



CIMSPA Standards
Advocacy
Professionalism

Conference Report 2019

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Conference Welcome

Marc Woods, CIMSPA Chair

Introduction

Marc Woods opened the CIMSPA 2019 conference with a reflective tone, looking back at the last 18 months of his chairship of the organisation and the progress CIMSPA has made. He also spoke of his pride in representing the sector and previewed CIMSPA's future vision.

The last 18 months in review "Last year I spoke about my journey to becoming chair of CIMSPA", he said.

"This year I want to talk about the last 18 months and how much we have achieved. I see a group of people who are exceptionally proud of what they do, who want to have high standards and want to improve standards, and who want to offer great customer service with great people. And they want CIMSPA to be the advocate and the guardian of the sector.

"To look at where we are today, I think it is important to look at where we have come from.

"Our membership has grown to around 10,500. That is 10,500 members who believe in our vision. Our education offering has exploded. We now have 30 professional standards, 340 sector wide qualifications and 638 CPD units. We are beginning to gain a real presence in higher education with some incredible partners joining us over the last year and our quality assurance programme is heading in the right direction.

"The massive change in the last 18 months is that we have moved from 'Can they do it?' to 'They are doing it!'".

Our new brand

Marc introduced the new CIMSPA branding to the audience.

"Being part of a chartered institute should mean something to all of us. We are the people guarding and taking care of the sector. We have a responsibility to maintain the high levels of quality we are putting into place for everyone involved in the sector.

"Our new logo represents our position of responsibility in the sector. We are here to protect the sector as represented by the shield and if you look closely you will see an owl with a protective wing, watching over the industry. The roll out of the new branding will be happening soon and we are very excited to see how it is received."

In conclusion

"The last 18 months have not been easy. It has felt like we are building the plane while flying it. It takes a special group of people to do that. I can't articulate how tough it has been and how hard the team has worked. To deliver what they have done to get us to the here and now the work they have done going in to the future is phenomenal.

"It's great to talk about what we have done so far, but what's super-exciting is to talk about what's on the horizon."



Conference Opening – Five years forward

Tara Dillon, CIMSPA CEO

Introduction

Tara Dillon welcomed delegates to the conference noting that in her 32 years in the sector, “this is the best coming together of all types of sport and physical activity professionals I have ever seen”.

“It has been an incredible journey to date. Our figures are great as Marc has just discussed. We are growing exponentially, thanks in large to our team, our board and most importantly the support we are receiving from the entire sector.”

Five years forward

“Back in 2014, we went out on tour to get an idea of what the sport and physical activity sector was about. We asked, ‘what is this sector? Where are we going? Where do we want to be?’ We listened to the workforce and the key things that they wanted were a sector led by one voice, to have standards set by those in the sector and qualifications awarded by a organisation that understands the sector’s needs.”

“That was then, and here today, I believe we have achieved so much. CIMSPA has landed!

“We are stronger together, and looking at everyone here is proof of that. Together we have made the idea of becoming a respected and recognised profession a reality. For so long we were guilty of just saying “this is what we could do with or what we need to do is...”

This is a new era, we have matured and improved together and now we share an agenda for the future.”

Looking at the CIMSPA strategy and its nine strategic outcomes, Tara said it was incredible where CIMSPA was heading. She referred to successes achieved to date, including 70 per cent of training providers signed up to CIMSPA. She said it was great that there are a handful of sports working with the organisation, but she wanted all 46 funded sports working with CIMSPA and was making great inroads with Sport England to achieve just that. CIMSPA has over 20 higher education institutions working towards CIMSPA degree programme endorsement and she congratulated Cardiff Met for becoming the first HE to achieve this standard.

“We have 130 operators (in partnership), but we need all operators to be part of this movement because we are so much stronger together.”

Tara went on to say that government and allied professions are now taking the sector seriously, which was important given that the sector’s new market was health. GPs, physios, occupational therapists etc hold 80 per cent of the population that the sector currently doesn’t service, yet knows it can. She said the new professional standards around health and long term conditions will give the sector an “army of people” to which GPs will refer.



Her conclusion was that all they (the health sector) wanted was a chartered institute to deal with, because it “looks like them and how they behave”, and that was the key in the door.

With regards to individual members, Tara said 10,500 was a great achievement, but that the target was 500,000 – the number of people who work in the sector. In addition, there are a wide range of organisations and stakeholders who want to and should be a part of CIMSPA.

“Now is the time to widen and deepen our reach and profile. We cannot stop. These figures are great, but they need to be off the chart.

“Our aim now is to continue to lead and engage at the highest level but to do this we need the support of the entire sector. Everybody has their part to play. From new startups to large operators. Everybody needs to get on board. If we all pull in the same direction, have the same aims, we can reach our shared goals.

Tara added that she understands how difficult times can be: “I know how tough being an operator can be, I have been there myself. Competition is huge but our position means that we are being taken seriously. Three years ago, I was begging to get my calls taken by some government departments – now they are calling me.”

Taking CIMSPA to the next level will cost money, part of which must be funded by the sector, and Sport England is quadrupling its investment in CIMSPA over the next few years.

“That’s phenomenal. That’s confidence and a tick in the box, not for CIMSPA but for the sector and CIMSPA together as a collective.”

Ending her session, Tara repeated her pledge to the sector, saying: “I will not stop, we will not stop until the public and the allied professions understand just how good you are.”



Keynote – Providing a return on workforce

Jeremy Campbell, Jeremy Campbell Coaching

Introduction

Drawing on his commercial experience and over 20 years in human resources, Jeremy delivered an inspiring presentation on how to make the most of your workforce through leadership and strategy and engagement with both staff and customers.

“If you listen to your customers and your colleagues, they will tell you how to run your business and...make it profitable.”

Leadership and strategy

After introducing himself to the delegates in attendance, Jeremy explained why he was appearing at the CIMSPA Conference.

“I’m literally just a bloke who worked really hard. I left school at 15 and I’m dyslexic. Being dyslexic meant at school I was considered very bright, to the point where I was put at a desk in the back of the class. I left school with no qualifications but with a huge thirst for learning. After working for 38 years, I decided that my purpose in life is to help people be the best version of themselves they can be. And so I set up Jeremy Campbell Coaching.”

How do you make business impact from building the right culture?

“In my previous company we got the link right between really high engagement, a brilliant culture and high Net Promoter Scores – the highest in our industry – which lead to customer retention, revenue and profitability. It all started off with looking after our people and building a following.”

“If you listen to your customers and your colleagues they will tell you how to run your business”, was a mantra of previous CEOs Jeremy worked for and is something he fully advocates.

