



SUPPORTING SPORT IN WALES

CYMRU AM BYTH

SPORTS
CHAPLAINCY

SERVING SPORT THROUGH EXCELLENCE IN CHAPLAINCY



Who We Are and What We Do

Sports Chaplaincy UK (SCUK) has had the privilege of providing chaplaincy provision through offering wellbeing support – pastoral and spiritual care across UK sports since our inception in 1991. We are recognised as leaders in our field across the world. The charity was started by John Boyers whilst serving as chaplain at Watford Football Club, and who also spent many years as chaplain at Manchester United.



Sir Alex Ferguson CBE

Director & Ambassador at Manchester United

“Chaplains can be of help to all sorts of people involved with sport, when crisis, need, or difficulty comes. I commend the idea of sports chaplaincy and the work of Sports Chaplaincy UK to you”

Sports Chaplaincy continues to grow covering a wide range of sport – football, rugby union, rugby league, hockey, Gaelic football, shinty, cycling, motor racing, horse racing, Boccia, gymnastics, various athletics and running events etc. At the start of 2024 we have around 850 mainly volunteer chaplains. We provide support at all levels from International teams, professional sport teams and academies, including most of the English Premiership League Teams, many professional rugby teams (union and league), to local clubs, both men and women’s sport, and also in Wales we are leaders in provision to Disability and All-ability Sport. We have partnership agreements with many key governing bodies like the PFA, English Premier League, English Football League, Disability Sport Wales, FAW JD Cymru Premier League, Welsh Hockey, Welsh Gymnastics, Run4Wales, SFA, RFL and Racing Welfare to name a few.




Gerald Davies CBE DL

Former Wales & British Lion, former WRU President & Chair of URC

“I would like to recommend the benefits of having a sports chaplain in a rugby club. This is an important part of the modern game: to have someone who will listen to the worries and problems facing a player of any age. Chaplains can support the various needs of players, coaches, families and anyone else linked to the club. I feel strongly that such support is truly priceless, especially for the young. There is plenty of support available in the domain of physical development and skills progression, but not as much attention is given to emotional matters and general mental health. Such support is needed to keep people in a positive mindset, full of hope in order to enjoy rugby with friends, and keep on looking forward to having fun with friends on the rugby field. The sports chaplain is ready to listen carefully, and respond with real empathy to what they are told.”

Our chaplains build relationships with players, coaches and the whole staff and volunteer base at clubs and match officials via visits to training facilities, stadia and community clubs. Chaplaincy recognises that a healthy heart and mind is needed to go alongside the physical strength and tactical awareness that sports people need to fulfil their potential and achieve their dreams. We are here to listen, being non-judgemental, offering a shoulder to lean on, on any matter on or off the field of play being trained and able to offer sensible advice and sign posting when needed to experts but continue to offer ongoing personal support. We expect our Chaplains to be ever developing their skill set and where we provide much CPD approved training in areas like various addictions, bereavement and tragedy, mental health including suicide awareness, and building resilience.

A photograph of a person in a red sports jersey lying on their back, being supported by others. The person's head is resting on a white surface, and their arms are being held up by someone. The background is a blurred green field.

Our Objectives

Sports Chaplaincy UK facilitates, trains, supports and encourages chaplains for the benefit of the whole of the sporting community; for people of faith and of no faith. It is recognised that there is a need for high quality pastoral and spiritual care. This generally involves visiting training facilities, stadiums, offices on a weekly basis and being available to listen and bring support to all. Each chaplain will bring with them a vast range of skills, knowledge and expertise. A chaplain should be extremely supportive, bring a non-judgemental, listening ear and an empathetic and compassionate presence.

Sports Chaplaincy UK Values

Presence, simply means being there regularly. A Chaplain becomes a connection point from which a journey of building trust and building relationship begins.

Excellence, in everything that a Chaplain does and says, and who should be continually looking to improve their pastoral skills which are extremely valuable.

Relationship, Chaplains are by their very nature relational, so when engaging with people they need to be sensitive and compassionate.

Confidential, a Chaplain must be a trusted and safe port of call.

Humility, a Chaplain must be beyond reproach acting with integrity with a focus on serving and not seeking kudos for themselves.

