



HEAD OF FORMER PLAYER CARE - NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASE (NDD)

Candidate Pack, July 2022



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The Union

The Professional Footballers Association (PFA) is the union for all current and former footballers and scholars in the Premier League, the Women's Super League and English Football Leagues.

We are committed to helping each member understand their purpose both as a professional player and a person. We provide the information, advice and support you need to help maximise the opportunities that come with playing professional football.

We're the only football organisation that solely prioritises players' needs. We offer a variety of educational, financial and wellbeing support services.

Throughout our history, the PFA has been instrumental in supporting the women's game, decreasing mental health stigma across the sport, leading the fight against discriminatory abuse of players and pushing for research into the links between neurodegenerative conditions and playing football.

We proudly amplify the players' voice to ensure their views are represented to the game's stakeholders and governing bodies. We also protect and enhance their rights and working conditions by holding stakeholders and governing bodies to account.

Our team is passionate about helping footballers navigate personal or professional challenges, and we use our own experiences to relate to players and help prepare them for the future.

**We are here to protect and support players,
for football and for life.**



Supporting Players

The PFA supports members past and present, offering advice, funding and a wide range of services, such as:

Coaching

Our Coaching team delivers exclusive, subsidised courses to help current and former professional players gain their qualifications to work with footballers at every level of the game.

Education

The education team provides career advice for all current and former members, focusing on personal development and enhancing career prospects. Members can apply to the PFA for financial support towards most accredited academic or vocational courses.





Community

We believe community work enriches players' lives and helps them to better understand the world outside the disciplined confines of professional sport. As a union, connections and collective power are at the heart of what we do. We want players to value social responsibility and recognise the power of their societal influence.

Wellbeing

Our Wellbeing department provides support services to all professional football players in the English leagues. We deliver mental health workshops to all clubs and discreetly assess and support players. We also operate a confidential 24/7 wellbeing helpline, so any player in crisis can access immediate support.



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Our EDI team has been fighting inequality within the game for many years. We operate a zero-tolerance policy for racism, homophobia, and every type of discrimination based on gender, disability, and mental health. We focus our work on education, support and protection.

PFA Awards

The PFA Awards recognises the outstanding performers from every division and is voted for by the players. Previous winners of the PFA Players' Player of the Year include Mo Salah, Lucy Bronze and Cristiano Ronaldo.





PFA Industry Representation

The PFA have representation in a wide range of committees, councils, boards, and trusts that have an impact in every tier of professional football including:

- Professional Football Negotiating and Consultative Committee
- Professional Football Compensation Committee
- FA Council
- Professional Game Match Officials Limited
- League Football Education
- Premier League Learning
- PLPFA Community Fund
- Football League Trust
- Professional Footballers' Pension Scheme Trustees
- FIFPRO
- Professional Players Federation



NDD Former Player Care Department

The Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) recently announced the creation of a dedicated Former Player Care department for neurodegenerative diseases (NDD) within football.

The new provisions, which form part of a wider PFA strategy on the issue, will also see Dawn Astle, daughter of former West Bromwich Albion and England international Jeff Astle who passed away with CTE in 2002, take up the position of the PFA's Project Lead on NDD in Football. This will be a wide-ranging role focusing on areas such as developing player education, monitoring ongoing research and football stakeholder engagement.

The PFA are seeking to appoint a Head of NDD Former Player Care to lead the new department. The postholder will oversee a team of two new Family Support Advisors in conjunction with Rachel Walden.

Former members can access the PFA's wellbeing services, which is also available to the families and carers of players living with dementia.

The PFA is also keen to seek further guidance from prominent figures and campaigners, such as Penny Watson, who will now be acting formally as an independent consultant. The players' union will continue to proactively engage with other members and their families to ensure services develop in line with their needs.



Dawn & Rachel

Alongside her family, **PFA Project Lead for NDD in Football: Dawn Astle** has campaigned tirelessly since her father passed away in 2002, she said:

"This is a significant step forward. As the players' union, and the voice of professional footballers, it is vital that the PFA is stronger in challenging the industry to ensure the wellbeing and interests of former players living with dementia are better represented.

"I will always continue to support former players and their families living with dementia now, but a key focus of this new role will be to strengthen protections for current players and future generations.

"I will be working with football's stakeholders to urgently improve players' knowledge about the information they need to make informed decisions about their brain health."

Dawn will combine her role with the work of The Jeff Astle Foundation, a charity established in her father's name, through which she has supported hundreds of families of former players living with dementia.





Family Support Coordinator at the PFA, Rachel Walden was one of those people supported by Dawn, when her father Rod Taylor, a wing-half for Portsmouth, passed away at the age of 74. Following a post-mortem examination, Rod was diagnosed by Dr Willie Stewart as also having suffered from CTE.

“Since working with the PFA, the volume of families requiring support has been demanding. We are proud that as a result of the work undertaken over the last 16 months, the PFA is now establishing a dedicated care department focused solely on neurodegenerative disease.

“We have developed a strong network and service that gives families emotional and practical support. But, ultimately, emotional support can only get you so far. Families need substantive and consistent financial assistance to provide care for their loved ones and navigate what can often be complex and challenging circumstances.”



PFA Chief Executive

Maheta Molango

"The first formal meeting I had as the PFA's new Chief Executive was with Dawn and Rachel. These were tough conversations, and I understand that families have felt let down.

"I also recognise that both Dawn and Rachel took a leap of faith last year. Their sole focus has always been on providing care for families and raising awareness to protect current and future players. I've been deeply struck by their dedication and tenacity to advocate on behalf of football's families. I have also been clear that I fully expect them to keep challenging both the PFA and the wider football industry to do better in this area."