“Something our directors did when business was not going well was visit our customers to get their input and in particular be sure to visit customers who were not particularly happy with us. From this process they would find out huge amounts about our business. We called these discussions ‘moments of truth’ and they made a huge difference to the relationship between the company and the customer.”

Jeremy went on to explain his thinking on strategy and leadership, summarising it as

Strategy is quite simple to explain:

- Where are you now?
- Where do you want to be?
- How will you get there?



“Most people focus on the second one, and the actions they need to get there, but these are the tactics of the strategy. I believe leadership is all about clearly describing the end goal so you can build a following among your colleagues as well as your customers.

“If you can’t articulate where you are trying to go, it’s going to be very difficult to get your people to follow you.

“Leadership is building a following, both internally and externally of your business. Leadership is not easy. It is fraught with setbacks and failures but having a clear focus on where you want to be helps negotiate these setbacks. Another thing about leadership people don’t consider, is that when you put yourself in that position, your followers are watching you and judging you all the time.”

Engaging the workforce

Jeremy took the audience through his perspective on delivering team engagement: “If people are your greatest asset, what are you doing to nurture, support, train and develop them?”

“In 2012, my organisation at the time, was going through a really tough time. I had to make a lot of my colleagues redundant. This process, though it was unavoidable, eroded the trust between the company and our remaining staff, especially with senior management.

“In response, the company set up communication days where senior managers dedicated one day every month to visit each office, to talk to people about what the business was doing, and share both the strategy and key financial data. Forums were set up in the afternoons for people to give their feedback.

“For six months it was really, really tough. We got a lot of flak from people, who just didn’t trust us at that point. But, over time, the more we communicated, the more we rebuilt trust and created a more trusting culture.

“Senior management would also go through every comment on employee surveys and look for hotspots, which they would discuss with employees on communication days.”

“Hiring for character”

When it comes to recruitment, Jeremy is passionate about hiring for character, saying he is more interested in the raw material of a person than skills.

“Skills are important but you can teach skills. What do I mean by character? When it’s really bad, who have you got next to you, who is going to be in trenches with you when a customer is screaming at you or you are putting in a tender at midnight?”

The 12-week plan

The twelve week plan was an idea Jeremy introduced to his sales team which saw an incredible 400% productivity increase year-on-year.

“One of the biggest challenges with behavioural change is getting people to take action. And the only way you get behavioural change is by taking regular action.



“The company broke down the end goals for the individual sales guys over 12 weeks into bite-sized chunks and sent out a weekly survey to get some engagement, asking how they were doing, what they could do to help, what were the best things that had happened to them that week etc.

“It didn’t work with everyone, because some people don’t want to change, but from a management and HR point of view, we’d never had better people data. We got 45 people to do a lot of things on a daily basis, which ended up with massive results. It was all about discipline.”

As well as creating a movement within the organisation, the company created a strong following among customers and its sector. And thanks to the ‘moments of truth programme’, customers who had once been very unhappy with the organisation were willing to act as advocates for it.

Jeremy also recommended the use of Net Promoter Scores. He described it as a brutal test, but well worth it. He said the company became obsessed with the number of people taking part: “You’ve got to get more and more people filling in the form or the numbers don’t mean anything.”

Keynote conclusions

- Strategy is simple to set, harder to deliver.
- Do you have a ‘first follower’ and a movement or are you a ‘lone nut’?
- Can you clearly describe your end goal and can your colleagues?
- People really are your greatest asset.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate.
- Get senior managers to take responsibility for engagement surveys.
- Hire for character.
- Make a 12 week plan.
- Create a customer-partner advocate following.
- Become obsessed with NPS.



Supporting the NHS, upskilling leisure staff to deliver a comprehensive health check service

Simon Alford, Senior Lecturer in Preventative Medicine, University of Central Lancashire

Introduction

Simon presented a brief history of public health through the ages from The Public Health Acts of 1848 / 1875 to the 2012 Health and Social Care Act which returned public health to local authority control. He commented that there has been very little change in the last 20 years and that there are lots of opportunities for our sector to work collaboratively with public health.

Successes and challenges

Public health has had successes, namely:

- Vaccination
- Motor-vehicle safety
- Safer workplaces
- Control of infectious diseases
- Decline in deaths from coronary heart disease & stroke
- Safer and healthier foods
- Healthier mothers and babies
- Family planning

However, causes of death are now changing. There has been a reduction in infectious diseases but an increase in non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and obesity. Life expectancy in the UK is lower than France, Portugal, Spain and Germany.

Challenges facing public health are:

- Health damaging behavior (tobacco, alcohol, sexual health)
- Decrease in physical exercise
- Rising levels of poor mental health
- Increase in musculoskeletal problems, arthritis, CHD and stroke
- Issues of long-term care, dementia and multiple diseases
- Poverty - health inequalities between the various social groupings

Financing of initiatives is becoming an increasing problem. Between 2015/16 and 2019/20 there has been a £531m cut in the public health budget which represents a 9.6% reduction in cash. According to Ms Seccombe, chair of the Local Government Association's community wellbeing board, "Cutting the public health budget is short-sighted and will undermine the objectives we all share to improve the public's health and to keep the pressure off the NHS and adult social care."



The NHS has a preventative approach via their Health Checks which cover:

- Local authority commissioned
- 40 - 74 year-olds (every 5 years)
- Delivered by doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants
- Measurements - waist; cholesterol; blood pressure; weight; height; BMI; CVD risk%
- Topical discussion areas - diet; exercise; weight; alcohol; smoking; dementia awareness (65 to 74 years)

Unfortunately there are no standards across England. A patient is more likely to see a health care assistant rather than a doctor. Whilst the Health Check is every 5 years, the number of appointments offered to eligible participants varies widely across England and the actual take-up is equally varied. Those that do attend probably don't need to see a doctor because what they need is lifestyle advice.

Other findings are:

- Reluctance amongst GPs to discuss physical activities with patients. (Booth et al, 2015)
- Some GPs are not fully aware of the guidance and recommendation in relation to the physical activity. (Savill et al, 2015)
- 48% of trainee GPs lack confidence in providing advice and support around physical activity. (Dunlop & Murray, 2013)
- The ability of any brief intervention to impact upon participants is in part down to the quality of the interaction and the staff delivering the intervention. (Mills et al, 2017)

University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) School of Medicine have looked at other methods of delivery rather than through an ill-prepared doctor. They have developed the Certificate of Competency in Health Checks Assessments (COCHA) which has been endorsed by CIMSPA. It is a 5 day CPD course aimed at individuals with qualifications such as gym instructor, personal trainer or those with a lifestyle management qualification. Full details can be seen [here](#).

