



Port Vale Football Club

Mental Wellbeing Policy

Version control

Document Title:	Mental Wellbeing Policy 2021/2022
Document Owner:	Port Vale Football Club – Jon Bloore
Reference:	Mar 2021

Document review

Last reviewed	Position

Version history

Version	Date Released	Originator	Authorised	Comments
1.0	Mar 2021	Natalie Simpson	Board	Original Policy Implementation
1.1	Apr 2021	Jon Bloore	Board	Upgrade policy to Club uniform presentation.
1.2	August 2021	Tim Bailey		Revised version

1. The Purpose and Scope of this Policy Statement

When working with young people in an often-competitive environment, it is important that staff and coaches are aware of stress which may occur through the pressures which can be created by the ambitions of both players and their parents/carers.

There are occasions when players are released from the academy at any age from 9 years and more especially between the ages of 16 and 18. Worrying about possible release and learning to cope after a release are two significant triggers for poor mental health. They can create feelings of stress and sometimes feelings of failure. It is vital that support is in place to address these challenging times and is embedded in the culture of the Club and Academy.

Every year, one in four of us will experience a mental health problem, but this is just what we know about. Many more people struggle without telling anyone or seeking help.

At Port Vale, we take everyone's wellbeing very seriously and recognise everyone as an individual. We work closely with North Staffordshire MIND, and have offered training, designed with football as a sport in mind, to our staff.

We are committed to going further to ensure the protection and promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of our players and staff. We shall continuously strive to improve the mental health environment and culture of the club by identifying, eliminating, or minimising all harmful processes, procedures and behaviours that may cause psychological harm or illness to its players and staff. Furthermore, we shall continuously strive, as far as is reasonably practicable, to promote mental health throughout the club by establishing and maintaining processes that enhance mental health and wellbeing.

This Policy is for use across the club and is to be observed by all staff, the Policy exists to ensure that best practice is promoted and adhered to.

Activities undertaken at the following locations/departments are under the remit of this policy which include:

- Port Vale Football club and the Vale Park Stadium
- Port Vale Foundation Trust
- Port Vale First Team
- Port Vale Academy and youth development
- Port Vale Women
- Port Vale Retail Store

2. Definitions

"Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their own community.....health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." WHO, 2014.

"Mental wellbeing describes your mental state – how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental wellbeing is dynamic. It can change from moment to moment, day to day, month to month or year to year.

If you have good mental wellbeing, you are able to: feel relatively confident in yourself and have positive self-esteem, feel, and express a range of emotions, build and maintain good relationships with others, feel engaged with the world around you, live and work productively, cope with the stresses of daily life, adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty." (MIND 2019).

Mental ill health is a more than temporary state of mind that adversely affects your ability to function on a day-to-day basis (MIND). We all have mental health, but some of us have mental health problems and may need some additional support to help us through the difficult times.



3. Getting Support

Talking about mental health does not have to be hard and you don't need to be an expert. Simply asking someone how they are feeling can really make a difference.

At appendix A of this policy is a 'Safety Plan' which may be able to assist you when in need of help, there are questions you can answer as a self-guide or to complete when talking to others.

External support available to anyone can include contacting your GP, and through multiple helplines which can be found on the MIND website below. There is staff within Port Vale Football Club who can assist and they, with the individuals permission, can refer to other agencies if appropriate.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/helplines-listening-services/>

4. Support for staff

Staff are encouraged, where they feel comfortable doing so, to speak first with their line manager about any matter which is causing them concern. Should they not feel comfortable in doing so or wish to speak with someone independent from the line

management relationship but still within the organisation, they can contact a trained Mental Health First Aider.

Contact: Mental Health First Aiders
 01782 664087, available
 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

For 24/7 Support: Tim Bailey - Designated Safeguarding Officer
 07966 935817

5. Support for players:

All players, irrespective of age or team, are encouraged to speak with their **coaches** where they feel able and comfortable to do so. This can be an ad-hoc conversation at the players request or can be during a scheduled monthly review.

The Professional Football Association (PFA) offers clubs the ability to access the PFA Safety Net online platform. This is available to all academy players U9's – U'23's, trialists, parents, guardians and club staff as a means of accessing useful confidential material 24/7. The platform covers certain challenges and obstacles that academy players can sometimes be faced with both on and off the pitch and are presented in an engaging manner across these specific areas: Mental health, Lifestyle, Relationships, Football, Further help and other websites.

