

# Case study produced by EUHC 'Lead the Way' members

Three members of Scottish Hockey's 'Lead the Way' initiative who have been involved in the mental health work undertaken by the University of Edinburgh Women's Hockey Club have produced a case study to help others.

Eilidh Campbell, Emma Lambert and Hana Nasser from the 2020-21 Lead the Way cohort, alongside club Welfare Officer Iona Grant, developed it to share with hockey and sports clubs across Scotland as a means of promoting and supporting mental health initiatives within clubs.

Eilidh explained: "Emma and I are both on the Lead the Way programme. During one of our discussions, we talked about mental health in hockey, especially over the lockdowns, and about what our clubs had done to help members and support people.

"Edinburgh University has done a really good job, so we talked about everything we had done as well as what worked well for us personally and for the people we know.

"Then Scottish Hockey got in contact and asked if we would be interested in putting a case study together on the things we had done and its impact."

Eilidh and Emma approached Iona Grant and Hana Nasser to help with the case study as they had both played a role in the club's approach to mental health.

Hana had come up with the idea of having the club post anonymous stories on its social media pages detailing members'

personal mental health experiences. People could submit their stories via an anonymous online form to shine a light on mental health while tackling stigma.

She said, "I was doing a masters degree at Edinburgh University and had always been intrigued by athletes' mental health. I saw that people did not really talk about their mental health, especially if they are athletes, so I put forward an idea to the hockey club then watched it grow arms and legs.

"Iona, as Welfare and Inclusivity Officer, took it on, with Eilidh and Emma getting involved. I had got the idea from the Humans of New York Instagram page – it is run by a New York photographer who takes photographs of random New Yorkers then asks them to tell him their stories. I thought it would be interesting to do that from the angle of mental health in sport."

Emma, then Publicity Secretary for Edinburgh University, said: "Reaction from the first post was great, and because it was an anonymous submission everyone got on board because they saw it as a positive step.

"It was good to hear what other people were going through. We may all think we know what is going on in our club and team, but then you realise that you do not. So, to hear what was really going on was a positive step.

"We operated through a Google form, and the link is in every post and on the bio of our Instagram and Facebook. Anyone can post. You do not have to be anonymous, and a lot of people have chosen not to be. It is your call whether or not you self-identify."

One of the main findings was that the Welfare and Inclusivity Officer role at the club has been vitally important in supporting members with mental health issues and promoting inclusivity within the club.

Iona, explained, "Welfare and Inclusivity is a big role; mental health problems are so common. We all have our own mental health awareness and the stigma that continues to be attached to mental health issues is highly detrimental.

"As a club, we believed it was important to start tackling the stigma surrounding mental health. What we saw was a gap between people coping with their mental health on an individual level and opting to seek professional help.

"My role sought to help bridge that gap. I promote all the services that are available in Edinburgh, many that people do not even know exist, but I am also a face that people in the club recognise and one that is there to help and support them throughout whatever they are going through.

"I am not there to solve people's problems, I'm not a councillor or a healthcare professional, but I'm there to lend an ear and promote the services that are available."

Edinburgh University has been working on expanding the welfare officer role across its entire sports offering, highlighting especially the success of the position at the hockey club.

Recent graduate Hana is now also using her experience to work with her new committee at Watsonians Hockey Club to establish an Inclusivity and Diversity Officer role and to showcase the importance of such roles across Scottish sport.

***The Lead the Way: University of Edinburgh Mental Health Initiatives Case Study can be found here:***  
***<https://www.scottish-hockey.org.uk/lead-the-way-members-produce-case-study-on-university-of-edinburgh-hcs-mental-health-initiatives/>***