

HRH Duke of Cambridge and football legends champion mental health

In an historic first, all 32 Emirates FA Cup third round fixtures this weekend will be delayed by one minute. A new film narrated by His Royal Highness, The Duke of Cambridge will be played before the matches, encouraging football fans to 'Take A Minute' to start taking action to look after their mental health and that of their family and friends.

The powerful one minute film features current and former players, pundits, managers and fans including Frank Lampard, Harry Maguire, Alex Scott, Dele Alli, Jordan Pickford, Callum Hudson-Odoi, Son Heung-Min, Hamza Choudhury and Slaven Bilic. The film will play across stadiums, online and broadcasters, reaching millions of football fans across England.

The film has been released as a collaboration between Public Health England's (PHE) Every Mind Matters and The Football Association (The FA) and Heads Together's Heads Up campaign, who have teamed up to raise awareness of the simple actions we can all take to look after our mental health.

While the collaboration is aimed at everyone including players, supporters, friends and families, it's widely recognised that football can be a powerful way to reach men in particular. There are over 15 million football fans in England, 69% of whom are men.

A YouGov survey commissioned by PHE shows that men in England are less likely than women to seek help or take self-care actions for early signs of common mental health concerns. It showed:

- of the 78% of men who have experienced early signs of mental health concerns in the last year, just under half (45%) said they'd never taken self-care actions to manage their mental health (compared to 31% of women)
- of those men that did take steps to manage or improve their mental health, over three quarters (73%) wished they'd taken action sooner
- men were also less likely to take self-care actions every day, with 18% of men doing so compared to one in four (24%) women

Heads Up is a season long partnership between The FA and Heads Together, and spearheaded by HRH The Duke of Cambridge, which uses the popularity of football as a vehicle to generate the biggest ever conversation around mental health. For the Third Round, the campaign is now partnering with Every Mind Matters, a groundbreaking mental health platform from Public Health England. Together, the initiative will encourage football fans to look after their own mental health, and support friends and family who may be struggling. They can start this by completing a 'Mind Plan', a quick and free tool from Every Mind Matters that has already been completed over one million times.

By taking a minute to answer a few questions about how they are feeling, fans

will get their own personalised action plan. Clinically assured by the NHS, the plan recommends a range of evidence based self-care actions for each individual, which are designed to deal with stress, boost their mood, improve sleep and feel more in control – preventing these common mental health concerns escalating into more serious, clinical conditions.

Duncan Selbie, chief executive of PHE, said:

As every fan knows, football has its highs and lows – and so does life. This is a fantastic opportunity to bring the football community together in an important conversation about how we can all take care of our mental health, starting with a few simple actions.

Godric Smith, chair of the Heads Up campaign, comments:

Football is already doing some great work on mental health but it is really encouraging to see the whole game uniting around the Heads Up campaign in 2020 starting with the Emirates FA Cup Third Round. Support your team. Support your mates. And support yourself. The Every Mind Matters website is a great place to start. We all have mental health and we can all take a minute to think more about it and take simple, positive steps.

Frank Lampard, current manager of Chelsea F.C.:

It's hugely important for men to think about their mental health and take action where they can. I came from a family where we bottled up a lot of emotions, feelings and sometimes anxieties. I think a huge thing now is the great campaigns that are going on encouraging people to speak openly about looking after your mental health and not feel bad about how you feel inside. I think as men, sometimes we can think that it's a weakness but it certainly isn't. It's a huge strength.

Mark Bullingham, The FA's Chief Executive, said:

We hope that the symbolic 60 second delay to all Emirates FA Cup Third Round fixtures will be the start of a journey for better mental health for the millions who will be watching one of English football's most famous weekends. We're delighted to have an association with Public Health England for this Round and to signpost fans to their 'Every Mind Matters' website, one of the simple steps that is readily available to drive change.

Dele Alli, current player for Tottenham Hotspur F.C.:

It's very important to me to be a part of this campaign because I feel a lot of people like to try and deal with their problems by themselves and can feel like they sometimes haven't got people they can talk to, or that there's nothing they can do about it. There are so many people struggling with their mental health, so I want to help people understand that they don't have to deal with it alone. There are a lot of people out there that can help and there are steps you can take to make sure your mental wellbeing is the best it can be.

Dr Hilary Jones, comments:

Most of us experience some sort of mental health difficulty during our lives and we know that men in particular struggle with acknowledging and acting on any problems. We hope this new partnership will be able to reach men and women in a way that helps them to take action to look after their mental health.

The Emirates FA Cup Third Round kicks-off on Saturday 4 January 2020 at 12.31pm with games taking place across the weekend.

Fans can search Every Mind Matters to create their own personal mental health action plan or visit www.everymindmatters.co.uk.

Those in need of immediate support can text 'HeadsUp' to 85258 to be connected to a trained crisis counsellor. This service is available 24/7, and free to text from most mobile networks.

In conjunction with Heads Up charity partners Mind, CALM, Heads Together and Sporting Chance, fans will also be provided with helpful tips and advice on [The FA website](#) on how they can approach managing their mental health.