



Milton Keynes Dons

Well Being Policy.

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Role in Organisation	Senior Safe Guarding Manager
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The Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly, safe environment for all of its members so that they can participate in any sport in an enjoyable and secure atmosphere.

Introduction

Milton Keynes Football Club values all members of staff and players, and seeks to provide a positive and satisfying working environment in which each member is treated with respect and with regard for their health, safety and well-being.

The Club is committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect allowing employees to work at their optimum level, thus creating a workplace environment that promotes the mental wellbeing of all.

Principles

Many factors in the workplace influence mental wellbeing, understanding and addressing the factors which affect people's mental wellbeing at work have a wide range of benefits, both for individuals and the organisation.

Everyone can contribute to improved mental wellbeing at work, by addressing workplace mental wellbeing it can strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health and wellbeing.

Objectives

1. Develop management skills to promote mental wellbeing and manage mental health issues effectively
2. Develop a positive mental wellbeing culture based on trust, support and mutual respect
3. Provide support for players and staff experiencing mental health issues

4. Ensure non-discriminatory recruitment procedures
5. Acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors

Responsibilities for implementing the Staff Well-being policy

Directors responsibilities

The Directors have overall responsibility for ensuring this guidance is implemented through the Senior Leadership Team.

- Provide support for the Club by promoting good performance management practice and communication.
- Review the policy every three years following feedback and consultation from staff, management information.

The Directors recognises that on occasions it could be a source of stress to others and accept responsibility for this and take appropriate action.

The Management team responsibilities

The management team is responsible for implementing this guidance by their actions and through their staff.

Managers are responsible for taking action to minimise stress and promote the wellbeing of their staff.

- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes
- Assist and support players and staff who are known to have mental health problems or are experiencing stress outside work
- Ensure staff are provided with the resources and training required to carry out their job
- Monitor workloads and working hours
- Promote a culture of consultation, participation and open communication throughout the club and within teams, ensuring that there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work
- Monitor sickness absence and promote interventions to reduce this

All members of staff responsibilities

- Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being
- Take responsibility for their own continuing professional development as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team
- Take responsibility for their own health and well-being
- Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, helping to avoid stress to their colleagues

Referral Process

Where appropriate, and with consent, referrals will be made for staff to other external mental health practitioners. The following provides an overview of the process followed when situations emerge that require an external referral. We reserve the right to refer to appropriate agency / organisation if there is an immediate risk to welfare of the person being referred

Triggers for Referral

- Staff member or player requests support on a mental health or wellbeing issue
- Staff member or player requests support on behalf of another on a mental health or wellbeing issue

Actions arising from a Referral.

The following are a range of possible actions arising from a referral and include:

- Individual speaks with an appropriate senior member of staff (i.e. their line manager Player Care Manager, DSO, Senior Safeguarding manager, HR etc..)
- That person records the concern on MyConcern (Online safeguarding portal)
- Staff - if further action needed then refer to HR in order to arrange OH support
- Players - if further action needed then in consultation with Club Doctor/Medical staff refer for external support
- If issue falls outside this remit, or if specific (family counselling; financial; substance abuse) then suitable provision is sought through third party.
- Continued support of staff and progress monitored

If you feel the person is in immediate risk of harm and you are unable to contact a senior colleague ring the emergency services on 999

Appendix 1

Stress in the workplace

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as:

“The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly pressure and challenge, even when high can be motivating and stimulating. However, when an individual feels pressure at a time when they cannot cope, or in some cases too little pressure or challenge, this can lead to stress. It is important to recognise that the ability to cope with stress differs from person to person and it will depend on the individual as to how they react to stress.