"The creation of a new, dedicated department is hugely important, but we are acutely aware that this is just a first step. We are determined to take responsibility internally, but also to ensure that we advocate on behalf of members for a coordinated, football-wide approach on this issue.

A joined-up game-wide approach is absolutely essential to improve the health and safety of current and future players.

Now is the time for the whole of football, including clubs, leagues and governing bodies, to recognise their collective responsibility to protect former players who have contributed so much to the game. This means providing comprehensive support to former players and their families, who are currently living with dementia and other neurodegenerative diseases.

This is a vital and complex area. It has to be the top priority for all involved in football."



Chair & Independent Consultant

PFA Chair John Mousinho

“This is an area that is a high priority for the PFA Players’ Board, first and foremost in solidarity with former players and in recognition of the need to secure a long-term care provision. We also want to raise awareness among current players and strengthen the case with football’s lawmakers to enhance concussion protocols and improve head injury management.”

To assist with an expected uplift in enquiries resulting from the consultation, the PFA has recruited former goalkeeper and former Head of Manchester United's Community programme, David Ryan. David is a trained therapist and will work with Rachel Walden to provide support to families. Rachel and David come from football families and backgrounds. Both have lived experience caring for family members who had developed different forms of dementia.

Independent Consultant Penny Watson

“This exercise is an essential step that will influence many aspects of the long-term approach to former player care from the football industry.

“It will demonstrate the extent of the problem and the challenges currently being faced by families up and down the country. We encourage as many former players and their families to complete the survey and share it with friends from football and former teammates, particularly using channels such as squad WhatsApp and Facebook groups.”



Job Description

Position	Head of Former Player Care – Neurodegenerative Disease (NDD)
Department	Former Player Care NDD
Reporting To	Chief Executive
Reports	4 (3x family support advisors, 1x project lead)

Job Summary

The Head of Department is a leader that puts the PFA Union members, their families and our staff at the very heart of all decision making and setting the departments direction.

You will be an experienced professional working around dementia and neurodegenerative diseases, leading a multidisciplinary team to deliver the department's priorities, such as:

- Family liaison and support
- Dementia education
- Concussion awareness in the professional game
- Building relationships with Former Player Associations
- Lobbying Government and other stakeholders
- Building a picture of dementia and neurodegenerative diseases in football

Key Responsibilities

- Strategy development
- Budget management, financial analysis & resource allocation
- Building stakeholder relationships with PL, FA, EFL, LMA
- Leadership - actively manage and support the development of individuals within the team through appraisal, personal development planning, coaching and mentoring
- Provide outstanding service delivery to former players and families
- Lead on the creation and implementation of a Former Player NDD Care Fund
- Charity partnering
- Lobby for change with government and the Health & Safety Executive
- Clinical governance and audit – programmes aimed at improving provisions to former players and their families
- Raising awareness and education on Neurodegenerative Diseases
- Work in partnership with others and as part of cross directorate and organisational teams to deliver successful outcomes
- Present information and issues, explaining complexities, to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders
- Ensure accurate analysis of management information



Job Description

Qualifications, Experience and Skills

- A clinical or science degree highly desirable
- Educated to Masters level or equivalent level of experience of working at a senior level in specialist areas
- Established reputation within a related academic field or clinical context
- Experience of controlling financial budgets, resources and staff management
- Highly developed communication skills for delivering key messages to a range of stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation, at very senior level
- Ability to use informed persuasion to influence others
- Proficient in current best practices in dementia care
- Excellent problem-solving skills and ability to work in stressful situations
- Empathy, interpersonal and relationship building skills (understand the importance of relationships to achieving our ambitions, maintaining strong networks with key stakeholders)
- Analytical proficiency - Ability to understand a broad range of complex information and make appropriate recommendation & decisions
- Calm, measured and reflective (High EI)
- Ability to influence a wide range of stakeholders
- High integrity & team focused
- Passionate, positive and self-motivated



Meet Your Consultants



Ben Westcott BA (Hons)
Director

ben@compassexecs.co.uk

+44 (0) 208 036 3530

+44 (0) 7900 254 285

Ben Westcott is a Director at Compass Executives. He has an extensive track record in private health and social care executive appointments. He has developed a reputation for the service quality and outcomes achieved for both clients and candidates, collecting a multitude of glowing recommendations across multiple platforms. Ben's expertise spans a wide spectrum of sub-sectors including: Private Acute Hospitals, Specialist Care, Elderly Care, Digital Health, Primary Care, Homecare, Consumer Healthcare and Veterinary.



David Sayers
Managing Director

davids@compassexecs.co.uk

+44 (0) 208 036 3530

+44 (0) 7774 982 895

David Sayers is the Managing Director of Compass Executives. With a track record spanning over 25 years' experience in search, David is one of the most established and respected individuals in the industry. During this time, David has been responsible for delivering some of the most high-profile CFO appointments across multiple industries and geographies. David has worked for both FTSE and privately owned recruitment businesses as well as successfully launching and developing his own practice.



Richard Gould
Executive Researcher

richard@compassexecs.co.uk

+44 (0) 208 036 3530

+44 (0) 7496 273 791

Richard Gould joined Compass Executives as an Executive Researcher in 2022, following a highly successful career as a recruitment consultant spanning 15 years. His experience includes boutique services and large-scale corporate organisations. Richard was typically responsible for placing CFO, Group Finance Director and Financial Controller mandates into fast-growth SME's, and PE backed businesses. He also has considerable experience in the education space dealing with Governing Bodies, CEOs and Headteachers.