

As we know Running is one of the most accessible and low cost ways to be active and meet government recommendations to be moderately active for at least 150 minutes per week. Whether it's to get fit, improve health, make friends or take on a challenge running has something to offer everyone.

England Athletics is a signatory of the **Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation**. The Charter sets out how sport can use its collective power to tackle the stigma that surrounds mental health and help people seek support when needed. [See Link at end](#)

Following on from this, England Athletics and **MIND** (a UK mental health Charity) have developed a **Mental Health Ambassador programme** [See Link at end](#). The programme aims to establish a network of volunteer ambassadors in affiliated running clubs and groups across England to support those of us who are experiencing mental health problems. Support includes helping people to start running, get back into running, or continue running as well as to improve the mental wellbeing of their existing members. England Athletics (EA) is committed to improving mental wellbeing through running. EA's aim is to one day have a mental health ambassador in every affiliated club and group in England so that those of us experiencing mental health problems can access the benefits of running in a supported way.

Mike Feighan and **Sarah Moffat** pictured below are the Mental Health Ambassadors for **South West Road Runners (SWRR)**. We will keep you posted via club announcements and facebook. For any further information, ideas, comments or if you think you can help please contact **Mike** or **Sarah**. We want to receive your ideas to help shape how we develop this initiative. You can also contact either of the two, even if you are not a member of SWRR to discuss mental health and running further.

Contact details are: **Mobile: 07962 041573** **Email:**
mentalhealth@swrr.co.uk



Running, and sport in general, has so many positive effects on the mind. Yet for potential new members, having the confidence to take that first step out the door towards a club can be terrifying, and for someone with a Mental Health problem, it might seem impossible. For this reason we want to use our role(s) to give people, who are experiencing these struggles, the confidence they need just to put that first foot in front of the other. As well as bringing new people to the club, the scheme aims to support existing members who might be experiencing their own Mental Health issues. Having ambassadors in place will encourage people to open up talk about this often stigmatised subject. Perhaps we can offer moral support to keep members engaged with club activities if they are experiencing tricky times. So keep your eyes open in the coming weeks....

These are some of the areas we wish to focus upon:

- Getting people talking about mental health, sharing their experiences and removing stigma.
- Raising awareness of mental health problems.
- Supporting people experiencing mental health problems to not just start running but also maintaining the habit.
- Supporting leaders, coaches and other volunteers with relevant guidance about mental health.
- Volunteering through MIND and other organisations to support people experiencing mental health problems to start running.

LINKS

Sports Charter <http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/campaigns-initiatives/the-mental-health-charter-for-sport-and-recre>

England Athletics Ambassador Programme www.englandathletics.org/mental-health-ambassadors



working with



for better mental health