

Isle of Man Sport Aid Mental Health Strategy – Steering Group

Steering Group

Ian Braid FMHC (Chair)

Ian is the founder and MD of DOCIA sport, a company formed following his involvement in the UK government’s review of Duty of Care in Sport led by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson. He has worked across the UK “Talent Pathway” as a Trustee of SportsAid and is the former CEO of the British Athletes Commission. He is originally from Fleetwood, Lancashire as his mother’s family settled there after leaving the Isle of Man looking for work. His great uncle was a member of the House of Keys.



Ian is a MHFA England Mental Health First Aid Instructor and a Fellow of the Mental Health Collective. The work of DOCIA sport has recently been recognised winning the Mental Health Consultancy of the Year Award 2020.

Nikki Arthur

Nikki is Director of Key stage 4 at QEII High School. She has been teaching for 11 years after completing a Masters in Forensic Analytical Chemistry at the University of Strathclyde. Nikki’s pastoral role at QEII includes working with children and young adults who require extra support within school. Much of this support is for students with poor mental health, ranging from mild anxiety in lessons to supporting families with children who have attempted suicide. After losing a friend to suicide in 2018 Nikki fought to set up the link between mental health charity Isle Listen and QEII, allowing QEII to be their pilot school. This was a successful collaboration and Isle Listen are now involved in all secondary schools across the island.



Nikki was a competitive boxer, winning the 2015 Isle of Man championships and qualifying for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. She is now the island’s sports development officer for Boxing and sits on the Commonwealth Games Board as Associate Director. Since leaving competitive boxing, Nikki has taken to endurance events as she enjoys the mental game that goes with the physical aspect. Some of the events or challenges she has been a part of include the Parish Walk, Ironman, the Manx Xtreme and running the Raad ny Foillan in under 24 hours.

Helen Collis

Helen Collis is married to Antony and mum to Archie, who has progressed through Sport Aid Academy and has been a Sport Aid recipient for the past 2 years. Helen works as an administrator for a corporate service provider in Douglas. As someone who struggles with anxiety, she believes that talking about issues affecting us is important - it is very difficult for individuals, of any age, who do suffer to speak out, but probably more so for teenagers and young adults who are just starting to find their path through the stresses of education, work, and relationships.



Archie is a member of the Isle of Man and North West (Junior) judo squads and is now a first-year student at Sheffied Hallam University. As a parent Helen has been part of Isle of Man judo support bubble for 10 years, both supporting coaches on the Island and travelling with our young athletes competing in the UK. She is also a qualified British Judo contest recorder, helping at competitions both on the Island and in the North West region. Helen has watched Archie grow from taking up Judo at the age of 8 as a way of helping gain confidence in order to deal with bullying at school, to watching him grow through his sport to win medals at national competitions and representing the Island at the Island Games and at the Commonwealth Judo Games in Birmingham.

Eleanor Devereau

Eleanor is the Activities Co-ordinator for the Community Wellbeing Service running the mental health physical activity scheme, ACTIV4HEALTH. She supports and encourages service users to participate in exercise, primarily to improve their mental health and wellbeing, whilst also improving their physical health and lifestyle. Eleanor has a BSc in Psychology and a MSc in Forensic Psychology and has been volunteering at the Isle of Man Prison for the past three years. She conducts various programmes including emotion regulation and thinking skills with prisoners helping them to consider, understand and change their behaviour. During her MSc she conducted her dissertation within the Isle of Man Prison interviewing prisoners about their experiences and perceptions of mental health provisions and needs.



Eleanor has been involved in a variety of sports from a young age, however hockey is something she is passionate about - she was Vice Captain of her university hockey team and she also coached the under 11 hockey team for her club, Valkyrs. Eleanor loves a challenge, which she demonstrated by walking the Raad Ny Foillan coastal footpath over 4 days whilst camping each night, raising money for two local mental health charities: Isle Listen and REACH IOM. This year she is taking on the Parish Walk.

Gianni Epifani

Gianni heads up the Physical Activity Team which, primarily through varied exercise schemes, encourages inactive people to make better lifestyle choices. Long-term positive behaviour change allows them to enjoy improved physical and mental health, in work, social and family settings. Gianni has worked in the sport and leisure industry for nearly 30 years, in varied roles such as lifeguard, leisure & gym attendant, coach, tutor, sport development officer and more recently managing an exercise-focused health and wellbeing team.



Sporting wise, middle- and long-distance running is his passion. By his own admission he frustratingly never reached the peak of his capability as a runner but enjoyed representing the Isle of Man at four Island Games, winning four medals in the process. More recently he has represented GB Age Group in the Duathlon World Championships, and he also holds a number of long-distance National Cycling Time Trial records. Gianni thrives on the competitive element of sport and the focus and discipline of being active has benefitted his mental health through life's ups and downs. He values sport for the positive impact it has on his wellbeing and outlook on life.

