



BRISTOL ROVERS
FOOTBALL CLUB

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Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Club Statement

As a club we are committed to ensuring we support positive mental emotional and physical health and wellbeing across our workforce, players and participants and fans. From those who represent us on the pitch to those who work for and with us.

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.

We recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing is just as important as good physical health, and this document outlines the steps we will take to drive a positive culture around these key areas. We are committed to ensuring that we will do all we can in a preventative space to create strong resilient minds to promote good mental health but also support those who at times may need more help to be back to wellness. Good mental and emotional wellness results in a productive and happy place to work and links to our performance across all areas of the club.

This strategy sets out Bristol Rovers Football Clubs commitment, and pathways to support our staff, players, participants and fans around positive mental wellness and physical and emotional wellbeing.

If anyone has any questions relating to this strategy, please contact our safeguarding team.

Definitions

Mental Health – good mental health means being able to think feel and react in the ways that you want to. We all have times when we feel down unable to cope are stressed or frightened. Most of the time those feelings pass but sometimes they develop into us experiencing poor mental health where we struggle to cope and become overwhelmed and unable to think or function properly, which could happen to any one of us at any time.

Emotional health- is about how we think and feel. It is about our sense of wellbeing, our ability to cope with life changes and events and how we understand our own emotions as well as those of others. It means recognising when someone might be struggling, need a bit of help and support or just want to talk about how they feel.

Physical Health- relates to how our bodies are functioning. A person who is physically fit will be able to walk or run without getting breathless and they will be able to carry out the activities of everyday living and without needing help. However, in some cases poor physical health or an injury can result in negative impacts to someone's mental health.

Governance

There are clear governance structures in place to ensure that we are meeting EFL requirements, HR, Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding, and Health & Safety responsibilities. We are committed to ensuring we go beyond the expected minimum standards and strive to role model a positive culture around mental health and emotional wellbeing. This strategy sets out the direction and commitment of Bristol Rovers Football Clubs commitment and pathways to support our staff, players, participants and fans around positive mental wellness and physical & emotional wellbeing. This will primarily be delivered through the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Action Group who will have ownership for driving this agenda forward across all areas of the club.

Awareness, Education and Engagement

Everyone can develop skills and understanding to support their own mental and emotional wellbeing, we will do all we can to raise the profile of positive mental and emotional wellbeing activities, break down barriers and facilitate a

supportive, safe culture around talking about mental health and support those individuals who may need more targeted help through the relevant external professional pathways.

Training is a key component to ensure our managers can recognise early signs and triggers if a member of staff is struggling. We are clear about the boundaries of the support we can offer. Where appropriate we will signpost to professional agencies and partners who are best placed to help individuals who need support beyond our expertise.

Signs and Symptoms

- 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 or gambling as a way to cope
- Loss of appetite
- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- Problems sleeping or sleeping too much

The club has a network of trained mental health first aiders embedded across various teams. These individuals are on hand to support with the following:

- Have supportive conversations
- To act as a point of contact and reassurance for a colleague who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress
- Communicate and report any concerns if a colleague is at risk of harm
- Signpost people to professional help

Five Ways to Wellbeing



CONNECT

- Socialise or connect with friends and family
- You can do this in person (if allowed)
- Via the internet
- Over the phone or facetime
- Join a new group or club.

BE ACTIVE

- Do something active every day
- Physical exercise helps us to keep both our body and mind fit
- Find an activity you can enjoy or challenge yourself with
- If it involves someone else, then you also get connection



KEEP LEARNING

- Learning new things keeps our brains energised and healthy.
- Think of something you would like to learn more about
- Something you would like to learn how to do a new skills or new hobb'

GIVE

- Giving to others, and to ourselves
- This can be compliments
- Thoughtful gestures
- Listening
- Advice
- Time
- Doing something helpful for someone



TAKE NOTICE

- Take notice of the world around you
- Notice the beauty of nature
- Be mindful of your thoughts and feelings

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Emotional Health

Emotional health is about how we think, feel, our sense of wellbeing, our ability to cope with life changes, events and how we understand our own emotions as well as those of others. It means recognising when someone might be struggling, need a bit of help, support or just want to talk about how they feel.