In order to access the PFA Safety Net, simply visit [The PFA Safety Net](#) and register. Please understand that when registering to the platform, it will generate the appropriate support page for each individual i.e. Foundation Phase academy players content will differ from an academy player within the Professional Development Phase.

- **1st Team**

Contact: Mental Health First Aiders
 01782 664087
 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

For 24/7 Support: Tim Bailey - Designated Safeguarding Officer
 07966 935817

- **U23's**

Contact: Mental Health First Aiders

01782 664087

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

For 24/7 Support: Tim Bailey - Designated Safeguarding Officer

07966 935817

U16's - U18's

Players in the U16-U18 category will be aligned with a college to support the continuation of their studies. At Port Vale, we work closely with Stoke-On-Trent College, who offer a student counselling service to all registered students. Players in this age category, registered with Stoke-On-Trent College can contact the services by following the link: <https://www.stokecoll.ac.uk/support/counselling-and-mentoring/>

For 24/7 Support: Tim Bailey - Designated Safeguarding Officer

07966 935817

- **U9's – U15's**

Support available, in addition to that available through player coaches, and The PFA Safety Net, can be obtained by contacting Tim Bailey, Designated Safeguarding Officer on 07966 935817.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Supporting activities that enable good mental health and wellbeing at the Club is the responsibility of all staff, players and parents/carers. Senior managers and coaches in particular will be expected to show leadership in supporting this policy guidance.

Port Vale will look to all of our line managers and coaches to support their staff and players in a manner which is not detrimental to mental health and which, at its best, can positively promote mental health and wellbeing.

It is the responsibility of the Club Board to ensure the club is being implemented as intended and is reviewed at least annually to provide a strategic overview of how the Club intends to drive activities which support the overarching aim of supporting and enabling good mental health and wellbeing for everyone at the Club.

Resources – General

Mental Health and the FA. [Mental health and well-being - Inclusion and anti-discrimination | The Football Association \(thefa.com\)](#)

[Supporting footballers' mental health: Guidance \(thefa.com\)](#)

Mental Health help lines and links page - [Get help from a mental health charity helpline - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Appendix A](#)

Board Authority and Acceptance of this Policy

Signed by:

Name Board member..... Date:.....

SSM..... Date:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following learning outcomes as a result of a significant incident or when legislation / statutory guidance changes by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safety Plan

If you sometimes struggle with negative or harmful thoughts,

It may help you to complete the plan below.

When you are feeling down, follow the plan one step at a time until you are safe.

Feeling down or depressed is the result of experiencing some form of extreme pain,
and not having the resources to cope.

We therefore need to reduce pain and increase coping resources.

These feelings will pass.

Keep the plan where you can easily find it or when you may need it.

What do I need to do to reduce the risk of me acting on negative or harmful thoughts?

What warning signs or triggers are there that make me feel more out of control?

What have I done in the past that helped? What ways of coping do I have?

What I will do to help calm and soothe myself?

What I will tell myself (as alternatives to the dark thoughts):

What would I say to a close friend who was feeling this way?

What could others do that would help?

Who can I talk to?:

A Friend or relative: Another?

A work colleague or mental health first aider: Other?

A Health professional: Other?

A Telephone helpline: Other?

A safe place I can go to:

What I need to do to reduce the risk of me acting on the negative and harmful thoughts:

Remove stockpile of medication – take them to a pharmacy.

Throw away blades.

What warning signs or triggers are there that make me feel more out of control?

Staying home, alone, in bedroom, brooding.

What have I done in the past that helped? What ways of coping do I have?

Being honest with other people and yourself. Keeping busy. Being with other people. Writing down my thoughts and feelings – and reminding myself of alternative ways of looking at things.

What I will do to help calm and soothe myself?

Focus on my breathing. Do something else, anything, for at least 20 minutes. Then do something else if it still feels overwhelming.

What will I tell myself?

I have got through this before, I can get through it now. These are not helpful thoughts, but they are JUST thoughts, I don't want to hurt myself or anyone else, this will pass.