This has potential for leisure providers:

Areas of development

- Tender for commissioned work (i.e. NHS Health Check)
- Workforce wellbeing
- Support 3rd sector organisations (i.e. housing trusts)

Income generation

- Commissioned/commercial work
- Increased footfall
- Building upon social and cultural capital



Further benefits are:

- Promote prevention, support people in making good choices, help to reduce illness and physical difficulty.
- Services transformation / sustainability
- Create opportunities to link to the community/3rd sector
- Promote working together across public services - collaboration

Questions from the audience included:

Q. Social prescribing – how does this fit in?

A. There are no clear lines or pathways at the moment.

Q. Do you see Health Checks taking pace in leisure centres/gyms?

A. It doesn't matter so long as those conducting them are trained.

Q. Do you see that there will be NHS gyms?

A. Probably not.



We were born to move

Justine Williams, Global Business Development Manager, BORN TO MOVE, Les Mills

Martin Radmore, Company Director, VisionED

Introduction

Les Mills developed the BORN TO MOVE programmes to help increase children's fitness, stop inactivity and to make positive habits; this session looks at new revisions to its content and its trials within schools. Justine Williams began the session by explaining what the programme involved.

We know the stats

Justine began the presentation mentioning that we in the sector know the stats of childhood obesity, noting that they are in the news nearly everyday. Born to Move was designed to offer a solution to this problem:

“There are ten different people going to headmasters with ten different solutions to promoting healthy living in school children everyday. What Born to Move offers is different. We have collaborated with education professionals to produce a program that is simple to use, suitable for under resourced schools and in line with what they have asked from us.”

“Talk and listen” – the challenges our educators face

Justine conceded that the first version of Born to Move (BTM) was simply too complicated. “When we first introduced BTM, it was too complicated. The youth activity sector is under resourced, underpaid and often not listened to. The feedback we got was ‘We like what you are doing but we can't sustain it.’ We had to simplify.”

Born to Move is delivered in two formats. Virtually – via online classes, easily accessed by a school or youth group, and live, where the group is led by a trained instructor.

“Our virtual platform runs a Netflix-type model. One of the unique aspects to our program is that we encourage teachers to let the children run the classes. Kids can learn to be a facilitator online. This promotes leadership skills and confidence in the classroom.”

Children who become facilitators get to control the lessons, choosing everything from the activities they want in the lesson down to the music used in the videos.

“Foster a lifelong love of movement in children”

“We now have the pilot scheme running with 50 schools throughout the country. We have also branched out to run the program with local centres outside of schools and have also set up a reward scheme with parents.”



Engaging with the education sector

Martin Radmore joined the presentation to discuss his role in the development of Born to Move and his experience in engaging with education partners and the current situation in schools when it comes to exercise.

“As an education consultant I have seen many schemes aimed at schools before but this program has been developed by health and physical activity experts, that is why VisionED is delighted to partner with Les Mills Born to Move.”

Martin went on to say “kids from as young as 4 are sometimes doing a 50-hour week in school if you include things like after school clubs. But, in the average PE session, kids are only actually active for an average 12-13 minutes – physical education doesn’t equal physical activity.”

Children in school are simply not moving enough. As they learn they are encouraged to sit down and be still. In pre-school, kids move a lot more and activity is part of their learning. But as they get older, this movement is discouraged.

“We have seen £1.2bn pounds invested into the health of our children over the past two years and yet we see the same headlines everyday regarding childhood obesity and poor health in schools.”

An important issue Martin raised was that schools are terrified of litigation and not enough is done to support them.

“The PE curriculum hasn’t really changed for generations. It is all highly games based. PE and sport need to be treated as two different things. BTM understands children, it promotes having fun through movement and there are proven links between physical activity and mental health. We have seen this being pushed in the media recently. There is also a direct correlation between physical development and cognitive development. Basically we are proving that moving kids learn better.”

He said the schools involved in the pilot see the potential of the product and the benefits for pupil health and wellbeing.

“This is the first programme that I’ve ever come across in my 35 years in education that looks at children from a children’s point of view, children after and outside of school and parental engagement.”



Shaping the future of the sector's workforce

Elaine Briggs, Head of Education and Innovation, Future Fit Training

Introduction

The session began with Elaine introducing herself as Head of Education and Innovation at Future Fit Training. Elaine started off setting the scene by explaining what the Raising the Bar report actually was.

She stated that over the last four years, Future Fit Training, with the support from CIMSPA and ukactive, have published findings in regards to the state of the sector's workforce. Elaine then explained that the session would explore the wider issues facing the sector in terms of workforce skills and will provide the group with an opportunity to help shape the future of our sector.

"The importance of having the right person in the right job should not be underestimated" said Briggs.

Raising the Bar

Back in 2014, Future Fit were becoming increasingly aware of frustrations being voiced by operators and the sector at large, with regards to the work-readiness of newly qualified fitness professionals. This first report gauged employer opinions on the following four topics:

- Methods of training
- Assessment standards
- Skills requirements
- Employment pathways

Initial dissatisfaction

The 2014 report highlighted dissatisfaction among employers. Not one respondent was satisfied with the current Level 3 Personal Training qualification. Not one respondent believed current assessment methods are robust enough or included sufficient practical assessment. 100% of respondents answered either 'yes' or 'sometimes' whether they have to provide additional training to fitness staff. All respondents said personal trainers should undertake their assessment on a real life candidate.

Elaine then highlighted the work that CIMSPA has done to create the new professional standards alongside employers, training providers and awarding organisations. Elaine stressed the importance of all training providers getting on board to make sure they are delivering the correct knowledge, skills and behaviours as part of their qualifications.

Tara Dillon also contributed and told the group how the professional standards have been created and how important it was for employers to pick the right training for their staff.



“There are still rogue training providers out there offering a poor standard of delivery and we need to work together to make sure that instructors pick the kitemark of training. The power is with the employers, they have a duty to make sure that their own staff are trained to the highest possible standard.”

REPs was discussed and several employers in the room expressed their concern that the sector cannot have two registers as this is causing great confusion amongst individuals, training providers, awarding organisations and most importantly, employers.

“If you want one register, then have one. The power sits with you – the employer” said Dillon.

Tara also touched on the fact that employers should only pick quality assured training.

“Pick the register that gives you that assurance – CIMSPA.”

Fast Forward to the 2018 report

Elaine firstly gave some general feedback about what employers and operators said in the 2018 report. Employers and operators said that they genuinely believed that the introduction of the new professional standards would have a hugely positive impact on the standard of delivery.

Qualifications

- 73% believed that personal training qualifications should take at least six months to complete.
- 92% provide additional training to ensure that fitness staff are work ready.
- 87% said that candidates are entering the industry with unrealistic expectations.

