

Blue Light Programme

Keep your staff
well for work



We're Mind and we're experts in mental health. Our Blue Light Programme works in partnership with police, search and rescue, fire and ambulance services across England to provide practical and positive ways for staff to stay well for work.

Blue Light Programme



The need for support

If you work or volunteer for the police, search and rescue, fire or ambulance services, our independent research shows that you're more at risk of experiencing a mental health problem than the general population, but are less likely to access support.

We found staff and volunteers tend to give long periods of service, meaning they can experience extended exposure to high levels of stress and trauma over time. This can have profound effects on their mental health - 9 out of 10 of those we surveyed had experienced stress, low mood and poor mental health at some point whilst working for the emergency services. However, our research also found that:

- 7 out of 10 think their organisation does not encourage them to talk about mental health
- Over half were not aware of the mental health support their organisation offers
- 44% thought colleagues would be treated differently in a negative way if they disclosed a mental health problem at work.

Many of those surveyed experienced symptoms of stress and anxiety such as loss of sleep, loss of appetite and anger but were still reluctant to seek support.

I was going to work almost crying because I was that depressed. But I loved my job and that was the frustrating thing; I couldn't tell anyone because of the stigma at work.

Zoe, police service



The benefits of support

There can be lots of positive benefits to both individuals and organisations in receiving support with their mental health:

- **A more positive and engaged workforce.** Our research told us that emergency service staff and volunteers have a high level of interest in more information around mental health. Provide them with the information they need and, over time, help tackle any stigma and discrimination that may exist.
- **Increased effectiveness.** We've found that looking after wellbeing in workplaces can also have a positive effect on productivity and help to increase the effectiveness of staff.
- **Challenge the negative perceptions.** By engaging with the support on offer organisations can publically challenge some of the negative media around how emergency services engage with mental health and showcase the positive work they are doing.
- **Guided by experts.** Organisations are not on their own with promoting better mental health. Our Blue Light Programme can provide expertise, practical support and targeted resources. The programme has been developed using Mind's extensive mental health experience, and is just for the emergency service sector.

We know that real change can take time. But by being part of this movement to challenge stigma and discrimination in the emergency services, organisations can help to continue positive change around mental health in the sector.

I've been to the darkest places and I didn't think there would be any help for me, but I made it through and I want people to know that there is help available.

Neil, ambulance service



Let's continue the change together

We can offer support, training, information and resources to organisations that employ, work with or support members of the emergency services:

- **Access the confidential Blue Light Infoline:** Need advice on mental health or wellbeing? Call, email or text our Blue Light Infoline; just for emergency service staff, volunteers and their families. We can provide understanding and confidential support, helpful advice and signposting to local support services.
- **Commit to the Blue Light Time to Change pledge:** sign the pledge and join a growing movement of 300+ employers across different sectors in England who are working to tackle mental health stigma and help keep their staff well for work. Pledge commitments are backed by an organisations own action plan, which is developed with our support and details the practical activity that you will deliver.
- **Access information:** Our series of information booklets are designed to support staff and volunteers from the emergency services with their mental health. You can read them online or order printed copies to be delivered to your organisation.

0300 303 5999 (local rates)

bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk

text: 84999



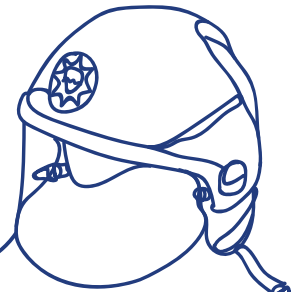


- **Give your managers the skills that they need:** designed for line-managers and team-leaders, our managing mental health in the emergency services training course provides the tools needed to actively support staff to stay well and prevent any problems from getting worse.
- **Learn about mental health online:** our series of webinar films on mental health awareness, mental health at work and looking after your mental health are tailored to each of the services and available to watch at any time.
- **Champion better mental health:** we're looking for individuals who can champion better mental health in their workplace by running events, giving out information and encouraging others to talk. We're also looking for support from those who have experienced mental health problems and who are willing to share their stories to help promote the programme.
- **Join in with our peer learning opportunities:** a way for organisations to meet, talk and learn from each other in different ways.
- **Support for search and rescue (SAR) teams:** for voluntary based organisations especially, balancing volunteer commitments with work and personal life can have an impact on your mental health. Our SAR resources can help teams to look after themselves and others.
- **Benefit from our mental health networks:** we're piloting four Blue Light Mental Health Networks with the help of some of our local Minds. Join the networks if you're based in Tyneside, Northumberland and local areas; Central London; Liverpool, Wirral and nearby areas or Cambridge, Peterborough and surrounding areas. You can also help to test our redeveloped resilience course to make sure we've got it right.

For more information on all of the above, including dates of availability, please visit mind.org.uk/bluelight.

I've been quite open about all of it with my bosses and colleagues. They have been really supportive. Since I have spoken out, other colleagues including senior officers have told me how they went through that 20 years ago. It's comforting to know that I'm not the only one; that people do get through it and progress.

Richard, fire service



It will empower our officers and staff to talk about mental health and wellbeing confidently and to respond to both colleagues and the public appropriately.

Chief Constable Simon Cole, Leicestershire Police

Get involved

We're Mind, the mental health charity.
We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.

mind.org.uk/BlueLight
bluelight@mind.org.uk

For support contact the confidential
Blue Light Infoline:
0300 303 5999
bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk
Text: 84999

 @MindBlueLight #mybluelight

 Mind

We're a registered charity in England (no. 219830)



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Cabinet Office

