



Mental and Emotional Health Policy

NEWPORT COUNTY AFC

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At Newport County AFC we are committed to ensuring that we support positive mental, emotional, and physical health and wellbeing across our workforce, players, participants, and spectators. From those who represent us on the pitch within our First Team and Academy, to those who work for us and with us.

As the 4th EFL Club to commit to the Mental Health Charter for Sports and Recreation, it is vital that we demonstrate a strong commitment to everyone's mental wellness and promote positive physical and emotional wellbeing across all areas of the Club. We want everyone to be encouraged and supported to look after their own mental and emotional wellbeing and we want to equip individuals with the skills to be resilient and recognise when they might be struggling and know what support is available to them.

What is mental and emotional health and wellbeing?

Everyone has mental health. It includes our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps to determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental Health is important at every stage of life, through from childhood and adolescence into adulthood.

Over the course of your life, you may experience poor mental health, where your thinking, your mood and behaviour could be affected. Many factors contribute to poor mental health including:

- Biological factors, such as brain chemistry or genes
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Whereas your mental wellbeing can be affected by factors such as:

- Living conditions
- Discrimination and violence
- Education
- Community connectedness
- Social acceptance and participation
- Access to economic resources

Emotional wellbeing is the ability to practice stress-management techniques, be resilient and able to generate the emotions that lead to good feelings. The components of emotional wellbeing are also contributors to mental well-being. These are individual factors involved in emotional regulation, such as the ability to cope with stressors as well as communication and social skills needed to maintain connection with others.

Types of mental health conditions can include:

- Anger

- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Bipolar disorder
- Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD)
- Borderline personality disorder
- Depression
- Dissociation and dissociative disorders
- Drugs – recreational drugs and alcohol
- Eating problems
- Hearing voices
- Hoarding
- Hypomania and mania
- Loneliness
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Panic attacks
- Paranoia
- Personality disorders
- Phobias
- Postnatal depression and perinatal mental health
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Psychosis
- Schizoaffective disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)
- Self-esteem
- Self-harm
- Sleep problems
- Stress

- Suicidal feelings
- Tardive dyskinesia
- Trauma

Around 1 in 4 people in any given year will be affected by mental health. We all have mental health, and just like physical health, we need to take care of it. Experiencing poor mental health or a mental health condition is often upsetting, confusing and frightening at first. If you become unwell, you may see it as a sign of weakness or that you are 'losing your mind.' It can happen to people of all ages and from all walks of life, however with support, self-care, and treatment, over time you can get better.

We pride ourselves on being #ExilesHereToListen and strive to provide an open and supportive culture, where people feel safe to talk about any areas of concern that they have, knowing that they will never be discriminated against for talking about their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Some signs and symptoms of someone struggling with poor mental health can include:

- Feeling sad, low, or tearful
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Significant tiredness, low energy
- Low self-confidence
- Being agitated or irritable
- Dependency on alcohol, drugs, gambling to cope
- Loss of appetite
- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts and attempts
- Problems sleeping, or sleeping too much

We recognise that to reach out for help and support takes courage and is a huge sign of strength. We are working to develop relationships with key partners and stakeholders to ensure that we are working in collaboration to support better outcomes for individuals.

We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important as good physical health. We are committed to ensuring that we will do all that we can in a preventative space to create strong resilient minds, to promote good mental health and emotional health, but also support those, who at times may need more help to move back to wellness. We are passionate about breaking down barriers and seek to drive a culture where there is parity between mental, emotional, and physical health.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Chairman is the designated board member with overall responsibility for safeguarding, including mental and emotional wellbeing. The Board collectively are responsible for providing club-wide strategic leadership to assist the Club in developing and delivering its mental health and emotional wellbeing action plans, ensuring that these areas remain a priority at Board level.

