



East of England Mind Regional Network Hub

# Mental Health Champions

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# Introduction

In November 2019, the mental health charity Mind announced the launch of nine new Regional Networks to help more people with mental health problems engage with physical activity.

By linking up local organisations across the physical activity, mental health and charity sectors Mind hopes its Regional Networks will support sport and physical activity organisations to be more inclusive of people with mental health problems.

The Regional Networks work to increase the number of groups in their region who are equipped with the skills to support and engage people with mental health problems in physical activity. They offer training, toolkits and resources, as well as providing a platform for networking and sharing best practice to build stronger relationship between organisations.

Every Regional Network is led by a Hub (lead organisation), with one based in each of the nine English government regions. They receive support and funding from Mind. Hubs have autonomy and responsibility for designing, delivering and implementing their Regional Network.





# What is a Mental Health Champion?

A Mental Health Champion is someone who takes action to raise awareness of mental health and challenge stigma. Stigma is when we make assumptions about how a mental health problem will affect someone's behaviour. In turn, this makes it more likely that they will be labelled as different, strange, or even dangerous.

In some cases, and where trained appropriately, champions can help those who are experiencing mental health problems by signposting them to appropriate support services.

Mental Health Champions aren't expected to be experts in mental health, or to diagnose mental health problems. Instead, their role is to promote positive mental health and to signpost to relevant support and help, where appropriate.

## What does the role involve?

Individuals who sign up to become a Mental Health Champion will receive:

- Free Mental Health Awareness for Sport and Physical Activity training co-ordinated by Mind, UK Coaching and 1st4Sport.
- A Mental Health Champions e-handbook, which includes guidance around the role, the support available and where to signpost people who may be experiencing mental health problems.
- A free subscription to our monthly mental health newsletter, sharing updates and access to useful resources that come out. Additionally, we will share useful resources that could benefit them in the role.
- Invitations to quarterly forums to share best practice, enabling Mental Health Champions the opportunity to hear from guest speakers, request support on certain areas and network with the East of England Mind Regional Network Hub partners as well as other Champions.





## Who can become a Mental Health Champion?

Anyone over the age of 18 can be a Mental Health Champion. You don't need personal experience of mental health problems, but we know that those who do have lived experience of mental health problems may find it helps them to start conversations and challenge stigma. Any action that a champion takes – no matter how big or small – helps to end stigma and raise awareness.

Being a champion is a voluntary role, so it's important to give careful thought to how you can best use your time to bring about positive change. As with any volunteer role, you are choosing to invest your time, so it should be a positive experience for both you and the organisation, club or group you're part of. It is important that you have consent and support from decision makers in your club or group, such as the committee.

If you have a passion for both sport and activity, and improving people's mental health, then you are just the sort of person we are looking for to become a Mental Health Champion.

[Click here to access the Mental Health Champion Registration Form](#)

For more details about the East of England Mind Regional Network Hub please contact Tom Horey via email: [t.horey2@herts.ac.uk](mailto:t.horey2@herts.ac.uk)