The Need For A Chaplain

Pastoral care encompasses a wide variety of issues and offers support at times of personal crises as well as during everyday life. Problems faced by sports players are no different to those faced by society as a whole but, there are some features unique to the sporting world, which create an additional need for chaplaincy support:

- * The highs and lows of the sporting lifestyle.
- * A high number of young people who are forging a career in the spotlight of their own communities, often needing a confidential listening ear.
- * The need to incorporate overseas players and their families into local life.
- * High odds against becoming a successful player can lead to feelings of failure and despair.
- * The work is physically demanding and potentially dangerous.
- * Injured players often require ongoing care to keep mentally fit whilst recovering physically.
- * Intense and unique working hours.
- * Preparation for life after playing, “transitioning”, in collaboration with player welfare services.
- * Having a trusted confidant to discuss the wider challenges of life with and with a wider perspective than just sport.



Sporting Life Endorsements:



“..every athlete needs some kind of support and encouragement and a chaplain can be a valuable source of this support”

Anne Wafula-Strike MBE Non-Exec Director of UK Athletics Board, Former GB& NI Paralympian Gold Medallist



Chaplaincy brings a whole other dimension... It brings a personal touch. People feel they can be listened to as individual. If chaplaincy was established in every club I think it would be of huge benefit.

Sir Ian McGeechan, Former British Lion Player and Head Coach



Providing Sports Chaplaincy has become an important part of our approach to equality and ethical behaviours. Aside from providing a friendly, familiar face and an open door to confidential advice and support for everyone, there have also been occasions when our Sports Chaplains have made significant and timely interventions supporting athletes, staff and wider service users through some difficult and challenging times.

Experienced and well trained, the Chaplains have brought added value to our organisation. **Jon Morgan, OBE, Former CEO of Disability Sports Wales**



Sports Chaplaincy has been of huge personal and group benefit within our female international team camp environments. The support has been provided within all our age group teams and senior squad and has proved to be extremely beneficial for players and staff with regards to dealing with the pressures of achieving competitive excellence. The listening capacity and non-judgemental approach has allowed people of all ages and varied personal circumstances to feel welcomed into the environment and well supported throughout personal and team challenges.

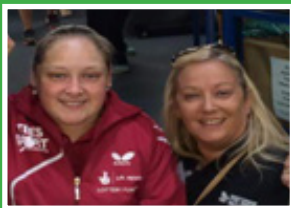
Jayne Ludlow, Former Women's National Teams Manager Football Association of Wales



We have been fortunate enough to have a chaplain for over 5 years now. He is now part of the wood work at the region where his work is invaluable to all, from academy to 1st team. His manner and nature are vital components in his chaplaincy work and we couldn't envisage a performance environment at the Blues without him.

Richard Hodges, Former Elite Performance Pathway Manager and Senior Defence Coach Cardiff Rugby

What We Give



We currently (Jan 24) have 100 chaplaincy roles across Wales (and growing, supporting professional, semi- pro, amateur and all ability sports clubs up and down Wales. We have also provided chaplaincy support at major sporting events that have taken place in Wales like the Rugby Union u20s world cup, World Student rugby 7s, the European IPC All -Ability games and the 21st World Golden Oldies rugby tournament, the World Sea Rowing Championships. Some of our chaplains have served at Olympic, World and Commonwealth games. We regularly support Run-4Wales events like the Cardiff Half, plus the Swansea and Tenby Ironmans'. Our chaplains work on a voluntary basis and are dedicating 4 to 6 hours per week to support their clubs (both sporting and non-sporting staff).

Training



Sports Chaplaincy UK has worked to ensure that there is a level of consistency across our chaplaincy. To this end, each chaplain will have attended an induction training day covering deeper insights into what affects sports people and the unique world of sport, plus issues like safeguarding and of course our ethos of practice. We are working hard to develop sports chaplaincy across Wales liaising with clubs and local churches to find, equip, release and support chaplains across various sports. Chaplains are there to support the whole club and so some clubs have more than one chaplain in post. All our chaplains agree to ongoing continuous professional development to ensure we are as "fit" as possible to deliver. This means undertaking specialised training in things like bereavement, dealing with addictions, debt management, mental wellbeing and so on.

