

Mental Health Champions and Ambassadors

As part of the #RunAndTalk programme we aim to establish a network of volunteers across affiliated clubs and RunTogether groups in England to:

- promote mental wellbeing through running by supporting the aims of #RunAndTalk
- work with their club/group to support its members to improve their mental health through running.
- Support new people who are experiencing mental health problems to start running, get back into running, or continue running.

There are 2 volunteer support roles, Mental Health Champions and Mental Health Ambassadors. There is no hierarchy to the roles but each has a different remit and require different levels of qualifications.

Mental Health Champions

The role of a Mental Health Champion is to support people to access the mental wellbeing benefits of running, remove stigma and get people talking about mental health. Champions will NEVER be expected to provide mental health support in the role but they will be provided with details of where to signpost people for professional support with their mental health.

Once appointed Mental Health Champions are provided with guidance and advice to support them in the role along.

Mental Health **Champions** will:

- Be nominated and appointed by an England Athletics affiliated club or RunTogether group and act on their behalf.
- Have lived experience of a mental health problem, either personally or from a close relative or friend.
- Have an open and non-judgmental attitude.
- Adopt a positive, patient and supportive approach towards supporting people with mental health problems.
- Be a positive role model.
- Behave in a professional, confidential and non-discriminatory manner at all times and promote equal opportunities for all.

Along with any other Mental Health Champions from the club/group they will:

- Support #RunAndTalk campaigns and register an organised run for each event

- Provide crisis contacts to their club/group
- Be a point of contact for anyone experiencing mental health problems to join the club/group
- Encourage and promote conversations about mental health
- Make links with mental health organisations in the community
- Actively promote mental wellbeing and running

What Mental Health Champions do

We ask Mental Health Champions to consider doing some or all of the following but how much time and exactly which parts they do is up to them and the club/group they represent.

The role of the Mental Health Champion includes:

1. Supporting.

Working with other people in their club or group (such as committee members or your group leader) to proactively support the mental wellbeing of club/group members

2. Engaging.

Making links between their club/group with local mental health groups and organisations and encourage their members to start running.

3. Tweeting.

Posting using #RunAndTalk particularly during the campaign periods.

4. Sharing.

Sharing social media posts from England Athletics, RunTogether, Mind and other Mental Health Champions using #RunAndTalk.

5. Talking.

- Starting conversations about mental health with other club or group members.
- Sharing good news stories in your newsletters or website to get people talking.
- Encouraging people to sign up to Elefriends to receive support from others online and join our Get Active discussions. Elefriends is open to everyone aged 18+ that struggles with their mental health.

6. Advocating.

Sharing guidance and information provided by England Athletics with elected club/group officials and others about mental health issues related to running.

7. Volunteering.

Getting involved and actively participating in wider volunteer opportunities to support people experiencing mental health problems to start running.

Our aim is to one day have a Mental Health Champion in every England Athletics affiliated club and RunTogether group in England so that people experiencing mental health problems can access the benefits of running in a supported way.

Mental Health Champions are appointed directly by the club or RunTogether group.

Mental Health Ambassadors

Mental Health **Ambassadors** will:

- Be an England Athletics Mental Health Champion
- Hold a Mental Health First Aid Training qualification (2 days or equivalent)
- Have professional experience of working in mental health settings in the community (e.g. in a mental health charity) or the NHS in a practitioner role this could include in support roles, therapist, mental health nurse or another relevant clinical role.

They will:

- Undertake the activities within the role of the Champion
- Provide an advisory role to England Athletics regarding #RunAndTalk
- Provide support to other Champions (Champions will be assigned to a specific Ambassador for support/guidance)
- Be a point of contact for Champions and provide advice and guidance regarding any concerns

Mental Health Ambassadors are appointed by England Athletics with applications opened annually to existing Mental Health Champions.

What Mental Health Ambassadors do

Mental Health Champions who work in the mental health sector and have specific training and qualifications in this area can apply to also become a Mental Health Ambassador. This is an additional role to the Mental Health Champion where they provide support to a number of Mental Health Champions who may be from outside of their club or group. This means that every Mental Health Champion who wants to has someone they can turn to with expertise in mental health.

Mental Health Ambassadors are also be asked to provide wider support to the #RunAndTalk programme and England Athletics through guidance, advice and

contributing to the development and delivery of development opportunities for Mental Health Champions.

What a Mental Health Champion/Ambassador won't do

#RunAndTalk is about getting more people running and benefiting from the physical, social and mental wellbeing benefits that come from running. **Mental Health Champions and Ambassadors are not able to provide individual or emergency support for people experiencing mental health problems or in crisis within their role.** There are lots of people who can though and Mental Health Champions and Ambassadors know who they are and how to access them.

Similarly unless they are qualified to do so Mental Health Champions and Ambassadors won't provide leadership or coaching advice. They work with the UKA qualified leaders and coaches at their club or group to help people to run safely and meet their goals.

Neither role acts as a practitioner for providing mental health support but will be provided with information and guidance on how to help someone access support.