

"Inspiring Active Lives"

Introduction

Richard is the Workforce Manager for Wesport and his role entails ensuring that the coaches, volunteers and sports administration staff have the appropriate skills to increase the number of people who are physically active. Wesport is a County Sports Partnership and a registered charity. Our vision is to contribute to improving lives in the West of England through championing, developing and delivering sport and physical activity.



Image: NAME: Richard, Workforce Manager for Wesport

How did you get started in your career?

I started working in sport when I began volunteering as a Squash Coach when I was 15. I then gained my coaching qualification at 16. I stumbled into Sports Development after completing a Geography degree and then gaining summer work on a Children's sport and activity programme. This then led to being a community sports coach with the local authority.

Can you outline a typical work day?

There are not many days that are the same but I might typically meet with colleagues in the morning about an upcoming funding bid for a project we wish to start, then spend time gathering evidence for that project and costing how much it will be to deliver. At lunchtime we regularly have a half hour game of table tennis on an outside table near our office. I regularly work evenings, delivering courses and training to new and current coaches.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I basically work within my hobby and passion, so being able to talk with sports people about sport and influence others to realise the benefits of leading a physically active life is very rewarding. Being able to assist people to discover new skills can also be very exciting, especially when you meet them further on in their journey and discover what they are up to now.

What skills are important for anyone wishing to start in your profession?

On top of your knowledge of the sector you have to be good at relationship building, understanding the needs of different audiences and being flexible and creative in your approach. The ability to constantly learn and re-assess is vital as funding and the priorities for sports and physical activity are regularly changing.

What main personal attributes do you think is important for your type of job?

The ability to engage with others at varying levels is crucial. All of our work involves people so communication skills is crucial through both face to face and electronic methods.

Do you have any tips or suggestions on how young people and adults can enter your industry?

Sports Development can be a highly competitive field to get into. Our advice is to go and gain all the soft skills and knowledge by giving up your time and volunteering with different organisations. Get to know as many people as

What career progression opportunities are available in your business/sector?

Many organisations within the Sports Development sector are fairly small so progression often happens by changing organisations, however with organisations being small there is also the opportunity for quick progression.

What trends do you predict for your industry within the next 10 years? E.g. is it a growing market requiring more young entrants

This is an unknown, a lot of organisations rely on government funding and money from the National Lottery to undertake their activities. Funding cycles are generally about 3 years, so long term projections are difficult.

General words of advice

Get involved in your local sports clubs, help run them, gain a coaching qualification, give up your time and hopefully it will pay you back later on.

Further contact/information

www.wesport.org.uk