

PRESS RELEASE: The Sport Wellbeing Hub

22 04 20



The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic is the biggest health crisis for generations. The pandemic has increased the mental health risks for our society.

Before the crisis hit mental illness was already the single largest cause of ill health and disability in Northern Ireland with around 1 in 5 adults and around 45,000 of children suffering from a mental health problem at any one time. The impact of Covid19 will see potentially result in a further increase.

The impact of Covid19 has exacerbated the pre-existing troubled state of affairs regarding mental health in NI and across the UK:

- The UK's largest domestic abuse charity, Refuge, has reported a 700% increase in calls to its helpline in a single day;
- Young Minds reveals 32% of young people agreed that COVID-19 had made their mental health much worse and 51% agreed that it had made their mental health a bit worse; In Northern Ireland, stigma is still a major deterrent to seeking help for mental illness.
- Prescription rates for mood and anxiety disorders has increased in NI with a higher rate in women than men.

Sport NI CEO Antoinette McKeown, in partnership with the PHA, today announced the launch of The Sport Wellbeing Hub in response to the COVID 19 challenge. The Hub is unique. It provides instant access to helpful information, guidance and screening that is tailored specifically to help care for our wellbeing needs.

Speaking online at the launch, Antoinette McKeown said, **“We developed The Sport Wellbeing Hub with Inspire; to help you create your own wellbeing care-plan, as well as giving guidance on support through a guided self-assessment. It helps to provide the right help, right now, with online access to a range of fantastic and useful resources that are tailored to the user, which is so important at this challenging time”**.

The Sport Wellbeing Hub is a valuable online resource that we encourage you to use. The Hub is for everyone across the sporting community, those who are involved in sport, at all levels and all abilities. Everyone.

The Sport Wellbeing Hub, provides a fantastic range of innovative tools and resources, including:

- Guided self-assessment via ‘Chatbot’;
- Self-help programmes and digital intervention tools;
- Searchable ‘5 ways to wellbeing’ map; and
- Wellbeing information library.
- Video content featuring some of our sporting heroes talking about mental health

Whether looking for some advice or need a little more direction, please visit The Sports Wellbeing Hub: www.inspiresupporthub.org/sports

Tony Adams MBE, Arsenal and England captain and Sporting Chance founder said,

“Looking after our mental and emotional health is always important. At this time when we are all experiencing lockdown, worries about work and loved ones and of course the impact on our beloved sports, it couldn't be more so. The Sport Wellbeing Hub is a really useful tool to help sportspeople of all ages, take a look! – This is great work.”

Ciara Mageean- Was due to compete at the Tokyo Olympic Games

“The Sport Wellbeing Hub from Sport NI is a fantastic place to go to help with our mental health. I've signed up to an account, found the i-helper and mood-tracker really useful. I'd highly recommend checking it out, our mental health is so vital and right now is a challenging time for all of us”.

Oisín McConville (Former GAA All-Ireland winner & counsellor)

“Well-being covers so many different facets of life, for many years there was a stigma around anybody addressing their mental health. Thankfully we are in a much better place now, society is tackling mental health and wellbeing head on. There are lots of avenues to track, react and better our wellbeing including The Sport Wellbeing Hub. There's a function that can track your mood from week-to-week and I'd advise anyone to check it, engage with it because The Sport Wellbeing Hub will help all areas of mental health”.

Dr Philip Doyle (World championship & world cup silver medallist rower)

“I was supposed to be going to the Olympics, instead I'm now training in my garage. During lockdown especially when you're alone with your thoughts, mental health is really important. One of the best things about Sport NI's Sport Wellbeing Hub is raising awareness, a 5 step guide improving your mental wellbeing and the contacts section. With sport and with life, there are ups and downs. The ups are brilliant but sometimes we need help to get through the downs and this is a great resource to help you through that”.

Dr Claire McLaughlin (Ireland rugby)

“The Sport Wellbeing Hub has so much information, loads of resources covering anxiety, depression, bereavement, sleep and more. During such an uncertain time, it's important we try to manage our mental health. I'm currently working as a doctor at the Ulster hospital. Seeing people coming into A&E in crisis and having struggles on mental health, I think it's so important we focus on this.”

David Jeffrey (Football manager)

I'm a senior social worker & manager of Ballymena United football club. We're all going through a pretty tough time. Covid-19 is presenting challenges we thought we'd never have to face. Sport NI has launched The Sport Wellbeing Hub. The guidance is straightforward, practical and a very good way of helping people look after their mental health. Together let's make sure our mental health is good- and better”

Joe Donnelly (TAMHI manager)

"This almost one stop shop for information and resources will be invaluable to clubs. Having Sport NI and Inspire ensuring quality and relevant content will really help with clubs developing Wellbeing capacity”.

Group Director of Inspire Professional Services, John Conaghan said,

“Inspire are delighted to have developed this unique resource in partnership with Sport NI. Now more than ever we hope that it will offer practical support and guidance to help thousands of people in sporting communities across Northern Ireland to look after their wellbeing”

Notes:

Further details of The Sport Wellbeing Hub can be found at:
www.inspiresupporthub.org/sports

For Information on The Sport Wellbeing Hub contact: Marie-Therese Higgins at:
wellbeinginsport@sportni.net

-Video & Audio messages from above sportspeople available on request

For further information on this statement and interviews with any of the below sportspeople, please contact Ali Campbell 07703328346 or
alicampbell@sportni.net:

- David Jeffrey
- Ciara Mageean
- Oisin McConville
- Philip Doyle
- Paddy Barnes
- Antoinette McKeown CEO
- Claire McLaughlin

Photos:

Attached