

Mental Health News

Football legends support *It's a Goal* in Blackpool

The Mental Health News e-bulletin is a daily bulletin issued by the Mental Health Improvement Programme (MHIP) containing an item relating to a Mental Health issue, development or outcome in the North West.

The aim is to bring awareness to our stakeholders about service improvement and innovative projects underway in Mental Health across the North West, and to encourage you (the reader) to act as vehicle for ensuring that you or your organisation is engaged with the work where applicable.

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On the 30th October, NHS Blackpool were pleased to launch the **It's a Goal** initiative at Blackpool football stadium with the support of sporting legends Sir Bobby Charlton and local hero Jimmy Armfield, close friends and members of the 1966 World Cup squad. Following their training session, the manager and players from Blackpool FC also showed their support by turning up wearing **It's a Goal** t-shirts.

A DVD produced with the involvement of the Blackpool football squad was shown at the event and will be used to help reduce stigma and discrimination, especially with young men in Blackpool. Opening speaker Elaine Walker, Primary Mental Health Team Manager, let the 'picture tell the story', showing the activity that had taken place in Blackpool starting World Mental Health Day through to the big screen viewing of the DVD on match day 17th October. The 'Time to Change' message clearly displayed by players challenged mental health discrimination and helped lay the foundation for the **It's a Goal** programme starting in the New Year. MHIP speaker, Julie Cullen, outlined how the sessions focus upon developing tactics and techniques for individuals to take more control over their lives.

Sir Bobby highlighted the power of football and the valuable contribution it can make to towards supporting young men. This was echoed by Jimmy Armfield who talked about vulnerable groups in Blackpool and the potential of the stadia as a facility to support its community. Blackpool Football Club has offered the use of the players changing rooms to run the sessions and players have agreed to drop in and show their support. The club has also offered free tickets to some of the home games as an incentive to help individuals on the programme reach their goals.

For more information about the **It's a Goal** programme in Blackpool contact Janet Duckworth via Janet.Duckworth@blackpoolpct.nhs.uk or 01253 655192

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