



What we're doing to improve mental health through sport

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Posted On: **February 04, 2016**

Table Tennis England committed to signing up to the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation in July, 2015. Since being the first National Governing Body to submit an Action Plan to Mind in September, 2015, here's a brief look at what we've achieved so far and some plans for 2016 and beyond!

Our first internal mental health and wellbeing working group session was held soon after completing our action plan in September and we've since been busy moving the plan forwards.

In October 2015, we were asked to work with Mind and present at the Sport Minds conference about our action plan and encourage other organisations to do the same! We then followed this up by presenting some of our work to MPs in the Houses of Parliament.

We covered this exciting news on our website to help raise awareness and have [focused one of our 'Around the Table' articles](#) on our work.

Several organisations (including Mind Oxford, Mind Tower Hamlets and Core Arts London) have taken up our table grant scheme offers to get heavily discounted tables in their office or community settings where they work with people with mental health problems and this scheme seems to be going well so far.

As an organisation we've committed to looking at the support our staff get around their wellbeing. Two staff members have been trained and are now fully qualified Mental Health First Aiders and as an organisation we've signed up to an Employee Assistance Programme to provide additional support to staff members.

We invited Mind into our Head Office to use our staff and coaches as a pilot for their newly developed Mental Health in Sport course, which saw some really good engagement and knowledge sharing around mental health, sport and how we can use table tennis to improve people's lives.

Towards the tail end of 2015 we had a Mental Health focus to the second edition of our coaching magazine *Winning Edge* which saw some great interviews and articles around mental health and wellbeing.

In December, we were also delighted to have four table tennis tables at the PeerFest event held in Preston, linked with Lancashire Mind. We had a great day showing the fun you can have playing table tennis. We were also able to promote some of our exciting offers to help organisations introduce table tennis as a fun physical activity into their workplace or into programmes to improve people's mental and physical wellbeing.

We know we have lots of anecdotal evidence around the benefits of table tennis for improving people's mental health and wellbeing and we are starting to collect and get that information out there. We have just started working with Northampton University (who are measuring Mind's 'Get Set to Go' sports programme) to deliver a piece of research looking at the benefits of table tennis in the workplace. This work will commence in early 2016 and we are hoping can show some solid evidence to the benefits of table tennis at work and encourage more people to get reduced-rate offers through our Loop table tennis grant offers.
<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/loop/>

Table Tennis England Clubs & Disability Manager, Steve McFadyen, who is leading the project for the organisation, said: "This is a really important project to us as an organisation. Raising awareness around mental health and working with Mind and the Sport & Recreation Alliance we are looking to do more work with Get Set to Go, collect more stories around the impact table tennis has had on people's lives, look to work with some coaches and players from around the country on becoming ambassadors."

To find out more information or if you want to get involved in any way please contact Steve on steven.mcfadyen@tabletennisengland.co.uk / 01908 208881.

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