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Women's voices in sport

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Reducing accidents

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HEALTH

Active nation, happy nation

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S&PA Professional

ISSUE 49 • SPRING 2023

 **CIMSPA**

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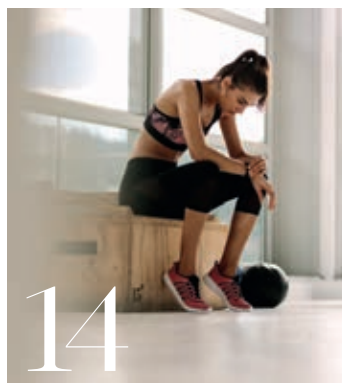
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"We keep talking about wanting equity within the sports industry, but what does that look like and where are we now? We decided to do research this year that we can then build upon in the future" (p18)

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UK leisure framework

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“ The UK Leisure Framework is unique in that it delivers an end to end solution for leisure developments. Whereas most Frameworks simply procure and manage the transformation of physical buildings, the UK Leisure Framework offers services that contribute to whole-community engagement, providing an efficient means of increasing opportunities for physical activity through the creation of inspiring active spaces. ”

Jamie Groves
Managing Director,
Denbighshire Leisure Ltd.

“ The UK Leisure Framework allowed the Council to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and get our projects to market with expediency. Working with Alliance Leisure, provided a range of options, early cost certainty and our projects were delivered on time and within budget. ”

Damian Hughes
Senior Manager, School Planning
& Provision, Flintshire
County Council



UPFRONT

EDITORIAL

▶ DeeDee Doke

A time of regeneration



*Diving deep to
bring you good
news for the sector*

The government's announcement of £63m in funding for swimming pools is wonderful news for the public.

In total, £40m of the fund will be made available for investment in decarbonisation and long-term energy efficiency, while £23m will help with costs to make these essential local hubs more energy efficient. Council-run pools, pools run on behalf of councils by private companies and by charities are all eligible for support. What a promising start to spring!

There's much to inspire and enlighten you in this Spring 2023 edition of *S&PA Professional*.

Our Sport Ambassador, Opinder Kaushal, is a perfect example of 'walking the walk' in his discovery of fitness and health as a sector professional.

The continuing growth of CIMSPA's ReTrain to ReTain initiative offers both emerging professionals and the sector itself hope and renewal in building a vibrant, revitalised workforce.

And there's much more, including a new report that shines a light on the

experiences of women working in the industry.

After a long, cold winter, spring is really here – a time of regeneration, revitalisation and renewal for all!



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S&PA News

A round-up of the latest developments in the industry



REPORT REVEALS CONCERNS FOR DISABLED USERS

By DeeDee Doke

A new report from ukactive about disabled people's experiences of gyms, swimming pools, fitness and leisure centres reveals a number of concerns and key influencing factors that affect usage and perceptions of accessibility.

Part of Everyone Can, which is an ongoing agenda led by ukactive and supported by Sport England to set a collaborative tone for inclusivity across the sector, the report is based on the results of the most comprehensive survey of disabled people to date. Data and market research company Savanta

conducted the poll of 1,555 UK adults aged 18+ about their experiences of gyms, swimming pools, fitness and leisure centres. Those surveyed had disabilities or long-term health conditions and were polled online.

One in five people in the UK are disabled, and 81% of disabled adults have indicated that they want to do more physical activity. This aim supports gyms and leisure centres with "a huge commercial opportunity as the economic value of the 'purple pound' is £249bn per year", ukactive said in a press statement. (The 'purple pound' refers to the spending power of disabled households.)

Key findings and recommendations include:

- 50% of gym users agreed 'most centres provide a good range of equipment that I can use', while only 28% of non-users agreed.

SHUTTERSTOCK / ISTOCK

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS



“Communication should be utilised in the digital space to improve accessibility and combat perceived barriers, including online virtual tours,” the report said.

- **One in five respondents** said that staff offering assistance or practical support would encourage them to attend the facility more often. The report recommends taster sessions and regular check-ins following inductions.
- **35% feel too self-conscious** to ask for extra information and support from gym, fitness and leisure centre staff. Customer service should be a focus, offering support which extends from

initial induction.

- A fifth of survey respondents either feel worried they would be the only one with a disability or feel they did not see many other individuals with a disability in the facility. Everyone Can recommends improved representation in marketing imagery and the workforce. Cited as a “shining example” is the Gym Group’s Inclusive Traineeship, which supports disabled people to get a qualification in fitness and physical activity, and the EmployAbility programme, supporting the leisure industry to get more disabled people in employment.

MESSAGE FROM
CIMSPA CEO

TARA DILLON
ON THE SKILLS
SHORTAGE
CHALLENGES
FACING THE SECTOR

Staff shortages continue to be one of the biggest issues for the sport and physical activity sector.

We’ve been working with our partners to overcome the recruitment and retention challenge via the ReTrain to ReTrain programme. Funded by Sport England and delivered in conjunction with UK Coaching and EMD UK, I’m pleased to report that the £5m job retention package and support package is making a difference. Our latest progress report, launched in January, shows how the scheme is both upskilling and reskilling our existing workforce and attracting new people to the sector. We also hear from some of the people who have benefitted from the funding (p9).

As laudable as it is, this programme is not enough to solve the skills shortage. As a sector, we have to get better at looking after our staff and that includes supporting their mental health and wellbeing. Mental health has made it on to the national agenda, but we still have some way to go in promoting mental health in the workplace as the latest findings of Workforce State of Mind Survey demonstrate (p14).

The research shows a widening gap between the needs of the health and fitness workforce and the protection and support provided by employers. It finds that while 54% of individuals have experienced a mental health issue in the last year, only 49% of employers have a mental wellbeing strategy in place.

Retaining great staff is crucial. Creating a workplace environment where teams feel included, empowered and safe has never been more important.

RESEARCH

SOCIAL VALUE OF MOVEMENT AND DANCE

The Sport and Recreation Alliance, alongside members from its Movement and Dance division, and a consortium of academic professionals specialising in research on movement and dance, have published a report highlighting its overlooked social value.

Headline findings from the report include:

- The annual social value of movement and dance is £3.49bn, representing around 5% of the total social value generated by community sport and physical activity.
- Of every £20 of social value created by sport and physical activity, £1 is created uniquely by movement and dance.
- Movement and dance creates £430m in savings on physical and mental health.
- Prevents more cases of breast cancer and hip fractures than its ‘market share’.

- A host of other benefits – delayed onset of Parkinson’s disease, reduced loneliness, and improved retention in activity of young people, older people and people living with disabilities.

To maximise the social value of movement and dance, the report recommends that they are better used to relieve pressure on the NHS, by being integrated into health, care and prevention practices, including ‘social prescribing’. It should also be a key method used to keep an ageing population active and reducing the risks of being sedentary.

SRA CEO Lisa Wainwright MBE said: “Movement and dance is a vital part of our society and culture, and deserves to be supported for the incredible value it provides for so many people. We hope that this report can be the start of that process.”



UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

SWIMMING POOLS GET £63M BOOST FROM BUDGET

By DeeDee Doke

Publicly owned leisure centres with swimming pools have been handed a financial boost following the announcement of a major new fund in the Spring Budget, announced on 15 March.

According to Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, £63m of new money will be made available in a one-year fund.

The fund, which will be managed by Sport England, will allow local authorities to apply for funding for leisure centres with pools that face immediate cost pressures including operational and maintenance costs, and energy bills.

There are more than 2,000 public leisure centres in England, over 800 of which have pools, and these play a vital role in helping communities engage

with sport and physical activity. They provide vital services which are not available through other providers, a Sport England statement said.

Sport England CEO Tim Hollingsworth said it is vital this money goes where it can make the greatest difference.

“Swimming pools play a vital role in our communities and are enormously important in helping people to be physically active in their daily lives”

Tim Hollingsworth, CEO of Sport England



“This is a significant and welcome amount of support from the Government that will offer a lifeline to many public leisure centres across England as well as help sustain them into the future,” he said.

“Swimming pools play a vital role in our communities and are enormously important in helping people to be physically active in their daily lives.

“We know how difficult the present situation is and have been working hard to ensure these providers get the support they need. We’ll now turn our efforts to supporting the process in the weeks ahead to distribute the funding made available today to ensure it goes where it is needed the most.”

A key aim of the fund will be to help these facilities to become more energy efficient, Sport England said.

In total, £40m of the fund will be made available for investment in decarbonisation and long-term energy efficiency, while £23m will help with costs to make these essential local hubs more energy efficient.

Council-run pools, pools run on behalf of councils by private companies and by charities are all eligible for support.

The report provides an overview of the current landscape and outlines a model direction of travel that will enable the sector to create a more sustainable future.

More information on how local authorities can apply for funding and detailed eligibility criteria will be made available in due course.



IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE



RETRAIN TO RETAIN... MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The ambitious programme continues to support the sector through the current recruitment and retention crisis. Read on for a programme update and learn how people are benefiting from the scheme

ReTrain to ReTain is a £5m job retention and support package funded by Sport England through the National Lottery and delivered by CIMSPA alongside a consortium of partners including UK Coaching and EMD UK.

Launched in November 2021 to support the smooth reopening of the sector following the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme was designed to support up to 25,000 sports and fitness coaches who had to find work outside the sector during the pandemic, prioritising those living and working in areas of economic

deprivation or supporting under-represented groups.

In response to the recruitment and retention crisis, which hit the sector after the pandemic, the ReTrain to ReTain programme evolved to help with the industry's skills shortages and recruitment challenges. The scheme now works to support everyone working or volunteering in sport and physical activity in England, helping to upskill/reskill the existing workforce and attract new people to the sector.

