIS SECTOR?

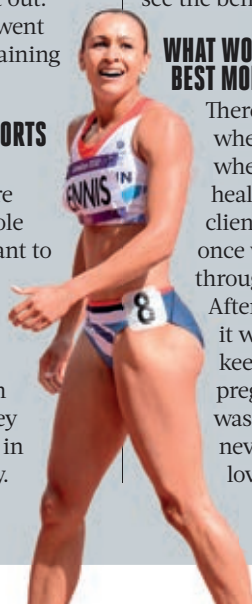
Back in 2011, I was working as a marketing manager for a sports charity but had very little to do with the delivery of the programmes. I decided to retrain as a personal trainer (PT) and move into actually helping people get active rather than promoting its benefits from behind a desk.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB IN THE SECTOR AND HOW DID YOU COME INTO IT?

I worked as a PT in parks across London and as a fitness instructor at a local gym. I was working part-time in a freelance consultant role and part-time in the fitness industry to try it out. Within a couple of months, I went full-time with the personal training as I enjoyed it so much.

WHO IS YOUR ROLE MODEL IN SPORTS AND LEISURE?

That's a hard question, as there are so many. For me, female role models are incredibly important to encourage girls and women to get active. I think the likes of **Jessica Ennis-Hill** and Tanni Grey-Thompson, and broadcasters like Gabby Logan are all great role models as they boost the exposure of women in the sports and fitness industry.



"I love that I can help people feel better both physically and mentally... sport and exercise are powerful"

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

I love that I can help people feel better, both physically and mentally. Sport and exercise are powerful tools. But it can often be scary or out of reach. Being able to bring exercise to people and to see the benefits is priceless.

WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE BEST MOMENT OF YOUR CAREER?

There are many – those moments when you make a difference, whether that's getting through health issues or working with clients in rehab programmes. I once worked with a client going through her fourth pregnancy. After the birth, she told me that it was by far the best due to keeping active throughout the pregnancy. Another moment was when a client who had never exercised told me they loved it and got the bug for it.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN YOUR JOB TODAY?

Getting people to understand that health is all encompassing and includes movement, nutrition, sleep, stress levels and lifestyle. For the best results you need to address the whole thing.

WHAT'S YOUR ULTIMATE CAREER GOAL?

To provide a holistic approach to health and fitness. You shouldn't look at aspects of it in isolation. For example, I recently qualified as a massage therapist so that I can also offer that service to my clients to treat musculoskeletal issues, address stress levels, or both.

WHAT IS YOUR SIGNATURE DISH?

I love food and cooking so my signature dish changes over time, but I would probably always fall back on a salmon filo-pastry tart with oven-roasted cabbage. The cabbage tastes nicer than it sounds – honestly!

WHAT WOULD YOU REGARD AS YOUR PERSONAL INSPIRATION?

That there's always more to learn. The day you settle with what you have and what you know is the day you stop challenging yourself. I find the more I learn, the more there is to learn. 

CIMSPA member Megan Smiley was speaking to S&PA's Graham Simons

LAST WORD

SPORT BY NUMBERS



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This issue... Helping disabled people get active

Sport England has awarded national disability charity Sense with funding to help thousands of people living with complex disabilities access sport and physical activity for the first time.

The National Lottery money will allow Sense to expand its operations and collaborate with partners to offer sessions accessible to all at locations across the UK over the next three years.

According to Sport England's Active Lives survey, people with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be inactive compared to non-disabled people.



Disabled people are more than **twice as likely** to be **less active** than people without disabilities

Sense offers a **wide range** of sport and physical activities to people with **complex disabilities**, from **football** to **rock-climbing**



Funding will support **more than 2,500 people** with **high-level support needs** to participate in sport and physical activity sessions



51% People living with **more than one impairment** increases the likelihood of inactivity - **51%** of people with multiple complex disabilities are **inactive**



One in two people with complex disabilities get **less than 30 minutes** exercise each week

£1.3m

Sense has been awarded **£1.3m in funding** to help disabled people get active



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