



New European Lead appointed by the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) and the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL)

IIMHL/ IIDL is delighted to announce that Sean Russell has been appointed as our European Lead. Sean is taking over the role from Steve Appleton (incoming President and CEO) who has been undertaking the role since 2019.

Sean is currently the Co-Investigator for the UK based Midlands Engine Mental Health and Productivity Pilot, a partnership of Midlands universities, local authorities, and mental health charity Mind. The initiative was set up to help Midlands' employers of all sizes, to improve workplace mental health and wellbeing and increase productivity. In his previous role with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) he led the COVID-19 response assisting the Regional Convenor to reduce the stubborn transmission of case levels and also focused on workplace COVID-19 safety.

Sean, a retired Police Superintendent with 27 years' service, has extensive experience working across public sector agency and organisations spanning NHS, social care, government departments, community associations and the independent and voluntary sector across large geographic footprints. In recent years, he was the Implementation Director and Head of Thrive West Midlands leading the development and roll-out of the Mental Health Commission Action plan. He was the founder of Thrive at Work and led the regional response to its implementation. Sean has committed much of his working career to finding ways of developing partnerships and initiatives to reduce the burden of mental ill health, improve people's lives, and encourage healthier more productive communities through community and workplace wellbeing.

Steve Appleton, current European Lead and incoming President and CEO said: "I am delighted to welcome Sean as IIMHL/IIDL's new European Regional Lead. Sean brings a wealth of expertise and knowledge from his previous roles, including leading population public mental health and wellbeing and wider public health work. He has a network of contacts across Europe and the UK. I am looking forward to him joining our team from the start of 2022 and to working with him to advance the aims and mission of our organisation."

Sean will continue in his current role at Midlands Engine Mental Health and Productivity Pilot whilst spending a proportion of his time dedicated to the European Regional Lead role. Professor Guy Daly, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Coventry University and Sean's current employer said:

"I am really proud to see that Sean has been appointed to this role. Coventry University is keen to support the work that Sean will undertake within the IIMHL/IIDL. As a global university, we recognise the importance of bringing leaders together from across the world to generate innovation and the rapid transfer of knowledge. We are also committed to supporting the strategic leadership ambition which seeks to grow the emerging talent for the future in these really important areas of work."

Sean Russell said: "Being appointed to this role is a great privilege and opportunity and I am very much looking forward to taking up the mantle of European Lead. I have always had a keen interest in public mental health, and I look forward to continuing IIMHL/IIDL's vital work to bring positive change and leadership to its members and individuals. I am excited at the prospect of working with existing liasions and developing new strategic partnerships across Europe.