Primary sources of stress are:

- **Demands:** i.e. workload, work pattern, and the work environment
- **Control:** i.e. how much say the person has in the way they work
- **Support:** the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Relationships:** i.e. promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role:** such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change:** such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation

Examples of additional pressure to staff may include:

- Dealing with bad behaviour
- Academy audits
- Accountability and targets.
- Finance
- Buildings matters
- Recruitment and staffing issues
- • Conflict in the workplace

In order to combat these areas of pressure, staff should be able to admit that they are struggling before it becomes too difficult to cope with and know who to call on for support and advice if they need it. The following are examples of how staff can help themselves:

- Ask your line manager or another colleague for help and support if you need it.
- If you are an Academy Player or parent please speak to the Head of Player Care
- If you need something to change, find a way to make it change
- Own up to your problems and be honest about them, express your feelings and do not internalise your concerns
- Make yourself aware of the Clubs policies and procedures- these can be located....
- Take a break from work during the middle of the day, it is your entitlement....detail entitlement

- Identify opportunities for development relevant to your position
- Use the performance management to identify your achievements and establish support required to meet your goals
- Be honest about reasons for sickness absence and any request of leave of absence
- Try to have a good diet, don't skip meals, drinking plenty of water throughout the day.
- Make time for exercise and relaxation and learn to manage your time effectively. For example, during your afternoon break take a walk outside. This is particularly important if your access to natural light is limited during the winter months. You may also wish to consider a Vitamin D supplement during the Autumn and Winter. See the helpful links in Appendix 2 - Resources
- Please always consult your GP if you ever have any medical concerns.
- Conflict in the workplace

Appendix 2

Resources

The Head of Player Care is Natascia Bernardi, please contact via 07880 036999 or email:

natascia.bernardi@mkdons.com

The Head of Education and Safeguarding is currently vacant; the role has overall responsibility for our safeguarding provision and arrangements. Please contact via 07747 218064

The MK Dons Performance Director is Simon Crampton, please contact via 07834 463170 or email

simon.crampton@mkdons.com

Helpful information can be found on the following websites:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>

Players can also find support via the PFA as detailed in the following:

External Emotional & Mental Health Support Pathways for Players

The below resources are intended to complement club frameworks and add to a club's reach in this area. We also acknowledge that sometimes players want to separate their emotional and mental health support from their workplace and club. Using recognised vetted pathways will protect both the player and your club.

	PFA Members (16 + years old)	Non - PFA Members (15 + years old)	Non - PFA Members (Under 15 years old)
External Mental Health Support Providers			
Sporting Chance: Player Helpline	x	x	
The PFA Youth Advisory Service		x	x
Childline: Online Resources	x	x	x

1. Male Playing Population

1.1 Provider

Sporting Chance Clinic

- Face-to-face assessment at an appropriate venue that suits the player
- Access to Therapists, Counsellors, Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatrists
- Access to Sporting Chance residential services for substance or behavioural dependency

- Provision of practitioners that speak the players first language
- Twelve initial sessions pre-funded through PFA membership

1.2 Access

- Referral by club
- Self-referral through 24/7 telephone helpline: **07500 000777**
- Email: **talk@sportingchanceclinic.com**
- Premier League Player App direct link to online contact form

1.3 Summary

Player: Sporting Chance have a national network of expert mental health practitioners that can be accessed quickly and confidentially. An assessment to discuss an individual's needs can be arranged at an appropriate location that suits the player. Sporting Chance endeavour to provide face-to-face ongoing support/treatment within forty-five minutes travel of a players home

or club, and to use a practitioner that speaks the players first language. Support can also be provided online, with practitioners meeting athletes on platforms such as Zoom or Teams, should this be preferred or suit the players needs better.

Club: Club staff can refer a player to the service described above. Typically, referrals are received from club psychology, medical, or player welfare staff. Please refer to the toolkit's information sharing documents for assistance with this process. The Sporting Chance clinical team are also available to discuss with such staff, concerns and approaches concerning players should a referral manifest or not.

PFA Members: This group of players will be union members and can also access the above services through the union. In addition to this service the union provides many other services, including education advice and opportunities including coaching qualifications, legal advice, and player representation.

2. Youth Development Phase - Aged over 15 years

2.1 Provider

Sporting Chance Clinic

Service Description

Sporting Chance are pleased to support club participants who are aged fifteen years and above. Players can be referred by completing the attached contact form and emailing it to **support@sportingchanceclinic.com** or by calling **07500 000777** during office hours.

Sporting Chance is not an emergency service and should a player be presenting in a manner that suggests a risk to themselves or another person safeguarding protocols must be followed. If the presentation suggests an individual to be in imminent danger or harm, emergency procedures should be followed.

Sporting chance will provide access to therapeutic talking therapies through their network of expert practitioners who have been vetted and are qualified to work with this age group, should the club not be able to or be considered not appropriate to provide such support.