The scheme offers a wide range of funded programmes and learning

resources from CIMSPA, UK Coaching and EMD, with additional resources available for specific job roles and people living and working in low socio-economic group areas.

A progress report, launched in January 2023, highlighted the impact of the scheme to date. It found that as of 20 December 2022, the programme had supported 34,142 individuals (paid and volunteers) and employees. Of these, 11,545 are paid individuals and employees.

The support package has funded 804 qualifications and 378 CPD courses. The three most popular qualifications were Level 3 Swim Coordinator, Level 2 Certificate in Gym

Instructing and Level 3

Diploma in GP Exercise Referral. The top 10 funded CPD course subjects were cancer and exercise rehabilitation, cardiac rehabilitation followed by management and leadership.

To help create a sector where workforce behaviour creates a positive experience for customers, extra support is given to individuals and employers who need it most with fully funded qualifications/continuous professional development courses.

As of 20 December 2022, the programme had supported 2,715 individuals and employees in areas of economic deprivation. Of these, 681 individuals have received funding to complete a qualification with 92% of learners living in an area of economic deprivation and 62% living in some of England's most deprived areas.

In addition, 72 employers across 187 sites have been supported with

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

ReTrain funded training for employees, with 62% of employer sites supported located in areas of economic deprivation and half of sites located in the most deprived areas.

The launch of the UK's first sport and physical activity sector specific jobs board, which links those looking for work with employers struggling to recruit, has proved a huge success. More than 24,000 jobs were presented to potential candidates from May to December 2022. Over 17,000 individuals visited the job board, from over 200 UK cities and towns, with 1,300+ of them clicking through to apply for jobs.

"I'm delighted by the success of ReTrain to ReTrain to date. The programme is releasing funds directly into the sector to addresses employer skills shortages by upskilling existing staff and training new people for the workforce, while supporting those who need the most help," says Tara Dillon, CIMSPA's CEO.

**JOANNE JONES**

COMPLETED SEQ LEVEL 1 SWIMMING ASSISTANT (TEACHING) QUALIFICATION AND IS NOW WORKING AS ASSISTANT SWIM TEACHER

I started my educational fitness journey in 2018. Swimming was always going to be the final string to my qualification bow. Self-financing would have meant delaying studies quite significantly and I couldn't get any volunteering experience at my local pool.

I was directed to the Institute of Swimming for help with funding for an assistant swimming teacher qualification (SEQ Level 1). That motivated me to 'scratch the itch'.

As a direct result of the ReTrain to ReTrain funding, I passed my SEQ Level 1 training and gained employment assisting with stage 1 to 3 swimming lessons. I now have a regular shift and access to mentoring from Stage 2 swimming teachers. Over the next six months I will gain valuable experience in the pool, as an assistant, in

anticipation of my SEQ Level 2 Teaching Swimming award. By the end of 2023 it is my goal to be running my own classes.

**DUNCAN LAWRENCE**

A FREELANCE TRAINER/DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CONSULTANT WHO COMPLETED A LEVEL 5 DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP TO

PROGRESS INTO SENIOR ROLES

I had loads of experience and quality wellbeing qualifications, but for some reason senior sports management jobs never came my way. I felt very stuck – I assumed it was primarily due to my age – and that the sports management jobs might have passed me by.

The ReTrain funding helped to reenergise my career, building on my transferable skills in sports management and leading to more diverse job interviews.

During the course, I started to incorporate the learning into my freelance work. Potential customers began listening and hearing me in different ways and often treated me as if I had always been a senior sport manager/leader and consultant.

Senior consultant and exercise referral doors opened as I was now viewed as a sports management practitioner alongside my history of wellbeing, diversity & inclusion, SEN etc.

The training has given me additional credibility when selling my training and business coaching. All my engagements now get a more well-rounded Duncan, one that can easily and with confidence transfer my skills and knowledge from practitioner level to strategic leadership level. Customers and other stakeholders get more value when they take me on and students seem to value who is in front of them more.

Without attaining my sports management/leadership qualifications, I would have taken steps to semi-retire and continued to feel pigeon holed with





limited employment pathways and salary levels.



ANDREW STUBBS

A GROUP EXERCISE INSTRUCTOR WHO COMPLETED A LEVEL 4 OBESITY AND DIABETES QUALIFICATION, WHICH HE HAS IMPLEMENTED INTO HIS WORK WITH

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

I am a personal trainer and group exercise instructor and specialise in working with those who struggle to engage in physical activity due to various conditions.

I work with people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities and a lot of my clients have other issues including obesity, diabetes and mental health problems.

The Level 4 Obesity and Diabetes course was excellent and without the ReTrain funding I wouldn't have been able to complete it due to the cost.

It has given me the potential to work

with the local NHS trust and other groups and to introduce physical activity to many people who would not usually engage in such activities. It has also helped me to tailor my sessions to meet the needs of my existing clients. A number of my clients have lost weight as a result.



JOAO PEREIRA

A PT WHO AIMS TO START A NEW BUSINESS FOCUSING ON SPECIALIST POPULATIONS FOLLOWING EXERCISE REFERRAL TRAINING

The ReTrain funding came at the perfect time for me. I was feeling lost when it came to employment and was probably going to end up working in security or warehousing just to pay my bills despite my passion for helping people to achieve their goals through health and fitness.

As a result of ReTrain funding I was able to widen my range of services to

include work with specialist populations in my area. I am hoping to use this knowledge to open my own business offering opportunities for people on low incomes to access exercise and nutrition coaching. I believe education is a lifelong process and truly appreciate the opportunity that ReTrain to Retain provided.



KAREN PENNEY

A RECENTLY QUALIFIED PT WHO PLANS TO SUPPORT OLDER ADULTS AND THOSE IN CHRONIC PAIN FOLLOWING SPECIALIST TRAINING

Post-Covid and aged 60, I was made redundant from a stressful corporate role as head of marketing. I decided to retrain in something I loved and where I could help people. After completing Level 2 Gym Instructor, Level 2 Group Exercise to Music and Level 3 Personal Trainer qualifications, I started training my first PT client in May 2022. He is 64 years old, and seeing how he has improved cemented my view to work with older people.

I set up my business, Fit and Fabulous, but also wanted to establish a local Escape Pain programme, with my physiotherapist friend, for local people with chronic joint pain. I booked myself onto an Exercise Referral course, but didn't have the funds to attend the Escape Pain training. This is where the ReTrain funding came in.

Thanks to the funding, we will be able to welcome our first Escape Pain cohort this spring, to help people with osteoarthritis of the knee or hip live with and manage their condition better. People will hopefully be referred to us by local GPs, social providers and in response to our local marketing. This is another way I can help local people who really need it using my group exercise skills.

For more information on Retrain to Retain, visit <https://retrain.cimspa.co.uk>

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

CIMSPA SCOTLAND UPDATE

It's a hive of activity north of the border, as regional manager Susie Benson talks about some of the exciting initiatives taking place

"I feel like I'm riding the crest of a wave, there's so much brilliant work going on here," says regional manager Susie Benson. Since joining CIMSPA in 2019 in a role jointly supported by CIMSPA and sportscotland, Benson has provided a vital link between the two organisations to ensure the success of CIMSPA's long-term partnership in Scotland.

The relationship has facilitated the delivery of a number of transformative projects for the Scottish sport and physical activity sector. This includes the creation of the CIMSPA Scottish Professional Development Board (SPDB) in 2020. Chaired by David Mclean, head of operations at Edinburgh Leisure, and including key stakeholders from across the industry, SPDB's ambition is to grow the attractiveness of working in



the sector and ensure all Scottish customers and consumers have an excellent experience.

As part of this aim, the SPDB launched the Sector Skills Strategy for Scotland 2021-2024. Developed in collaboration with the industry and supported by CIMSPA and sportscotland, the strategy outlines the key priorities and challenges for the Scottish sport and physical activity workforce. At its core is a recognition that a more highly skilled and professional workforce is needed to cater for the increased challenges in volume, diversity and complexity of sport and physical activity participation.

"We are a close-knit community here in Scotland and organisations are open to working together, which is great. But until now we've never had a single, overarching strategic plan for the workforce. This new strategy gives us a common purpose to get the right people in the right place at the right time. And to have sector-wide buy-in

from sportscotland, national governing bodies and training providers to awarding organisations, operators and the education sector is just fantastic," says Benson.

The SPDB has just launched a new education sub committee chaired by Iain Houston, associate dean sport and fitness at City of Glasgow College, which will grow the attractiveness of and increase the retention of the sport and physical activity workforce in Scotland alongside improving pathways for people moving into the sector from all entry points – school, graduates of further and higher education, apprenticeships, vocational training pathways and career changers.

And in another exciting initiative, CIMSPA has entered into a partnership with sportscotland and Scottish Student Sport to develop an active campus network across Scotland's colleges. The ambitious scheme aims to encourage sport and activity among students and staff, while providing high quality and effective work-based placements around sport and active health.

And this is where CIMSPA can provide valued support, as Benson explains: "This programme will help ensure students get a positive experience of working in sport and activity, making the sector a more attractive career option.

"It's an exciting time for the sport and physical activity sector in Scotland."

"This new strategy gives us a common purpose to get the right people in the right place at the right time"

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

NEVER GIVE UP

We meet CIMSPA's new sport & physical activity skills hub manager for Wales, Robyn Lock, whose own life was turned around by sport and physical activity

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CAREER TO DATE...

I studied Marine Biology at Swansea University, but sport always played an important role in my life. I became Swansea University's sports officer after graduating in 2016, which propelled me into the sport and physical activity sector. I chaired the Welsh Sport Student board in BUCS. I then joined Swansea Council's sport development team, working in schools.

