

The Specials frontman Terry Hall announces launch of Tonic Rider programme

Tonic Rider programme launches, a free mental health programme providing support to musicians and venues through the pandemic and beyond



United Kingdom, London, Feb 16, 2021 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - **Terry Hall**, frontman of The Specials and **Barry Ashworth** of Dub Pistols announced today the launch of **Tonic Rider**, a unique, new programme that has been created by charity **Tonic Music For Mental Health**, to provide free, direct, practical mental health support to the community of musicians and venues through the pandemic and beyond.

The Tonic Rider programme will be delivered via virtual peer groups led by **Adam Ficek** (psychotherapist, Babyshambles), plus digital workshops for Performance Anxiety, ACT (Acceptance Commitment Therapy), Mindfulness, Emotional Coping Skills, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, suicide prevention education, plus an array of digital resources for advice and support.

Tonic Rider is a unique, innovative new programme, designed in consultation with mental health professionals to meet a vital need in the music sector at this challenging time with practical support to aid recovery. The programme has been designed by **Tonic Music for Mental Health**, a respected charity founded in 2012, that counts Terry Hall and Barry Ashworth among its esteemed Patrons. The charity has engaged with hundreds of musicians every year since inception, by providing a unique range of services using music and creative practice, workshops, a punk choir and ska choir, as well as the new Tonic Rider programme, to support individuals on their journeys of recovery through non-clinical environments.

Tonic Rider will be working virtually with venues, such as **100 Club** in London and **Wedgewood Rooms** in Portsmouth, and many others across the UK through the pandemic. The programme will be eventually rolled out physically to green rooms, festivals and **Night Time Industries Association (NTIA)** members, with the aim to include the Tonic Rider on all rider lists, venue posters and via 'Tonic Hubs' at partner live events. Tonic Rider also launches a research study led by **Jeordie Shenton** (PhD researcher, Goldsmiths) and **Adam Ficek** (Psychotherapist, DPsych researcher) into the mental health of music industry professionals, to inform ongoing preventative work and support services.

Terry Hall, Tonic Music For Mental Health patron said *"These are terribly testing times for those of us with mental health issues. My mental health deteriorated towards the end of last year. The thing that got me through was communication. If you're suffering, then it is incredibly important to tell people, family, friends, doctors, Tonic! Tell them to check on you... always! Share your health issues...they aren't problems. Most of all...stay safe...stay secure...We'll get there!!"*

Barry Ashworth, Tonic Music For Mental Health patron said *"Among my music circle, it's been devastating to lose friends to suicide since the pandemic. People have lost their livelihoods, their identities, their confidence and have feelings of anxiety, depression and feelings of hopelessness. The need is urgent and I'm really honoured to work with an organisation that is providing practical support where it's most needed. The Tonic Rider is providing much needed mental health support remotely to venues and the rest of the community. With the music industry on its knees, it is needed now more than ever."*

Adam Ficek, psychotherapist and Babyshambles musician said *"The Tonic Rider peer support group will be a free, safe space to be heard and supported. From my experience, there is a huge benefit of being validated in a shared community. The current pandemic has crushed the music industry and subsequently, the mental health of many musicians and I feel privileged to give something back by facilitating these groups."*

Steph Langan, Tonic Music for Mental Health CEO added *"Given the current crisis within every area of the music industry, but especially the struggling live sector, we are pleased to bring together our experts to launch Tonic Rider digital support programme, as well as the research study at this time. Providing free, remote support to musicians and venues will allow us to reach the people who need our support the most at this time of great uncertainty and change. Whilst venues are closed, it will be a particularly helpful time for venue staff and musicians to receive vital psychoeducational training, emotional support and access to advice and support via digital resources. We are working together with our partners, including the NTIA so that when the world re-opens, Tonic Rider can offer face-to-face support."*

The Tonic Rider programme provides free mental health guides, training and support, all provided digitally:

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training provided to grassroots venues – delivering skills needed to recognise and support individuals experiencing mental health difficulties
- Workshops for Music Performance Anxiety, ACT (Acceptance Commitment Therapy), Mindfulness, Emotional Coping Skills, Suicide Prevention training and other workshops
- Virtual peer support groups, plus digital resources such as videos, blogs, podcasts, and email support provided by mental health professionals
- Mental health guides are written by a team of mental health professionals in consultation with music industry professionals, covering topics such as anxiety, depression and suicide

prevention

Find out more about the programme [here](#)



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Source : Music News UK

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