**active-net 2022 tackles mental health awareness**

More than 100 industry delegates met in person at the annual active-net event at Eastwood Hall in Nottingham for the first time in two years last week (23/24 March), to discuss the importance of mental health awareness.

The business networking conference provided the base for Workplace Mental Wealth to launch its 2022 Workforce State of Mind survey during the key note panel session ‘Making Wellbeing Our Goal’, which highlighted a slight rise in mental health distress since last year. Educational breakout sessions then covered Wellbeing of our Workforce, Wellbeing in our Communities and Wellbeing of our Existing and New Customers.

The theme continued into the evening, with SAS Who Dares Wins star, Jamie Cartwright, as the after dinner speaker. Cartwright, who is the owner of Hatton Boxing, co-founder of BOX12 fitness studio and mental health campaigner, held the audience in complete silence as he spoke out about the affects of the abuse he suffered from paedophile football coach, Barry Bennell, and the powerful story of how he turned his life around.

David Monkhouse is Director of leading customer insight provider to the active leisure sector, Leisure-net, which organises the two-day event. He says: “It’s time the world gave the same importance to mental health as they do to physical health. You wouldn’t send a member of staff pool-side with a broken leg. However, mental health issues present differently for everyone; we can never make assumptions, so we need to ensure employers in our sector are doing everything they can to support staff.

“It’s why we were adamant that active-net 2022 took on a mental health awareness theme, and we hope every organisation in attendance will sign up to the Good Work pledge at workplacementalwealth.com, to assist them in working proactively to safeguard their staff’s mental wellbeing. Jamie's hard-hitting story really highlighted the damage that is done when things go wrong. No one should have to experience that trauma, and we hope active-net 2022 put a spotlight on some of things our sector can be doing to prevent and protect from risk, as well as providing valuable help when it's needed.”

The active-net events are aimed at all health, fitness and leisure industry operators and suppliers, with a focus on the public sector, whether trusts, local authorities or universities/colleges. As well as the educational element, the conference also includes one-to-one buyer supplier meetings and a networking programme.

Feedback from delegates, who were excited to resume face-to-face meetings, was really positive, with many praising Leisure-net’s ‘very well organised and seamless event’, stating they had enjoyed some ‘really positive meetings’. Feedback also commended the ‘excellent panels’ and confirmed how relevant both the event theme and meetings, ‘all in a friendly, relaxed and collaborative environment’, had been to future development.

active-net Scotland will take place at Crieff Hydro in Perthshire on 7 September. Delegates can register here: https://active-net.org/scotland. active-net UK 2023 will once again be held at Eastwood Hall in Nottingham on 29 - 30 March. For further information/bookings visit active-net.org

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**Editor’s note:**

Leisure-net Solutions is the leading provider of Customer Insight, Business Intelligence and Consultation services to the UK’s active leisure, fitness and cultural services industries. Leisure-net helps leading industry organisations, local authorities and Trusts, as well as private sector operators and suppliers, to understand their customers’ and clients’ needs and aspirations, and to deliver innovative service and health improvement initiatives.