In 2019 I became active communities manager at Freedom Leisure. I was promoted to the Wales active communities lead working across Wrexham, Powys and Swansea, which saw me work at a strategic level, managing Welsh Government-funded national programmes and embedding systems and processes to highlight the importance of local leisure for communities across Wales.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS NEW ROLE AT CIMSPA?

Wales is a sporting nation and I'm passionate about making sure everyone in Wales has the easiest access and best experience when taking part in sport and physical activity.

My aim is to ensure the Welsh sport sector feels truly connected to CIMSPA as a partner. This means embedding skill strategies at hyperlocal levels through the sports partnerships and

"My mum asked me what I wanted to do when this was all over. I said I wanted to play rugby for Wales. I was selected into the Wales Women's XV Rugby team. I believe sport saved my life"



ensuring employers have a voice in the development of the workforce and needs of the sector.

Sport Wales is the main catalyst for creating impact in Wales and CIMSPA and Sport Wales have a shared vision. My role is to support them in achieving 'The Vision for Sport in Wales'.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO MOST IN THIS ROLE?

There's a lot of great work happening across Wales with many passionate people in the sector. I'm really looking forward to working with partners to ensure the work we do is robust, respected and creates more opportunities for more people in Wales.

WHY ARE YOU SO PASSIONATE ABOUT SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

Sport holds a special place in my heart. In 2014 I was diagnosed with Stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma. I was 21 years old playing regional and university rugby and living my best life. Once diagnosed, I spent almost six months in hospital having chemotherapy every two weeks.

My mum moved back from New Zealand to become my full-time carer. She asked me what I wanted to do when this was all over. I said I wanted to play rugby for Wales. A bold statement, but clinging onto that dream kept me going when I was being pumped with drugs.

I finished chemotherapy in April 2015 and in November 2019 (five years to the date of my diagnosis) I was selected into the Wales Women's XV Rugby team. I believe sport saved my life. I went on to gain six caps playing rugby for Wales, which have been some of the proudest moments of my life.

Not everyone's association with sport is about beating cancer and becoming an international athlete, but everyone's story is inspiring. Sport taught me to be resilient, dream big and enjoy every moment. Its power is huge.

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

2023 STATE OF MIND SURVEY RESULTS

Latest State of Mind Survey reveals a widening gap between level of distress and the provision of support and protection



15"

The third Workforce State of Mind Survey, designed to explore the relationship between the mental health of individuals and the professional environment experienced by people working in fitness and active leisure, has revealed a widening gap between the needs of the workforce and the protection and support provided by employers.

Conducted between 16 January and 10 February 2023, the State of Mind Survey attracted engagement from 918 individuals across all levels of the workforce and 68 employers. The survey reports that of the individuals who took part, more than half (54%) have experienced a mental health issue in the last 12 months, with 73% having experienced a mental health issue at some point in their life. This depicts that, amongst respondents there remains a significant level of distress that is consistent with previous years (54% in 2021 and 57% in 2022).

“Our survey, which now has collated data from the last three years, suggests that a significant percentage of the workforce has experienced a mental health issue at some point,” explains Lindsey Simpson, curator of the survey. “What is important is that, as a sector,

“Our survey, which now has collated data from the last three years, suggests that a significant percentage of the workforce has experienced a mental health issue at some point”

Lindsey Simpson, State of Mind Survey



918

The State of Mind Survey attracted engagement from 918 individuals across all levels of the workforce and 68 employers

we provide good work environments that support and protect our people and empower them to perform to the best of their ability. Unfortunately, whilst the survey suggests pockets of good work in this area, the overriding impression is that many employers are falling short, with many probably not meeting legally required standards in employee safety.”

“There are several pieces of legislation that protect the mental wellbeing of people in the workforce including the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) and The Equality Act (2010). Whilst falling short in this area is obviously problematic, it also means employers are missing out on the commercial benefits of a happy, healthy and productive workforce. In its 2020 Mental Health and Employers report, Deloitte estimates poor mental health at work costs private leisure employers between £702 and £769 per employee per annum. So, for a workforce of 200 that’s a cost of at least £140,400 per year.”

WHAT HAVE EMPLOYERS TOLD US?

Of the employers who completed the State of Mind Employer Survey, only

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

49% say they have a mental wellbeing strategy with just 19% stating mental health & safety is embedded in their management systems and strategically measured and monitored. Only 6% say the Board sees regular reports on employee wellbeing. Some 28% report that a process is in place for regularly checking in on employee mental health, although only 8% of individuals questioned stated somebody regularly checks their mental wellbeing.

All of this, even though 78% of employer respondents stated that they felt the senior leadership team understands its duty of care responsibilities in terms of supporting and protecting employee mental as well as physical health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report includes three core recommendations to begin to address the gaps. These are:

A Sector-Wide Approach

A sector-wide employer focus on raising the standard of employee mental health prevention and protection, driven and supported by sector bodies. This needs to include education to empower employers to develop a supportive and protective culture built on good work practices that fulfil legal requirements and support commercial growth.

Director Level Actions

Board members and senior leadership teams need to take responsibility for the strategy and action relating to the mental health and safety of their teams at all levels of their workforce.

This means implementing plans and risk-management systems that align with the organisation's physical health and safety approach.

Supporting Workers Without An Employer

There is a role for the sector's membership organisations to further explore, within their remit, what their membership would value in terms of promoting and supporting their mental health at work. It may be different for role types and levels. This could include conference sessions and webinars, resources, signposting support, HR or legal advice and training.

CIMSPA has been an official partner to the Workforce State of Mind Survey from the time of its launch in 2021. Tara Dillon, CIMSPA's CEO, says: "Three years of data is suggesting that, as a sector, we need to address inadequacies in the provision of good working environments that protect and support our people.

"This conclusion is also backed up by other sector research – such as the Quest survey, CIMSPA's Workforce Survey and CIMSPA's Emsi report. Our people have always been and remain our most valuable asset. Without a happy, healthy and productive workforce we are failing to deliver our full potential. It is now time for collective action."

To read the full summary report from the '2023 Fitness and Active Leisure Workforce State of Mind Survey', visit www.workplacemantalwealth.com and download your free copy.

Only 8% of individuals questioned state that somebody regularly checks their mental wellbeing



Top line findings

54% of respondents have experienced a mental health issue in the last 12 months (57% in 2022 and 53% in 2021)

73% of respondents have experienced a mental health issue at some point (73% in 2022 and 69% in 2021)

72% of respondents with line manager felt this manager cared about their mental wellbeing. (75% in 2022 and 78% in 2021)

46% of respondents would not be honest with their employer if they needed to take time off due to a mental health issue (48% in 2022 and 42% in 2021)

8% of employee respondents said somebody regularly checks on their mental health at work (11% in 2022 and 19% in 2021)

49% of employer respondents have a wellbeing strategy they communicate with the workforce (42% in 2022 and 40% in 2021)

71% of employer respondents would welcome support from an industry body to help them shape their approach to employee mental wellbeing and share best practice. (77% in 2022 and 63% in 2021)

63 out of 100

is the average rating for 'sense of belonging at work'

IN DEPTH

RIGHT DIRECTIONS

A REVIEW OF CIMSPA INDUSTRY GUIDELINES COMPLETED

An entire new library of CIMSPA industry guidelines has launched following a comprehensive review by health & safety and quality management expert Right Directions.

CIMSPA's original 250 documents have now been updated and merged with Right Directions' own RD Docs Guidance Notes, which give additional in-depth reference information, covering a wide range of more than 500 different topics that are valuable tools for all levels of management.

The merged guidance notes cover diverse topics such as adverse weather, diving, ice sports, private hire of facilities, goal post safety, lone working in a small centre, archery, roller skating, Parkour and inflatable structures, as well as information on the core activities you would expect to see, such as swimming pools and fitness and group exercise.

The full content of CIMSPA's guidance notes had

not been reviewed in its entirety for more than 10 years. Following an industry consultation, Right Directions pulled together and updated relevant historical information to reflect the current industry structure before merging them with its own RD Docs Guidance Notes. The work formed part of CIMSPA's wider review strategy, with the aim of ensuring all industry professionals follow CIMSPA's objective of being 'a unified voice for the sector'.

The documents will now provide a library of resources for front line leisure staff, as Gill Twell, head of development at Right Directions explains: "The

up-to-date notes detail current advice, best practice and legislation, and are an essential resource for anyone working in the health, fitness and active leisure sector. We work in a constantly evolving industry and staff must be prepared to deal with any situation that arises, whether that's on the gym floor or around the facility. This new library helps to reaffirm CIMSPA's vision of the leisure industry being a recognised and respected sector."

Right Directions has utilised its robust knowledge of health & safety, quality management, leisure operational management and environmental management throughout the guidance notes to develop and provide advice across a number of areas, which will be valuable for everyone from trainee managers just entering the industry to experienced managers who can seek information from an

up-to-date reference across a range of topics. Each document identifies important areas for consideration, such as hazards and risks, safe equipment, safe setup and safe operation/operational standards, as well as maintenance, checks and inspections needed, and supervision and staff training required. Advice on emergency procedures and first aid actions are also included where relevant, along with further useful resources, including signposting to other best practices and industry guidance.

The new guidance notes will be updated regularly when new legislation is issued or best practice is announced, and the first set of guidance will be rolled out from 1 April 2023 and will be available on both the Right Directions website and the CIMSPA member portal.

