

## DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Disability Football Prior to 1999 The Football Association's support for the development of disability football was limited. At this time there was a plethora of organisations that represented disabled people and The FA found it difficult to produce a coherent all-embracing strategy for disabled football. The creation of the English Federation of Disability Sports (EFDS), the umbrella organisation for the seven National Disability Sports organisations, in 1998 and the establishment by The FA of the Football Development Department a year later, led to the development of the first national disability football programme (Ability Counts was launched in 1999). This was seen as the initial step in helping to identify and develop talented footballers, providing quality coaching and increasing participation in the disability game. In 2001, after a period of extensive consultation with its stakeholders and in response to the various Government policy documents, The FA produced its Football Development Strategy (providing a strategic framework for football development in England for 2001-2006). The Football Development Strategy's key objective was to increase participation, quality and enjoyment of football using four key strands. One of these was entitled 'Opportunities for all' which committed The FA to ensure that everybody had the opportunity to play, coach, manage, referee and be spectators regardless of their race, culture, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, ethnicity or social status. Complimenting this, the first FA Football Development Programme – Disability Football Strategy (2004–2006) was the first step in integrating disability football into the 'mainstream'. The development of a clear strategy to ensure the further development of disability football is one of The FA's strategic imperatives. This is embedded in both The FA Strategic Vision and the National Game Strategy (both covering 2008-2012). As a result, The FA's Disability Football Strategy 2010-12 has been developed. To view the English Federation of Disability Sport website, please visit <http://www.efds.co.uk/>

To view The FA's Dispensation Policy, download the resource document below. Introduction to Football and Mental Health

### Why is mental health

One in four people will health problem in any population have time. There are involved in grassroots mental health examples of Robert Marcus Trescothick is relevant to at the elite should comfortable mental health matches and socially.



an issue for football?

experience a mental year. Over 10% of the depression at any one millions of people football, right now, with problems. The Enke, Frank Bruno and show that mental health everyone in sport, even level. Mainstream clubs including people with problems, in training, We want to make

coaches and team mates confident and comfortable about talking about mental health problems, in the same way that people discuss physical injuries. "Mental health problems can affect anyone – footballers too. I'm pledging to support Time to Change... It's ok to talk about mental health." Tony Adams - England and Arsenal

There are also projects delivering fantastic work in football and other sports, specifically to help people with mental health problems. These pages include information to help new projects get off the ground, and help existing projects grow and improve to deliver more benefit to more people. What can football do to help?

Sport can help in people's recovery, help to manage symptoms and can radically improve the quality of people's lives. Whether it's in mainstream, community football clubs, or in specialised sport and mental health projects, football can deliver massive benefits. There are three key ways that football can help: Sport can help in people's recovery, help to manage symptoms and can radically improve the quality of people's lives. Whether it's in mainstream, community football clubs, or in specialised sport and mental health projects, football can deliver massive benefits. There are three key ways that football can help:

- Improving mental health
- Delivering social inclusion
- Helping physical health
- Improving people's mental health

For some people, physical activity can be as powerful as medicine or therapy. In 2010 the Mental Health Foundation said that for people with depression, "Comparative studies have shown that exercise can be as effective as medication or psychotherapy". Exercise releases natural chemicals like adrenaline and serotonin. It also helps to release muscle tension, raises the body temperature and causes tiredness. These all help relieve stress and provide relaxation – this is of particular benefit for people with mental health problems. Delivering social inclusion Making

friends, holding down a job, keeping fit, staying healthy... These are all normal parts of everyday life. But the stigma that surrounds mental illness makes all of these things harder for people who have mental health problems. While attitudes to sexuality, ethnicity and other similar issues have improved, people with mental health problems are still often treated unfairly. Football can help to break this isolation and include people more in everyday life and their communities. Helping physical health People with mental health problems are statistically:

- More likely to be obese
  - Have 2-4 times greater risk of cardiovascular disease
  - Have 2-4 times greater risk of diabetes
  - Life expectancy of someone with schizophrenia is typically ten years less – due to physical health problems
- Sport and physical activity can help in tackling this inequality. "Football saved my life"

Read how football helped Jason recover from mental health problems: <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/blog/football-was-lifeline-jasons-story>

