

City firm offers staff free wellbeing course

Edinburgh firm Alliance Creative partnered with health specialists Wellness EQ to offer its staff and their families a free wellbeing course to help their workforce readjust following the pandemic.

Running for three months, the nutritional programme is designed to both improve lifestyle habits and boost mental health.

Steve Johnstone, co-founder of the leading Scottish creative collective, looked into the plan to assist his own reset following Covid-19 but then decided to roll it out across the Edinburgh-headquartered firm – at no cost to his employees.

“As a result of the pandemic, I like many others struggled to find the right balance of activity, healthy eating and work,” he said.

“At the beginning of the year, everyone seemed to be reinvigorated, and determined to give it their all and to make up for all that lost time. As I found out by the end of the first quarter, this just wasn’t sustainable physically and mentally.

“Personally, I’d lost structure in my work and home life and as a result my health started suffering through bad dietary and exercise choices. By chance I met a lady from Wellness EQ at a networking event and I was interested to know more, and

desperate to make significant changes to my lifestyle.

“What started out as a purely selfish exploration into a better lifestyle, I also started to think about our staff and whether this could benefit them as well.

“While the Alliance has been one of the pioneers of the work-from-home model since 2011, it does still take some readjustment to work in that environment with regards to taking regular breaks from your desks, getting fresh air and exercise and of course making the right informed food choices.

“Having spoken to our team on numerous occasions during lockdowns and the post-pandemic recovery period, it was clear we had all struggled in one way or another to get back some type of balance, so it was a no brainer to see if we could try to address this in some way.

“The 12-week nutrition programme has been offered to our core staff members and their families free of charge, asking only for their commitment to make the plan work for them. It has been a tough ask to change ingrained eating habits but the re-education aspect of what we consume and how it affects our bodies is truly eye-opening, completely changing our perception of what constitutes a healthy diet as advised by government, pharmaceuticals and the food industry.”

Alliance Creative co-founder Dan Hay was one of the first to sign up.

He said: “The main thing I’m looking to take from this is a bit of education on how to better look after my health via what I put into my body.

“Longer term I want to make the things we learn along the way stick and get out of the bad lifestyle habits I have been in for years, stay fit and motivated which will hopefully benefit me personally and professionally.”

This week saw World Mental Health Day help raise awareness of mental health issues around the globe and Issy Warrack of Wellness EQ said: "There is a big opportunity for companies to reduce mental and physical health issues by up to 80% with targeted intervention.

"Industry data shows that FTSE 100 companies who prioritise employee engagement and wellbeing outperform the rest by 10%

"At Wellness EQ, we offer a range of bespoke services helping the workforce understand how they can positively impact their physical and mental health, improving not only their own work performance but also that of their team and the business overall, no matter how busy they are."