"The up-to-date notes are an essential resource for anyone working in the health, fitness and active leisure sector"



AGENDA

GENDER EQUALITY

What are the personal experiences of women working in the sports and physical activity sector? A new report shines a light on the lack of data – and aims to benchmark the situation from now on

GIVING WOMEN MORE OF A

VOICE

By
Dean
Gurden

IN SPORT



It makes for depressing, though perhaps unsurprising, reading that just 1% of women working in sport today believe there is gender equality in the industry. That's the finding of a recent report, 'Voice of Women Working in Sport', produced by Sporting Insights in partnership with the Women's Sport Collective.

Based on an online survey of more than 850 women working at all levels across the sports industry, it's just one of many statistics in the research that paint a bleak picture for women working in the sector, and those wanting to join.

And yet many do. In fact, the most common positive word used by the respondents to describe how it feels to be a woman working in sport is 'empowering'. Despite the palpable barriers they felt existed to them carving out a successful career, they were still passionate and proud to be working in sport.

What precipitated the research was the need to draw a line in the sand, says Sue Anstiss MBE, founder and director of Fearless Women, and CEO of the Women's Sport Collective. "We wanted more context in terms of statistics and numbers for the concerns that we were hearing on a regular basis," she says. "There's data around visibility or, ▶

AGENDA

GENDER EQUALITY

more to the point, the lack thereof, and data around funding in women's sport, but in terms of their personal experience of working in the sector, we just couldn't find anything."

TAKING A MEASURE

Anstiss talks about the need for a measure. After all, if you can't measure something, you can't tell if it's getting worse or improving. "We're basically asking: if this is women's perception now, then what can we be doing to improve things and move forward?" she says. "We keep talking about wanting equity within the sports industry, but what does that look like and where are we now? Therefore, we decided to do research this year that we can then

build upon in the future to hopefully see improvements."

As Hannah Sprake, senior sports development insights manager at Sporting Insights, who led the research, explains, the intention is to perform the survey annually. "By doing it each year we can compare and track the changes," she says. "This is the benchmark year."

That said, one area where they were able to make a comparison was between

women who had worked in the sector for more than 10 years and those who'd worked for less than five years. "We asked them both if male gatekeepers had been a barrier to entry and the percentage was the same at 32%. So that's one area we can definitely say hasn't improved," says Sprake.

In fact, ask Sprake what she hopes the sector will take away from the report and she's adamant: "That it's not all



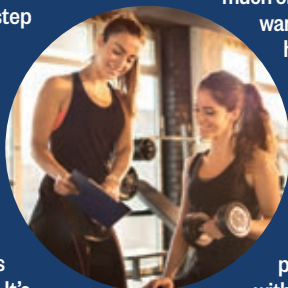
Women's Sport Collective

With 82% of respondents to the 'Voice of Women Working in Sport' research saying that being part of a large network of women working in sport would assist in their career progression, the Women's Sport Collective (WSC) provides a valuable and much-needed resource.

Set up by co-founders Sue Anstiss and Kate Hannon during the pandemic, it's an inclusive, collaborative network for women working in the sports sector with an ambition to see a gender-equal sports industry. "We want to ensure that every woman in sport has the chance to flourish and fulfil her potential," states its website.

"As this research shows,

women are fully capable and have self-belief, but I think the WSC, through its free webinars, workshops and networking opportunities, helps build confidence through those connections, encouraging women to go for that next step in their career," says Anstiss. "Having a network they can easily tap into and be connected to other women across borders is hugely powerful. It's something men have had in sport for decades, but it hasn't really existed for women."



It has certainly proved popular. With just over 5,300 members across 85 countries, there have been no campaigns shouting about its existence, but simple word of mouth. "Women hear about it and that it's free to join, and tend to think 'why not?'," says Anstiss.

"Actually, I think one of the attractive elements of it is that women can engage with it as much or as little as they want," she adds. "We have monthly networking meetings and some attend nearly all of them, and some just like to know they're part of something without feeling the need to be as fully engaged. But either way, some of the responses and emails we get from women who have

found jobs or moved on to new jobs, or just found mentors and support, are really powerful."

One of the action points that respondents in the research suggested is that women "focus on camaraderie with other women working in sport, not competition". Hannah Sprake, senior sports development insights manager at Sporting Insights, believes the WSC is a prime example of how they can go about achieving this.

"It's created a safe space for women to feel they can ask any question, even if it might seem silly, or if it's something they think they should already know," she says. "It allows them to support and champion each other. It can be an online option where it's all done virtually, in a sports setting or via a women's group within the office. It's about making women feel safe and able to have these conversations or just speak up."

rosy,” adding, “obviously a lot of the women have said they’re not surprised by the results, or the barriers and experiences experienced by other women that it highlights. But we’ve yet to present it to a male audience. I’m doing that in March, and I’m really interested to see what their reaction to the feedback will be. Will it be a case of ‘oh, I didn’t even realise’ or did they know but didn’t pay any attention to it?”

NON-SPORTY TYPES

One interesting point that came out of the research is that 25% of women were motivated to work in sport because of their interest in a function or discipline (such as marketing, HR, media), whereas 82% were motivated by their passion for sport, suggesting that the industry needs to attract more women who are not necessarily ‘sporty’.

Fearless Women and the Women’s Sport Collective are on this. “We’re looking to work with schools, colleges

and universities to let younger women know there are amazing jobs for women in sport, even though they may not have been sporty and active when growing up,” says Anstiss. “Highlighting the opportunities that lie within the entire sector can only make a positive difference.”

As she points out, if you only have people working in any industry who have loved it their whole lives, it’s hard for them to see how they can attract new people who perhaps don’t share their passion. “I think it’s the same for sport,” she adds. “I don’t necessarily want it to be seen like any other sector, because it is quite unique, but it needs to be known that you don’t have to play sport to a high level to come and work in the sports industry.”

Sprake agrees: “One of the strengths of working in sport is that it feels like a family, but that can be one of its downsides because it’s the same people with the same ideas all the time. So it



Key findings of Voice of Women Working in Sport

92%

of women faced barriers entering the sports industry

91%

faced blockers in developing their career once in the industry

51%

believe they are paid less than men for the same work

33%

feel that male gatekeepers and intimidating men were a barrier to entering sport

28%

say a lack of flexibility within workplace/ sports industry means it is difficult to progress

9 in 10

are confident in their current skills to do their job well

6 in 10

are worried about imposter syndrome



AGENDA

GENDER EQUALITY

really does pay to bring in individuals with different interests.”

MALE GATEKEEPERS

Perhaps one of the most dismaying findings of the report is that some men are actively working against women. As many as 37% of women in the industry ‘agreed or strongly agreed’ that male gatekeepers had restricted their career progression. “It was so disappointing to see those numbers and for them to be so high,” says Anstiss. “I suspected it might be the case, but it was really powerful to have them confirmed.

“And then there are the 32% of women saying that male gatekeepers or intimidating men working in the sport

“We didn’t survey any men or employers. It’s quite purposely the voice of women working in sport”

industry had even been a barrier to their entry in the first place,” she adds. “It’s quite a shock to see that written down. And these are the women that made it. What about the thousands that got put off and never even made it into the sector?”

That said, Anstiss is happy to

acknowledge that there are lots of “brilliant men who are very supportive” out there. But the report makes clear that 44% of women would like to see greater numbers of male allies being more visible and vocal in the industry. “I think a lot of men may be happy to sit behind the scenes creating more of an inclusive environment for women, but we need to get them to step forward a bit more,” says Anstiss. “We’re currently looking at various campaigns and initiatives that will better enable men to do this.”

What both Anstiss and Sprake readily admit is that their research is very much the perspective of women currently in the industry. “We didn’t survey any men or employers. It’s quite purposely the voice of women working in sport and we, unashamedly, focused on them,” says Anstiss.

But one thing they’ve discussed off the back of the research is that they are keen to engage with employers to ask them what they have tried to put into action, and what worked and didn’t work. One can only hope that through that engagement this research truly is the wake-up call it’s intended to be. Women deserve to be better served in a sector that can only benefit from their greater inclusion.

Actions for employers

- Increase the visibility of women working across all levels in sport
- Be more open-minded and transparent when recruiting
- Review pay and working conditions for gender bias
- Support women entering and working in the industry



ADVERTORIAL

ELEVATE 2023

SHARING THE LATEST INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE AT ELEVATE 2023

Elevate is the UK's largest trade show dedicated to physical activity, fitness and sport therapy.

During two full days, 7,000+ decision makers from gyms, studios, sport clubs, sports therapy practices, universities, personal training, schools and private practice meet over 250 leading suppliers, showcasing 1,000s of product innovations specially designed to 'elevate' the UK's physical activity.

Reconnect, celebrate resilience and look forward to a future full of exciting new opportunities!

Elevate 2023 brings ideas, technology, innovation and unparalleled learning from over 200 expert speakers, hundreds of leading suppliers and thought-leaders all in one place. Our industry is poised to kick on and capitalise on the ever-changing, ever-necessary call for the nation to get active!

Registration is free.

- **"Elevate is the most important event of the year for the UK fitness industry"** – Michelle Dand, Head of Fitness Product and Programming, David Lloyd Clubs



Elevate 2023 highlights to include:

- Five learning streams
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion series hosted by The Thought Leaders Conference
- The unique HYROX Physical Fitness Test open to all Elevate attendees
- Unrivalled networking opportunities

Other big sessions include:

- Controlling your Controllables, supported by Orbit 4: Focus on energy costs, equipment and people
- What does leadership in the activity and wellbeing industry look like?
- Does the industry need a rebrand?
- Workforce in mind: why looking after the mental health of your workforce makes financial sense
- How to onboard and keep good PTs
- Why different community groups won't swim and making water-based activities more accessible
- Act like a kid – what we can learn from children's programming to boost motivation, enjoyment and adherence for clients and members

Elevate 2023 takes place on 14-15 June 2023 at ExCel in London. To attend, register free here: <https://www.elevatearena.com>



SWIMMING POOLS

INCIDENTS

LOOKING AFTER

By
Caroline
Roberts

YOUR POOL IN

THE RIGHT WAY

Chlorine gas leaks can be deadly but with good care and attention they don't have to be

Last year saw a sharp rise in pool plant accidents involving chlorine gas leaks. Why is this happening, and more importantly, what can operators do to reduce the risks?

