



**September 2024**

### **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT PROVIDED BY PLAYER ASSOCIATIONS**

**Support helplines:** Most player associations provide 24 hour confidential helpline support for a range of mental health issues which can be rapidly followed-up by one-to-one sessions with qualified psychiatrists or counsellors. This service is on offer to members of the RPA (Rugby Players Association), PCA (Professional Cricketers Association), LMA (League Managers Association), PFA (Professional Footballers Association), PFA Scotland, PJA (Professional Jockeys Association), PDPA (Professional Darts Players Association), WPBSA (World Professional Billiards & Snooker Association) and the European Tour. The support often extends to former players too and in some cases, immediate family members.

The PFA also has a nationwide network of counsellors (270+ counsellors on the network which includes former players) available for all members.

**Player Welfare staff members:** The PFA have a dedicated Wellbeing department who deliver Emotional Wellbeing workshops at Clubs whilst other sports have a network of Personal Development Managers with regular access to players and can signpost them to relevant mental health support networks. The PCA has dedicated Mental Health Ambassadors whilst the PJA has employed its own Performance Consultant who is a former jockey as well as Clinical Psychologists available through IJF rehab centres. PFA Scotland have a Player Support Officer whilst the LMA has a Head of Psychology and Mental Health and Wellbeing Manager and the NPA have a Director of Player Services and access to two Sports Psychologists.

**Education, training and online resources:** Many player associations provide face-to-face mental wellbeing, resilience training and mental health first aid training both at Academy and Club level covering various issues such as identity, resilience, addiction, bereavement, career transition and injury. They also have dedicated online education resources to help break down stigma in dedicated sections of their websites or Member areas. Many player facing staff have now completed qualifications to better support players.

**Dealing with Online Abuse:** With an increasing amount of players receiving racist, sexist or homophobic abuse on social media, player associations have also provided further support:

- The PPF has produced a set of [Social Media Guidance](#) for its members
- The PFA has produced a set of guidelines and advice for their members suffering abuse. [Find out more](#)
- The PJA now have a dedicated abuse reporting service for jockeys and they co-funded short film 'The Fall' which focuses on jockeys' mental health and the impact of social media abuse. [Find out more](#)

- The PCA and PFA Scotland deliver Social Media awareness workshops to highlight how to deal with online abuse and how to keep yourself safe online.
- The RPA delivers social media education, and support to players, in conjunction with the B5 Consultancy as part of the RPA Academy Induction Day and via the RPA Gain Line programme.

**Mental Wellbeing Apps:** PFA Scotland has a Support app with relevant contacts and a self-referral form and self help information. The PCA and PDPA offer the Thrive app, an NHS approved app which has been transformed into a custom-made support mechanism for players whilst RL Cares has launched a Wellbeing Portal.

**Female Player Wellbeing:** The issues facing female athletes are different from men and they have the challenge of their peak years of fertility coinciding with their peak years as an athlete. Player associations provide bespoke services to help and the PPF have produced a Maternity & Elite Sport Policy Paper to highlight best practice. [Find out more](#)

**Retired Player Wellbeing:** Players can struggle when their playing career ends. Many player associations have charity organisations which provide support to ensure the lifelong wellbeing of players. This role is carried out by the Professional Cricketers' Trust, Restart Rugby, Second Half Rugby, JETS (Jockeys Education & Training Scheme) and The After Academy supported by the PFA. The WRPA has also developed a Player Transition Programme in partnership with Healix Health and Nuffield Health which will support players to be 'life, work and sport ready' when transitioning to the next stage of their life.

#### **Charity Partnerships:**

**Sporting Chance** - The PFA, RPA, RL Cares, PCA, PJA, PDPA, WPBSA, WRPA and NPA work with Sporting Chance, a leading charity set up by Tony Adams which provides a 24hr helpline, access to counselling, education and residential treatment.

**Shining A Light On Suicide** – The LMA produced a film in partnership with the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, to raise awareness of free online suicide prevention training.

**Alzheimer's Society** - The PCA, LMA, RPA and WRPA have launched a pioneering support scheme for members affected by dementia with a specialised referral system for any past and present player or manager who has either been diagnosed with dementia or is caring for a loved one.

#### **FURTHER INFO ON PLAYER ASSOCIATION WELLBEING SERVICES**

PCA - <https://www.thepca.co.uk/health-welfare/>

PDPA - <https://pdpa.co.uk/your-wellbeing/>

PFA - <https://www.thepfa.com/players/wellbeing>

PFA Scotland - <https://pfascotland.co.uk/mental-health/>

PJA - [https://www.thepja.co.uk/service\\_cat/healthy-mind/](https://www.thepja.co.uk/service_cat/healthy-mind/)

RPA - <https://therpa.co.uk/lift-the-weight/>

**RL CARES - <https://rlplayersportal.co.uk/>**

**WPBSA - <https://wpbsa.com/players/support/mental-health-support/>**

*For more information on the PPF's work on Mental Health or for relevant player association contacts, please contact Simon Taylor [simon@ppf.org.uk](mailto:simon@ppf.org.uk) 07726 627422 or visit <https://www.ppf.org.uk/resources/mental-health/>*