



# Why Wellness Management Matters

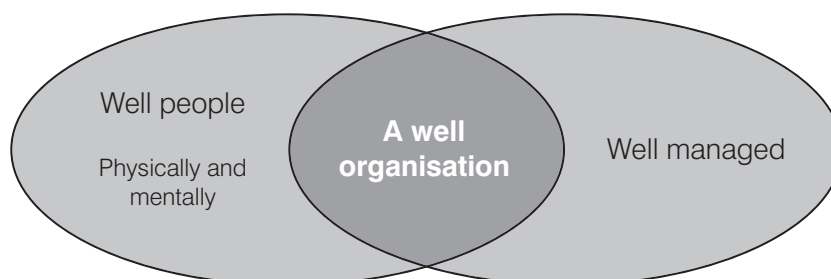
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It's not rocket science. If you ensure your staff are physically and mentally well, and that they are well managed, they'll have the physical health and mental energy to offer sustainable high performance at work and to get greater enjoyment from their personal lives. This means happier and more productive individuals, more effective teams and more efficient organisations (Fig. 1).

**Figure 1: The Wellness Management Equation**



Goal – increased enjoyment of life and sustainable higher performance

Wellness Management demands a balance of disciplines, taking equal care of the health of staff and of the way they are managed. There's plenty of advice available on how to run organisations effectively. What's new is the coupling of effective management of organisations with the effective management of staff wellbeing to achieve a 'well organisation'. Senior managers are being asked to recognise that their leadership skills should include understanding their own and others' wellness, and relating those factors to their organisation's performance. Doing so should pay off. Stephen Bevan, Director of Research at The Work Foundation, says "genuine concern for others" is emerging as a significant variable in organisational performance.

Wellness Management isn't about faceless bureaucracies imposing morning callisthenics at the desk or workbench. Instead, it means striking a bargain with staff: organisations provide services that staff can use to manage their wellbeing and in return staff offer their best at work and enjoy their leisure time to the full.

Why bother? UK workers have some of the longest working days in Europe, but UK productivity is among the worst in Europe according to *Personnel Today's* analysis of data in the 2004 *World Competitiveness Yearbook*. The result of this culture shows up in UK organisations' absence rates, healthcare costs and the difficulties they have in recruiting and retaining staff. What's more difficult to gauge, and potentially much more costly, is the impact of lacklustre staff performance on sales, customer relationships and innovation.

People who think they're sick, are sick or just feel sick at the way they are managed are a drag on organisational performance and constitute a hidden cost. They are also a potential source of legal issues, especially as employers' liabilities expand under new legislation. Conversely, organisations that focus on the wellbeing of staff can gain a double benefit by presenting that focus as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes. Wellness Management then becomes a way of getting the best out of your staff, saving money and building your employer and community brand.

## Taking a Lead in Wellness Management

Some organisations have already taken these messages to heart and are applying Wellness Management to ensure that having well people who are well managed adds up to a well-performing organisation.

The hospitality industry's success is very dependent on the quality of its people. When you are in the deluxe sector, like **Chateau Elan Hotels & Resorts**, it's vital to provide outstanding service every minute of every day of the year. Jackie Cannon, VP of HR for the group, understands that personal wellness is fundamental to achieving this level of performance. She has started teaching Line Managers to be much more aware of their own wellness and that of others by giving them personal wellness profiling and relevant developmental training. At **St. Andrew's Bay Golf Resort & Spa** a network of accredited Personal Wellness Reviewers is being developed to help Line Managers who identify personal wellness as a developmental need. The hotel is one of the first employers in the UK to recognise that personal wellness is a legitimate developmental need for employees and that outstanding performance is achievable day in, day out through wellness.



**Valley Leisure** is well known for winning national customer service awards, which makes it increasingly difficult to find ways to improve performance. Sheridan Easton, Chief Executive, and his management team used an organisational wellness review to provide a host of practical ideas on what to do next to improve performance.

**Co-operative College** is a central service for co-operative organisations. Chris Cooper, Head of Learning & Development, wanted to enable the team to explore how well it was – whether all its members were really satisfied and what each individual could do to improve their wellness. The team became significantly more productive and team members became happier within six months as a result of their individual and team wellness reports.

**Lilly** has developed a well people philosophy, covering wellness at work and beyond, as part of efforts to be a leading employer in the highly competitive pharmaceuticals industry.

The Gershon Report on public sector efficiency is challenging local authorities to be more productive. Madeleine Sumsion, Regional Director, and John Tennent, Head of Open Events of **South East Employers**, which represents local-authority employers in the region, have identified Wellness Management as one way to achieve this.

Stephen Davis, Director of Southampton's **Enterprise Hub**, is promoting Wellness Management as a way for SMEs to get the best from staff in high-growth companies.

