

# Mental Health in Sport and Physical Activity



The journey we have been on as a sector

**2000** Former footballer Tony Adams sets up mental health charity [Sporting Chance](#) with support from the PFA and other people in football.

**2008** The [RPA](#) starts working with mental health experts Cognacity (then LPP Consulting) offering a confidential counselling service to members. Over 300 players have been supported since 2008.

**2011** The [PFA](#) launches their Player Welfare Department. It gives private and confidential emotional support to former and current members.

**2012** The PFA launches a national network of counsellors/therapists to support members' mental health.

The RPA (with Cognacity) provides a mental health education programme to all members. They work with former player Duncan Bell, who shares his experience of depression.

The England and Wales Cricket Board works with psychological services provider [Changing Minds](#) to make cricket the first sport to have a clinical psychologist in an elite sports workplace

**2013** The PFA launches a 24-hour telephone counselling helpline.

**2014** Our [Performance Matters in Elite Sport](#) report inspires discussion on mental health in elite sport.



**2015**

The Sport and Recreation Alliance, Professional Players Federation and Mind launch the [Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation](#). This inspires over 470 sports organisations to make a public commitment on promoting better mental health.

The Department for Culture, Media, and Sport launch [Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#). This is followed by Sport England's Towards an Active Nation. For the first time ever mental wellbeing is listed as one of five key outcomes highlighting the positive impact physical activity can have on mental health.

**2016**

First anniversary of the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation. There's a reception at Parliament with MPs who champion the charter.

**2017**

The PFA hosts the first annual [Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Conference](#) on the physical and emotional wellbeing of professional players. They also launch Player Welfare – Mental Health & Wellbeing Educational Workshops to all league clubs.

The RPA launches their [#LiftTheWeight](#) campaign. It aims to help remove the stigma around mental health problems and help RPA members to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life, both on and off the field. RPA also create a Player Welfare Education Strategy and set up a Wellbeing and Resilience training programme.

[Cardiff Metropolitan University](#) begins a study on psychological load and coping in professional rugby. It's supported by the RFU, PRL and RPA.

The government publishes Baroness Grey-Thompson's report into the [Duty of Care in Sport](#). The report identifies seven recommendations to creating safer and more effective coaching in the UK. There's a chapter dedicated to mental welfare.

Roundtables with DCMS and the Minister for Sport and Civil Society to review mental health provision in sport.

The government publishes [Thriving at Work: A review of mental health and employers](#). It offers guidelines to support mental health at work.

## 2018

Mind and the EFL announce the [On Your Side](#) partnership at the start of 2018/19 season

The [Mental Health and Elite Sport Action Plan](#) is published. It's developed with mental health and sport organisations to improve mental health support for elite and professional athletes.

EIS and UK Sport launch the [Mental Health Strategy for the High Performance System](#). It aims to create a positive mental health environment for everyone in the UK high performance system. The EIS creates a mental health team to put it into action.

The RFU, Premiership Rugby and RPA review the mental health support provided in professional rugby.

Changing Minds launch [Performing Well](#) – which puts mental wellbeing at the heart of sustained high performance.

## 2019

Edge Hill University and DOCIA sports release the first workplace survey of people working in UK sport.

Mind launches [Thriving at Work: a guide for the sport sector](#)

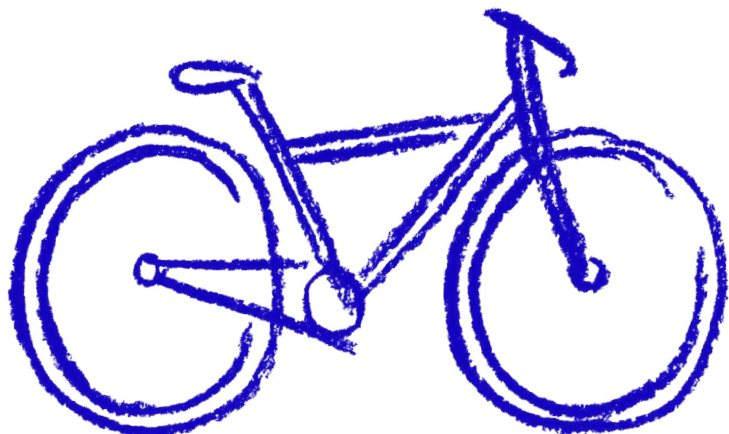
The Premier League introduces new regulations to ensure clubs have Mental and Emotional Wellbeing Action Plans and provide annual education sessions to all contracted players on mental health. Category 1 Academies also need to have a full-time Player Care lead dedicated to supporting players.

Through the Players' Helpline players can be assessed at home by multilingual professionals.

The new Players' App connects players to a helpline and gives regular information on mental and emotional wellbeing.

The FA and the Royal Foundation launches the [Heads Up](#) campaign. It aims to ensure everyone feels comfortable talking about mental health, in the same way they would about football. Since the launch, the FA has published mental health guides to support coaches, managers and referees.

UK Sport and EIS work with [Changing Minds](#) to develop Mental Health Champions training across Olympic and Paralympic sports



# 2020

November, Rugby League Cares and Rugby League World Cup 2021 launch the [Mental Fitness Charter](#). It's the first for a major international sporting event. The charter is a commitment that every player, team official, match official, teammate and volunteer will get mental health training.

The [Mentally Healthy Football Declaration](#) is launched by the Duke of Cambridge. It gets support from across the game, including chairs, CEOs, players and managers.

The Premier League introduces a club toolkit. It's designed to support staff and players' mental and emotional wellbeing. They give individual support to clubs to help develop action plans.

Rugby's Professional Game Board (PGB) endorses [Cardiff Metropolitan University's](#) research on players' psychological load and shares it with players and professionals. It recommends mental health first aid training for players and staff and funding for a mental health lead doctor role at each club. It also makes sure funding is the same for mental health problems and injury support.

RFU, PRL and RPA introduce a mental health screening programme for Premiership and England teams and offer Mental Health First Aid training to England squads and Premiership clubs.

The Football Association:

- Mental Health Strategy is launched. Its aim is to ensure everyone has the opportunity to experience positive mental health and have access to specialist support when they need it. A full time Mental Health lead was appointed to deliver the Strategy.
- The FA with Sporting Chance launched clinical referral pathway and 24-hour helpline for all England players.



## 2021

ASICS invite the world to be part of the first live, multi-sport study to better understand the link between movement and mental wellbeing. The [Mind Uplifter tool](#) enables everyone, everywhere to be part of this ongoing study.

Athletes including Simone Biles, Adam Peaty, Naomi Osaka and Ben Stokes speak openly about their mental health during summer 2021.

Mind release *Moving towards better mental health: Mind's Physical Activity Impact Report 2018–2021* and refreshed toolkits for the sport sector.

ASICS, with Professor Brendon Stubbs, prove the positive impact of a simple movement-based programme on mental wellbeing. The [ASICS Movement for Mind programme](#) is freely available to everyone regardless of their fitness level.

England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) appoint their first Consultant Sports Psychiatrist, Dr Amit D Mistry (current chair of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Sport & Exercise Special Interest Group)

## 2022

The Football Association with [Changing Minds](#) deliver Mental Health Ambassadors programme across the organisation.

