



We're backing sport's Mental Health Charter

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Welcome to **Around the Table**, our regular look at the work Table Tennis England is doing to promote and support table tennis around the country.

Today, we look at how we are getting involved in a project to use sport to help improve participants' mental health.



Table Tennis England is passionate about the positive impact table tennis can have on people's lives, and we want to shout about it!

So we have committed to the [Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation](#) to work alongside the charity Mind

to tackle mental ill health and the stigma that surrounds it. Through our table tennis initiatives we intend to improve awareness of mental health, and create more opportunities for people to get involved in table tennis, have fun, and improve their mental health and well-being.

What are mental health problems?

Mental health problems can affect the way you think, feel and behave. Some mental health problems are described using words that are in everyday use, for example 'depression' or 'anxiety'. This can make them seem easier to understand, but can also mean people underestimate how serious they can be.

A mental health problem feels just as bad, or worse, than any other illness – only you cannot see it. Although mental health problems are very common – affecting around one in four people in Britain – there is still stigma and discrimination towards people with mental health problems, as well as many myths about what different diagnoses mean.

What is the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation?

The Sport and Recreation Alliance, alongside the Professional Players Federation and with support from the mental health charity Mind, have created the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation. It sets out how sport can use its collective power to tackle mental ill health and the stigma that surrounds it. They want to use the power of the sport and recreation sector to make our activities welcoming, positive and inclusive for everyone.

Why sport then? And why table tennis?

We all know that being physically active is good for our bodies. But [our physical health and mental health are closely linked](#) – so physical activity can be very beneficial for our mental health and well-being too. Table tennis is an activity that is great for body and mind and we really want to encourage people to try and enjoy table tennis as part of this programme.

What is Get Set to Go?

[Get Set to Go](#) is a Sport England and National Lottery funded project, working with Mind to improve the lives of 75,000 people who have mental health problems through access to sport in their communities. The programme works by creating sporting opportunities in local Mind groups to increase activity levels and find the right sport for people.

We want to encourage these groups to use table tennis in their sessions to allow people to benefit from the sport in a way we know they can.

Table tennis is already involved in the Croydon Get Set to Go project, and will hopefully be included in the Blackpool and Middlesbrough locations too. As Get Set to Go expands to more than 30 locations in the next couple of years we hope to build a real table tennis presence in these projects throughout the country.

How is the success of the initiative measured?

The University of Northampton will be monitoring all those who take part in the Get Set to Go project and evaluating the impact on their mental health, which we are confident will provide a lot of evidence of the positive impact of sport in general and of table tennis in particular.

What else is involved in our support for the Charter?

We are looking to recruit ambassadors and role models within the sport to support the Charter, who are willing to share their experiences. We want to be sure that if people in table tennis are experiencing mental health problems, they can find help and support within the sport.

If you would like to find out more about our support for the Charter, [click here to see our action plan](#)

What can people do to get involved?

On Saturday 10th October, 2015 people all over the world will be supporting [World Mental Health Day](#) to raise awareness of mental health problems and support people to talk about their concerns.

We understand that mental health is a very complex and sensitive subject for people to talk about. We are looking for people in the table tennis community to be role models and ambassadors working with us on this project, helping to tackle the stigma that surround Mental Health. We are also looking to gather case studies to show the physical and mental health benefits of table tennis.

If you are interested in talking to us about how you might be able to get involved then we'd love to hear from you.

For more information or to get involved you can contact Steve McFadyen, Clubs & Disability Manager on steve.mcfadyen@tabletennisengland.co.uk or call on 01908 208881.

For more information about mental health and the support available please visit the [Mind website](#).

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