

MEDIA RELEASE

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 **NEW DRIVE TO END THE STIGMA SURROUNDING MENTAL HEALTH AS THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE AND**

**THE FA LAUNCH *HEADS UP* CAMPAIGN**

* **Partnership between Heads Together and The FA will use the power of football to inspire the biggest conversation ever on mental health**
* ***Heads Up* will run throughout the 19/20 season and be visible across all levels of football in England, culminating in the Emirates FA Cup final being dedicated to Heads Up next May**

Heads Together and The Football Association [The FA] have today announced an exciting new campaign – *Heads Up* – to generate the biggest ever conversation around mental health.

The campaign was announced today at Wembley Stadium connected by EE by The Duke of Cambridge, FA Chief Executive Martin Glenn and Mind Chief Executive Paul Farmer. *Heads Up* will harness the influence and popularity of football to help show the world that mental fitness is just as important as physical fitness, and will build on the decades of work to tackle the stigma and drive the conversation on mental health.

While it’s aimed at everyone including players, supporters, friends and families, it’s widely recognised that football is a uniquely powerful way to reach men in particular. Men are three times more likely to commit suicide than women, with suicide the most likely cause of death for men under the age of 45. The campaign hopes to encourage more men to feel comfortable talking about their mental health, and feel able to support their friends and families through difficult times.

*Heads Up* will be launched at The FA Community Shield in August 2019 and will culminate at the May 2020 FA Cup Final, where Emirates has generously agreed to support the *Heads Up* campaign. The campaign will be visible across all levels of football in England throughout the course of the 2019/20 season, including the men’s and women’s England teams, FA competitions and grassroots – from England matches through to the Emirates FA Cup. The FA will give more details of this broad ambitious campaign at the start of next season at The FA Community Shield. During next season dedicated promotional activity will aim to spark conversations while resources and training will be available to all football participants and FA staff.

**The Duke of Cambridge said:** "As President of The FA I saw an opportunity to bring the sport I love – that many men talk about more than anything else in their lives – to help lead the next phase of the conversation. Over the last two years, we’ve been working behind the scenes to decide the best way to harness the power of football to change the way men think about mental health. *Heads Up* will show men that we all have mental health just like we have physical health. Building on the amazing attitude that led England to the World Cup Semi-Finals, it will show us all that mental fitness is just as important as physical fitness.”

**Martin Glenn, FA’s Chief Executive, said:** "Mental health remains one of the biggest issues facing men under the age of 45. Around 12 million people play football in England each year, with even more watching on, and *Heads Up* will use the power and popularity of football to drive awareness and change. In football and in life we’re constantly talking about physical fitness – but mental fitness is even more important.

"Helping to raise awareness for mental health is a real priority for The FA and we are delighted to partner with The Duke of Cambridge and Heads Together on this project. The FA has already done a lot of great work in this space but we want to ensure English football is set up to be a world leader in sport when it comes to mental health."

The Duke of Cambridge and England manager Gareth Southgate have featured in an emotive film outlining the *Heads Up* manifesto. The film also included Lionesses’ legend Kelly Smith and the founders of FC Not Alone Matt Legg and Ian McKenzie. To watch and download the film [click here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIH_clPpJWU).

**Godric Smith, Chair of the *Heads Up* Campaign, said:** “After the success of Heads Together, The Duke identified the opportunity to take the conversation on through our national game. Nothing gets men in particular talking more than football. We also know there is pretty much nothing they are less likely to talk about than their mental health. The *Heads Up* campaign gives us the chance to help change that and build on the great work that is already happening. Through football and the leadership of The FA we can help show we all have mental health and demonstrate to everyone the importance of mental fitness.”

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**About The FA:**

The Football Association [The FA] is the not-for-profit governing body of football in England. It is responsible for promoting and developing every level of the game, from grassroots through to the professional game, and successfully generates enough revenue to support the investment of well over £100m into English football each year. The FA oversees 28 England international teams, across men’s, women’s, youth and disability football, as well as running FA Competitions, including the Emirates FA Cup and SSE Women's FA Cup, and the world-class facilities of Wembley Stadium and St. George’s Park, all with a purpose to Unite the Game and Inspire the Nation.

**About Heads Together:**

In 2016 The Royal Foundation launched Heads Together – a campaign spearheaded by The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and The Duke of Sussex. The campaign convened eight charity partners to tackle the stigma around mental health. The campaign successfully encouraged more people in Britain to talk openly about mental health than ever before, and more people started accessing services as a result. Today we continue to work with our charity partners to support new initiatives to help people get the right help, at the right time and in the right place for them, whether that’s at school, in work, in social groups, or in the armed forces community. Heads Together also helped design and establish ‘Shout’ the UK’s first crisis text support service, which was set up with a £3m grant from The Royal Foundation to the charity Mental Health Innovations.