

ISMA^{UK} Annual Report 2024

As we approach the end of 2024, it's time to reflect on the year we've been through and give you feedback on how it went for ISMA^{UK}. It was a special year in which we marked 50 years since the organisation was founded. With seven branches around the world, we can be proud of our combined achievements over the past 50 years. In this special year, we launched our inaugural [Stress Management Awards](#). These Awards were open to businesses and organisations of all sizes – see full report below.

Our 2024 theme was ***Campaigning to reduce stress and improve wellbeing*** and we focused on development and collaboration, both internally and externally. We look forward to building further links, extending relationships, and adding many more connections in 2025.

ISMA^{UK} Interactive Webinars

Our Online Interactive Webinars have seen another successful year, with four webinars held on differing subjects: *Shattering the Silence About Menopause* with Helen Tomlinson and Adam Pavey; *Thoughts on Resilience and Change* with Patrick Regan and Laura Ginesi; *How to Thrive in an Accelerating World* with Charlotte Kemp and Emma Pennycard; and *No-Fluff Yoga*, practising yoga at your desk, with Jamie Abrams and Becca Clayton. We were fortunate to have such amazing speakers – thank you to them all. The first interactive webinar of 2025 on Thursday 23rd January will feature Paul Davison of PPWD (our sponsors this year) speaking on *Compassionate Safety*. Details are on the [webinars](#) page.

International Stress Awareness Week

Held between 4th– 8th November, the highlight of [International Stress Awareness Week](#) was our one-day [Online Global Stress & Wellbeing Summit](#) on Stress Awareness Day, Wednesday 6th November. We attracted the highest attendance we have had for an Online Summit, with 50 or more watching each of five sessions on highly relevant topics for our times –

- **Beyond the Half Century: Reflecting on the Past, Charting the Future**
- **Community Care: How Organisations Champion Health, Safety and Wellbeing**
- **Building Resilience: Nourishing Your Body with the Right Foods and Supplements**
- **Fostering a Healthy Workplace Culture: Proven Strategies that Work**
- **AI and the Future: Minimising Stress in the Light of Technological Advancement**

Our expert speakers included ISMA^{UK} Patron, Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE, 50th Anniversary Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health, Manchester Business School; Dr Fiona Meechan, Leadership Specialist; Kay Allen OBE, Campaign Director, Age Irrelevance; Alastair Greener, Event MC, Communications Speaker, TV Presenter; Paul Davison, CEO and Founder, PPWD; Richard Martin, CEO, The Mindful Business Charter; Malcolm Staves, Global Vice-President, Health & Safety, L'Oréal; Carole Smets, Group Health and Safety Director, Pernod Ricard; Laura Mogollon Garcia, VP of Global

Risk, Environment, Safety & Health, Essity; Sarmado Sibley, Raw Food Coach & Chef; Martin Jervis, Chief Operating Officer, Thrive Mental Wellbeing; Janet Leighton, Director of Happiness, Timpson Group; Kris Hall, CEO/Founder, The Burnt Chef Project; Paul Hargreaves, Chief Empowerment Officer, Cotswold Fayre; Ruth Pott MSc, LLM, FCIPD, Head of Workplace Wellbeing, BAM UK & IRL; Charlotte Kemp, The Futures Alchemist; Tony Reeves, Lead Partner, Digitising Defence, Deloitte UK; and Julie Holmes, AI Expert, Speaker and Author.

Our thanks go to them all for making our 2024 Summit such a success.

Ticket holders are able to watch the Summit sessions in the ISMA^{UK} Hub until the end of the year.

Sponsorship

We are grateful for the support of [PPWD](#) as principal sponsor of ISMA^{UK}'s 50th Anniversary Year, of the Online Global Stress & Wellbeing Summit, and lead sponsor of the inaugural Stress Management Awards. Their founder and CEO Paul Davison was also the moderator on the *Community Care: How Organisations Champion Health, Safety and Wellbeing* panel at the Summit. PPWD share our core values, beliefs, and vision for reducing stress and enhancing health and wellbeing. They specialise in the facilitation of programmes that bridge non-technical skills from trauma management to investigations, learning reviews, fair culture, wellbeing, and leadership.

