

Case study

**ukactive - mental health
at work**



Project at a glance

- An office move inspired ukactive to reflect on how they supported mental health throughout the organisation.
- They responded by forming a Mental Health Steering Group as part of a broader wellbeing action plan to win senior buy-in and drive forward new initiatives, including...



Introducing
Mental Health
First Aiders



Flexible
working

The challenge

How can organisations support employee’s mental health during a UK-wide lockdown? A pre-Covid-19 office move gave ukactive the impetus to reflect on wellbeing alongside their offer to staff. Then the unique challenges of lockdown accelerated the need to put their plan into action.

ukactive’s response

“Starting our Mental Health Steering Group seemed a logical step before lockdown happened,” says Charlotte Cuenot, Internal Workplace Wellbeing Lead at ukactive.

“Personally I’m from a generation that’s used to talking about mental health, and it’s important to have that openness in the workplace. We’d just got our Mental Health Steering Group [a group across the organisation driving forward new initiatives] off the ground before lockdown. So when quarantine started it became natural to ask ourselves what steps we could take to support everyone’s mental health while working at home.”

ukactive's response (cont)

Charlotte says lockdown inspired the team to be more creative. This included virtual social sessions to bring people together like cooking lessons hosted by staff and talks from a nutritionist. A staff book club is next on the agenda.

“What’s interesting is that these activities tend to engage people who hadn’t got involved before – because you’re trying something new,” adds Anna Davison, Head of Workplace Wellbeing.

Senior buy-in for the Steering Group also encouraged staff to think about wellbeing. For example, one senior staff member took advantage of flexible working to train for a marathon early on Friday morning. Their diary shared this choice with the rest of the organisation, role-modelling how other staff could strike a positive work/life balance.

Another successful initiative was a regular ‘wellbeing minute’ to share resources around mental health. “People really engage with it,” says Charlotte.

“It’s basically a daily fix of wellbeing to remind people what’s important. People share books, articles and management training tips. They understand it’s valuable and like the fact that they can contribute.”

The results

Mind helped ukactive focus their thinking with a Mental Health in the Workplace course early on in the process. Follow-up calls ensured that the team could take action on what they’d learned and discuss any challenges along the way. This ensured the various initiatives best supported employees’ mental health and were fully embedded in the organisation’s culture.

Learning

- **Try new wellbeing activities**

Get creative with activities to ensure it isn't the same faces appearing at every event. Ask employees what they'd like to do to expand your repertoire of ideas.

- **Focus on small wins**

Culture change can take time. But by celebrating the small wins that change behaviour, you can work towards your end goal.

- **Include senior people**

“Having the three wellbeing committees helped focus the conversation,” says Charlotte. “It means the senior team can directly see the benefit of initiatives like Mental Health First Aid Training. It also ‘gives staff permission’ to take advantage of initiatives such as flexible working.”

- **Reflect your organisation's values**

“As an organisation we're about encouraging people to get active,” says Anna. “And that gave us the spur to make sure we're offering things we promote to other workplaces, such as showers so people can get active on their commute or lunch break, or flexible working to give people the opportunity to focus on their wellbeing in the way that works best for them.”



Relevant support available

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

Mental Health Awareness for Sport & Physical Activity+ eLearning

Mind's Workplace Wellbeing services

Mental Health at Work gateway