A chlorine gas emission from a pool plant can have serious consequences for the health of customers and staff. Exposure causes breathing difficulties, coughing and eye irritation, and can lead to long-term lung scarring and even death. Even if no one is hurt, there can be serious disruption to your business with loss of revenue due to closure, clean-up costs and reputational damage.

It's therefore worrying that figures collected by the Water Incident Research Hub show there were 19 incidents in 2022, almost double the highest number in any year since 1999. The most serious of these was an emission at London's Aquatic Centre, which resulted in 29 people being taken to hospital and a four-week closure of the facility.

Around 90% of UK pools use either sodium hypochlorite, otherwise known as liquid bleach, or calcium hypochlorite, a chalk-like powder, to disinfect the water. As these are alkaline, an acid substance – hydrochloric or sulphuric acid, sodium bisulphate or carbon dioxide gas – must be added to correct the pH. But mixing of the chlorine compound with an acid outside of the water, either through human error or mechanical failure, produces toxic, yellowish-green gas, which is heavier than air so is likely to affect swimmers before staff if it enters the pool area.

Industry health & safety experts point to a number of factors that seem likely to have contributed to the increase in accidents. One of these is staff shortages. As in other sectors, the Covid pandemic has resulted in increased staff turnover and the resignation of many experienced employees, often without the usual handover period. It has also made it more difficult to ensure everyone has the

“It needs to be drilled into employees that if they put a barrel in the wrong room, there’s the potential to kill most of the people in the building”

appropriate and most up-to-date safety qualifications and training, increasing the chances of less qualified and less experienced staff being left in charge of pool plant.

A shortage of chemicals has been another issue, and it seems likely to persist this year. The war in Ukraine and the prolonged Covid lockdowns in China, a major producer, have disrupted supply chains and this has meant that many operators have had to order smaller amounts from different suppliers. These often come in different containers with packaging sometimes similar to that of other chemicals, leading to confusion. Brexit has also played a role as it has contributed to delays in the supply of parts for repairs and maintenance of pool plant equipment.

In the most up-to-date facilities, the tanks for different chemicals will usually be in separate rooms to lessen the chance of mixing. But in older builds, they will often be in the same room and may be topped up manually, either by opening a valve, pumping chemical in using a hand pump, or even by tipping it in from a barrel, explains Ian Ogilvie, health & safety consultant and lead pool plant tutor for the Institute of Swimming (IoS). “The most common cause of accidental mixing is a staff member getting the two tanks confused when filling, or a pipe being attached to the wrong tank during a delivery.” Occasionally, a power failure can cause chemicals to sit in the



SWIMMING POOLS

INCIDENTS

pipework and then mix when the system is restarted, he adds.

Spillages of individual chemicals can also produce harmful fumes or, in the case of acids, cause burns if they come into contact with skin. Larger plant rooms often have a bulk storage tank, usually for sodium hypochlorite, and a small tank for everyday use that is filled by opening a valve. "One of the issues we come across is someone getting called away and leaving the tank filling so you can end up with 1,000 litres of chemical all over the floor," says Ian. "It gets under the door and onto poolside, giving off fumes and you usually have to bring in a professional company to clean it up."

Adding chemicals to the water by hand creates another hazard. "If people start using alternative products due to the shortage, their system may not be set up for this so they have to start hand-dosing. It can also become necessary if the system goes down and you can't get the part you need. Hand-dosing should really be a last resort and you need to make sure you do it properly with PPE."

Given the current challenges, it's vital that properly trained staff and organisations raise awareness of the potential hazards, says Ian. The Swimming Pool Technical Operator (SPTO) qualification, delivered by the



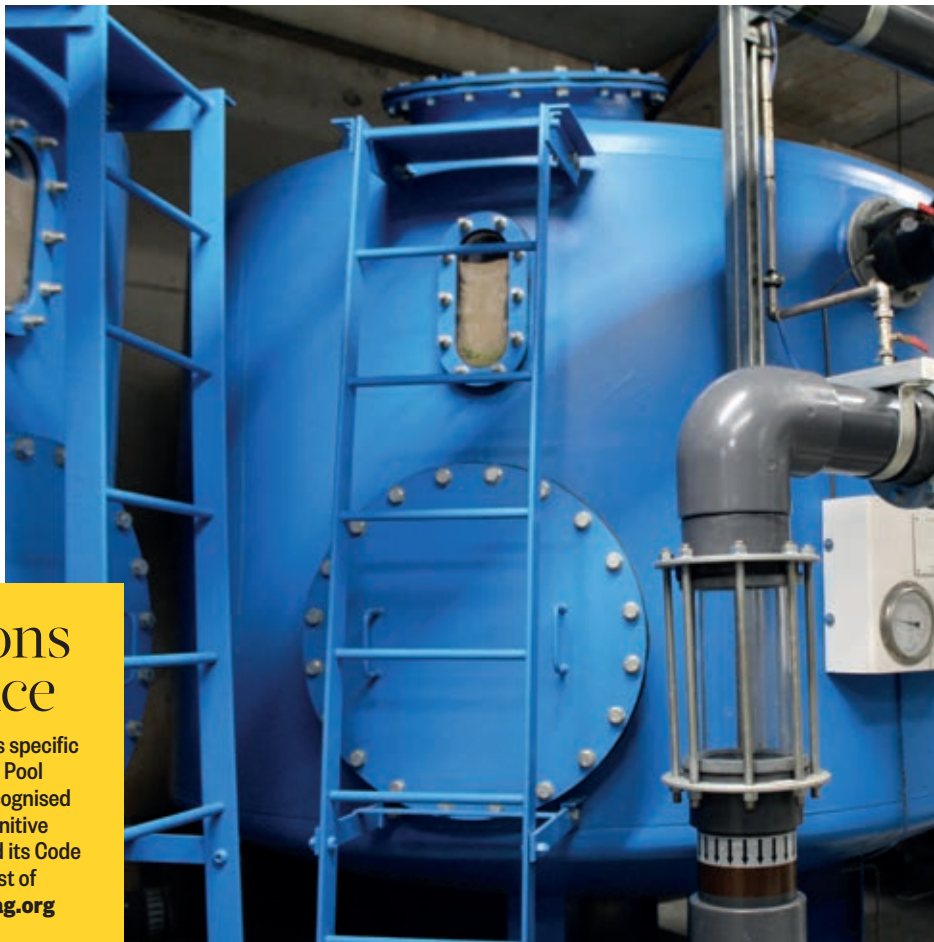
incidents of chlorine gas leaks in 2022

Source: Water Incident Research Hub

IoS and a number of other accredited providers, is recognised as the industry standard for safe operation of pools. But post-qualification experience and mentoring is vital for those in charge of a

pool plant, he adds. "You don't really learn to drive properly until after you've passed your driving test and are driving your own car. It's exactly the same with the course. Pool plant rooms are all different and you actually learn more once you're back at your own site and developing site-specific skills."

Andrew Long, facilities and safety manager at Hampshire-based Horizon Leisure Centres, agrees. "The operator course gives a great orientation into how plant rooms work but unless you're doing that hands-on work regularly it's



Qualifications and guidance

There are no health & safety laws specific to swimming pools. However, the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG) is recognised by Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as the definitive source of information and guidance. You can find its Code of Practice, information on qualifications and a list of approved training providers on its website, [pwtag.org](https://www.pwtag.org)

easy to overlook things. With health & safety training, you've got to inform, instruct and train employees, and you've also got to supervise them. In the absence of supervision the previous three things mean nothing."

Helping employees build on their training can be easier for small operators like Horizon, which runs two leisure centres in Hampshire, he says. "When you're in a large organisation there is a risk that training can end up being a bit generic and diluted. Because we're small we can really drill down into bespoke



Plant room safety checklist

Gill Twell of Right Directions shares her top tips for avoiding accidents:

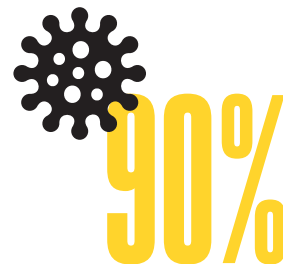
- Reduce chemical consumption by promoting showering before swimming, and keeping pool surrounds and equipment clean
- Try to stick to the same supplier. If you must use a different chemical, make sure you obtain safety data sheets and complete new COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessments. Ensure staff are trained accordingly and know if container colours have changed
- Always have a trained, experienced and competent staff member available to supervise deliveries
- Ensure plant and storage rooms are secure, have appropriate chemical warning signage, and can only be accessed by authorised and properly-trained people
- Make sure new or newly-trained staff and contractors have time to familiarise themselves with your site before being left in charge of plant or chemical procedures
- Have your plant serviced regularly by a competent contractor and ask for a copy of their Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) and insurance
- Ensure all staff are trained in what to do if there's a suspected chlorine gas emission or chemical spill and are able to act quickly. Procedures should be documented in your Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Make sure appropriate PPE is available both inside and at the entrance of the plant room and put in place a process to check the equipment and expiry dates

training for our centres. I'm split between two sites so I can spend time with the operators and main team and I'm always there if they have queries. It's built into their induction that if they're not sure about something they should step back and pick up the phone. We also have an internal auditing structure with a monthly audit and we aim to roll through the whole health and safety management system once a quarter."

