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**To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues,

**Men's Health Week 12 – 18 June 2023:**

### Introduction

Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18th June, the world acknowledges [Men's Health Week 2023](#). This annual event is organised by the Men's Health Forum and aims to raise awareness of preventable health problems that disproportionately affect men and encourage them to gain the courage to tackle their issues.

The Men's Health Forum (MHF) is a charity supporting men's health in the UK and the CWU Health, Safety and Environment Department has worked closely with the charity for a number of years supporting their campaigns. The MHF has attended CWU Conference, presenting and speaking at the Health and Safety fringe meeting and has attended a number of regional meetings in the past. We are pleased to see MHF strongly promoting Men's Health Week again this year and we are happy to give our support.

**Men's Health Week Theme 2023 is 'Men's Health and the Internet' and asks the question – "Is too much time spent on tech?"**

The iPhone was born in 2007. Those born in the same year will turn 16 this year. They've grown up with a high-performance computer in their pocket. What are the implications for men's health? That's the central question MHF are looking at for this year's Men's Health Week. Clearly there are some health benefits to being able to access health information or deliver and receive health services online but what are the downsides? Read on for full details including on MHF's new resources on internet-fuelled addictions.

The 2023 Men's Health Week Theme is 'Men's Health and the Internet' and asking the question: "Is too much time spent on tech?" MHF say that in 2023, most of us are walking around with a high-performance computer in our pockets. Clearly, it's great to be able to access health information or receive health services online (and, of course, lots more besides) but what are the downsides?

MHF point out that one of the key chemical messengers in the brain dopamine. It creates feelings of pleasure and plays a role in concentration, memory and what we find interesting. In short, dopamine makes us feel good and we all like a hit of it from time to time.

But the smartphone is a dopamine-delivery device that is to hand 24/7. Every single app you

use on it knows this full well and is designed to keep you using it. The potential for over-use is obvious. Even an 'addiction' to a pretty benign app is going to cost us time and the attention we could have devoted to more meaningful things.

But what about when it starts costing money, relationships, work?

### **MHF advise – 'Take a Screen Break' But there's more that can be done.**

#### **A Message to Men**

If you think you're spending too much time on your tech (and even if you don't), try the free [CAN DO challenge](#) which can help.

- Use the MHF social media shares and posters [MHW 2023: men's health and the internet - take a screen break](#) and also [social media shares and posters for the CAN DO challenge](#)
- The CAN DO challenge alone will benefit your mental wellbeing but if you want to give your mind a fuller MOT, get the MHF [Man MOT For The Mind manual](#).
- There's evidence that some addictions which particularly affect men have been made worse by 24/7 internet and smartphones. If you're concerned about your gambling or porn-use, check out the two new MHF new manuals: 'Wanna Bet' and 'Porn Free'.

#### **Mens Health Forum (MHF) Message to Partners**

- Get a discussion going in your workplace or organisation on the impacts of the smartphone and the internet on health. Perhaps use the MHF free [Toolbox Talk](#).
- Use their social media shares and posters [MHW 2023: men's health and the internet - take a screen break](#) and also [social media shares and posters for the CAN DO challenge](#)
- Ensure workplace colleagues have a copy of their free [SWAP: the stress at work action plan](#)
- If you want to take it further, buy copies of the [Man MOT For The Mind](#) manual, the manual which the SWAP supports
- Consider copies of the MHF Mini-Manuals - looking at key mental health challenges and other subjects.

#### **Key Men's Health issues:**

If you're worried about any of the following, see your GP without delay.

#### **Men and Mental health**

According to the Mental Health Foundation, approximately 1-in-8 men have a common mental health problem such as anxiety, stress, or depression. When left unattended, these problems can worsen and be detrimental to those affected. This is highlighted in current statistics: for example, in the UK, 3 out of 4 suicides are men. Furthermore, suicide is the biggest killer of men under 45. These statistics underline the importance of removing the stigma surrounding men's mental health, helping men reach out, talk about their problems and seek treatment. According to recent statistics, 40% of men won't talk about their mental health with their friends or family. Therefore, the message is **'don't suffer in silence.'** While the topic is becoming more prevalent with more awareness campaigns, there is still a need to help men feel comfortable enough to speak out about their mental health. There may not always be clear signs you're dealing with a serious issue, not just a bad day. If your life satisfaction seems to have taken a knock or you are feeling like you want to be alone a lot, there could be more going on. Men often feel embarrassed or uncomfortable talking about their mental health. But the bravest thing you can do is tackle the issue before it becomes a bigger problem. You are not alone. Many other people are going through the same emotions and struggling to find the best way to cope. Some of the common signs and symptoms associated with mental illness: anger, irritability, or aggressiveness, noticeable changes in mood, difficulty

sleeping, avoiding friends and social activities, constant low energy, drug or alcohol abuse, ignoring personal hygiene.

### **Fitness**

If you're unfit, you need to think about whether you're taking enough exercise. Read the MHF 'Get Fit' section on the MHF website link below. (If you're older, very overweight or have an existing health problem, check with your GP before starting an exercise programme.)

<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/fitness-basics-faqs>

### **Weight**

The simplest guide to whether you're carrying too much weight is your waist measurement. This gives you a fair idea of your risk regardless of height. Measure around your belly at the widest point - usually around your belly button: If your over 37 inches, you're probably overweight and at increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer - check out the MHF 'Get Fit' section on the MHF Website link below. Over 40 inches, you could be obese and at serious risk of the conditions mentioned - talk to a GP or health professional. If you're putting on weight, see the MHF 'Get Fit' section on the MHF Website link below. But if you have been losing weight for no apparent reason, it may be a sign of something serious, see your GP.