We are looking forward to building our relationship with them in 2025 and would like to thank them for their generous support this year.

ISMA^{UK} Stress Management Awards

To mark our 50th year, we established the inaugural Stress Management Awards, specifically designed to recognise businesses, organisations and individuals who are committed to reducing workplace stress and improving the mental health and wellbeing of their employees.

The three winners of the International Stress Management Association's (ISMA^{UK}) inaugural Stress Management Awards were announced at ISMA^{UK}'s Global Online Stress & Wellbeing Summit on 6th November. The winners are: Ballyclare High School, Northern Ireland, with special mention of Dr Michelle Rainey (winner); Dr Elaine Smith, Creating Compassionate Workplaces (runner up); and Simon Collyer, Sailing Wellness and the Association of Pension & Benefits Claimants (runner up).

Ballyclare High School has a values-driven ethos. Relationships are built upon aspirant attitudes and teamwork where both participation and excellence are celebrated.

At **Creating Compassionate Workplaces**, Dr Elaine Smith works with leaders to build resilience and help them lead with compassion, fostering empathy, connection and wellbeing in their workplaces.

Simon Collyer is a social entrepreneur and sailor who founded **Sailing Wellness** as a 'blue health' project. It helps people with PTSD, mental health problems, and physical injuries.

All applicants were invited to join as [Corporate members](#) or [Charity members](#) of ISMA^{UK} at a special one-off 50% discount on their first year's membership.

The applications were evaluated by a panel of four judges, all experts in aspects of stress management, wellbeing, performance and motivation in the workplace and other environments. They were led by Laura Ginesi BSc (Hons), PhD, PGCE, PGCert, FHEA, FISMA as Chair; and the others were: Dr Steve McKeown MB BS MRCPsych FFOM; Jane Thomas, Director, Premier Life Skills, Senior Practitioner in Motivational Maps; and Becca Clayton, Founder and Director, Tonic Wellbeing.

The judges had a difficult task but did an excellent job, as they awarded three worthy winners, who are delighted to be recognised for their contributions to stress management in this way. A big thank you to our valued judges.

The benefits of entering for ISMA^{UK}'s Stress Management Awards include demonstrating how much you value and appreciate your employees' achievements, whilst recognising leadership and innovation; encouraging and improving morale and motivation; boosting productivity; and improving staff retention. After a highly successful first year, the Awards will be back in 2025, and information will be available on our [Stress Management Awards page](#) in the new year.

ISMA^{UK} Products

Wellbeing & Resilience at Work Training Programme

This is our flagship product. The main objective of the programme is to help participants review basic areas of health to manage stress and ensure wellbeing is in balance. It can be used in small groups, online, or in the workplace. ISMA^{UK}'s Patron, **Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE**, commented: *"It combines very accessible, useful information with interactive sessions. It is a supportive guide and toolkit for individuals, HR and occupational health professionals"*.

The programme is a boon for anyone who is planning a course but has no time to prepare. ISMA^{UK} have done it for you! For more information and to purchase a copy go [here](#). ISMA^{UK} members enjoy a discounted rate.

Start Living Stop Stressing Training Programme

This [programme](#) can be used as an interactive workshop, as an interactive group session or in one-to-one sessions. The objective is to guide participants to recognise areas of their wellbeing that require attention and provide them with tools and techniques that, if implemented, could generate improvements in their wellbeing.

Stress Journals

You can access *The International Journal of Stress Prevention and Wellbeing* from our website. It is a peer-reviewed journal, sponsored by ISMA^{UK}, which publishes articles on all aspects of the theory, research and practice of stress prevention and wellbeing. Free access to this journal is a membership benefit. You will also find details of two other journals on the [same page](#).

ISMA^{UK} Ultimate Stress Relief Playlist

This playlist was originally compiled to accompany a 2023 Summit panel on *Using the Power of Music to Reduce Stress and Improve Wellbeing*. It includes over 20 specially chosen pieces of music which help reduce stress and improve wellbeing. It's on [YouTube](#) and can also be accessed from our [Free Downloadable Resources](#) page.

