
Scottish Mental Health Charter

sportscotland action plan 2023-25

Chief Executive's Foreword

I'm delighted to introduce **sportscotland's** third action plan which demonstrates our continued support for the Scottish Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport, a powerful tool to provide focus and drive change across Scotland.

While I have only been in this role for six months, I have been close to the work in this area for several years as part of the **sportscotland** senior management team and I am encouraged by the progress being made.

I am reassured by the way that partners across the sporting, physical activity and leisure sector are working together to raise awareness of the role of sport and physical activity in supporting mental health and in delivering local and national programmes to meet the needs of people who need support. This action plan highlights the five areas of focus in the Charter and aligns with our corporate strategy, Sport for Life.

I am pleased to see the strong emphasis on inclusion throughout the action plan as we aim to reduce barriers to participation and support more people experiencing a mental health problem, to access sport and physical activity. This supports our commitment to inclusion underpinning everything we do, and I am confident that this action plan will contribute to improvements in this area.

Experience over recent years has taught us that collaboration is essential if we are to overcome challenges and continue to progress towards a Scotland where anyone who needs it, can access the right mental health support. We know that sport and physical activity can play a key part in the solution. We are determined to encourage and support partners to work towards that goal.

The Feel Your Personal Best campaign was a great example of partners working together to raise awareness and share stories, resources, and good practice about the role of physical activity and sport to support mental health. I know there are many other inspiring examples of local and national initiatives making a difference to the people of Scotland. I thank you for the work already taking place and I look forward to seeing it develop.

Forbes Dunlop, sportscotland Chief Executive

Declaration of Support to the Scottish Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport

This document demonstrates our support for the Scottish Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport. **sportscotland** is committed to improving equality and reducing discrimination so more people with poor mental health can engage, participate and achieve more in physical activity and sport. To achieve this, the Mental Health Charter outlines five key areas of focus:

Table 1: Five key areas of focus of Mental Health Charter

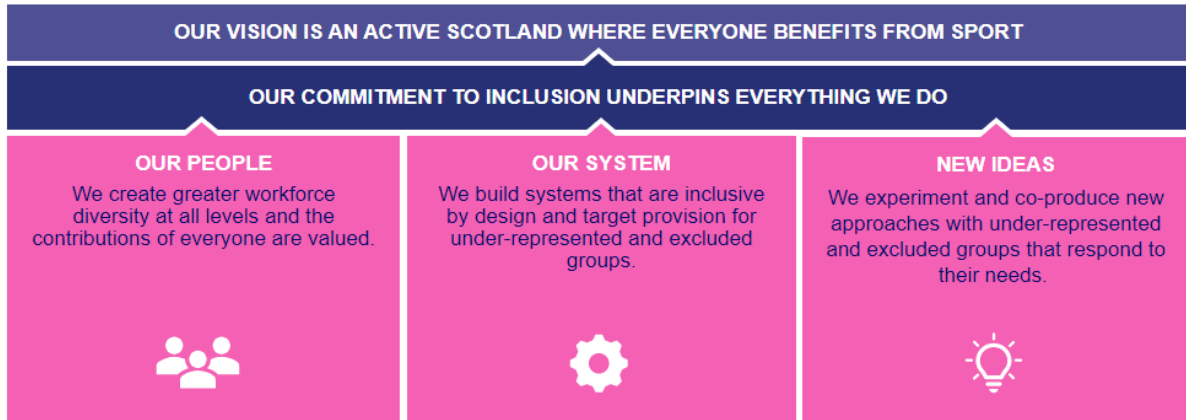
Actively promote inclusive practice and ensure a positive and welcoming environment for all.	Develop inclusive policies and practices which are informed by including mental health in strategic planning.	Actively encourage participation and promote messages focusing on the benefits of physical activity on mental health.	Establish a Scottish Mental Health Charter Network to support meaningful collaboration, share resources and best practice.	Routinely review performance and identify ways to improve working in relation to mental health
--	---	---	--	--

Organisational Statement

Our corporate strategy, [Sport for Life](#), sets out the vision of an active Scotland where everyone benefits from sport. Our mission is to help the people of Scotland get the most from the sporting system.

Sport for Life sets out a commitment to inclusion underpinning everything we do. Our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) approach](#) has three strands which brings this commitment to life (see figure1). Scotland’s Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport supports our EDI approach and helps us deliver against our vision. You can read more about our EDI approach at: [Sport for Life and our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(sportscotland.org.uk\)](#).

Figure1: Equality, diversity and inclusion approach



Sport supports health and enhances wellbeing

We all have mental health. Being active isn't just good for our physical health; it's also proven to have a positive effect on our mental health and wellbeing. Sport and physical activity can help us unwind and feel more relaxed. It can be a way of making friends, social connections and becoming involved in a community. It can give us energy and confidence to think clearly and get the most out of life. It can also help us develop a stronger body and combat health issues.

Yet, we know that people experiencing a mental health problem can find it difficult to engage, participate and achieve in physical activity and sport. We aim to improve equality and reduce discrimination for anyone with a mental health problem. Ensuring there is no barrier to taking part.

Our sporting system creates opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity across different environments: clubs and communities, schools and education and performance sport. We are focused on supporting the wellbeing and mental health of participants across all environments.