Internal monitoring is just as important as external, emphasises Gill Twell of safety consultancy Right Directions. "Walk the walk with the people who are doing these jobs and actually watch someone change the barrel or do a backwash of the filtration system. And never get complacent.

"We sometimes go into plant rooms and ask to look at the PPE, and they produce it still in the cellophane wrappers, so you can tell it has not been used," Twell said. "You should be using it every time you transfer chemicals. I've also seen masks that are past their expiry date. It shows you that people don't understand the dangers of the chemicals they're handling and the consequences if things go wrong.

"It needs to be drilled into employees that if they put a barrel in the wrong room, there's the potential to kill most of the people in the building," she warned. "It's about making them really understand the importance of double-checking that label."



of pools use sodium hypochlorite or calcium hypochlorite to disinfect the water

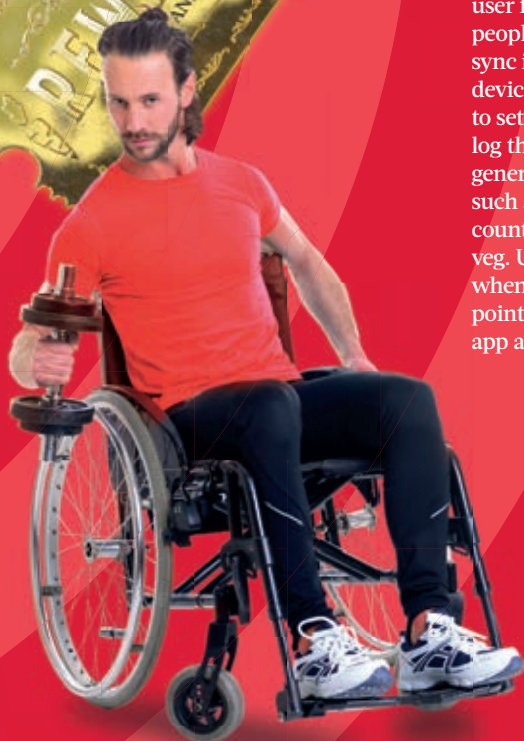
INCENTIVES

REWARDS APP

AN APP A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY

By
Roisin
Woolnough

*A pilot initiative in Wolverhampton
could benefit the nation if it is successful*



Gym discounts, supermarket vouchers and free cinema tickets – these are some of the rewards on offer to

adults in Wolverhampton who achieve exercise and healthy eating goals. The Better Health: Rewards app is a government-backed initiative that gets people to lead healthier lives by exercising and improving their diet.

A 20-week pilot scheme launched mid-February and within two weeks, over 15,000 people had signed up. John Denley, director of public health at Wolverhampton City Council, said he anticipated that number more than doubling before the month-long sign in period closed. “It has really captured people’s imaginations, so I think we will exceed our targets,” he says.

The app has been designed to be very user friendly and manageable. All people have to do is download the app, sync it to their phone or some other device, and use the free fitness tracker to set themselves incremental goals and log their progress. Each week, the app generates personalised health goals, such as a person increasing their step count by 5,000 or eating more fruit and veg. Users collect points each week when they achieve their goals and those points are exchanged for rewards. The app also includes budget-friendly tips that help people to develop healthier habits and the challenges have been designed so that they can be completed anywhere.

Making £3m available for the incentives, the government has got a variety of organisations on board. Gyms and leisure centres across Wolverhampton are involved in the initiative, including PureGym, WV Active, Places Leisure and Complexions.

Stephen Rowe, chief marketing officer at PureGym,



“Rather than seeking a single one-off change, the Wolverhampton initiative helps people to build healthy habits through small, regular changes to increase exercise and improve nutrition”

Stephen Rowe, chief marketing officer at PureGym

says the organisation was keen to support the initiative. He thinks the focus on gradual, incremental change will be key to successful outcomes. “A healthy lifestyle is something that is developed and sustained over time,” he says. “Rather than seeking a single one-off change, the Wolverhampton initiative helps people to build healthy habits through small, regular changes to increase exercise and improve nutrition. Making these habits part of day-to-day life, hopefully with friends, family and the community as a whole, will give this initiative the best chance of success.”

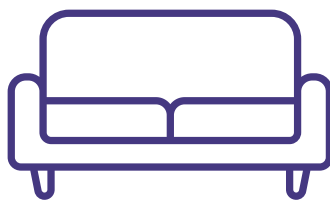
He’s not the only person to think that – Paul Yeomans, service lead at WV Active, the council’s leisure centre provider, also thinks that the emphasis on sustained activity is critical to achieving lasting behaviour change. “We have had lots of pilots in the past where funding stops and it all tails off, so sustained lifestyle change is what we are trying to achieve. People can do little things to get themselves more active ▶

INCENTIVES

REWARDS APP

and to improve their health and that's what we want. With this app, we are not setting people ridiculous challenges, but realistic targets that build people up."

Yeomans is delighted with the sign-up rate, but says it's not just about the numbers – he's just as interested in who has downloaded the app. "We've had lots of different people – from people in their 20s to people in their 70s. One woman said to me that she wouldn't have thought of doing more exercise if it wasn't for this scheme." It's those people that Yeomans would really like to see engage with the app and come to WV Active – people who have never been to a gym, don't go to exercise classes and



35% LESS ACTIVE BY 2030

The UK population is **roughly 20% less active than it was in the 1960s** and if the trend continues along the same trajectory, it will be **35% less active by 2030**

haven't been to a swimming pool since they were a child, unless it was to take their own children swimming.

He thinks a lot of people who are physically inactive find the prospect of

trying a gym session or an exercise class daunting. By encouraging people to step through the door and give something new a go, he hopes the app will break down barriers and demonstrate that it is easier to become physically active than people think.

Several national supermarkets are supporting the scheme (Sainsbury's, Aldi, Tesco, Morrisons and Asda), with users of the app being able to claim up to £40 in food vouchers. That has proved to be the most popular reward so far, with the cost of living crisis potentially being a factor, says Denley. Numerous other big name organisations have also signed up, including M&S, John Lewis, Primark, Currys, Amazon and Argos.

The pilot is being delivered by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), in partnership with Wolverhampton City Council, as part of a bigger drive to address the UK's growing obesity problem. "The pilot is an opportunity to explore how we can further harness technology to support people to improve their physical health, prevent illnesses before they develop and help to ease pressure on the NHS," says Steve Barclay, secretary of state for health and social care.

According to a January 2023 government research briefing paper, 26% of adults in England are obese, with a further 38% being overweight. Physical inactivity is a big part of the problem. Statistics from the OHID show that one in three men (34%) and one in two women (42%) are not sufficiently active for good health. Currently, physical inactivity is associated with one in six deaths in the UK, costing the UK an estimated £7.4bn annually, with a £0.9bn bill for the NHS. And the problem is getting worse – the UK population is roughly 20% less active than it was in the 1960s and if the trend continues along the same trajectory, it will be 35% less active by 2030.





“We’ve had lots of different people – from people in their 20s to people in their 70s. One woman said to me that she wouldn’t have thought of doing more exercise if it wasn’t for this scheme”

Paul Yeomans, service lead at WV Active

That’s why initiatives such as this are so important, says Rowe: “We all see the impact of poor health every day, on individuals, those they love, society as a whole, and importantly, our health services too. Regular exercise, even small amounts, can make a massive difference to our health, not just physically, but also

in the way we feel about ourselves and our mental wellbeing.”

Sir Keith Mills, health incentives adviser to the OHID and pioneer of highly successful reward programmes such as Air Miles and Nectar, is the person who came up with the Better Health: Rewards app idea. He thinks it’s important that the government collaborates with organisations at a local level to help people make healthier life choices. “Through the pilot we have exciting and innovative partners on board, which will help motivate people to want to earn incentives, but also should help them overcome barriers to making healthy decision in future,” says Sir Keith. “I’m looking forward to seeing how this scheme develops.”

Someone else who is looking forward to seeing how the scheme develops is Denley from Wolverhampton Council. “This is national policy delivered at a local level, and I’m really excited about it. We will analyse the outcomes by demographics, by deprivation, etc in

order to construct a very good study at a population level.”

The council plans to use the findings to establish key demographic information – who in the local population downloaded the app and completed challenges, for example. It will analyse what choices they made in terms of exercise and healthy eating and what rewards they chose – were certain segments of the population more likely to choose cinema or gym passes, for example? Just as importantly, it will analyse who didn’t engage with the app and who downloaded it but allowed it to fail by the wayside. “Who didn’t it work for?” says Denley. “What were the barriers? Was digital exclusion a barrier? Or are there cohorts of the population who used libraries to access the app?”

While there have been various initiatives that have used technology to get people more active and initiatives that have incentivised people to achieve behaviour change, Denley says this is the first to combine technology and incentivisation. “It’s good to try something different,” he says.

Benefits of regular exercise

Regular physical activity reduces your risk of:

- dementia by up to 30%
- hip fractures by up to 68%
- depression by up to 30%
- all cause mortality by 30%
- cardiovascular disease by up to 35%
- type 2 diabetes by up to 40%
- colon cancer by 30%
- breast cancer by 20%

Source: <https://bit.ly/3KbLgeH>



£3m has been made available for incentives for the Better Health: Rewards app

HEALTH

ACTIVITY PROMOTION

AN ACTIVE NATION.



***Rachel Masker
finds out about a
revolutionary idea
that is helping to
save health services
money and make
everyone a little bit
more lively***

Physical activity can radically improve the lives of people with disabilities and long-term health conditions, while saving millions for the taxpayer, research suggests.

