

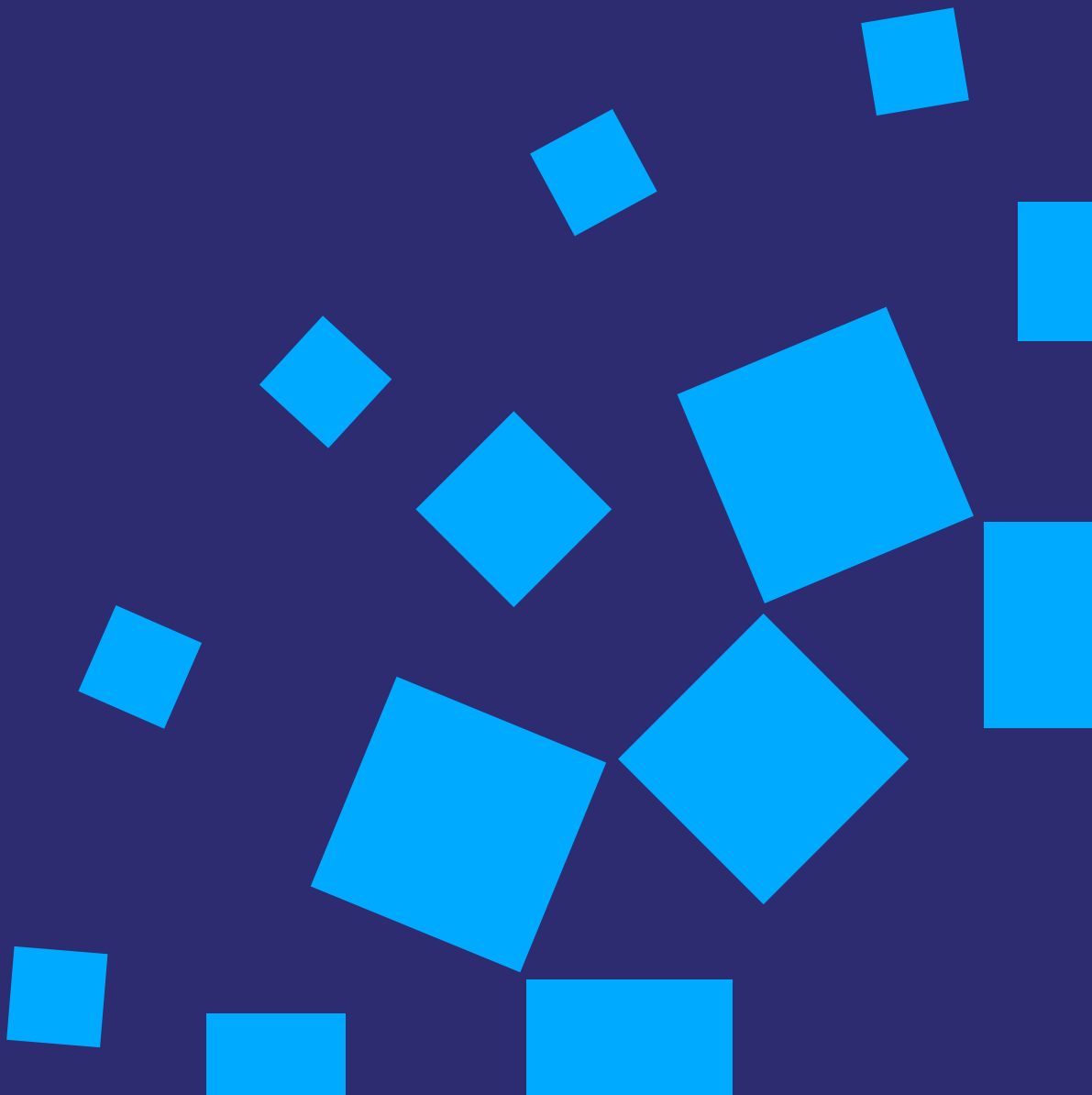


College of
Policing



The National Police
Wellbeing Service

Blue Light Wellbeing Framework 3rd edition



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Foreword

I have worked closely with the UK police service for many years and have seen first-hand the high levels of emotional labour associated with the profession. I have published research on police wellbeing, working closely with the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Wellbeing and Engagement working group. The research highlights the unique issues and complex challenges that emergency service workers face in the workplace.

The Blue Light Wellbeing Framework (BLWF) is grounded in this research and in the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance. The framework provides invaluable advice in the key areas of leadership, the working environment, personal resilience and support, including some of the new risks faced by officers, staff and volunteers.

Wellbeing is linked to physical and mental health. At the heart of getting wellbeing right is how we perform when we feel good. This framework demonstrates the police service's commitment and determination to understand and address the issues affecting its people, so that it can further invest in prevention, early detection of illness and rehabilitation.