Players can be referred to Sporting Chance when

- A player exhibits a general lack of capacity to engage with day to day activities and communications highlights a concern about their mental health
- A significant change in behaviours towards their social interaction, sleep patterns, food intake, withdrawal and/or a capacity to practice self care
- A sustained period (three days plus) that suggests symptoms of anxiety or low mood
- A sustained period (three days plus) of regular outbursts of anger, regular distress, difficulties to regulate emotions

This list is by no means exhaustive or complete and is simply offered in an attempt to guide and bench-mark for who this service will be useful. If you are in doubt, you can discuss a case anonymously by using the telephone number and/or email address offered above.

2.2 Service

- Face-to-face assessment at an appropriate venue that suits the player
- Access to Therapists, Counsellors, Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatrists
- Provision of practitioners that speak the players first language
- Six sessions funded through the Premier League

2.3 Access

- Referral by club
- Email: **support@sportingchanceclinic.com**
- Telephone **07500 000777** Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Summary

Club: This service is to offer clubs an additional resource for players over the age of fifteen who have not signed a contract to move forward into the professional development phase of the structure. Should club pastoral support or internal expert support be judged to have not moved a player away from a presentation of concern clubs can refer to this service. Typically, referrals are received from club psychology, medical, or player welfare staff. Please refer to the toolkit's information sharing documents for assistance with this process. The Sporting Chance clinical team is also available to discuss, with such staff, concerns and approaches regarding players, whether or not a referral is made.

PFA Additional Support: This group will not be union members but can use the PFA's Youth Advisory Service. This includes access to advice on registration procedures and end of contract protocols. The PFA Youth Advisory Service also offer a welfare assessment through their player welfare department and access to "Safety Net", an online resource containing a wealth of advice and practical solutions for managing mental and emotional well-being <https://www.thepfa.com/players/youth-advisory/safety-net>.

2.4 Childline Additional Resource

The Premier League wants to help children and young people feel safe, valued, and empowered.

We have teamed up with Childline to develop online resources for children over 12 years old that will help them to find information and access support about issues which may be worrying them.

Visit our website for more information www.premierleague.com/safeguarding.

3. Youth Development Phase – Aged under 15 years and Foundation Phase

3.1 Provider

The PFA Youth Advisory Service

Access to Saftey Net online resources

3.2 Access

- Referral by club or family
- Email: youthadvisory@thepfa.com
- Telephone **0161 236 0575**

Summary

The PFA Youth Advisory service can organise an assessment with one of their player welfare counselling team. An assessment will offer advice and recommendations to a family regarding a child's emotional and mental wellbeing and signpost to services that can provide follow up support. This group also have access to Safety-Net, an online platform available to all academy players, trailists, and parents and guardians, which covers challenges and obstacles that academy players can sometimes be faced with both on and off the pitch. Some of these include mental health, lifestyle, relationships, football, and further help and support. This resource also contains a wealth of advice and practical solutions for managing mental and emotional well-being. <https://www.thepfa.com/players/youth-advisory/safety-net>.

