

Generic Press Release (2 pages)

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Preston North End are supporting the Boot The Virus campaign, created by two football fans for football fans, to help the fantastic work of the NHS.

Lifelong PNE supporter Kenny Marland and his partner Joanne Dalton have created the campaign to unite the football community across the UK in a bid to raise funds for the incredible NHS heroes.

The initiative is simple, we are asking for professional footballers to donate a pair of signed matchday boots which will then be auctioned online with all of the funds raised going directly to the NHS.

North End season ticket holder Kenny, who travels to every game home and away, is currently undergoing chemotherapy treatment in his fourth battle against cancer, and speaking of the campaign, he said: "I have a personal affinity with the NHS heroes due to my vulnerable situation, I am frustrated at having to stay at home when I would rather be volunteering to help the wonderful people at the NHS.

"I was pondering how I could combine my passion for football and help out, then the idea of Boot The Virus came to me in a chat with Joanne. I then put the idea into the notes section on my phone and sent a copy to Tom Clarke to see his thoughts. Tom said it was a good idea and that he would back the campaign. That then gave us the confidence and belief to give it a go! So, we are asking professional footballers from all the leagues in England to donate a pair of their signed matchday boots."

"I know times are difficult right now, but the plan is for all donated items to go to an online auction via our website, giving fans the opportunity to own a piece of sporting memorabilia with 100 per cent of the monies raised going directly to the NHS. It helps the heroes in the NHS and brings some joy to football fans by owning such an item."

"We have also included a section of the website for retired professionals who can also help us Boot The Virus if they want to donate any signed items."

PNE captain Tom Clarke is the first player to commit to the campaign and is hoping many others will join him in supporting the initiative. Speaking of the campaign and the work Kenny is doing, Tom said: "I know of Kenny through my wife who met him through work, then he contacted me through Instagram and said he had this idea that he was doing with his partner to raise money for the NHS.

"He had a few ideas and he's worked hard over the last few weeks to build it up and I said I would help in any way I can and try to help them get it out there and get the campaign going."

"I have spoken to Kenny on and off now for the last few weeks, he's going through chemotherapy at the moment which is really difficult for him and his family so to even be thinking about doing things for other people is brilliant and testament to how strong he is and how strong he's being through all of it."

"We are all trying to do our bit and thinking of ways we can help and how to help the NHS and those struggling at the moment."

"When Kenny first came to me with the idea I knew it would kick-off and the club are backing it as well and we are trying to get it out there as much as we can and trying to move it forward. I can definitely see it being successful and hopefully raising a lot of money for the NHS."

"On the fantastic work of the NHS, Tom added: "The NHS are working day and night to keep us all safe, all we have been asked to do is stay indoors and compared to what they are going through day to day it's nothing. Anything we can do to help that little bit and keep everyone safe and help them in any way we can, we will do."

Once a player commits to donating a pair of signed matchday boots, they are asked to nominate four more professional players whether it's teammates, opponents or friends, to encourage them to take part too!

The incredible work of the NHS staff is being highlighted right now more than ever as they risk their lives to save others, something we are all eternally grateful for.

The challenge is for all clubs to be represented in this campaign with as many players as possible from each club showing their support.

If you're a professional footballer, retired professional or you work for a club and want to make a donation, please get in contact via the links below to back the initiative and help fund the NHS as they battle to 'Boot the Virus'.

Website – www.bootthevirus.com
Instagram @bootthevirus
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