A pilot study of 1,000 people living with disability and chronic ailments found that exercise boosted levels of wellbeing, confidence, skills and independence.

The research reinforces the message that a sedentary lifestyle is not an inevitable consequence of disability or chronic problems, and since the beneficial effects of physical activity are better than drugs in many cases, exercise should be more strongly embedded in the health and social care system.

The pioneering 'Prevention and Enablement Model' (PEM) pilot study conducted in Essex estimates that for every £1 invested in encouraging and supporting people to be more active, they've received £58 back in "social value".

It comes at a time when overstretched NHS, public health and social care systems are struggling to keep pace with rising demand for services. In 2022-2023, the department of Health and Social Care is expected to spend £180bn. Most of the spending (£153bn) is on health, according to the King's Fund.

"We spend a ridiculous amount of money on the NHS and a lot of it is of limited benefit," said Dr William Bird, GP and chairman of Active Essex, a

By
Rachel
Masker



A HAPPY NATION

partner in the pilot study. The NHS does some things extremely well, such as acute care, cancer treatment, hip and knee replacements, he added.

“But it is less effective when dealing with chronic pain and long-term conditions. A lot of medicines and screenings are of marginal benefit yet use a lot of resources. Whereas we know that working together and keeping people active is going to make a massive difference and is very low-cost.”

Dr Bird said the cost benefit analysis was aimed at Whitehall officials who “do the sums and work out the best investments”.

Currently, according to an Active Lives Survey, only six out of 10 adults in England achieve 150 minutes of

£22,230

The difference in life satisfaction between individuals about to start PEM and those one month into the programme is estimated to equate to £22,230 per year

moderate exercise per week, the recommended minimum. And rates of physical inactivity are much higher for people with disabilities and chronic ailments than the wider population.

The two-year PEM study aimed to close the gap by developing more

opportunities for disabled people and those with long-term health conditions to engage in physical activities.

Bird explains: “If you have a long-term condition and are feeling depressed, your body is telling you not to be active because of all the pain and lack of confidence, so we must be gentle with people.

“Rather than scare them, you start very slowly and build up, saying if it’s painful, stop. There is never a good reason not to be active – there is always a way around it.”

The part-time GP and CEO of Intelligent Health has been on a mission to get people moving since the mid-1990s when he set up health walks and a gym from his practice in Reading. ▶

HEALTH

ACTIVITY PROMOTION

“When you are looking at getting people engaged in physical activity you need to make them feel safe, valued and that they belong. That is where leisure centres can help by having classes of similar people working together.”

The PEM pilot study involved a range of projects, including:

- Inclusive but “no labels” multi-activity sessions for adults with physical and learning disabilities and chronic impairments in three leisure centres. Adjustments were made to equipment, sensory stimulus and the degree of challenge for individuals and groups (see case study).
- A follow-up falls prevention programme run jointly with NHS physiotherapists in leisure centres. Some participants transitioned to swimming sessions, Zumba Gold and seated yoga classes.
- ‘Love to Move’ sessions with coaches trained by the British Gymnastics Association. The age-and-dementia-friendly seated gymnastics programme is aimed at getting older people moving and functioning better to boost their

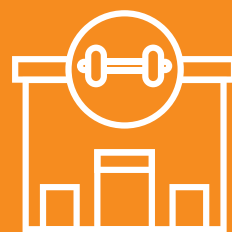
We spend a ridiculous amount of money on the NHS and a lot of it is of limited benefit

Dr William Bird, GP and chairman of Active Essex

independence. For example, improving fine motor skills required for using cutlery and dressing.

- Enabling and supporting occupational therapists in Essex County Council adult social care department and care home staff to embed physical activity into their practice and everyday work. For instance, when clients get pressure sores, to ask why they are seated for long periods and aim to get them more mobile rather than simply prescribing pressure relieving cushions.

Bird said the pilot study was “similar but different” to the current NHS campaign for ‘social prescribing’ that urges GPs to recommend activities such



Multi-activity sessions in leisure centres

From cycling and swimming to dance and gymnastics, three Essex leisure centres are hosting inclusive “no labels” multi-activity sessions twice a week.

During the pilot study at Basildon Sporting Village, Clacton Leisure Centre and Colchester Leisure World, hundreds of people with disabilities and chronic conditions took part in these activities for the first time.

Now the two-year initiative has finished PEM sessions are continuing at these venues, so disabled people aren’t excluded once more, thanks to one extra year’s funding from Essex County Council.

“Learning to ride a bike is one of those milestones that most of us experience but not everyone gets the opportunity as a child,” said occupational therapist (OT) Megan Potts, who helps run the PEM sessions. Adapted bikes like side-by-side tandems and tricycles are very expensive, so being able to access them in a leisure centre gives more people the opportunity to learn, she said.

Among those who had never ridden a bike before was a 64-year-old woman with a learning disability who lives in a care home. “She was over the moon,” said Megan. Success stories include two men in their 20s, one with an acquired head injury and the other with autism, who went on to buy their own bikes and cycle to their local leisure centres.

Each PEM session is run by a specialist sports coach who works with the OT. “The skill is being able to adapt and guide the activities to suit everyone’s abilities,” said Potts. “For example, in the dance sessions, the coach will stand at the front and demonstrate the moves, while the OT goes around and helps to adapt the dance if done seated in a wheelchair or for an amputee.”



as joining a walking group or volunteering opportunities to fight chronic ailments instead of pills.

He said: “This is similar in that we are not using medicine or NHS services but different in that it is targeted at the individual to get their confidence back and hopefully join mainstream activities.”

Driven by a strategic partnership between Essex County Council, Active Essex and Sport for Confidence, the aim was to reach disabled people and those with chronic ailments who often miss out on being active.

Increasing physical activity levels of people with disabilities and chronic ailments doesn't require structural change, said Dr Bird, just more training for health and social care professionals on the benefits of exercise, “a change of mindset” and joint funding.

The PEM study is pioneering because it involves occupational therapists using physical activity as a “tool for health”. Lyndsey Barrett, founder of Sport for Confidence, is believed to be the first OT employed by a leisure centre in the UK. Sport for Confidence played a key role in the design and delivery of physical activity sessions and provided education and guidance to health and social care professionals involved in the pilot study.

Barrett said: “Through the work Sport for Confidence has delivered over the past seven years, we already know the far-reaching impact physical activity has on the lives of individuals. What the PEM initiative has now evidenced is the true extent of that potential, not just for individuals but for the whole of society.

“An active, engaged population is a healthier, happier population which is less reliant on health care interventions.”

The report said the pilot study had supported many occupational therapists and care home staff to embed physical activity into their daily practice and enhanced their job satisfaction. Barriers



An active, engaged population is a healthier, happier population which is less reliant on or likely to call upon health care interventions

Lyndsey Barrett, founder of Sport for Confidence

to regular exercise included time, knowledge, skills, resources and support.

Questionnaires and personal logs were used to measure activity levels of participants about to start PEM sessions and those one month into the programme. Data was compared to the Active Lives Survey, a nationally representative survey. The report says “this comparison suggests that PEM may have the effect of lifting a person living with a disability or long-term health condition to similar activity levels and wellbeing as typically reported by non-disabled people.

“This suggests that PEM could play a crucial role in reducing health inequalities between individuals with and without long-term health conditions.”

Researchers found that those who participated for longer had higher physical activity levels and more favourable attitudes to exercise and their

own health and wellbeing.

The study also found a slight decrease in self-reported service use, including GP visits and 999 calls. A “tentative estimate” is that this could save £365 per participant a year in health and social care costs, according to a report from the University of Essex.

Researchers used HM Treasury's ‘Green Book’ to evaluate the pilot study. Called the WELLBY, it attempts to give a monetary value of wellbeing by asking life satisfaction questions. The difference in life satisfaction between individuals about to start PEM and those one month into the programme is estimated to equate to £22,230 per year.

When considered against direct running costs, PEM could deliver an estimated social value of £58 for each £1 invested. The value of reduced service use equated to 95p compared to the value of increased wellbeing of £57. Taking into account the reduced service use and higher life satisfaction, this suggests that the total annual social value could exceed £20m in Essex alone. Researchers said this was mainly due to the extremely high association between participation in the programme and improved personal wellbeing.

Barrett said: “It is our hope this pilot will be rolled out across Essex and other local authorities will learn from and mirror PEM, driving transformational change at a national level.”

Barriers

Reasons that people give why they don't do regular exercise include:

- Time
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Resources
- Support

WORKPLACE

FOCUS

WHY RECOVERING LIKE AN ATHLETE WILL FUTURE-PROOF YOUR CAREER

*Rest, recuperation and recovery
is the name of the game when
fighting off stress and exhaustion*

THE NECESSITY NOT LUXURY OF RECOVERY

If you're looking for one of the most effective ways to sharpen up your performance and stave off burnout, give some thought to how you rest, recover and recharge regularly. Neuroscientists call the technique, used by professional athletes and special forces operatives alike, oscillation.

This involves alternating bouts of productive activity or periods of high stress, with short bursts of pre-planned decompression time. Whether that be a 60-second micro break between meetings or a couple of 20-minute daily active recovery breaks.

The goal to avoiding burnout is to get the balance right by oscillating between the two fundamental elements of our

nervous system that enable us to do two things. Push ourselves to the edge of our abilities and then recover in a world-class way.

REVVING UP OR CHILLING OUT?

Our autonomic nervous system is split into two parts, the sympathetic and parasympathetic.