ISMA^{UK} Scotland

ISMA^{UK} Scotland has been developing apace during 2024, under the proactive leadership of Maggie Stevens. They are holding regular talks, with the last of this year held on 25th November, when Alexander Haener spoke on *Breath: The On and Off Switch for Stress*. Scotland also hosted an online

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Christmas event for all members and friends of ISMA, both in the UK and internationally, on Monday 9th December. For information about ISMA Scotland and their plans for 2025, contact Maggie at ismaukscotland22@gmail.com.

News from ISMA International

Italy

One of ISMA^{UK}'s [Ambassadors](#) is in Italy - Dr Pier Michele Mandrillo, who is a Lecturer at the Universities of Foggia, Chieti and Tor Vergata Rome. The 8th Annual Italian Stress Awareness Day was held on Friday 8th November in Milan. The programme, entitled *Extraclinical Management in Aesthetic Medicine and Dentistry: Transforming Stress into Patient-Client Wellbeing*, was part of the broad scientific and clinical programme of the IAPEM-ASMOE International Congress on 8th-9th November. Coordinated by Dr Mandrillo remotely, the plenary session saw the participation of over 1,200 doctors and staff members of various gold-professional teams from all over Italy. This was both a national and international success for ISMA. You can read a report of the event [here](#).

Netherlands

There is a new chair at ISMA Netherlands, Dr Rendel D de Jong PhD. At present, as a member of the research committee of the Dutch branch of EMCC, his main focus is on evidence-based practice in coaching. He has developed a workshop on recovery for ISMA Netherlands. Dr de Jong shared with us a couple of events that the Netherlands branch held this year: in June, Professor Dr Erik Peper spoke on *Tech Stress: the negative impact of technology on our health and strategies to cope with them*, and in August, Dr Lara Solms presented the results of her PhD study on coaching. Details can be found [here](#).

Australia

Ian Shakespeare became the new Chair of ISMA Australia in 2023. This year he has been focusing on forming a local committee – he is talking to three experienced psychologists who work across industry. Ian is also developing a constitution that will be acceptable to the Australian Charities and Not For Profits Commission (ACNC) and will then register ISMA Australia with the ACNC. The plan for 2025 will be to expand ISMA's presence, foster partnerships and enhance member engagement. As part of these initiatives, he will be promoting ISMA Australia to industry. Contact Ian at ianshakespeare0@gmail.com

ISMA Pacific and Oceania

This branch was set up by Veronica Connaughton in 2023, having previously chaired the Australia branch. As Director, ISMA Pacific and Oceania and Regional Chair, Australia-Japan-New Zealand, Veronica is working to extend the reach of ISMA in the Southern Hemisphere. This year, she has made some promising contacts in Japan and New Zealand which she will continue to develop in 2025. She welcomes enquiries from individuals and organisations who would like to connect with ISMA in these countries at veronica.connaughton@gmail.com.

ISMA^{UK} on Social Media

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We had a strong social media presence during International Stress Awareness Week and we have extended our social media profile on a regular basis through the year too. This has been possible thanks to the efforts of our social media specialist, Noam Dvir, and her volunteer team who have worked tirelessly this year creating and uploading posts on LinkedIn, Facebook and X. Social media certainly raises our profile and attracts followers, so we have high hopes that there will continue to be a steady increase in awareness of ISMA^{UK} and what we do, and in the number of followers we attract.

Our Valued Members

Members are our lifeblood, as without them there would be no ISMA^{UK}. We're always looking for opportunities to grow the membership, whether through events, referrals or promotion, with the help of like-minded organisations. The most popular membership classes are [Professionals](#) and [Associates](#). We would like to develop more [Corporates](#) and [Charities](#) as members and will focus on doing more to achieve this in 2025.

A Big Thank You ...

There are some wonderful people who give their time to ISMA^{UK} in various ways, and the year cannot pass without thanking them all for their help in 2024. I would like to mention -

Our **Trustees** for their role in supporting ISMA^{UK} and steering its way forward

Our **Ambassadors** who help to raise the profile of ISMA^{UK}

The **A-Team** - the people who offer creative thinking at online meetings on a monthly basis and follow through with new ideas and directions we could take. There is always a place at the table for new A-Team members!

Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE, our esteemed patron, who has supported us throughout the year.

Stephen Fry, the well-known actor, writer and presenter, who has been happy to support ISMA^{UK} and his testimonial appears prominently on our website.

Claire Parkinson, our administrator, for her continued commitment and invaluable help in ensuring everything runs smoothly and helping to take ISMA^{UK} forward.

Noam Dvir, who has been super-active in increasing our presence and activity on social media.

Maggie Stevens Maggie is one of our [Ambassadors, and the coordinator of ISMA Scotland](#). Under Maggie's guidance, ISMA Scotland continued to grow in 2024, with new members joining all the time. You don't have to live in Scotland to be a member, so if you'd like to join, get in touch with [Maggie](#).

Alina Tudor of WebPro, who has made countless updates to our website during the year.

Louise McKenzie of LM Design who is responsible for the excellent logos and imagery that play a big part in the way that ISMA^{UK} comes across online.

Helen Johns, an independent marketing consultant for ISMA^{UK}, played a pivotal role in supporting the Summit. Throughout the year, she has worked tirelessly, crafting and distributing press releases while keeping a vigilant eye on the website to ensure everything ran smoothly.

Alastair Greener of Present Yourself who is the Stress Summit MC every year. He brings all the sessions together and provides excellent continuity. He is generous with his time, so a big thank you, Alastair, for your support.

Susan Kabani of Ugenie, our IT partners for both the Stress Summit and The Hub. Without Susan's support neither of these would be possible.

Our Partners

We have increased the level of interaction with our three existing partners: the HSE through their [Working Minds](#) campaign; [Make A Difference Events](#), who are happy to feature blog articles from ISMA^{UK} on their website; and the [PRCA](#), who have uploaded our free downloadable resources on their Mental Health Toolkit page, and featured a blog article written by Carole Spiers. Details of partner events can be found [here](#).

ISMA^{UK} Website

This is updated frequently, with news of ISMA^{UK} events and changes. A new page was added this year, to promote our inaugural [Stress Management Awards](#), and this page will be updated for 2025 in the new year. Our [History and Background](#) page was also updated. And, of course, the [Home page](#) changes regularly. We added a new membership category for charities, and details can be found [here](#). The 2024 Stress & Wellbeing Summit programme and speaker pages will still be available, together with Summit programmes from previous years, when they are archived under [Past Events](#)

The Hub

The Hub is an online community forum for ISMA^{UK} members, health professionals, and individuals with an interest in stress, mental health and wellbeing. It is designed to be a valuable library and information resource and offers an opportunity for supporters of ISMA^{UK} to share information on a wide range of relevant issues. If you have any suggestions for items that could be added, please let us know at admin@isma.org.uk.

Our Theme for 2025

Our theme for 2025 is ***Optimising Employee Wellbeing through Strategic Stress Management***. Strategic stress management is essential for enhancing employee wellbeing, and it must be grounded in ethical, values-based actions. Leaders play a key role in setting the tone, while managers are crucial in recognising and addressing workplace stress. Actions should align with established standards for managing stress effectively, supporting a broader industry goal: to create healthy, positive workplace cultures where employees thrive.

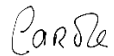
We will be playing our part, reaching out and collaborating with businesses, other organisations and individuals who are working to reduce stress and improve lives. We also support our members who work tirelessly to combat the incidence of stress and mental health issues and develop effective solutions across the workplace and in society.

Season's Greetings

And so 2025 beckons! At ISMA^{UK}, we are looking forward to going full steam ahead in the new year and to opening up many more doors of opportunity. May I wish you all a relaxing and restorative festive season.

Page | 7 It is a privilege to lead the Association into the next 50 years and I look forward to sharing with you all the activities we are busy planning. Hopefully many of you can become involved in some way, however small, it all helps.

With best wishes



Carole Spiers
Chair
ISMAUK

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