Mental Health Charter Case study

March 2016

- 1. Project name: We wear the same shirt
- 2. Organisation name: Time To Change Wales and the Football Association Wales Trust
- 3. Target group: People with lived experience of mental health and the public
- 4. Aims of project: Tackle the stigma around mental health

5. Impact of project

Many individuals dealing with mental health say that the discrimination they face is often worse than the illness itself. To make matters more difficult, this stigma acts as a barrier in stopping the same people from getting involved in sports and activities. To tackle this, Time To Change Wales and the Football Association Wales Trust have come together to use their skills for what they do best. The result? 'We Wear the Same Shirt'; a unique pilot football programme designed specifically for people with lived experience of mental health, and a public campaign to combat the ever-present stigma.

In any one year 1 in 4 individuals will experience a mental health problem or illness and, at any one time, 1 in 6 of the workforce will face these challenges. With mental health considered by many as a taboo subject, discrimination prevents people from talking about their problems and seeking the help they need. Tragically, suicide is the biggest killer for men under 50 in Wales, a painful tragedy that Welsh football knows only too well.

It's time to create a society where mental health problems are not hidden in shame or secrecy, and what better way than to use the 'beautiful game' to break down these barriers and get our communities talking, and playing.

Physical activity is a proven factor to improving mental health and thanks to Sports Wales funding, people living with mental health conditions in the communities of Newtown AFC and Merthyr Town FC and Newport and Wrexham as of June this year, are able to sign up to the 'We Wear The Same Shirt' football programmes, delivered by the club's top coaches, for free. The programme promises to be free of the pressures of competition, and provides a safe and empathetic environment for people plagued with mental health in starting their road to getting active.

While the programme is in the early stages of delivery, evaluation is embedded from the outset. This will include qualitative and quantitative data. It will look at the impact on the individuals involved, the communities that we are working in and the long-term health benefit of the project.

6. Further information

To show your support, or to find out more information about the initiative please contact a.metcalfe@timetochangewales.org.uk or visit: http://wwtss.timetochangewales.org.uk/home/