3.3 Childline Additional Resource

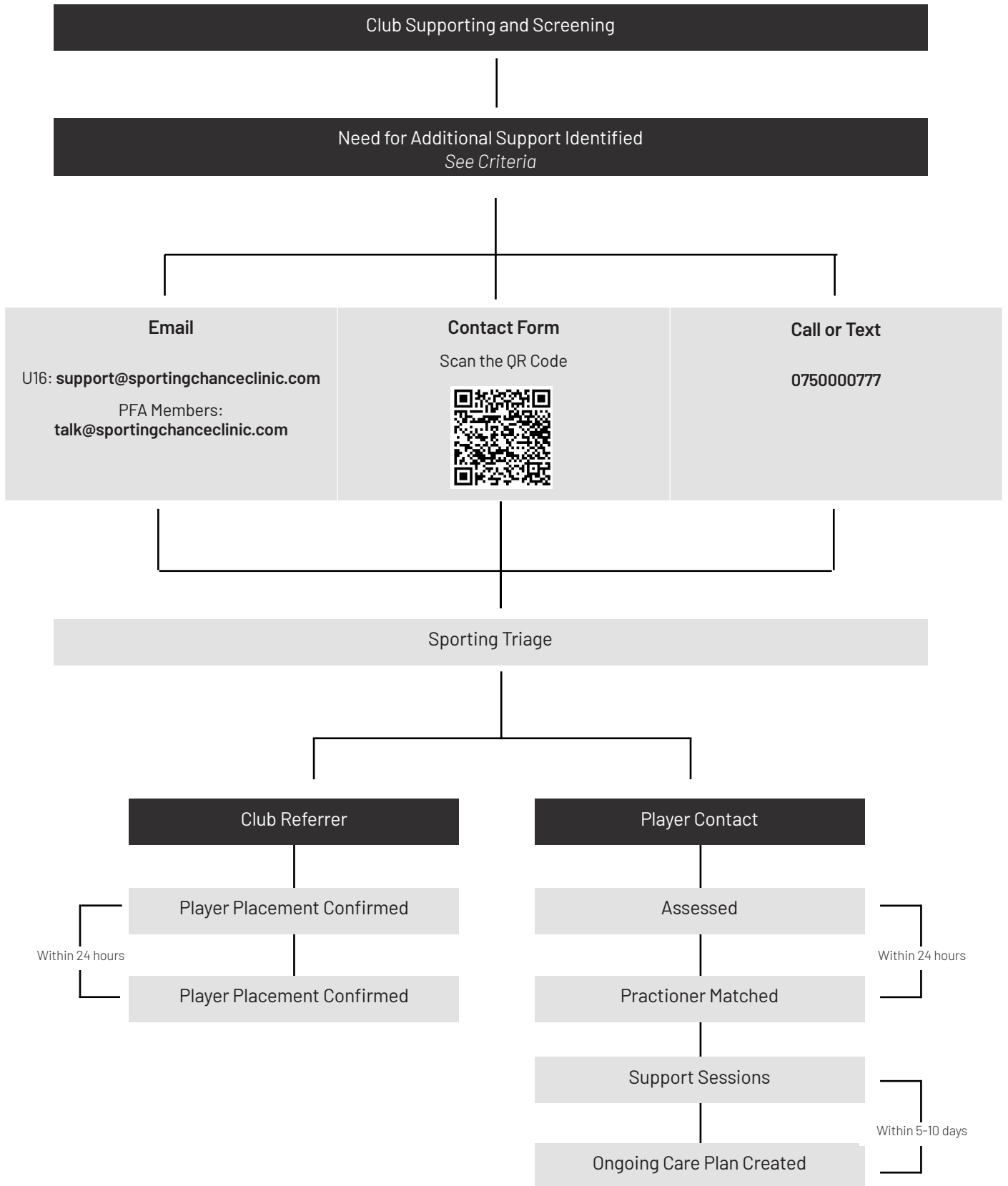
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Sporting Chance Mental Health Support Pathway

3.4



Sporting Chance Mental Health Support Pathway

If you feel someone is experiencing Mental Health problems - follow the ALERT acronym to support them



ASK discretely if they want to talk about it - if so find somewhere to talk and highlight that you might have to pass on information



LISTEN attentively. Ask simple, open and non-judgemental questions. Let the person explain in their own words how they're feeling



ENCOURAGE people to seek, open and non-judgemental questions. Let the person explain in their own words how they're feeling



REASSURE the person that they're not alone. Seeking help can feel lonely, and sometimes scary. Let them know there is support out there - and that you can help signpost them to the help they many need.



Tell a specialist person if you think urgent action is needed



Report the conversation to an appropriate senior person



In an emergency: In the unlikely event of you being faced with an emergency call 999



Alternatively, text 'HeadsUp' to 85258 to connect with a trained crisis volunteer, who will chat to them by text message, sharing only what feels comfortable and help them through the moment



Conclusion shared with appropriate people including player and parent/guardian(s) as appropriate



Case file shared in short with AMT (if appropriate) and with Safeguarding Team



Situation monitored and any further incidences recorded



Review of procedure (if necessary)



Further potential signposts:

Heads Up text Service on **85258** which is a 24/7 service

Childline: www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/mental-health/

Young Minds has information for parents and young people: www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/

Samaritans: just dial **116123**