Lee Holland

Lee is the Isle of Man national swimming coach. He has coached professionally for over 20 years and worked with every level of athlete from grass roots to Paralympic champions and world record holders. Working with young people, Lee has a keen interest in mental health and wellbeing. He feels this is an area coaches are not adequately prepared for.



As someone who competed at an international level himself, Lee has battled on a regular basis with the "ex sportsman" issues regarding retirement and the loss of identity associated with those changes. Lee has lost two close friends due to mental health issues and suicide whom he knows would have been helped, if not saved, had work and support of this nature been more readily available through sports.

Dr Thomas McCabe

Tom is a sports psychiatrist working from Glasgow, having a career change from general practice some 4 years ago. He is a key contributor to the growing speciality of sport psychiatry within the UK and has presented on the issue of mental illness diagnosis at national and international stage.



Tom has recently co-edited a book called Case Studies in Sports Psychiatry. This book draws on lived experience from professional athletes bringing together the latest evidence-based research on severe mental illness recognition and management within elite sport. He is particularly interested professionally and socially in rugby, football, and cricket and works with professional teams in the Glasgow area.

Dr Hollie Quaye

Hollie works as a Clinical Psychologist across a range of Healthcare settings. Predominantly, her experience lies within Mental Health, working with adults and children with a range of complex needs. Hollie currently works in palliative care, providing psychological support for patients and their families. This involves working with a range of age groups and clinical presentations, such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD. Hollie also works to ensure that staff wellbeing needs are identified and met.



Hollie has been immersed in sport from a young age, competing locally, and reaching regional standards in Athletics. She now has a young family who also enjoy the benefits of sport. Hollie recognises the ability for sport to become a mechanism for positive wellbeing and coping in people's lives, however it can also be an area where mental health difficulties are shielded, and needs may go unmet.

Catherine Reid

Catherine is a 22-year-old semi-professional track athlete from the Isle of Man, specialising in the 400m. In her athletics career to date, she has experienced many ups and downs. In 2015, Catherine was Island Games champion and won a bronze medal at the IAAF World Youth Championships. Shortly after that she picked up a major knee injury, which prevented her competing at Commonwealth Youth Games and ultimately cut short her NCAA career at the University of Georgia. Catherine has fully recovered from her knee injury and now lives and trains in Loughborough.



Catherine is aware of the mental health implications faced by athletes, given the lack of care she experienced as an NCAA student-athlete and dealing with a 5-year long injury and recovery process. She is looking forward to contributing to this project, helping to put in place a mental health framework that will support fellow athletes. Outside of athletics, Catherine is involved with an organisation called People of Colour, Isle of Man - an anti-racism organisation working to make the Isle of Man a more inclusive space for all.

Ian Sharpe MPhil BSc

As a seven times world champion and ten times Paralympic medallist in a sporting career spanning nearly three decades, Ian consistently demonstrated the dedication, commitment and motivation required to become the best in the world in not only one but two sports.

Working with some of the world's top coaches, physios and sports psychologists throughout his career, Ian has come to recognise the powerful interplay which exists between sport and mental health, both at competition level and in normal, everyday life. He has reaped the benefits: It's hard to stay frustrated when you're swimming seventy thousand metres a week; who cares if you're blind when you're the best in the world? And he has experienced the lows: what happens when an injury puts you out of action for a year; how do you get that endorphin high once you've retired from competition?

Passionate about the benefits of sport on mental health having seen how even moderate physical activity has improved the emotional well-being of friends and family, Ian welcomes the opportunity to share his experiences and insights to help others.



Richard Sille

Rich is a sport psychology practitioner, researcher, and lecturer. He has recently been installed as Sport Psychology Lead at Isle of Man Sport Aid where part of his remit is to develop a Mental Health Strategy. Rich has also been involved with Isle of Man Sport Aid Academy since its inception in 2015. Rich is completing a Professional Doctorate at Liverpool John Moores University where his research interests include development of expertise in motorsport and long-term injury. Rich is also an accredited Mental Health First Aider through MHFA England.



Rich lives in Colby, Isle of Man with his wife and two young children. He played football and rugby in his younger days, mainly for enjoyment and social reasons. After retiring from team sports, he found his way into fellrunning. Exercising in the natural environment has been great for his mental health and wellbeing. He enjoys longer races in the Lakeland Fells, particularly when the mist is down – making it exciting and also a bit scary!

Sarah Vorster

Sarah holds a BSc and MSc in sports therapy and has been running her own practice on the Isle of Man for over 10 years, winning Young Achiever of the Year in 2014 for the growth of her clinic. Prior to moving back to the Isle of Man she worked with both Watford FC and London Irish RUFC. More recently, Sarah was part of the Athletics support team, travelling to the Island Games in 2015 and 2017. Spending time with athletes on a one-to-one basis, Sarah has become aware of some of the coping mechanisms athletes use for their mental health. Sarah feels that her industry, with the right training and within a multidisciplinary approach, is well placed to pick up on mental health presentations and play a part in triage.

