



Fellows Broadsheet

The Institute of Hospitality Fellows Broadsheet is a monthly thought-leadership article written by a member of our esteemed College of Fellows. Celebrating the wealth of professionalism, knowledge and expertise within our diverse, worldwide hospitality family. The Fellows Broadsheet is published on the first Sunday of every month, exclusively for members.

The importance of nutrition and wellbeing

Ben Purton FIH has been a member of the Institute since 2019 and an active member of the IoH's London branch. He is currently Restaurant Operations Manager for Harrods Restaurants, London and has been a Chef for nearly 30 years.

In this edition of the Fellows Broadsheet, Ben focuses on, the importance of nutrition and wellbeing and how getting it right helps balance the mind and body.

Background

The emergence of wellbeing for ourselves, our family and our teams had been gathering pace pre-Covid but became an urgent need during the pandemic. For so many it highlighted how little many of us knew about the topic and what it meant.

The role that nutrition and diet plays in wellbeing is unquestionable. The relationship between the body and mind is so indelibly linked that looking after your physical and mental health is vital for long term success.

What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy' which is true. However, when dissected it has a much broader reach. It includes other things such as how satisfied people are with their current situation and life. Their sense of belonging and purpose and ultimately how 'in control' they feel.

That's why the Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdown highlighted this area. Many felt they were no longer in control of their routines, which were either severely altered or completely removed.

The 8 Dimensions of Wellness



What is Nutrition?

Nutrition is the biochemical and physiological process by which an organism uses food to support its life. Yes, we are the organism and everything we put into our bodies has an impact on our functionality, performance, health and of course, our wellbeing.

Just like a car, our bodies need looking after. Regular fuel, MOT's, oil to keep the moving parts working, and some TLC. You cannot drive fast and furious every minute of every day as you will wear out the composite parts. The occasional wax and polish from time to time is also recommended to make it look and feel better.



Causes and impact on the Hospitality Industry

Within the Hospitality Industry I have seen so many people first-hand affected by poor diet, working excessive hours, and abuse of their mind and body. After many discussions it is clear that we don't know enough about wellbeing and nutrition. And crucially we don't know where to look to get a better understanding of these important topics.

2020 & 2021 have been tough - mentally, and physically tough. We have seen an obvious decrease in wellness across so many parts of our industry.

I personally have had so many 'what can I do' calls where colleagues, industry friends and family were not sure how to cope. It's been well documented how Covid has affected our industry but the wellbeing of the people that make our industry what it is, could be the greatest challenge that we have to face.

I knew I was not fully prepared for the impact of the pandemic. It's easier when things are going well, and advice focuses on the next career move. It's not easy when it feels like you are holding someone's delicate soul in your hands.

I reached out to an amazing industry contact who I'd met in a local networking group called BNI called Stephanie Hutchings. She runs The Resilient Workplace, and I attended a Mental Health First Aid course. My own mind was opened, and the door remains wedged open. It was easily one of the best courses I've ever attended and at such a critical time. My advice: everyone should attend Mental Health First Aid course.

Steph explained: "Physical and mental health are so closely entwined. Eating well can not only improve your mood and overall wellbeing, but there is also evidence that a better diet can actually contribute to the prevention of numerous mental health conditions including depression."

When chatting about mental health struggles with Andy Aston, Wellness Ambassador for The Craft Guild of Chefs, he said: "People should not feel embarrassed about it. At the end of the day, life is a journey, and it is not a weakness to ask for help. You might experience something you do not understand and need help navigating through it. Today there are so many individuals and organisa-

tions who can help support us and they are just a phone call away."

Andy also advised that a good starting point would be to seek guidance from an employer, start a conversation with a colleague, friend, loved one even a stranger. Take small steps. There are also some great charities and hospitality initiatives like Kelly's Cause, The Burnt Chef Project, Beyond Food Foundation and Beder who are all collectively working together to support, advise, train and give opportunities to so many who are struggling. Talking can be the most powerful thing in the world and in most instances the other person can relate to your problems. Helping you realise you are not alone.

The mental health and general wellbeing of ourselves and our teams will have the biggest impact on our industry over the next 5-10 years. Get it right and we have a chance to embrace the amazing. Get it wrong and wellbeing will be an issue alongside Covid and Brexit.

Quick tips

- Make time for your own wellbeing and to know what your body and mind need to succeed
- Ask your employer if they have a Mental Health First Aider and if they don't, ask them to consider getting one. Maybe it could be you so put yourself forward
- Keep a look out for your colleagues, friends and family. Ask them: Are they OK? Then ask them again. Asking twice really works, so do it
- We can all make a difference to the wellbeing | of ourselves and those around us. A smile costs nothing but a frown gives you wrinkles
- Sometimes, all you need is a quiet moment and to breathe. Don't forget to do the easy things and do them often
- Try to eat well and be mindful what you put into your body. It will help your mind and body function well and effectively.





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References

[Andy Aston - click here](#)

[Stephanie Hutchings - click here](#)

[Kellys Cause - click here](#)

[The Resilient Workplace - click here](#)

[Burnt Chef Project - click here](#)

[Beyond Food - click here](#)

[Beder - click here](#)

[Personal well-being in the UK - click here](#)

[The Eatwell Guide - click here](#)

[Government wellbeing & health policy - click here](#)

Further resources, guidance and advice

[Craft Guild of Chefs - click here](#)

[NHS UK - click here](#)

[Nutrition.org.uk - click here](#)

[The Resilient Workplace | Mental Health First Aid - click here](#)

[Fair Kitchens movement - click here](#)

UK policies and data

The most recent annual declines in personal wellbeing in the UK were the greatest we have seen since we started measuring personal wellbeing.

UK National Statistics | Measuring National Wellness | April 2020 to March 2021

Life satisfaction	0.27 point decline	↓
Anxiety	0.26 point increase	↑
Happiness	0.17 point decline	↓
Feeling that things in life are worthwhile	0.15 point decline	↓

About the author

Ben Purton FIH lives and works in the UK and is the Operations Manager for the restaurants at the world-famous Harrods department store, London, Executive Chef for Thyme and Plaice and owner of the Ben Purton Consultancy.

He took up the role of Conseiller Culinaire Great Britain for the prestigious Chaine des Rotisseurs in 2021 and heads up the successful Young Chef Competition.

After washing pots at the age of 16, Ben chose to become a Chef and join the hospitality industry. At 17 years old he began his life's journey of training and perfecting to be the best Chef he could be. He hasn't looked back since. His career has led him to work at luxury London hotels such as, the Carlton Tower Hotel, the Hyatt Regency London, The Churchill, The Royal Horseguards Hotel and the Royal Lancaster Hotel as well as Selfridges De-partment Store and in-house at Goldman Sachs Bank.

As Director of Food & Beverages at the Churchill, Royal Horseguards and Royal Lancaster hotels he brought the chef, back of house and service teams together and proved that they really are stronger as one team.

He continues to be very active in our industry, where his life's mantra is: "To help as many people as I can, in whatever way I can, be the very best they can be." Or as Ben would also say: "Just be a bit better today than you were yesterday and repeat tomorrow."



Ben Purton FIH

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