



*Jane Batten has been a wellbeing advocate since the scheme launched and works at the **Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership...***

What attracted me to becoming a wellbeing advocate

I think I have a personal level of resilience, alongside wanting to help people. As a long server in the department I was already a natural point of contact for questions and becoming a wellbeing advocate was a natural progression from the Departmental Safety Officer role I held at the time.

How wellbeing works at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL)

We have two wellbeing advocates at CISL and a wellbeing group which consists of around ten people. Most of these people were those that already had an interest in wellbeing and were organising some events but didn't want to be wellbeing advocates. We meet once a month to plan the next couple of months of activities – we rotate the Chair and minute taker which means the pressure is not on any one person.

Don't be afraid to accept help from people who are interested in moving wellbeing forwards – you can't do everything yourself, you need support from others to move things forward.

Having a wellbeing group that can help with the promotion of events means that I have more time to listen to people's concerns and signposting colleagues who may be in crisis.

“ Wellbeing is key for employees' satisfaction and productivity. ”

We have run many different events at CISL; we aim to have at least one event take place each month. These have ranged from baking competitions to seasonal guided walks; from a Summer party to an unwanted Christmas present swap in January!

Since we have been home during lockdown, we have held a virtual quiz, which around half of the department attended.

The importance of senior staff support

Covid-19 has seen a huge shift towards recognising the importance of wellbeing in a crisis. The Executive Director, Education has now joined the wellbeing group and given it a central platform on the intranet and in the departmental newsletters. This has meant an increase in time spent on promoting wellbeing, but I would like to see the profile of wellbeing raised higher so that it is seen as mandatory and key for employees' satisfaction and productivity.

We have an all-staff meeting which takes place each term. The wellbeing group is usually given some time in the agenda to talk about the subject of wellbeing; it's great that management see wellbeing as an important enough topic to have a place in something as large as a departmental meeting.

A message for potential advocates

The networking events are great to attend because you get the chance to hear what others are doing and generate some ideas of your own. There are lots of different ways that Wellbeing Advocates act across their various departments; some might have a dedicated budget for wellbeing and others don't. You don't need a huge amount of money to be able to buy some props and drinks and cake throughout the year – try and keep things low key, the event is the most important thing.

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