Working in the NHS is both challenging and rewarding. **Portsmouth PCT** is one of the first employers to recognise that Wellness Management provides a useful framework for improving people management in the NHS. Senior management and the PCT's Staff Involvement Forum participated in a trial of wellness tools, which was such a success that the Staff Involvement Forum is developing a wellness policy for the organisation.

**Hampshire County Council** employs more than 30,000 people and has been rated as an 'excellent' County Council for a number of years. It has decided to restructure its HR function around Wellness Management concepts, including creating a special unit called Health & Wellbeing to focus on wellness. Jackie Wright, Head of the unit, is developing active health services to complement the Council's reactive services.

The Housing Association sector is very demanding on its people because of the nature of its services. Added to this is the management challenge of rapid change and mergers as the sector becomes more concentrated. It is understandable that new Chief Executives, like Karen Wilson of **Origin**, are seeking new ways of managing their organisations, and are drawn to Wellness Management and believe in the principles of the approach.

The **Society of Personnel Officers in Local Government (SOCPO)**, under the guidance of Mary Canavan, HR Director of the British Library, has launched its first wellbeing awards. Jayne Griffiths, Head of HR for New Forest District Council, Mary's successor in her SOCPO role, is a pioneer in the field of Wellness Management and will build on the work Mary started.

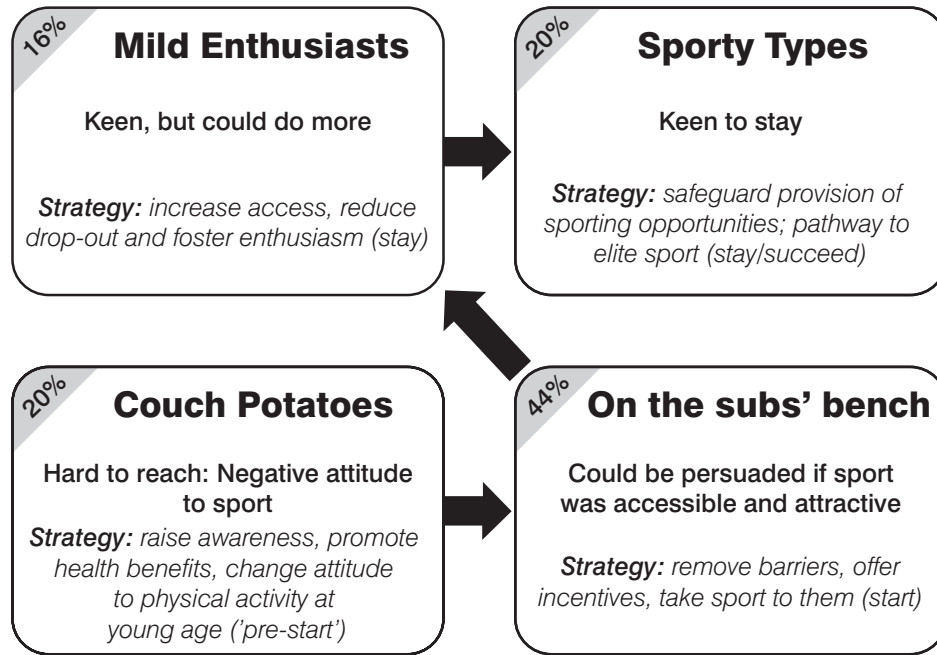
### **The Challenge of Creating a Well Workforce**

UK lifestyles are unhealthy. Long hours in sedentary jobs and over-consumption lead to ill health, which is reflected in poor performance at work and less enjoyment of home life than is possible. Most of us face an increasing pace of life, with rising uncertainty and growing challenges at home and work. We're reluctant to be told to do something about our health, but respond well to being given the opportunity to take control of it ourselves.

Personal wellbeing has a big impact on business performance. The **CBI** estimates that staff absence costs business £11.6 billion a year. Organisations such as **British Airways** and the **Royal Mail** have been driven to offer staff increased pay or a chance to win incentives if they reduce the number of sick days they take, in BA's case to below 16 days over two years. Sick leave for **UK Civil Servants** is costing taxpayers £386 million per year, with civil servants taking an average of two weeks off in 2003. The average number of days off has risen since and is above government targets, despite the fact that more than one third of staff took no time off at all.

There is a significant decline in activity levels amongst the English once people enter the world of work. According to Roger Draper, Chief Executive of **Sport England**, 20% of the adult population are 'sporty types', 20% are 'couch potatoes', 16% are 'mild enthusiasts' and 44% 'are on the subs bench' (Fig. 2).

