



September 2019

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT PROVIDED BY PLAYER ASSOCIATIONS

The following support services and campaigns demonstrate the work that is being done by Player Associations across the UK. Our members are spending approximately £1 million each year on confidential mental health support to their current and former players.

Support helplines: Most Player Associations provide 24 hour 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) and the European Tour.

In addition, the PFA also has a nationwide network of more than 100 available for its members. The LMA has an in-house Consultant Performance Psychiatrist and is expanding its team to include psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists.

Charity Partnerships: The PFA, Rugby League and PDPA (Professional Darts Players Association) have established partnerships with Sporting Chance and other associations are now working more closely with the charity. Sporting Chance is a leading charity set up by Tony Adams MBE which provides a 24hr helpline, access to counselling, education and residential treatment for professional athletes.

A number of associations also work closely with and support the work of MIND, one of the leading mental health charities in the UK. The Welsh Rugby Players Association has teamed up with Hafal and Time to Change Wales to help end the stigma around mental health.

Mental Health Awareness Campaigns: A number of high profile welfare campaigns which tackle mental health have been led by the Players Associations. These are in addition to the regular education sessions on subjects like resilience, addiction, bereavement, career transition and injury.

Mind Matters (PCA) – An online educational resource for current and former cricketers to provide information on mental health, signs and symptoms and where to go for support. Featuring Andrew Flintoff and Monty Panesar.

Lift The Weight (RPA) – An online hub with resources, links and cases studies featuring a range of rugby players including Johnny Wilkinson and James Haskell, designed to remove the stigma surrounding mental health issues. In 2018, a second phase of the campaign was launched discussing inclusivity and acceptance featuring Sam Stanley and Heather Fisher.

Jockey Matters (PJA) – A series of educational videos including mental health and wellbeing aimed at raising awareness of mental health issues and the support available. They feature AP McCoy, Graham Lee, Jim Crowley and Mark Enright.

Don't Panic (PFA) – An ongoing mental health awareness campaign highlighting the support helpline and access to the safety net for academy players and parents.

Your Cue To Talk (WPBSA) – A campaign to raise awareness and support for players who may be struggling, featuring snooker players talking about their mental health.

Mental wellbeing education & resilience training: Many player associations including the PFA, PCA, PJA and RPA provide training programmes which focus on education around mental wellbeing and resilience training for athletes entering the sport and senior professionals.

The LMA Institute of Leadership and High Performance hosts a series of wellbeing events focussing on mental and emotional support, complemented by educational literature. LMA members also have access to a network of mentors.

Resilience training is delivered on the mandatory licensing courses for jockeys. The PFA runs Mental Health/Wellbeing workshops for players alongside its online safety net for academy players and parents. The RPA is delivering player led "Team Talk" sessions to encourage players to discuss their thoughts and experiences of various issues associated with being elite athletes. The PCA have worked with MIND to deliver training to young players entering the profession.

Player Welfare staff members: The PFA have a dedicated welfare officer Michael Bennett. Many other Player Associations have a network of Personal Development Managers who can provide players with access to relevant mental health support networks. As mentioned earlier, the LMA has its first in house Consultant Performance Psychiatrist. Similarly, Welsh rugby players have access to the WRPA psychologist.

Most Player Associations staff will have completed Mental Health First Aid training.

For more information on the PPF's work on Mental Health, including the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation, or for relevant player association contacts, please contact Simon Taylor simont@ppf.org.uk 07726 627422