

*Fiona Craig has been a wellbeing advocate for two years and works at the **Scott Polar Research Institute...***



### **What attracted me to becoming a wellbeing advocate**

I believe it is really important for staff to feel supported, happy and part of a team. It is the key to a successful department. I felt by being a wellbeing advocate I could be part of improving the quality of working lives for all staff by providing initiatives and activities that help bring staff together despite their different areas of work.

### **Getting things started**

Initially it was hard to encourage staff to make the time to attend events so we started scheduling them over break times and lunch so that we could encourage people to see the benefit of participating in wellbeing events. Once we had run some successful events, people began asking when the next ones would be! We could then start to put on some more serious events, targeting mental health issues.

### **How wellbeing works at the Scott Polar Institute**

We have recently set up working group so that in addition to myself and the other wellbeing advocate, Rebecca Stancombe, we can help bring events to life. There are comment boxes in social spaces for people to provide feedback to the group so we can constantly monitor whether what we're doing is working.

We ensure that events are at different times of the day and take place on different days of the week enabling everyone to have the opportunity to attend something. We also have a variety of activities, ensuring that there's something for everyone. We have a Calendar of Wellbeing for the academic year and many of the events are seasonally linked. We have run a penguin Easter egg hunt through the Museum with cryptic clues hidden in eggs around the building, Deck the Doors, where people decorated their office doors for Christmas, A Question of SPRI and SPRIDE and during lockdown we ran SPRI through the keyhole. We have also held training sessions on mental health, Respect, equality and diversity.



*“ Wellbeing has become an integral part of our working life. We always consider it in our plans, policies and processes and more importantly it is acceptable to do so! ”*



*SPRI colleagues take part in SPRIDE – creating their own rainbow on the stairs*

### **Getting the word out there**

When people are inducted to SPRI they receive an induction booklet which includes the photographs and contact details of the wellbeing advocates so they know who to contact if they need assistance.

We have a calendar of wellbeing for the academic year and many of the events are seasonally linked which helps to create a real buzz about wellbeing and shows how embedded it is in general life at SPRI.

### **Roles for everyone**

I have found that the events are a great way to encourage people to take the lead in something they are good at. PhD students set the questions for the SPRI Easter Egg hunt and our Outreach Officers have held behind the scenes Gossip Tours of the Museum.

### **A message for potential wellbeing advocates**

It is a great opportunity to listen and be a part of supporting staff in the work environment.

You will help to promote dignity at work, share great ideas and useful tips for helping create a happy and healthy workplace. Being a wellbeing advocate will help create positive self-esteem and maintain good relationships.