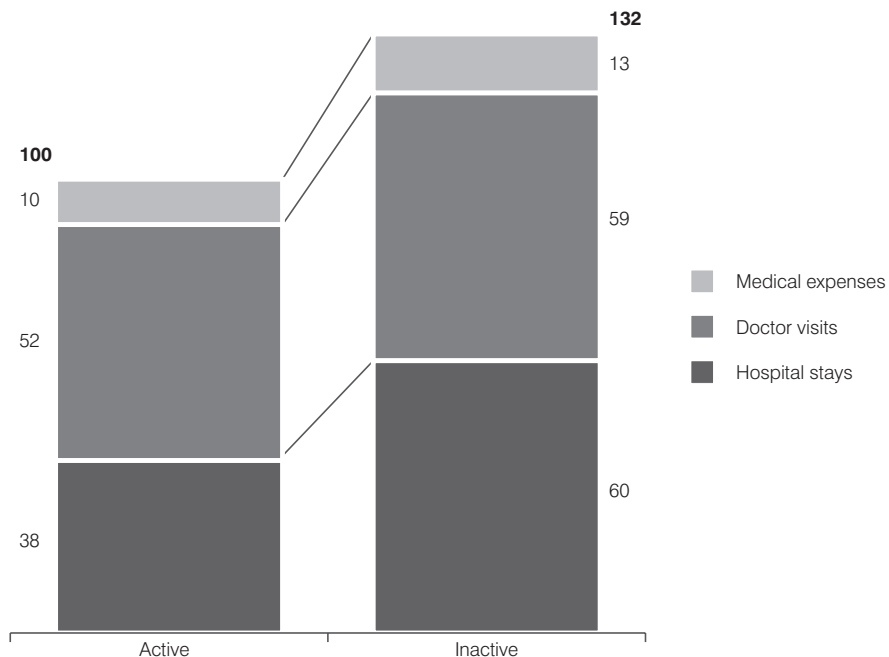
Figure 2: Start...Stay...Succeed: Understanding the Market



Source : Sport England

An inactive person generates 32% greater direct annual medical costs than an active one, according to figures quoted by the **Carter Review** of national sport effort and resources (fig. 3).

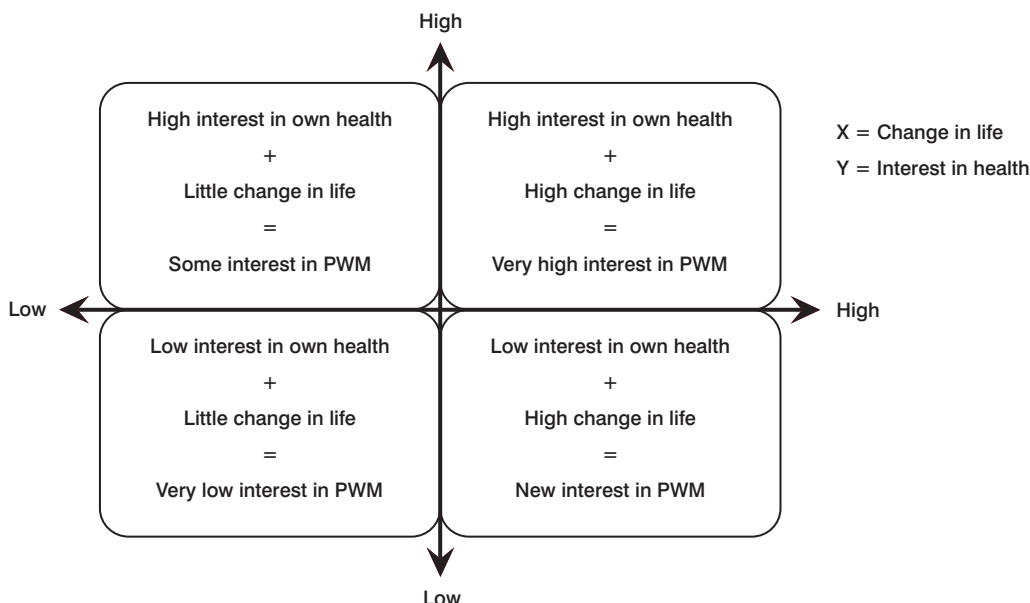
Figure 3: Indexed comparison of direct medical costs for active and inactive people





There are ways to forecast how interested people will be in personal Wellness Management

**Model for forecasting interest Personal Wellness Management (PWM)**



The evidence shows the magnitude of the problem and the value of tackling it. Organisations need to consider the impact of lacklustre staff performance and the costs of poor staff wellbeing and the advantages that managing wellbeing more actively could bring. For example, do you assume that staff are in the best state to learn when they are sent on training courses? If you managed their wellbeing to ensure they were best able to take on new ideas, how much greater would the return on training and development budgets be?