A major skills gap was also highlighted as the biggest challenge:

- Commercial acumen
- Social skills
- Behaviour change skills

2019 – Moving forward and raising the bar further

Elaine highlighted the need to exceed expectations to push through the professional standards. Future Fit, in collaboration with Sport England are being tasked with building a stakeholder group. A group of organisations coming together to improve the quality of training and education across the sector. It is designed to establish principles, aspirations, and goals, but more importantly to share best practice.

In preparation for the first stakeholder group meeting, Elaine asked the group to break-out in to three groups to explore the following issues/questions:

- What do you feel are currently the main barriers to our sector when considering how we can improve quality of training and education?
- How can we share best practice across the sector and continue to raise the bar and support the professionalisation of the sector?
- What would you like to see on the agenda for the first meeting of this new forum?



Tara Dillon, Rob Johnson (MD Future Fit Training) and Stuart Armstrong (Sport England) facilitated the group discussions.

Key areas of discussion from group break outs:

- Rogue training providers offering cheap and cheerful qualifications.
- Funding – employers struggling to fund courses for employees.
- REPs vs CIMSPA issue – the confusion of having two registers in the sector. We need one accreditation scheme, one voice in the sector. Employers need to be putting CIMSPA membership on job adverts as compulsory.
- The HE skills gap – university courses not including work experience for students.
- Backing from Sport England – will they back CIMSPA for the foreseeable?
- Understanding exactly what employers are looking for in an instructor – the soft skills are what really retains a customer. The ability to relate to a customer is really important when you are trying to engage them.
- Employers have buried their heads in the sand regarding the qualifications that their own staff have. Now is the time to completely quality assure what is going on and alleviate this problem of staff not having the correct qualifications.

Stuart Armstrong from Sport England ended the session by highlighting the importance of employers actually valuing the need for professional development. He also touched on some of the challenges that lie ahead for training providers with it being a competitive market.

“We need a ‘Diamond Alliance’ of training providers to come together and collaborate to face the challenges that the sector faces moving forward and effectively raise the bar even further.”

Stuart and Rob Johnson then asked the group to express their interest in forming the stakeholder group and commit to the ‘movement’ in training, learning and development. The aim will be to come together on a regular basis to tackle the issues that have been discussed.



Vocational education: nurturing the workforce of the future

Marina Bowler Postlethwaite, Lead Trainer for Sport, Pearson

Catherine Hillhouse, Co-Trainer for Sport, Pearson

Introduction

Marina welcomed the group and explained that Pearson are responsible for vocational education within schools, higher education and further education. The session aimed to explore the practical skills and knowledge vocational learners bring to higher education and the workplace, and why applied learning is so valuable.

By the end of the session Marina and Catherine wanted delegates to have gained an insight into the main skill set that Pearson include in their qualifications and the impact that these would have in meeting employer needs, developing transferable skills and preparing learners for real-world working environments.

Task 1

The session started with a task which aimed to look at the delegate's views and perceptions of vocational education. To do this Marina split the tables into groups, to answer 3 key questions:

- What makes vocational learners different?
- Why is applied learning so valuable?
- Why is vocational learning so important in the sports sector?

The delegates gave the following responses:

What makes vocational learners different?

- A vocational learner has the opportunity for on the job learning.
- Learners develop the skills to apply the theory they learn.
- They have access to wider development opportunities than the typical education system, and benefit from different learning strategies.
- They learn how to interact with the individuals they will be working with.
- They are able to gain confidence and experience through participating in a vocational setting.
- They are able to develop skills which are not taught in early learning environments.

Why is applied learning so valuable?

- It is flexible and adaptable and so can be tailored to cater for a range of learners.
- It provides the opportunity for assessment of both knowledge and skills.
- It provides a practical learning experience where students learn from physical experience.
- It teaches the knowledge and skills relevant to the performance of the job roles which the learner will then be able to fulfil.
- It gives the opportunity to learn what works best for the individual and so refine their skills through practice.



- It gives the opportunity for individuals to earn while they learn.
- It provides the opportunity for learners to gain accreditation of their work experience to help support completion of assessment criteria.
- It provides learners with the opportunity to draw evidence from multiple areas and in multiple forms to fulfil assessment criteria, as opposed to rigid assessment structures which may limit an individual's potential to succeed.
- It provides individuals with real world experiences which will foster career pathway progression and access to a range of job roles.

Why is vocational education so important in the sport sector?

- In our sector, employers require learners to come out of education industry ready.
- The sports sector is a people-centred industry.
- As there is not an off the shelf, set career pathway for individuals in the sport sector, vocational education allows individuals to be in working environments, gaining a wide range of skills, which makes possible career opportunities clearer to learners and enables them to progress up the career ladder.

Task 2

Marina and Catherine explained that command verbs are embedded the assessment criteria for all Pearson vocational qualifications, to ensure students engage with them and are rewarded for demonstrating the necessary skills.

A selection of command verbs were placed on tables and the delegates were asked to discuss what they mean and how they can be of use in practical work situations.

The following responses were given:

Explain

- Understand the learner and audience needs.
- Tailor the information to suit prior knowledge and experience level
- Get learners to arrive at their own methods – discovery over prescription.
- If someone is unable to access what explain means, there is an immediate barrier.
- Need a certain level of knowledge and skills to understand what explain is about and be
- When a learner can explain something, they are then able to access the higher command verbs.

Evaluate

- Understanding that failure is an opportunity for learning.
- Have to create reflective practitioners.
- Have to include time for evaluation in daily activities.
- Constant improvement.
- Important to highlight to learners how they meet the skill requirements as it is likely they will be completing these without realising it, as this will enable them to evaluate their practice effectively in the future.



Assess

- Assessment of right and wrong.
- Based on having a sufficient level of underpinning knowledge.
- Have to be able to assess situational needs to determine what is needed to meet these and move the practice forward.

It is important that command verbs are clarified in the vocational education setting to prepare learners for deployment with employers. The command verbs help students understand what is needed from them in order to be effective practitioners, and are consistent across vocational qualifications, creating a high standard of practice that is applicable to all learners.

Task 3

This task was aimed to highlight how employers can be involved in the vocational learning process and provide evidence to support learners in meeting assessment criteria.

The following evidence was deemed acceptable for submission in a learner's portfolio:

- Completion of structured work experience or work placements that develop skills.
- Completion of projects, exercises and/or assessments/examinations set with input from industry practitioner
- Undertake one or more units delivered or co-delivered by an industry practitioner. This could take the form of master classes or guest lectures.
- Industry practitioners operating as 'expert witnesses' that contribute to the assessment of a learner's work or practice, operating within a specified assessment framework. This may be specific projects, exercises or examinations, or all assessments for a qualification.

