



Case study

**CIMSPA –  
Wellbeing Committee**

## Project at a glance

- The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) launched a Wellbeing Committee in 2019 or Wellbots as it's now affectionally know.
- It's a forum for a panel of team members to support mental health in the organisation.
- Support offered includes a wellbeing newsletter, self-care tips, mental health champions, access to an Employee Assistance Programme support and a calendar of engagement events to get the team active.
- The Wellbeing Committee have also completed training in Active IQ Level 2 Award in Mental Health Awareness. This has helped to ensure they understand what can be helpful for staff, how to speak about mental health and create a 'safe space' for conversation.

## The challenge

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) prides itself on being a 'people-first' organisation. As part of this approach, they needed to find a practical way to raise mental health awareness and signpost to support.

“Our whole organisation is based around the idea of ‘people first’,” says Ben Hulson, CIMSPA’s regional partnerships manager and wellbeing lead.

**“We believe if you support people, and make them feel valued, they’re going to produce their best work. Also, we wanted more ways of coming together and supporting each other.”**

## CIMSPA's response

CIMSPA launched their Wellbeing Committee in 2019. It features representatives from various departments at all levels. This means their work has leaders' support, and also helps them capture a snapshot of the current mood across the organisation.

Through this, the committee can address any problems, signpost to Mind or offer support through CIMSPA's Employee Assistance Programme. It also helps to reenergise and invigorate team members especially in the world of remote working where it can get lonely.

"We have regular 'pulse checks' where we ask people how they're feeling," says Ben.

"For example, during winter lots of people were commenting on the bad weather: they felt they were starting work in the dark and finishing in the dark. So, as a result of that we gave people the opportunity to book an hour and a half from the middle of the day with no meetings. That way they could get out and have a walk or exercise in the light."

Ben says that the arrival of Covid-19 meant the committee really came into its own. CIMSPA had always offered remote working. But now the challenge was to check-in with people remotely and maintain a community feel. They achieved this through a dedicated Slack channel where people could share self-care tips, a wellbeing newsletter and fun events.

**“Simple things can make a difference”**

Ben



## The results

“When the Tokyo Olympics was cancelled, we decided to have our own event,” says Ben.

“So, we worked out the distance between our head office in Loughborough and Tokyo and pledged to cover the miles as a team by walking, running, cycling – basically anything but driving. We did a survey afterwards and people said it had a positive impact on their mental health because they were working together for a collective goal.”

One of the challenges CIMSPA faced was finding activities that worked for everyone. Simply asking team members for ideas is a smart way to overcome this – it’s how CIMSPA’s book club came about. However, Ben acknowledges that some people won’t want to be involved, and that’s OK.

So how would Ben recommend other organisations start working towards better mental health? He says that getting the ball rolling is the most important part.

“It’s about starting the conversation with staff,” he says.

**“Walk towards it. It can be as simple as saying: ‘we’ve seen this initiative in another organisation – and it’s achieved this. What do you think?’”** Ben



## Learning

- **Find your champions**

“You’ll have people in the organisation that show positive behaviours and values around mental health,” says Ben. “So, champion those people and feed into what they’re already doing.”

- **Harness lived experiences of mental health**

Through the wellbeing newsletter, Ben has shared his experiences of mental health challenges. If team members feel comfortable (and safe) doing so, this can send a powerful message that your organisation is ready to talk about wellbeing.

- **Use pulse checks**

Asking how people are feeling through software like Survey Monkey can provide an instant snapshot of wellbeing at your organisation. Keep things simple with a sliding scale of responses and offer signposting (to organisations like Mind) to provide support where needed.



## Relevant support available

Thriving at Work: A guide to implementing workplace standards in the sport and physical activity sector

Mental Health Awareness for Sport & Physical Activity+ eLearning

Mind's Workplace Wellbeing services

Mind's Mental Health Champions Toolkit