Companies that want to explore Wellness Management may find their existing HR professionals need training in order to offer comprehensive wellness strategies. The UK has yet to form a professional body that covers well people, or one that covers the whole Wellness Management equation. HR professionals can still qualify at the highest level without understanding fundamental aspects of the wellness equation, such as how the human body works.

**Building the Wellness Infrastructure**

The gap between what companies need to take on Wellness Management strategies and the help that is available is rapidly being filled. There are national, regional and local efforts to provide an infrastructure for Wellness Management.

Stephen Bevan at **The Work Foundation** is developing The Wellness Management Index, a simple online tool that enables an organisation to assess and benchmark the key components of wellness among its workforce and to link this to existing absence patterns and future risks. The Index will also help highlight what organisations can do to improve wellbeing, performance and productivity.

Geraint Day, Head of Health, Environment & Transport Policy at the **Institute of Directors (IoD)**, says workplace health is one of its policy interests. The IoD works with government and others in this area, and advises its members on health at work. It has already published a Director's Guide, *Health & Wellbeing in the Workplace*.

According to **Roger Draper at Sport England**, "despite the business benefits, only 3% of businesses have a workplace activity plan". It wants the 44% of English adults who remain 'on the subs bench' to engage in physical activity, by taking sport to them. One way it is doing this is through the launch of WOW – Wellness on Wheels, a mobile gym developed by Wear Valley District Council, Durham Dales Primary Care Trust, Sport England and Technogym.

The **Fitness Industry Association (FIA)** is developing an Adopt a Healthy Organisation initiative. Innes Kerr, Member Services Director, and Will Collinson, Campaign Manager, want to enable all organisations to become healthier by working with FIA members.



The **Register of Exercise Professionals** has recently accredited new skills, such as those needed to become a Personal Wellness Reviewer.

Professional qualifications will become increasingly blurred as HR professionals and others learn the skills of Wellness Management. Personal wellness coaching qualifications may be attractive to a broader group of people than those who have qualified in a traditional sport and exercise field. This is one of the challenges which Stephen Studd is excited by as Chief Executive of **SkillsActive**, an employer-led organisation charged with developing the skills necessary for the active leisure and learning sector.

### Other Stakeholders

A variety of organisations are becoming actively engaged in Wellness Management as an extension of existing strategies or as a new business opportunity.

The **National Institute for Mental Health**, sees Wellness Management as widely applicable, have instigated a national programme called Shift ([www.shift.org.uk](http://www.shift.org.uk)) that promotes greater access to physical activity for those with learning difficulties.

**Primhe**, a charity that helps primary care professionals deliver the best mental health care, has already coined the term 'mental wealth'. It describes the cost of ignoring mental health and wellbeing issues, and the benefits of tackling them quickly.

Local experts such as Peter Brunskill, Principal Transport Planner (policy) at **Southampton City Council** and Amy Bristow, Workplace Travel Plan Co-ordinator of **Hampshire County Council**, are making cycling and walking to work part of personal Wellness Management. The strategy builds on Sport England's Everyday Sport Campaign and is backed by leading cycle brands, such as Giant.

Emily Mealey, Community and Volunteering Officer for the Thames and Solent region of **The National Trust**, has recognised the potential to use wellness concepts to promote volunteering.

**Plants for People** promotes the benefits of plants in the workplace. Colleen Smith sees tools such as well environment reviews as one way to educate people and organisations about the value of plants.

**Champneys**, which owns a chain of luxury spa hotels, recognises that corporate clients are open to acquiring wellness skills to enable them to be more resilient. The **Spa Business Association** says wellness is rapidly emerging as a big consumer need in the UK as people seek out life skills not just body treatments and a place to relax.

**The Sleep Council** promotes the benefits of getting a good night's sleep and is a supporter of Wellness Management. It says British people do not choose their beds with care and don't see sleeping as a skill that can be developed to provide greater energy and wellness.

In looking at trends in the way people behave and interact with technology, **Box**, an innovation partnership between EDS and London School of Economics, have discovered that some younger people are seeking work very much as part of life. Cliff Dennett, creative director, sums this up by the term "employee" not employee.

Wellness Management is rapidly taking off in the UK as leading organisations recognise the value of ensuring that their staff are physically and mentally well, and well managed enough to give their best at work and at home over the long term. Wellness Management is an attractive strategy since it gives staff the power and the tools to manage their own wellness rather than employers insisting they yield to an external process, such as a stress audit. Rising interest in Wellness Management is being matched by a strengthening infrastructure to support this new business function and a widening stakeholder group who are using it to develop their own organisation's prospects, from health spas to volunteering organisations. As business life becomes more complex and pressured, it's vital that people can manage their own wellness as well as being well-managed.

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