

SAMH'S VIEW:

SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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ABOUT THE SAMH'S VIEW SERIES

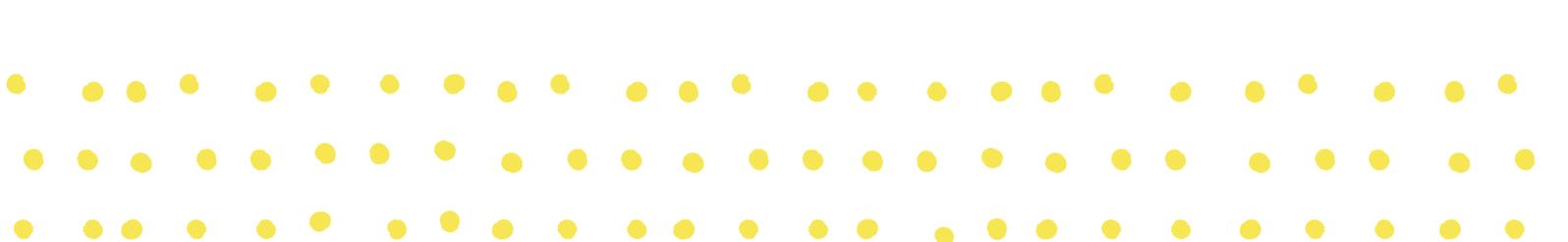
SAMH's View statements set out SAMH's position on a particular policy topic. They are produced by the Public Affairs team.

Context

Sport and physical activity are good for your mental health and wellbeing.¹ The less physical activity a person does, the more likely they are to experience low mood, depression, tension and worry.²

Key points

- The level of physical activity in the UK ranks poorly behind other European countries, with 44% of the population engaging in no moderate exercise.³
- SAMH's Get Active interim evaluation highlighted the benefits of regular physical activity in promoting good mental health, preventing mental ill-health and improving the quality of life of people who experience mental health problems.⁴
- People with mental health problems face stigma about their illness which may prevent them from engaging in sport and physical activity.⁵
- In some areas, GPs can refer patients with mild to moderate mental health problems to physical activity as a treatment for their illness. Edinburgh's 'Healthy Active Minds' is a successful example of this, with 99% of participants saying they enjoyed taking part in the programme,⁶ and 87% noting that the programme helped them to achieve their goals.
- Research has shown that the most positive impact on people's mood came from low-intensity aerobic exercise for 30-35 minutes, 3-5 days a week over a 10-12 weeks period.⁷
- Elite sportspeople face high and unique pressure in their day to day lives due to the nature of their employment.⁸ Despite this high risk, it has only recently been recognised and requires much development.⁹



SAMH calls for:

- Employers to adopt greater responsibility in promoting physical and regular movement amongst their staff.
- The roll out of the 'Daily Mile' programme in all schools across Scotland.
- Mental health training to be provided to all staff at leisure facilities, and subsequently the implementation of specific programmes for people with severe and enduring mental health problems.

Further detail:

OFFICIAL GUIDANCE

- [Sport and Physical Activity guidelines](#)
- [The Daily Mile Programme](#)
- [English Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation](#)
- [Mental Health and Elite Sport](#)

Notes

- 1 The Scottish Government, The Scottish Health Survey: Mental Health and Wellbeing, Jan 2015 at p 48 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00469088.pdf>
- 2 The Royal College of Psychiatrists, Physical Activity and Mental Health, 2012 <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/treatmentwellbeing/physicalactivity.aspx>
- 3 The British Heart Foundation, Physical Activity Statistics, 2015 <https://www.bhf.org.uk/publications/statistics/physical-activity-statistics-2015>
- 4 https://www.samh.org.uk/media/348932/get_active_evaluation_summary_report.pdf
- 5 The Scottish Government, Attitudes to Mental Health in Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2013 <http://www.scotcen.org.uk/media/563039/ssa-mental-health.pdf>
- 6 Edinburgh Leisure, Healthy Active Minds Performance Report, July 2013 http://about.edinburghleisure.co.uk/images/downloads/Healthy_Active_Minds_Performance_29.07.13.pdf
- 7 Reed, J. & Buck, S. (2009). The effect of regular aerobic exercise on positive-activated affect: A meta-analysis. Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 10 (6), 581-594.
- 8 Mind, Performance Matters: Mental Health and Elite Sport, 2014 <http://www.mind.org.uk/media/1085139/Mental-Health-and-Elite-Sport.pdf>
- 9 PFA Scotland, 'PFA Scotland Launch Wellbeing Fund' 2014 <http://pfascotland.co.uk/2014/news/pfa-scotland-launch-wellbeing-fund/>