The General Manager is responsible for ensuring that the mental health and emotional wellbeing of everyone at the Club is a key priority. He will be supported by the Club network of Mental Health First Aiders to support individuals' wellbeing, whilst holding the responsibility for managing any concerns and flags around work-related stress, stress absence management and support. He is also responsible for ensuring the Club meets its legal responsibility to help support employees aligned to ensuring work related stress does not have a prolonged impact of staff wellbeing as well as ensuring any wellbeing risks are identified and reduced as far as reasonably practicable aligned to HSE stress management guidance. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>

The Club has in place several qualified Mental Health First Aiders who provide staff and players of all ages with the opportunities to discuss any concerns or worries in confidence from a work or personal perspective and can help to signpost to professional organisations for additional support and help. They are as follows:

Gareth Evans – Club Secretary – gareth.evans@newport-county.co.uk

Ryan Morley – Academy FDP Lead – ryan.morley@newport-county.co.uk

Donna Linton – Supporter Liaison Officer – office@newport-county.co.uk

Stacey Larcombe – Ticketing Executive – stacey.larcombe@newport-county.co.uk

We continually strive to create an environment where everyone feels safe and supported to speak up about any concerns and issues they may have. Mental and emotional wellbeing is aligned to the Club's safeguarding approach, and we expect all our staff, players of all ages, participants, and spectators to look out for each other and report any concerns they have about an individual immediately to the safeguarding team.

We want to provide opportunities for open conversations around religion and faith. We recognise the positive contribution that spirituality can have, and we are committed to ensuring that we have a proactive approach to spiritual health and support spiritual and religious needs of individuals across the Club.

No individual shall be discriminated against on the grounds of their mental, emotional, or spiritual health, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation at our football club. We are committed to embedding strong equality, diversity, and inclusive practices across everything we do in line with the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights legislation. Safeguarding, mental, emotional health and equality and diversity are all closely aligned to ensure that every person is supported, protected and individual needs are always considered. We expect all our staff, including those engaging with children, young people and Adults at Risk to work to our equality principles and behave in a non-discriminatory and inclusive way. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unfair treatment and discrimination and covers mental health.

We recognise that there may be times in a player's career when circumstances can make them more susceptible to experiencing poor mental health or emotional wellbeing. These include but are not restricted to:

- Times of injury
- Being placed on loan away from the Club
- Being on loan at our Club
- Living away from home to play for our Club
- Being released from the Club
- Retiring from play

We are committed to reaching out to these players during this time and will actively promote pathways to support. Players who may be considered susceptible to poor mental or emotional health due to such circumstances will receive information as to how to access support at the club and the contact details of confidential support away from the club.

We are committed to positive parent engagement to support our young players. As part of promoting good mental health, we recognise that we have a role to raise awareness with parents around realistic reinforcements, positive messaging and how important it is to pass any early concerns of poor mental health on.

Mental and Emotional Health Response Guidance

Often, we can recognise changes in the mental and emotional health of those around us. Like physical health, mental and emotional health can be monitored, maintained, and supported. However, there may be situations that occur that need an immediate and urgent response. This may be because a person has reached crisis point or there may be a quick onset of a mental health condition or illness. As a Club, we are committed to anyone who reaches out to us and requires support.

If you believe that someone is at immediate risk of harming themselves or another person you should phone 999 and ask for the police. It doesn't matter who the person is or who you are. Our first responsibility is to save and protect life. Provide as much information as possible to the police; including the individual's contact details and location.

You should then contact the Club's Safeguarding Team:

Gareth Evans – Club Secretary

Email: gareth.evans@newport-county.co.uk

If you are in the stands at the game and someone is in crisis, please report directly to the closest available steward, and/or the Head of Safeguarding on the details above.

If a minor is in crisis, please ensure that a **minimum** of two members of staff are present for support, so that one member of staff can be present but call for support, whilst the other member of staff can talk to the young person to help to reassure them. Please ensure that you are in a place where the young person will feel safe and that you are never left in a 1:1 situation with a young person in an isolated area.

Please make sure that individuals are not left alone. This may mean finding someone to stay with them while you report your concerns. It may be that your concerns have materialised during a

phone call. If this is the case, you can either organise to call them straight back after reporting your concerns to the Club's Safeguarding Team or ask someone else to report them while you stay on the call.

Ensure that you report it to the club's Safeguarding Team (whether you've called 999 or not) Remember you should report your concerns, gathering as much information as possible about the situation and individual concerned. Often, the person who is the first point of contact for an individual is very important to the process. Continuity and non-judgement for the individual are key. You can report your concerns directly via telephone or via the Club's safeguarding software – My Concern.