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Awareness, Education and Engagement - Players

We are committed to ensuring that we have clear boundaries around what support we are able to offer, and this is communicated. We will ensure that we listen to the voice of the player and involve them in decision making.

Player Engagement

We understand that there will be a time in a player's career when circumstances can make them more susceptible to experiencing poor mental health or emotional wellbeing. These include; but 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 our Club

We are committed to reaching out to players at these times and will proactively 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 (GoAgain)

Parent Engagement

We are committed to positive parent engagement to support our young players. As a 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.

Player Support Pathways

We are committed to supporting every player and will ensure that we support and signpost to the most appropriate avenue for help, these could be any of the following areas:

Home

- Parent/guardian
- General Practitioner
- Family

School

- Teachers
- Tutor/Head of Year
- SENCo

Club Academy

- Player Care Team
- Teammates
- Coaches

- Siblings
- Friends
- School Counsellor
- Friends
- Safeguarding Team

Mental and Emotional Health Response Guidance

Often, we can recognise changes in the mental and emotional health of those around us. Like physical health, emotional health can be monitored, maintained, and supported. However, there may be situations that occur that need immediate and urgent response. This may be because a person has reached crisis point or there may be a quick onset of 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:

Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer

Nicola Dartnall-Smith

07715 255299

NicolaDartnall-Smith@bristolrovers.co.uk

Senior Safeguarding Manager

Louise Smith

07766 022731

LouiseSmith@bristolrovers.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 Senior Safeguarding Manager 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, in order to help and 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, gather 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 in 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.

We at Bristol Rovers Football Club would like to be a part of the support system for our staff, volunteers and players of all ages. Along with Go Again we have formulated a wellbeing action plan, where we can offer help and support, as well as taking 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, 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 four weeks for the individual and extend the time if needed. These sessions are not intended to replace professional support. Parental consent will be required, and information gained from the session 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 HAVE.**

Details of the Wellbeing Action Plans and recordings of meetings will be held of 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.

Equality and Diversity

No individual shall be discriminated against on the ground of their mental, emotional or spiritual health, race or religion at Bristol Rovers Football Club. We are committed to embedding strong equality, diversity and inclusive practises across everything we do in line with the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Legislation. Safeguarding Mental Health and Equality & Diversity are all closely aligned to ensure that every person is supported, protected and individual needs are considered at all times. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unfair treatment and discrimination and covers mental health.

Additional Services Available

Samaritans

Call: 116 123

www.samaritans.org

Samaritans is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide

Mind

Call: 0300 123 3393

www.mind.org.uk

We provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets support and respect.

YoungMinds

Text: YM to 85258

www.youngmind.org.uk

Mental Health Nurses within Child and Adolescent Services recommend YoungMinds. Text the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger for free 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.

PAPYRUS

Call: 0800 068 4141

Text: 07860 039967

www.papyrus-uk.org

If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be, you can contact HOPELINEUK for confidential support and practical advice.

Shout

Text: 85258

www.giveusashout.org

shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis, anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help with suicidal thoughts, abuse, assault, self-harm, bullying and relationship challenges

Further Resources and References

These are recommended resources to help keep your Mental Health in shape. It also contains references to third party resources, some of which have been used to create this document, for further reading.

Audio

- Mental wellbeing audio guides – NHS
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>
- Moodjuice Self-help guides on Apple Podcasts
<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/moodjuice-self-help-guides/>

Apps

- Headspace – Mindfulness app for physical and mental health
- CALM – Meditation app
- Mindshift CBT – for dealing with stress and anxiety

YouTube Videos

- Eckhart Tolle – Short videos to help learn ways to switch off thoughts and be in the present moment. There are also books “The Power of Now” and “A New Earth” you can listen to the full audiobooks on YouTube
- Jon Cabat Zin – Body Scan Meditation “Thich Naht Hanh”

Websites

- Eddins Counselling Group
<https://eddincounseling.com/grounding-techniques-self-soothing-emotional-regulation/>
- The Stress Bucket
<https://mentalhealth-uk.org/blog/the-stress-bucket/>