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**CEO COLIN BLAND  
REPORTS  
PAGE 3**



**DAME KELLY HOLMES  
JOINS THE CHARITY  
PAGE 4**



**MEET OUR STAFF  
PAGE 6**

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# THE SPORTING CHANCE NEWSLETTER

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## A Welcome from our founder Tony Adams

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Hi everyone and welcome to this first edition of the Sporting Chance Newsletter, which is intended to be published four times a year in order to keep everyone informed about the great, and expanding, work our charity is doing.

So much has happened since I decided back in 2000, soon after I began my own recovery from alcoholism by not drinking one day at a time, that there was a need in professional sport for an independent organisation to help other professional sportsmen and women with addictive disorders.

We still retain and run our innovative treatment centre at Forest Mere in Hampshire for those who require residential care. It remains the only facility in the world that offers a programme tailored exclusively for current or former professional sportsmen and women.

Now we do so much more than that. These days, as more is becoming known about the complexities that make sports people tick and what they experience, so much of our work involves mental and emotional health.

Our education programme takes us into clubs and organisations the length and breadth of the land and, in partnership with the PFA, we also run a nationwide network of almost 200 counsellors and therapists, available for one-to-one consultations with just a phone call.

I am proud of the development of Sporting Chance. We are proud of our work. So much so that we want to share it with a wider audience, via this newsletter. Because the more people we can reach, the more we can help.

We hope you enjoy it every three months. And we hope it furthers our contact with those we have already helped and maybe is part of the process of establishing contact with those who might be looking for help.

[www.tonyadamsofficial.com](http://www.tonyadamsofficial.com)



# We've come a long way – but there's more to do

By Chief Executive Colin Bland



IN HIS introduction, Tony talked about the evolution of the charity and our three core areas of work in this our 19th year of delivering services to elite sports professionals or those who have once been so: one-to-one counselling, education and residential treatment for addictive disorders.

I would just like to add a couple of numbers to this. The charity will offer direct therapeutic services to over 800 individuals this year and education seminars to more than 3,000. Although I consider these numbers high, in part because the number of people

accessing therapeutic services has increased by 40% on last year, I do believe there is plenty of work to be done.

Alongside the direct work we do for individuals, the charity also offers advice and guidance to governing bodies, unions, leagues and clubs. In recent years we've been closely involved in the addition of education and therapeutic pathways to disciplinary processes, the implementation of sport-wide mental health strategies and the creation of affordable funding models for less wealthy sports. Further to this, the charity has played a significant role in establishing a therapeutic response and associated systems for adult survivors of historic abuse in football.

My role - to the very best of my ability –is to make the charity's vision a reality, in line with Tony's mission statement: *"Whenever a sports professional has the courage to reach out for help with an emotional or mental health problem, there must be a safe and professional place for them to go - Sporting Chance could be that place."*

So, although we have come a long way in 19 years, I hope you will agree there is still a journey left ahead. All our departments are engaged in constant development. Recent changes have included the addition of therapists whose first language reflects that of those who play the sports we support, the development of interactive education seminars aimed at younger playing groups, technical education aimed at those who work with and support others and the development of shorter-duration residential programmes aimed at specific groups and presentations.

Personally, this is my seventh year working with this extraordinary charity and group of people. We have simple rules such as 'Do what you say you are going to do when you say you are going to do it', 'Remember this isn't a place for your ego', and 'Be kind'.

Sport can be a ruthless and hard world for those who play or work within it. Sporting Chance as an organisation can choose not to be.

# DAME KELLY HOLMES

## JOINS SPORTING CHANCE

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**SPORTING CHANCE is proud to announce that double Olympic gold medallist Colonel Dame Kelly Holmes has become a patron of the charity.**

Col. Dame Kelly, who won gold at 800 metres and 1,500 metres in Athens in 2004 and who was voted BBC Sports Personality that same year, will join Sir Elton John, Sir AP McCoy, Kate Hoey MP, Lee Dixon and Tony Smith on our list of patrons.



After retiring as an athlete, Col. Dame Kelly established her own Trust, which trains and develops world class athletes to deliver personal, social and emotional development programmes for young people who might be facing disadvantage, thus empowering them to realise the attitudes and behaviours needed to lead a positive life.

During the last 10 years, the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust has provided over 27,500 hours of mentoring from Olympic, Paralympic and world class athletes, who are themselves helped through finding a new role after retirement. More than 4,700 young people have completed the organisation's transformational programmes and more than 240,000 have been impacted through the inspirational programmes.

"We are delighted that Kelly has agreed to join us," said Tony Adams, Sporting Chance founder. "She had a stellar career as an athlete and has been using her retirement to benefit others, and so she brings a broad skill-set to the charity, given her experiences both professionally as an athlete and personally.

"The work Kelly has been doing over the past decade will dovetail well with what we do at the charity. Our work has expanded more and more from being initially about treating addictive illnesses into working with sports men and women on mental health issues and we are also more involved in other sports beyond football so this is a good fit for both Kelly and ourselves."