Types of Support



- Non judgement good listeners
- Character development
- LIFE skill teaching
- A wider life perspective
- Mental Health & wellbeing issues
- Relationship breakdown & counselling
- Suicide interventions & ongoing help
- Addictions
- Ethical and moral awareness
- Bereavement
- Funerals
- Scattering ashes
- Hospital visits
- Social justice work e.g. feeding the homeless
- Charity support
- Job issues
- Education
- Career development support
- Faith matters
- Pre match prayers
- Debt guidance
- Prison visits
- Take weddings
- Christenings/dedications

** We work positively alongside sports psychologists as below shows*



The role of sport chaplain is a valuable asset within sport where periods of athlete well-being vulnerability are typical and understandable. As a practitioner sport psychologist with a long involvement in elite sport I have frequently utilised the knowledge and relationship skills of the chaplain to ensure I better understand the spiritual and wellbeing needs of athletes. When athletes experience a trauma or major change event it is typical that they start

to question their meaning and purpose both within and outside sport, as such the role of the chaplain in supporting the athlete and or the sport psychologist during such times is essential to providing an effective and wholistic support system.

Dr Mikel Mellick Renowned Psychologist: SFHEA CPsychol AFBPsS, BNurs, BBehSc, PGDipPsych, PhD, CPsychol, RAPPs AFBPsS, RegPractPsych (HCPC)

We are delighted to serve Welsh sport at International & Club level having (had) chaplains at:



Sports Chaplaincy UK & Ireland is also supported by...



A Snapshot of Sports Chaplaincy UK in Wales



Josh Navidi chatting to chaplain as they help prepare food for the homeless with Cardiff Rugby



Jon Butler SCUUK Wales Head of Football (centre) with Sarah Sankey and Josh Smith Chaplains at Wrexham AFC



Chaplains supported The World Coastal Rowing Championships



Darran Dowe Chaplain at Dragons Wheelchair with Lyndon Price -Coach (& Head Coach of Tigers Wheelchair Rugby & Former Wales coach)



Heather Lewis (cl) and Karen Lorimer (cr) Chaplains at Newport Marathon with a couple of Run4Wales volunteers



Cardiff City Veterans Chaplain Chris Selby taking Remembrance Day service at Cardiff City Stadium



“Sports Chaplaincy Wales team are a wonderful addition to our events. They have been involved in supporting participants, spectators, volunteers and event staff since 2019. We are so lucky to have them as part of the team”.

Rachel Madge, Run4Wales

SUPPORT SUMMARY

In-kind hours: 25,000+
 Training hours: 1,000
 100 Chaplaincy roles and growing
 Value added - £500,000 worth of volunteers support
 £25m of wellbeing interventions including suicide issues where 1 suicide intervention alone has a value of £1.7m to the wider society.
 It is our plan and hope to offer a chaplain who is local and on call to any sports club across Wales who wants such support.
 We hope to develop partnership with as many Welsh Sports Bodies as possible.

Wales Ambassadors



Nick Williams

Former Junior All Black, 16 years professional rugby with N Harbour & Blues NZ, Munster, Aironi, Ulster & Cardiff Rugby. Pro 12 Player of the Season & IRUPA Player of the Year 2013

We all crave that shoulder to lean on. The support from our chaplains has been absolutely amazing encouraging me and my family all the way. I wholeheartedly recommend any sports club having a chaplain and for players, coaches etc to reach out and use them. I am delighted to become an Ambassador for Sports Chaplaincy UK.



Byron Hayward

Former Wales Rugby Senior Defence Coach, Pro Player & Coach

I think this sports chaplaincy is really important for players or coaches to have an avenue where they can go and deal with issues of life, not just rugby and sport, with someone who is impartial, totally confidential, and able to really help them in a pastoral way. I think it's such a vital service because players and coaches alike, we suffer from a lot of things, life in general and not just sport and rugby things. There is a lot of issues that the players have to deal with. If you are a young man and you get injured it's very serious and can affect you mentally. It is so important that players and coaches have that support and I think that a sports chaplain, along with many other things in their role, offers that.

HEAD IN FOR SUCCESS Self help well-being booklet

We are pleased to make this booklet available to you, covering key sport and life challenges.



If we can help please contact:
wales@sportschaplaincy.org.uk
www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk/sport