At present the following evidence was not deemed acceptable for submission in a learner's portfolio:

- Employers' or industry practitioners' input to the initial design and content of a qualification.
- This is not the student's work and so it cannot be assessed.
- Employers hosting visits, providing premises, facilities or equipment.
- Marina explained that the learner's skills are not being developed through this and a general visit would not provide the evidence needed.
- Employers or industry practitioners providing talks or contributing to delivery on employability, general careers advice such as CV writing, and interview training.
- Marina explained that this does not link to the individual's assessment.
- Simulated or provider-based working environments.
- At present this is not an acceptable form of evidence due to the quality and accuracy of simulated learning environments.
- Learner attendance at career fairs, events or other networking opportunities.
- Employers providing students with job references.



Task 4

The final task provided an insight into the skill types which delegates believed are needed from vocational learners to prepare them for employment after graduation.

It was highlighted that employers are hiring new staff based on character and culture and so it is important to train students with the right attitude to enter a workplace and commit to succeeding in that environment. This would come from students being resilient and able to adapt and develop from feedback, being self-aware and having a high level of emotional intelligence.

From an employer's perspective it is also important that

individuals are able to communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, with people at a range of different levels. The importance of soft skill development was also considered key, as employers require individuals to be competent in timekeeping, organisation and work etiquette.

Vocational assessment

Marina and Catherine explained that vocational qualifications encourage learners to apply their learning in realistic contexts, using scenarios and realistic activities, that will permit learners to draw on and apply their learning. As such vocational education uses a combination of internal, synoptic and external assessment and therefore assesses individuals on a large range of skills.

It was highlighted that synoptic assessment fosters the development of softer skills as it requires learners to demonstrate that they can identify and use effectively, in an integrated way, an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories and knowledge from across the whole sector.

Closing messages

Marina shared the newest qualifications that Pearson are delivering (see slide 16) and the different pathways available on the course. These courses aim to nurture and educate the workforce to provide employers with the best people for the job. Our qualification has been mapped to CIMSPA's professional standards demonstrating that Pearson are helping provide employers with the graduates that are work ready and what employers are looking for.



5 years forward: implications for developing and retaining talent

Chaired by: Colin Huffen, Head of Education, CIMSPA

Sarah Edmonds, Director of Quality and Standards, Active IQ. (SE)

Tanya Kesterton, Head of Learning Solutions, Swim England. (TK)

Matt Rhodes, Policy Manager, Association of Colleges Sport.(MR)

Hannah Crane, Director of Workforce and Employability, Streetgames. (HC)

Tim Barry, Head of Department of Medical & Sport Sciences, University of Cumbria (TB)

Chris Fennell, Leisure and Environmental Services Section Head, Watford Borough Council. (CF)

Millennials are now the largest proportion of the workforce in two years' time they will make up 50% of the total workforce and by 2030 will be 75%. Apart from the usual stereotypes what does this mean for educators and employers?

TB - Increased number of degrees being delivered, number of people progressing into HE has increased. Historically learners were spending a lot of money upskilling themselves after university completing L1s/2s, however they should no longer have to do this due to the embedding of the professional standards and that all degrees have placements.

MR - Generation Z are the new general coming through, for FE the millennials have come and gone. Technology is key and we are playing catch up with the learner at the minute. Learners expect to be involved in the development of their learning.

SE - Big changes happening, will GCSEs, A Levels etc still be around? 11.5 million certificates were issued last year that's a fall of 8%, following a trend of a fall every year. Where we think we'll be and where we will actually be may be very different.

HC - They will continue to deliver face to face as they feel it is the most beneficial for the type of learner they get through the door. The workforce want to be nurtured and valued, we need to focus on how we train managers to manage millennials and the next generation as currently there is a gap.

CF - Salaries aren't great however there are other benefits to working in the sector. The landscape has changed massively, and we need to manage expectations of where these new jobs will be e.g. some local trusts are developing academies to help with career progression.

TK - Expectation of the use of technology is key, we need to develop learning to meet the need of the learner.

CH - Is education catering for the learner though?

HC (Panel) - We need to look at what we want from career advice, we need to talk more about transferrable skills as people move from sector to sector.



SE - Certificates are currency, maybe the names of the qualifications could be more representative of where we are moving to.

MR - Schools really are not living up to expectations in terms of advice they give. As they are more inclined to provide advice to stay at sixth form because of funding (not all are following the Baker clause). Employers also need to be the go-to, to get advice from.

TB - There is now more emphasis on destination data and therefore decisions are driven on employability.

Moving on from millennials we look at those currently in mainstream education, there seem to be numerous huge reviews of the whole education system.

- GCSE grades have changed to a 9-1 scale.
- We're seeing a shifting policy from Ofsted moving from outcomes (exam results) to a greater emphasis on personal development.
- We are in the middle of a review of technical education there is an imminent review of all funded qualifications due imminently.
- Post Brexit its expected there will be a in depth review of higher education, including value for money with tuition fees.
- Can you help us make sense of all of this and what it might mean for educators and employers?

TB - HE have massive changes coming up. Ofsted are now inspecting higher level apprenticeships and Office for Students are to inspect L6.

Implications for employers are that they need to understand the workforce is ready and that they are planning for it. We need to catch up with other chartered institutes and professionalise our workforce with chartered members.

MR - There is a big funding shortfall with a 12% cut, T Levels are going to make big changes and are unaffordable for colleges to deliver. We also need to make stronger cases to keep the current system if it works for us. The new Ofsted framework includes a section on learners' access to sport and physical activity so some colleges are making a change to include more of this.

SE - We need stability for the next 5 years, will HE accept T Level as entry? There may not be enough money to fund anything else apart from T Levels.

HC - Streetgames ask for specific knowledge and skills not qualifications. Apprenticeships were meant to be helping the problem, however there is a shortage of opportunities.

CF - Some employers just do not have the capacity to take on more employees as the jobs just aren't there especially with an aging population where people are in their jobs for longer. Watford Council are looking at ways to develop new roles and pathways.

At this point the session unfortunately ran out of time. Colin thanked everyone for their input and the lively productive discussions.



How are technology and data important to the future of physical activity?

Dave Wright, CEO, Myzone

Introduction

Dave showed 'This is our World' video created by Steve Cutts.

Dave stated that now we are downbeat with technology ... there were two main game changers in the last 10 years, the mobile phone and cloud tech. It is a case of where in the past we used to go into a lab for testing and results, now it's at the click of a button.