To support our work on mental health and wellbeing, we will work closely with our strategic partners SAMH, Scotland's Mental Health Charity. We will draw on the expertise and experience from within our own **sportscotland** Institute of Sport as they provide world class wellbeing and welfare support to Scottish athletes in the performance environment. We are also putting people who experience mental health problems at the heart of the decision-making process as we design and deliver 'New Ideas' to achieve our new person-centred 2021-25 equality outcomes. For more information, please see: [New Ideas - Our equality outcomes \(sportscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.sportscotland.org.uk/new-ideas-our-equality-outcomes).

As part of our SAMH partnership we are committed to Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport. The following information details our current action plan.

2023-25 Mental Health Charter Action plan

We developed actions that align with the main areas of focus and associated activity in the SAMH Mental Health Charter.

Key area of focus: Actively promoting inclusive practice and ensuring a positive and welcoming environment for all

To achieve this, SAMH suggests the following activity:

1. **Be visible supporters of mental health inclusion** - Publish any policies in relation to mental health on your website, communications and social media. Promote opportunities which are tailored for people experiencing mental health problems.
2. **Participate in mental health awareness raising activities** - World Mental Health Day and Mental Health Awareness Week provide great opportunities to run events such as open days to raise the profile of the work you are doing to support people experiencing mental ill health.
3. **Staff Training** - Ensure mental health and wellbeing awareness is included within training for all staff and volunteers.
4. **Resources** - Utilise resources that promote inclusive practice and ensure a positive and welcoming environment for all.

Our actions

1. We will publish our revised commitment to the Mental Health Charter and our new 2023-25 action plan on our website and promote it internally and externally.
2. We will work with recognised external bodies including SAMH to review our current support for staff to ensure we are sector leading. We will implement any necessary changes and continue to review our support.
3. We will explore specific support for line managers to support staff wellbeing and mental health inclusion.
4. We will continue to promote mental health awareness programmes and signpost staff to the support and resources available to them. Examples include our staff wellbeing zone and the employee assistance programme - with access to up to six free counselling sessions, where this is considered to be an effective treatment.
5. We will work with SAMH to develop and share mental health resources bespoke to sport and embed principles of good practice across the sporting system.
6. We will support the wellbeing and welfare of athletes receiving support from the sportscotland institute of sport (SIS) through:
 - a. One-to-one support and referral pathways for athletes via SIS support services (i.e. Performance Lifestyle, Performance Nutrition, Sports Medicine, Sports Psychology)
 - b. Collaboration and engagement with external clinical specialists and agencies
 - c. Monitor athlete mental health through the Athlete Mental Health Screening Questionnaire
 - d. Engagement of the SIS Mental Health delivery group to implement the SIS Mental Health Strategy to develop operational support and supporting resources.
7. We will work with SAMH to deliver a coordinated programme of wellbeing and mental health training to professional staff in the sport sector, including local authorities and SGBs. This will include a maintaining well-being

workshop, a mental health awareness e-learning module, how to have a mental health conversation and finally a mental health awareness session. We will also recruit a network of MHW Leaders across partners organisations.

8. We will support SAMH and Scottish Sporting Futures to deliver online mental health workshops for young people, by young people
9. We will focus on information, training and guidance to support the mental health and wellbeing of coaches, leaders and deliverers.
10. We will collaborate with colleagues across **sportscotland** and SAMH to establish a Mental Health Curriculum for performance and for wider access across the sporting pathway.

Key area of focus: Developing inclusive policies and practices which are informed by including mental health in strategic planning

To achieve this, SAMH suggests the following activity:

1. **Working with people with lived experience** – Engage participants to help you identify and address barriers which could be stopping them from getting active.
2. **Demonstrate senior level buy-in** – It is crucial to involve leaders within your organisation. With their support it will be easier to compose and create an action plan.

Our actions

1. We will look to co-produce an action plan with representative groups and people who have lived experience of mental health problems, to help them take part in sport and physical activity and experience the following outcomes:
 - a. I see and hear people like me taking part
 - b. I have a voice in the decisions that affect me
 - c. I feel like taking part is for me
 - d. I can find opportunities that meet my needs
2. We will promote our commitment to the wellbeing of our internal staff using the voice and influence of our senior leaders.

Key area of focus: Participating in a Scottish Mental Health Charter Network to support meaningful collaboration, share resources and best practice

To achieve this, SAMH suggests the following activity:

1. **Facilitate a partnership approach** – Where possible connect to existing networks and partnerships.
2. **Making connections** – Use the power of storytelling to reinforce the link between physical activity and mental health. Share these stories within your community and with your wider network.

Our actions

1. We will have representation on SAMH project group to support the promotion of the Mental Health Charter and help create positive lasting change in wellbeing and mental health.

Key area of focus: Routinely reviewing performance and identifying ways to improve working in relation to mental health.

To achieve this, SAMH suggests the following activity:

1. **Source good practice** - Take time to look at similar organisations or individuals and identify what they are doing to engage individuals with mental health problems.

Our actions

1. We will collaborate with the Home Country Sport Institute Expert Mental Health Panel to inform best practice in performance sport.

Head Office

Doges, Templeton on the Green,

62 Templeton Street,

Glasgow G40 1DA

Tel 0141 534 6500

Fax 0141 54 6501

sportscotland.org.uk



sportscotland
the national agency for sport