Added Col. Dame Kelly: "After being approached by Sporting Chance to join them as a Patron, I spent time finding out about them and visiting their centre to see what they do and I am very happy to be adding my support to them.

"Thankfully there is more focus on the issues of addiction and mental health in sport but there is still a lot of work to be done. I will do what I can to bring my experience and expertise in helping to promote the Sporting Chance cause and to help athletes in the best way I can."

We welcome Col. Dame Kelly aboard and look forward to a long and fruitful relationship.

[www.damekellyholmestrust.org](http://www.damekellyholmestrust.org)

## Educating Bournemouth



A large part of our work involves going in to clubs to deliver sessions on mental and emotional health and addiction issues.

Tony, Head of Education Jeff Whitley and Education Support Officer Alex Mills spent a day at Premier League AFC Bournemouth...

**By Alex Mills**

**Sporting Chance deliver more than 100 seminars every year to players and staff at professional sports clubs, player associations and governing bodies throughout the UK.**

Our sessions cover a range of topics across the spectrum of emotional well-being, mental health and addiction and we see their purpose as twofold: to raise awareness of common issues affecting the mindset of those who work in professional sport and to signpost those who might need some help to the world-class support services that we offer.

Recently, we were asked by AFC Bournemouth's First Team Liaison Jimmy Glass to come and speak to the Cherries' squad and Tony Adams himself was only too happy to pay them a visit.

Tony hosted a brief session with captain Simon Francis and his leadership group (precipitating, we like to think, the club's excellent subsequent run of form!) before delivering his no-holds-barred account of addiction and recovery to a captivated audience that included manager Eddie Howe and former England striker Jermaine Defoe.

Afterwards Tony joined our lead facilitator Jeff Whitley in a presentation to the Under 18 Academy squad before Jeff rounded off a fantastic day with an interactive U16's workshop in the afternoon.

A big thanks to Jimmy Glass, Eddie Howe, Academy Education and Welfare Manager Dawn Roach, and to Tony and Jeff for all their efforts.



## Meet the staff...



**IN EACH edition, we will feature a member of staff who will explain more about their role and the work we do. It seemed appropriate to start with EMILY PENDLETON, whose voice is often the first that callers to Sporting Chance will hear...**

### How did you come to work for Sporting Chance?

I first met our former CEO Peter Kay back in 2003 when Sporting Chance was primarily a residential clinic, so all in all I've been involved with the charity for over 15 years. Back then, my job involved meeting the clients for supper before attending AA meetings with them, occasionally escorting some to meetings for addictions other than alcohol, and generally helping out wherever I was needed. In 2012 I trained to become an overnight staff member at the clinic and moved into my current role earlier this year.

### Can you describe your job?

It is primarily Triage and Administration. I am the first responder to all calls coming into the dedicated helpline, either from PFA members (current or former professional footballers), adult survivors of sexual abuse within football (it doesn't matter whether they were ever professional or not) or anyone who has ever played top level Rugby League.

I also take calls from individuals who aren't actually entitled to access our services (those who only played up to a certain level or from sports we don't yet have contracts with) but who have been given the helpline number by someone trying to get some support for them - so I have to have a knowledge of the eligibility criteria for each different sport that we work with and be able to signpost people to other forms of help where it's appropriate.

I also need to work closely alongside our Deputy CEO Shellie Heather to help process invoices and respond to general enquiries coming in to the clinic.

### What does your role entail?

First and foremost, I'm answering up to 20 calls a day from people in varying states of emotional distress. Some calls are more straightforward than others.

For example, I could be speaking to someone who has just sat in one of our education seminars and wants to try some therapy to make some small, positive changes in their life or take a proactive step to address something on the horizon such as their retirement or the birth of a child. On the other end of the scale, I might get a call from someone who is under the influence of drugs or threatening to take their own life.

Every call is different and needs following through with appropriate action, which in most cases is either linking the client with a therapist in their area who can best meet their specific needs or referring them on to our residential rehab team for assessment.

### **Your work has obviously expanded a lot, as the charity has done too. In what ways?**

Having worked for the charity since the early days, I've seen first-hand just how much we've developed as an organisation since Tony first put everything in place. The expansion of the one-to-one therapist network a few years ago was a huge step and change for us. Not only are we able to help so many more people now, we're able to address issues other than addictive disorders and the evidence would suggest that sportspeople with these kinds of presentations, be it depression type-symptoms or anxiety, difficulties with transition or the general 'life problems' that can affect anyone whether you're a sportsperson or not, these are the kind of cases we're getting more and more of.

### **Can you outline a typical working day or is there no such thing?**

Every day is a little different and every client that comes through to us has a different story. Some will fall back on humour to overcome nervousness, some calls can be really difficult as you imagine, but if there's a general pattern to my day, it's get up, drink coffee, turn computer on, work like a dog, turn computer off, go to bed. With a lot of listening in between!!

## **Ian takes on Comms role**



**This newsletter is edited by Ian Ridley, who has recently become Communications Consultant for the Charity, with particular responsibility for media and events.**

Ian has served on the Board of Trustees for several years, including as Chair, and is the co-writer on Tony's two volumes of autobiography, *Addicted* and *Sober*.