Ethnography

"You can improve your business by 10% by following the best in your sector. To improve your business by 110% you need to go outside of your sector. There is so much we can learn by looking outside our existing environment. What are people doing, what are our children doing, what are you doing?" "We can learn a lot from other sectors, how they use technology to enhance their business. For example, look at the work going on in hospitality. This is a sector where they pay less than within our industry but provide a better service. "Take the Olympics in 2012. The main sponsor was McDonalds, they provided courses to 80,000 people and trained them up. We need to learn from others, what they do badly and what they do well." Dave used an example from Walmart and their new marketing director. Walmart collected data from a person's credit card spend and were able to predict when they would get pregnant. The data provided Walmart the ability for targeted marketing and the ability to upsell baby products to the customer.

"Ask yourself a better question and you get a better answer."

Frictionless and simple

How easy is something?

- Apple's Steve Jobs famously said - 'simplicity is the ultimate sophistication'.
- Do you make it easy for people to go on the pathway of courses?
- Different countries seems to have different ways of making things easier for people.

Dave gave an example from America. "You are interested in playing tennis, you input your data into a system and the system gives you options of where you can go, what's available and what it would cost. You attend a session, with likeminded people.

"In the UK - how easy is it to get a court and how accessible is it? Do you make it easy (frictionless) and do you make it simple. Do you make it too hard for people to engage with you? What do you do to make it easy for your staff, managers, members, family members? Ask yourself what someone has to do to experience A-to-B. Your task is to eliminate as many steps as possible to make it a better experience."



Data

- Data is the new art and intelligence and information is the new currency.
- Having the data is one thing, doing nothing with it is reckless.
- The greater the accurate/relevant data – the clearer the picture.
- The more questions asked of a customer or member the narrower the data becomes and the more able you are to provide them with a solution.

Dave uses an acronym within their facility – before anyone is shown around, they answer the below:

HELP

How did you hear about us?

Experience of exercise

Lifestyle – tell me

Problem – what?

“I can’t help you until I know you – this is what technology and collecting data helps us with.”

Dave gave an example of this in the real world. A customer swipes into a gym at the beginning of month and at the end of month, an assumption is made that they’re not training much due to lack of motivation.

The customer is actually training for an Ironman and is adding other training to their schedule outside of the gym but the PTs are not aware of this.

The customer becomes disheartened as you don’t know them at all.

“The point is – get to know your audience – stay connected with customers to understand why there aren’t as many swipes. What else are they doing? e.g. training for an Ironman – show that you care.

“You should make notes on your conversation and the next time you bump into that customer, ask them how the ironman went and what their next goals are. How is your daughter getting on at university? How is the new dog settling in to the family?”

“Use the information you have to have better engagement with your customer, membership base, employers or fellow employees – really show that you care.”

Artificial intelligence

AI put simply is using collected data to predict behaviour.

Behaviour of your customers can be determined via data and the cool thing about this is that it can also be completed retrospectively.

“A revelation – using technology to solve the problem.”



Wearable technology

For the third year in a row, wearable tech is the fastest growing area in the sector, according to an American College of Sports Medicine study.

“Wearable tech, especially the smartwatch is so popular as they are frictionless. They do what they do apparently, simply. A user gets what they want from the product with no real fuss. Our industry needs to be more like this to appeal to more people both from a workforce and customer perspective.

“Employing certified people was down at 14 in the list two years ago and seeing it moving up in importance to number 6 this year shows that we are in a people industry.

“I really hope that this trend continues. I am very supportive of what CIMSPA are doing to create the kitemark. My aspiration is that everyone in the sector will have that endorsement soon.”



The National Workforce Registration and Regulation Consultation

Spencer Moore, Director of Strategy, CIMSPA

Dan Thorp, Director, Sporting People

Rob Young MBE, Director, Sporting People

Introduction

In this interactive session, Sporting People, the organisation which is currently conducting a consultation around workforce registration and regulation, sought to get the views from delegates about the potential of a national workforce registration scheme.

Biggest impact in a generation

CIMSPA's Spencer Moore got the session started by saying: "The work you will be doing in this session will have the single biggest impact on our sector for over a generation. It's the glue that holds together a lot of our vision for a regulated and respected profession."

He explained how the culmination of a number of factors, including the Duty of Care report, some high profile child abuse scandals in sport and the release of Sport England's Professional Workforce Strategy and Coaching Plan for England, triggered the consultation.

"There have been many attempts to have something like this before, but it has always failed because there were commercial drivers, product drivers and political agendas. We wanted make sure this work was completely open and transparent and seen to be led by CIMSPA, any feedback we get is treated in confidence."

The four key questions phase one is looking to answer are:

- Could a cross-workforce registration scheme be a good way of delivering a safe and consistent experience?
- Can the sector work together and self-regulate to achieve this?
- What are the other options?
- What other benefits can come from this?

Dan and Rob from Sporting People began the feedback session where delegates were able to upload their responses to questions posed in real time via a mobile app.

The questions and some of the responses are highlighted below.

We need to define the scope of who we are talking about. From the list below please tick those groups who you think should be in scope for this project.

Results in order of importance:

- Anyone who comes into contact with a participant
- Volunteer coaches
- Paid coaches



- Those coaches who aren't already part of a licensed coaches scheme
- Coaches in sport
- Coaches in elite sport
- Coaches in grassroots sport
- Anybody working in sport and physical activity
- Any practitioner who is facilitating physical activity
- All of the above

I can see the benefit of this project, however, for me / my organisation we will not engage with this if...

- "If it's cost prohibitive, if benefits are not clearly defined for individuals/operators/end user, if not made mandatory."
- "If there is no value to the club or operator in their region, i.e. lack of members."
- "If it has impact on our delivery and if the whole sector is not behind it."
- "If it impacts data protection."
- "If it paints the whole industry in a negative light."

The project is focused on regulation and national workforce registration. However, we know that there are many different possible solutions to the challenges identified. What solutions can you identify that you think would help to solve these challenges?

- "Sport England and other funders need to invest into regulated workforce roles, facilities and participation programs to bring about culture and behaviour change."
- "The registration scheme must not make us take our eye off the ball as in 'We have a register now so everything is fine.'"
- "A system to report any safeguarding issues and allow a club / NGB to investigate and manage. Full audit trail and transparency. No more 'brushing under the carpet.'"
- "If it's not sorted soon, the government will likely legislate so it would be better to have the system sorted before that. We should use the models that are already in use for health professionals or teachers."

What problems are you hitting that you think need addressing?

- "Different sports and operators require different safeguarding / H&S criteria and DBS."
- "The popularity of coaches or instructors can override their skillset. How do you encourage these people to change when their methods are proven at least in terms of participation numbers?"
- "Lack of respect between vocational and higher education."
- "Trust from the medical world is not where it needs to be to enable strong working pathways."

Dan and Rob from Sporting People thanked the group for their feedback and stated that once the consultations had been completed the results would be published.