<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/fitness-basics-faqs>

### **Prostate Cancer**

Is there any change in how often you pee or how easy it is? Do you get up more often at night? Peeing more often, especially at night, and less easily with a weaker flow can be signs of prostate enlargement. Further information on the MHF Website link:

<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/questions-cancer-and-other-prostate-problems>

Prostate enlargement is not necessarily a sign of cancer but it needs to be checked. Prostate Cancer UK have a simple cancer risk checker tool at this link:

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/risk-checker>

### **Diabetes**

Peeing more often, especially at night, along with being overweight, tiredness and sores healing more slowly, blurred vision may all be signs of diabetes. Get your blood sugar tested at the GP's surgery.

### **Blood Pressure**

You can get your blood pressure checked at the GP's surgery - or you can buy a home-tester. Blood Pressure is given as two figures. The first is when the heart is contracting (systolic), the second when it is resting (diastolic). 120/70 would be fine for a young man. Once the systolic starts getting up towards 140 and/or the diastolic to 90, you need to monitor your blood pressure more often. Of course, any stress can raise your blood pressure temporarily but if you're getting regular readings of 140/90 or more, see your GP without delay. The NHS also offers a more detailed '**What's Your Heart Age**' tool at this link:-

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/check-your-heart-age-tool/>

### **Testicular Cancer**

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men aged 20-35 but if caught in time it can be effectively treated and deaths are rare.

### **Bowel Cancer Screening**

Everyone aged 60 to 74 years who is registered with a GP and lives in the UK is automatically sent an NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Kit every 2 years. Make sure you take the test. Caught early this cancer is treatable but left untreated it can and will kill!

### **Other Health 'Warning Signs'**

Check yourself all over for:

- moles changing shape (possible skin cancer),
- unexplained lumps,
- unexplained shortness of breath/breathing difficulties,
- unexplained pain (especially in the chest),
- swelling or itching,
- a cough that won't go away,
- blood where it shouldn't be (in saliva when you spit or stools when you defecate),
- changes in bowel habits (such as blood in stools, diarrhoea or constipation for no reason, a feeling of bloating or of not having fully emptied your bowels or pain in your stomach or back passage.)

**If you have any of these talk to your GP.**

### **Take advantage of NHS free check-ups**

Most men aged 40-74 in England should be regularly invited for an NHS Health Check. It can help you spot upcoming heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, stroke and other health problems. **If you haven't been invited or haven't had one for five years or more, ask your GP.**

### **Key Statistics numbers for men:**

- **37** - a waist size of 37 inches or above puts you at increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer.
- **150** - men should aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week.
- **5** - we should aim to eat 5 portions of fruit and veg a day.
- **14** - maximum 14 units of alcohol a week.
- **10** - cigarette smokers die 10 years younger on average than non-smokers.
- **120/80** - normal blood pressure.
- **75** - 75% of suicides (3 out of 4) are by men.

### **Key numbers for policy-makers and service providers:**

- **1 man in 5** dies before the age of 65.
- **2 men in 5** die before the age of 75.
- **3 out of 4** suicides are by men.
- Men in unskilled work are **3** times more likely to take their own lives than men in senior management.
- The richest men live on average **10** years longer than the least well-off men. Richer area = longer life.

**MHF MESSAGE: - One man in five dies before he is old enough to retire. Together, by knowing our numbers, we can change this statistic.**

### **How can you get involved?**

There are several ways you can get involved with supporting men's health. You can also use this week to educate yourself and those around you. The Men's Health Forum (MHF) have a vast array of downloadable material. These materials provide information about health issues that affect men in their everyday lives and can be used to help promote conversations/run events in your workplace.

### **Man MOT Manuals for Physical and Mental Health**

MHF publishes two easy-to-use interactive 'Man MOT manuals' which go into this in more detail and provide tools to monitor physical and mental health;

- [Man MOT](#)
- [Man MOT For The Mind](#)
- **Serious Drinking alcohol made easy,**

- **'Wanna Bet' gambling and men's health (New)**
- **'Porn Free' - pornography and men's health (New)**
- **SEE THE FULL RANGE OF MINI-MANUALS on the MHS Webpage here:**  
<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/man-manuals>

#### **Men's Health Webinars - Two dates for your diary:**

- **Men and online harms** - the Forum's webinar with Dr Marcus Maloney from the University of Coventry. Marcus leads a discussion on 'Boys, men, and 'toxic' communities': Tuesday 13th June @ 2pm on Zoom. [REGISTER HERE](#).
- **Dr Hilary Jones** - the Forum's website editor Jim Pollard interviews the well-known GP in the Royal Voluntary Service's Virtual Village Hall: Thursday 15th June @ 11am on Zoom. [REGISTER HERE](#) (on Facebook).

#### **Further Information**

For more information about Men's Health Week, the MHF range of Men's Health 'Mini-Manuals' and lots of information - visit the Men's Health Forum website here: [menshealthforum.org.uk](http://menshealthforum.org.uk)

#### **Contact**

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Website: [www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)

#### **Attachments:**

- Men's Health Week Leaflets and Posters to print off

Yours sincerely



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**National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**

# MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

MEN'S HEALTH FORUM 

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