Our sympathetic nervous system is always on, expending energy, ensuring we're ready to respond to the demands of our day, whether by sharpening our focus and propelling us into super productive flow states or by hurling us into a state of 'fight or flight' when our stress levels hit boiling point.

The point is, it's automatic. However, switching over to the restorative,

parasympathetic system must be a proactive choice. Recovery paradoxically takes conscious effort.

GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO RECOVER IN A WORLD CLASS WAY

Data suggests that proactively injecting a little recovery time into our day will keep our internal charge up. This idea of scheduling it in before we feel we need it has a lot of





To re-energise, movement tends to beat stationary and outside beats inside. Frankly any form of light exercise will do the trick

traction in the high-performance literature of late.

If we go to the world of endurance sports for a moment, it's long been understood that if you wait until you're thirsty before taking a drink you've blown it. Dehydration has already set in. It's now a case of too little too late. How about we take the same approach to managing our mental fitness as we do our physical fitness by injecting a

couple of short 'active recovery' breaks into our daily schedule.

To re-energise, movement tends to beat stationary and outside beats inside. Frankly any form of light exercise will do the trick. A walk-in nature is a favourite for many. If that's not on our doorstep, a couple of laps around the block.

To decompress, fully detached beats semi-detached. Typically, phones off! Put on some chilled tunes perhaps. Meditation for some, breathwork for others. Or armed with your drink of choice, just sit and watch the world go by.

If you're sitting for hours on end and are really strapped for time, try the 20-20-20 method. Every 20 minutes stop and gaze at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Anything to break the mental pattern and re-set. Giving yourself permission to do nothing, in this instance, does in fact do something!

COLD WATER SWIMMING

Recently, there has been a significant growth in the number of people engaging in cold-water swimming. With increased participation has come renewed and enthusiastic claims for the physiological and psychological health benefits.

Whichever is your hack of choice, it is worth remembering that it may not be the stresses in life that are taking us down, but more the lack of planned and proactive daily recovery strategies. Run your own experiment and judge by your own results.

Jim Steele is a business speaker, leadership facilitator, executive coach and author of new book *Unashamedly Superhuman: Harness Your Inner Power and Achieve Your Greatest Professional and Personal Goals*, published by Capstone.

TECH TOOLKIT

PRODUCT ROUND-UP

HIGH-POWER WORKOUTS

Smart solutions for top training

BY SUE WEEKES



GOOD VIBRATIONS

Power Plate is bringing the benefits of vibration to cycling workouts with its REV exercise bike. It features the patent-pending VibeShift technology, which is designed to provide consistent, safe, precise and predictable vibration. It is inspired by elite cyclists of the famous Paris-Roubaix race, regarded as one of the most challenging terrains in cycling. It is built on the concept that when vibration is applied to riding it has been proven to drive significantly more muscle activation, increased oxygen uptake and greater calorie burn than traditional exercise. A preliminary study carried out at the Centre for Sports Science & Human Performance, University of Greenwich, found that level one resistance with vibration on the REV is equivalent level five resistance without vibration. REV features a commercial-grade design to stand up to the usage demands of health clubs and elite sports training.

powerplate.co.uk | Price: £4,995



Boutique stair climber joins the family

With a footprint of 54x29in (137x73.5cm) and a height clearance of 8ft (2.4m), the latest Stairmaster has been designed to fit into boutique and multi-housing training facilities and hospitality. One of the Core Health and Fitness brands, the 4G delivers the same level of workout and calorie burn as the rest of the Stairmaster family through a low-impact stair climb. It comes with a number of different OpenHub console options, features a safety-stop sensor, a redesigned handrail system that supports multiple climbing positions and includes integrated speed and stop controls. The OpenHub embedded console connects with the Apple Watch and Samsung Galaxy Watch for real-time data sharing between the equipment and watch.

corehandf.com | Price: To come

HYDRATION DATA ON TAP

Health and wellness data company Nix has made its biosensors available for Garmin smart watches and cycling computers in the Garmin Connect IQ store. The Nix Hydration Biosensor analyses sweat and provides endurance athletes with personalised hydration data and is compatible with Garmin watches such as Forerunner and fenix, as well as Edge cycling computers. Users can get hydration insights on their device, making it easier to know when to replenish their fluid and electrolyte losses. Nix's aim is to empower users to access, understand and act on their personal biology in real-time.

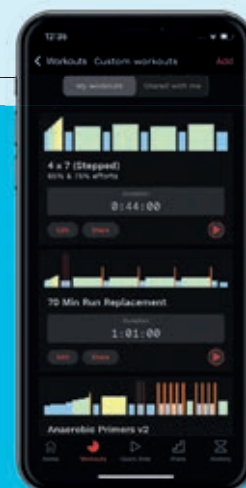
nixbiosensors.com



MAJOR NAMES TEAM FOR LIVE AND DIGITAL EXPERIENCES

Adidas and its membership programme adiClub are joining forces with Les Mills to deliver a programme of live and digital fitness experiences. The partnership will offer immersive and personalised solutions to more than 300 million adiClub members, as well as a range of exclusive benefits. There will also be a new series of Gen-Z focused programmes. Under the partnership, the latest high-performance Adidas training apparel, footwear and accessories will be worn by the Les Mills global athlete network. Available for both instructors and the community, Adidas has crafted collections and products to support key activity pillars, including HIIT, strength and yoga.

lesmills.com/uk/



Premium workout Hub gets personal

Indoor cycling specialist Wattbike is launching Hub+, a premium subscription version of its app, which allows personal trainers and coaches to configure their own workouts by selecting from a range of segment blocks in-app. The Workout Builder feature is designed as a drag-and-drop option for speed and ease when creating programmes. It also allows users to share custom workouts with other Hub+ users, including by channels such as WhatsApp,

SMS and Airdrop. An export feature also allows them to complete their custom workouts via other third-party apps or a bike computer outdoors. Hub+ subscriptions can be packaged for operators, independent gyms, studios, coaches and personal trainers to provide members with bespoke club workouts, challenges, extra training content and individualised member sessions.

wattbike.com

Price: £7.99 per month or £79.99 annually

LAST WORD

SPORT AMBASSADOR

Opinder Kaushal of *Anytime Fitness Maidenhead*, is keen to share his own transformation journey to show that anyone can improve their quality of life



CHANGE MENTALLY TO CHANGE PHYSICALLY

I was working for the family jewellery business, had money in the bank and a nice house, but I knew something was missing. This isn't to discredit the jewellery world, as it can bring a lot of happiness. I wanted to do something where I made a real difference to people's lives. But first it had to start with me, as I was in bad shape – both physically and mentally.

I'd got to the stage where I couldn't even tie my own shoelaces and lacked the energy and breath to play football with my kids. I was exhausted all the time. The final straw was when I bought a new suit a month before a friend's wedding and then couldn't fit into it on the day. I knew I had to make a change. That was five years ago.

I looked at myself in the mirror and, for whatever reason, I took a picture of myself and said: "That's the starting point." Initially, I started walking and jogging, and then visiting my local gym where a trainer must have seen



"I'd got to the stage where I couldn't even tie my own shoelaces and lacked the energy and breath to play football with my kids"

something in me. With their help I lost about 10kg in three months.

FOLLOW THE PLAN

Together we just kept on setting small goals and achieving them. Then after six months I thought maybe I could take it to the next level and start developing a good physique. So I started following a dedicated nutrition plan and proper exercise regime. I could feel myself gradually changing physically and mentally. I was gaining confidence all the time and felt I could conquer anything.

At this point it occurred to me there were a lot of people in the same position that I was in when I started out, so I began helping people at the gym with advice, and I think the idea of running my own place stems from that. I'd also moved to a gym closer to where I lived, which happened to be Anytime Fitness, and I thought the franchise model was something I could do. I obviously considered the whole financial side of things really carefully, but to be honest, I knew I just wanted to make a positive difference to my community.

Then Covid [the global pandemic] arrived and threw a spanner in the works. But, in a way, it gave us more time to plan, scout for a location – Maidenhead – and generally get things right. When I say "we", my wife, who is a qualified Exercise to Music Instructor (Level 4), has been brilliant

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- Suitable for both new and existing installations

LAST WORD

SPORT AMBASSADOR

“It’s so rewarding to know that I can now make a real difference to other peoples’ lives and health as well”

in helping and supporting me in every aspect of my transformation journey and getting the business up and running.

A lot of people thought we were crazy, as we didn’t know how long Covid would last, but we predicted that when the fitness sector started up again, it was going to happen quickly. Within two weeks of signing the territory contract with Anytime Fitness we found the perfect premises in Maidenhead and opened in April 2022.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

It’s very much a gym where anybody can come along and not feel intimidated. We make sure everybody coming in never feels lost with no direction. We will go to great lengths to understand what they want to achieve and put a plan in place for them, considering any conditions they have, such as diabetes or even a heart condition. We care about our members and I think they know that.

I also think the public want to know that the people running gyms have been in their position at some point and understand the challenges they might be facing. They can look at me and see the journey I’ve been on and what I’ve achieved. I’m not normally great at blowing my own trumpet, but when I look at where I was five years ago – an overweight 40-year-old man who couldn’t tie his own shoelaces – to where I am now – fit, healthy and running my own club with 1,500



members – I sometimes want to pinch myself. It’s so rewarding to know that I can now make a real difference to other peoples’ lives and health as well.

As for the future, I’m hoping we can grow to become a multiple franchisee. We’ve already signed another territory agreement with Anytime Fitness and are looking at potential sites and locations. We’ve also got plans for

things like wellbeing retreats and mental health programmes. We’re so aware that when people come to us wanting to make a physical change, they need to make a mental change first. It’s something I know only too well myself.

*Opinder Kaushal spoke with
Dean Gurden.*

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