Be The Change

How to use evidence based industry best practice guidelines to support more disabled people to work in leisure

Hilary Farmiloe, National Programme Manager, Instructability

Introduction

Hilary introduced the session by showing the group a video of a leisure centre which caters for employees with a range of impairments. It was highlighted that for a long time the sector has focused on the discrepancies between disabled and non-disabled participation rates and increasing disabled participation in sport, but little focus has been on increasing the representation of individuals with a disability in the sport and physical activity workforce.

When hiring individuals, employers should focus on getting the best individual for the job, regardless of ability or disability. Hilary outlined the benefits of increasing the diversity of the workforce.

The list below should be considered inclusive but not exhaustive.

- Attract and serve a more diverse customer base.
- Influence decision making in an organisation to allow it to better serve an inclusive population.
- Increase satisfaction amongst all employees due to an inclusive workplace culture.
- Enhance understanding and acceptance of differences across the organisation.
- Retain existing staff who acquire impairment through injury or health conditions.
- Improve productivity by cultivating a proactive, creative attitude to challenges.
- Boost reputation for social responsibility in the local community and across the sector.
- Be more readily prepared to meet contractual or legislative requirements.

Aspire is a national disability charity, which operates an inclusive community leisure facility, with a visibly diverse workforce. Case studies have shown that having a diverse workforce in a leisure facility made members feel more welcome and increased member engagement. Hilary and the team at Instructability now want to share the learning achieved through the case studies and promote this to the wider sector.

The Instructability programme

The Instructability programme was set up in partnership with Sport England, with the aim of giving individuals with a disability the opportunity to gain access to fitness qualification training. It works with leisure operators to give individuals the opportunity to undertake work placements and gain the knowledge and skills they would need for working in the sport and physical activity sector. Instructability has been running for 8 years now and has seen approximately 350 people go through the programme. They mainly work with YMCAfit on level 2 qualifications, however they are currently looking to increase the opportunities available to individuals, by working with the Institute of Swimming.

A video of individuals who had undertaken the Instructability programme was shown and highlighted the positive experiences the individuals experienced both during and after their



participation in the programme. They explained first-hand how it helped them not only gain qualifications, but establish a career.

In order to combat differences in representation and develop strategies and guidance on how to create an inclusive workforce, there is the need for high quality, evidence-based research. Aspire partnered with the University of Birmingham and undertook 360° consultations with disabled people, training providers, awarding organisations and employers. The information collected has been used to construct evidence-based industry guidelines, to assist with the training and employment of disabled individuals, within the sport and physical activity sector.

Increasing diversity in the sport and physical activity workforce will not happen overnight and requires a change in attitude. The following actions can be considered by employers when reviewing their own approach to hiring and promoting an inclusive workforce.

- It has to be a whole organisation approach and so a top down model would allow for the best execution.
- Inclusion has to be embedded into an organisation's strategic plans.
- A proactive attitude, where modification to environments and situations are considered before there is the explicit need for them should be adopted, as opposed to a reactive attitude to help ensure employers are prepared and create a supportive and inclusive environment.

Hilary explained that the social model of disability looks at what is disabling someone and focuses on finding solutions to reduce the impairment. It focuses less on the disabling effects of a medical condition and looks at how the environment an individual is in can be the disabling factor. This highlighted the need for employers to look at how they can make their facilities more accessible to for a range of workers. In society some of the most disabling factors is people's attitudes, policies and practices and so employer awareness of conditions and the adjustments they can make to support individuals with these conditions, will help promote an inclusive workforce.

Task 1

The group were split into 3 smaller teams and given a series of questions to work through. These were focused around job and course advertisements and communication within the workplace.

After feedback from the groups it was highlighted that although job and course advertisements are posted on a wide range of sites, employers could make them more accessible to individuals with disability by outlining in the advertisements examples of a few reasonable adjustments they could make to the role or responsibilities to make the job more accessible to individuals with specific disabilities. It is also key for the workplaces to be inclusive in both the physical set up but also in the provision of information. It is important to consider if the key staff resources are available in forms which any individual would be able to access.

Hilary suggested the following considerations for making documents accessible:

- Generate documents in Word or as a PDF.
- Use consistent formatting across documents.
- When a picture, chart or table is used provide an alternative text description.



What next

Hilary provided updates on the upcoming publishing of the guidelines for training and employing individuals with a disability, which will be publicly available in Summer 2019. Organisations will then be able to download the guidance and disseminate it throughout their workplaces. This should promote the review of current policies and practices and any reasonable adjustments to promote the creation of an inclusive workplace, in line with the guidelines, should be made. It would also be of benefit to measure both staff and customer satisfaction ratings before and after the implementation of the guidelines to determine the impact of creating a more inclusive workplace.



Keynote: The backbone of an active nation

Steven Ward, CEO, ukactive

Steve began his keynote by confirming the news that he will be leaving ukactive in a couple of months.

After 12 years at ukactive, the last four of which have been at the helm of the organisation, Steve took the opportunity to share some personal thoughts and reflections on where the sector is today.

“Leaving ukactive active is like running in a relay team. When Dave Stalker passed me the baton, I’ve absolutely run my heart out for the last few years and it’s time to pass the baton on to some fresh legs.

“I’m leaving at the right time for ukactive and the right time for me. In my time we have built a brand new board, assembled a very talented team, improved the way we add value to our members and built some fantastic foundations that will pay off for years to come.

“Today’s talk is about a five years forward view looking to the future. As I look ahead, I thought it might be useful to start by looking back. Four years ago I was writing Dave’s speeches and carrying his bags.”

Steve shared some of Dave Stalker’s quotes from a Health Club Management magazine interview to illustrate the challenges of the time.

“Some of the things that Dave said in that interview made me wonder about how much progress we have made. There are some wonderful quotes:

“This is still an industry largely based on gut feeling. We do things because that’s the way we have always done them. That’s why concepts such as the old LIW survived well passed their expiry date. All too often there is a reliance on habitual decision making as opposed to genuine consideration of the value that things bring.”

Steve said it’s likely that a few more things will go the way of LIW, but questioned if it was happening quickly enough:

Another Dave Stalker quote highlighted this issue of diversity:

“Another area we must focus on is diversity. We recently had a parliamentary dinner with the Conservative party where there were more female Tory MPs in the room than female fitness industry representatives.”

Four years on and we may still be in a similar place, said Steve.



What about skills and workforce agenda?

Steve went on to speak about the problem of having too many organisations trying to control similar aspects of the sector and the need for the industry to get behind just one – CIMSPA.

“The risk of collateral damage is real and it would be better off listening to the major employers, training providers and awarding organisations and getting behind one professional chartered body to drive the sector forward.