If you are at home and a loved one is in crisis, please call 999 or take them straight to the local A&E department.

If you are a member of staff and you are struggling with your mental health and wellbeing, please do speak to one of our qualified mental health first aiders or your line manager, where you will be given understanding and support, as well as signposting to services that can help.

Wellbeing Action Plans

We at Newport County AFC would like to be a part of the support system for our staff, volunteers, and players of all ages. We can listen, and help to formulate a wellbeing action plan, where we can offer help and support, as well as take any necessary action from any disclosures. We will offer the wellbeing action plan to anyone that we identify can use this, however we have also developed this for all age groups, where staff and young people can self-refer, and parents/carers of our Academy players can refer their children into this service which is provided by the Club.

Our Safeguarding team will host these sessions for a minimum period of two weeks for the individual and extend the time as needed. These sessions are not intended to replace professional support. Parental consent will be required, and information gained from the sessions will be acted on in the best interests of the person. This information can be made available to a health care professional or school on receipt of a formal written request. We are aware that the need to continue with routine is important to anyone who is struggling, so we would actively encourage a person to continue with their daily routine where it is deemed appropriate to do so and would not further endanger their wellbeing. We will also consider any reasonable adjustments that are required. **YOUR PLACE AT OUR CLUB IS NEVER AT RISK FOR SPEAKING ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING OR ANY CONCERNS THAT YOU MAY HAVE.**

Details of the Wellbeing Action Plans and recordings of meetings will be held on the safeguarding profile of the individual being supported on our safeguarding software My Concern. This software is a cloud-based system which is password protected. We may hold these sessions without a parent/carer present to enable the young person to speak freely and share appropriate information with the parent/carer. In this instance, this will be with the child's consent, with two staff members present and the session will either be voice or video recorded via Zoom for safeguarding purposes. This will be reviewed and discussed on an individual basis.

A young person or a family member can refer into these sessions by taking the following steps:

1. Speak to your child's Phase Lead who can make the referral to the safeguarding team. They are:

Martin Chan – Pre-Academy

martin.chan@newport-county.co.uk

Ryan Morley – Foundation Phase

ryan.morley@newport-county.co.uk

Josh Liddiard – Youth Development Phase

josh.liddiard@newport-county.co.uk

Ben Gast – Professional Development Phase /Head of Coaching

ben.gast@newport-county.co.uk

Jessica Walkley – FAW at Newport County AFC Girls Development Phase

Jessica.walkley@newport-county.co.uk

Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding Team directly by contacting:

Gareth Evans – Club Secretary

gareth.evans@newport-county.co.uk

For any young person being referred into the service we will require parental consent where necessary, and we will require further information from you before the provision can take place.

Information Sharing

The Club abides by the guiding principles on sharing information, consistent with the guidance published by the UK government and Information Commissioner. Always remember that the general rule is that no information should ever be given without consent unless one of the following exceptions apply:

- Emergency or life-threatening situations may warrant the sharing of relevant information with the emergency services without consent
- Sharing the information immediately could prevent a serious crime from being committed
- There is a reasonable suspicion that a serious crime has been committed
- The level of risk to safety (individual or other people) is assessed to be unreasonably high
- Any other people, are or maybe at risk especially any other children, young people, or adults at risk
- Other members of staff are implicated
- An adult at risk lacks the mental capacity to decide for themselves. This must always be properly assessed and recorded.
- There is a court order or other legal authority that requires action to be taken

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and human rights laws must never be barriers to properly justified information sharing. These regulations provide a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately.

Additional Support Services

For past and present players:

The PFA

Email: wellbeing@thepfa.com

Tel: 07500 000 777

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Tel: 0800 58 58 58

The Mix (U25s)

Text: THE MIX to 85258

Tel: 0808 808 4994

Shout

Text: SHOUT to 85258

Mind Cymru

Tel: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463

The Samaritans

Tel: 116 123

Kaleidoscope

Tel: 01633 811950

Email: info@kaleidoscope68.org

Sporting Chance

Tel: 07500 000 777

Email: support@sportingchanceclinic.com

Papyrus UK/Hopelink UK

Text: 07860 039967

Tel: 0800 068 4141