“You could easily fall into a trap of thinking things haven’t progressed, or not enough, but that would disguise the level of change we have seen in the last five years in this industry which has been enormous.

“The make up of the top ten brands in our sector is unrecognisable. Some of those considered to be market leaders are dead, replaced by challengers. New market entrants are able to emerge rapidly with no baggage, no history, no legacy holding them down. From every direction we are seeing new innovation paying no respect to national or local borders backed by levels of investment we might have only dreamed of before.

“We are in a totally different policy environment to anything before where the people in this room are recognised as the backbone of an active nation. We’ve seen the full impact of our collective call to turn the tide of inactivity, impact on policy and a fundamental shift in focus. Physical activity is recognised as a critical part of public health policy and critical to the NHS future long term plan for its contributions to the social prescribing agenda.

“We’ve seen the collapse of the retail sector open up property to deliver the continued growth of the industry on a scale we’ve never seen before. We’ve seen the boom of boutiques and the reminder that people value activity if its delivered in a high quality and engaging way.”

On the matter of approaching decision making in a new way, Steve noted the importance of using data to drive decisions rather than using “gut feeling”. “We’ve arrived at the point where there is no turning back on the level of data and intelligence available to guide our decision making. Together with our partners at 4global we are now aggregating 585 million visits from 2,000 sites across the country covering more than 5.4 million members with an opportunity to double that in the next 12 months.

“It means we can evidence our impact, predict our future, benchmark our performance, analyse our trends, target consumers we need to target to drive growth like never before.

“With this data and intelligence we can shape future policy not on gut feel but with genuine data guiding planning and investment. We can place facilities where they are needed. We can put this data in the hands of everyone in the sector all in the pursuit of getting more people, more active, more often.

“If we consider all of this and think about the earthquakes that really impacted the sector over the last five years, it’s my prediction that what will come next will be more pronounced and more seismic.

“I hope ukactive has played an important role as detection system for some of these earthquakes and will continue to do so.”



Steve referred to ActiveLab, the global launch pad of innovation in the sector, the Future Leaders programmes, children and young people agendas and its partnership with Sport England, as well as the work around an ageing society.

He also talked about the new ukactive leadership academy, “that goes hand in hand with CIMSPA which offers us a chance to transform the management and leadership skills in our sector. In collaboration with Pearson, we’ve piloted a degree level apprenticeship programme fully funded from The Apprenticeship Levy to tackle what CEOs tell me is their biggest workforce challenge. Together this is a chance to rally behind something tangible and long-lasting for our sector.”

He thanked Tara for her backing to help make this happen.

“I’m really proud of what ukactive has done and hugely excited by a future rich in opportunity for ukactive and sector as whole.”

“It’s my sincere belief that this level of excitement is not going to be enough to deal with the earthquakes that lie ahead. In the next five years the sector will be transformed once again at an ever more aggressive pace. Things are becoming more volatile, more uncertain and more ambiguous.

“Some of us are going to fall through the gaps that will emerge. We have to focus on building a new future for our sector that’s strong enough to survive these challenges and thrive for decades to come.

“History shows us that chaos always emerges when people decide to draw arbitrary lines. They can be drawn decades before disaster erupts. Drawn with good intentions, they run through the fault lines of society. They split tribes and they create wars for resource, they create inefficiencies in public services, create separate identities. Friction builds up and eventually we see ruptures and the system breaks down.

“Our current approach to politics in the UK is just the same. We’ve evolved a public policy environment where we’ve sought to place issues into different boxes – health, housing, education, transport, sports etc – all with their own missions and ideologies. All protective of their resources, with no united vision or drive to create the conditions for our nation to thrive. What they all miss, is that they are on the same team, trying to help the lives of the people they are here to serve. And they are utterly dependent on each other for being successful.”

Steve praised the work going on in Greater Manchester as an example of groups working together for a common outcome.

“It’s going to be those teams, those people, those institutions and policy leaders who are comfortable working across boundaries who are going to be able to tackle the scale of the challenge that lies ahead. Where we see this most effectively is in areas like Greater Manchester where the major cracking of heads together, to make it clear that there is one goal, one mission, one team improving prospects for everyone in that region.

“We are so far away from that at a national level. As a nation, we are on life support, unable to think, act or decide. We are going to have to go through a period of chemotherapy and extensive rehabilitation just to have a chance to recover.



“This national illness has affected every cell in our national body and stopped it being able to operate properly. It’s pushed us further apart at every level and degraded our ability to act with sincerity and passion.

“This is evidenced by the introduction to every chapter of the Sporting Futures national strategy, proudly written by a parade of ministers who have since been reshuffled and lost their jobs.

“Those introductions should be a source of national embarrassment. Because it shows that government clearly understands that activity is a golden threat – they articulate it in their words – yet it shows a clear inability to bring this together into anything tangible.

“The policy function of our nation is failing. This national fog will clear, but we can’t be sure when, how or what destruction will be left behind.”

“We can only hope there will be some sort of national renewal in the years ahead. We don’t know when and we can’t be certain it will come from government.”

So what do we do in the meantime?

“Together we must continue to make our own path, not wait for government or policy makers. I genuinely believe we are the backbone of an active nation. The greatest impact on our success lies in our own hands. The actions we take as a community can drive progress. We have a clear togetherness in our sector. We have one mission – more people, more active, more often.

“We need to grow the value of physical activity to society, turn the tide of inactivity, celebrate the fun of fitness, campaign with everything we’ve got and facilitate the partnerships that no one else can. Serve our sector with integrity, passion and genuine value.

“The same challenges that face continents or nations or policy makers are alive and well in our sector. We’ve got too many organisations organised on historic lines competing for resources and missing the bigger picture. It creates an inefficient system with poor outcomes for the people that we are here to serve.

“These organisations duplicate and operate in a way which is an embarrassing waste of public resources and time. They must never forget that they are here to service the sector, society and not themselves.

“ukactive must never forget that – we’ve played a huge part in this current mess – so must the huge range of other bodies that work for the sector.

“You are our shareholders, you are the drivers of our future direction. Given the earthquakes that lie ahead and the opportunities they present, we shouldn’t be afraid to think about how the landscape might evolve to better serve the sector and better pursue the mission. It might mean working together in different ways across boundaries, some organisations giving up resources. This will require an absence of ego, devotion to duty and some people will have to give up doing the things they love.



“In a five year forward view, it might be very exciting time for our industry. But if we are a similar bunch of people talking about similar problems and similar solutions, we are on the road to ruin.

“Willingness to spot uncertainty, to charge towards it with a greater mission will be a determining factor in our success.”

“Thanks you for your support over the years and for your support for ukactive during this interim process. I’m sure that together we can keep this backbone of an active nation in the best shape it needs to be for years to come.”





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