The framework's overarching focus is on creating a positive working environment in which the workforce can draw meaning and purpose from what is both a challenging and hugely rewarding profession. The framework now includes the opportunity to self-assess the quality of provision for police families and those leaving the service.

Professor Sir Cary Cooper, CBE

Professor Sir Cary Cooper is the 50th Anniversary Professor of Organizational Psychology & Health at the ALLIANCE Manchester Business School. He is the Chair of the National Forum of Health and Wellbeing at Work, President of the Institute of Wellbeing and immediate past President of the CIPD. He was Knighted by the Queen in 2014 for his contribution to the social sciences and was awarded a CBE by the Queen in 2001 for his contributions to occupational health.

Introduction

The Blue Light Wellbeing Framework (BLWF) is a statement of intent, showing a commitment to health and wellbeing. This is the third edition of the framework.

Organisations use this framework to audit and benchmark themselves against an independent set of standards, which have been tailored to meet the specialist needs of emergency services staff. The BLWF will help to identify what an organisation already has in place and what gaps there may be in providing the best wellbeing provision it can for employees.

The aspects of the framework are based on widespread consultation with leading academics and professionals in the field, as well as practitioners at all levels. The framework has always been intended as an up-to-date and ambitious guide for employers to self-assess against. This facilitates subsequent strategy and interventions that are based on evidence of need and improved outcomes.

Since the launch of the first edition of the BLWF and Oscar Kilo in 2017, the wellbeing landscape across policing has begun to see a positive shift. We have seen an increase in investment into police wellbeing from the government, the introduction of the Common Goal for Police Wellbeing, the launch of the National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS) and the Police Covenant.

As a result, our understanding of the evidence base and ‘what works’ has deepened. This has led to the publication of this updated version of the BLWF to ensure, in a spirit of continuous improvement, that it remains an up-to-date and relevant resource for organisations to use.

What changes have been made?

Refined and updated questions

While the seven areas of the framework remain the same, we have made refinements to a number of questions in each area.

For example, following the introduction of the Police Covenant, we have made changes to some questions in order to directly reference the consideration of police families or for those who may be preparing to leave the service.

Please note that all the questions in the Occupational Health section have been revisited and refined.

Occupational health section

The occupational health foundation standards (2019) were introduced into the second edition of BLWF and have enabled us to gain valuable information about the status of occupation health in policing. Many forces are now either fully or over 70% compliant with the BLWF.

The development of standards in occupational health were always envisaged as a process of continuous improvement. Therefore, five years on from the foundation level standards, enhanced standards were formally published in 2023, with a transition period in 2024. Whilst the foundation standards still remain as the solid base, the enhanced standards enable forces to extend and build on what is being done already. It is timely to now incorporate the enhanced standards into the BLWF.

Recognising that many occupational health services remain under pressure to meet the needs of their forces, we will continue to provide support and guidance to forces as they move towards the adoption of the enhanced standards.

Leadership

- 1 The organisation has assessed and documented its leadership requirements and priorities around embedding wellbeing.
- 2 The organisation can demonstrate the process for ongoing consultation and communication with staff on relevant workplace wellbeing issues. This consultation and communication should be through an appropriate agreement with staff associations and unions.
- 3 Senior management encourage a consistent and positive approach to employee wellbeing throughout the organisation.
- 4 There is an effective communication policy and platform in place to engage with the workforce.
- 5 An effective policy and procedure to tackle bullying and harassment has been implemented and evaluated and is regularly reviewed.
- 6 Flexible working practices and family-friendly policies are in place. Impact on family life is considered in policy development and decision making.
- 7 Effective policies are in place to manage disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- 8 A system is in place that recognises and rewards good work.
- 9 Managers understand, and can explain, the main issues that affect the health and wellbeing of their team.
- 10 Line managers have relevant leadership and management training that is documented in their personal records.
- 11 Line managers demonstrate regular joint working and shared decision making with employees and empower employees to work with autonomy.
- 12 Line managers have documented training in how to have difficult conversations, develop people skills and resolve disputes.
- 13 Employees are offered learning and development opportunities to maximise their potential. These opportunities are included in their annual review.
- 14 There is evidence of managing organisational development and change appropriately.

Absence management

- 1 A clear attendance management policy is in place and procedures are known to staff.
- 2 The organisation maintains contact with absent employees, to provide support and to aid return to work.
- 3 Documented return-to-work procedures are in place and are followed.
- 4 The organisation conducts and records return-to-work interviews, records any concerns and provides appropriate support.
- 5 The organisation conducts specific risk assessments for individuals in high-vulnerability roles and takes into account a person's circumstances.
- 6 Reasonable adjustments are available to employees, in line with recommendations made in a statement of fitness for work.
- 7 The organisation collects and monitors absence rates and feeds these into a suitable assessment and intervention model, for example, the GAIN model (policing).
- 8 Interventions are undertaken where patterns indicate trends of absence. Bradford Index findings do not necessarily lead to performance sanctioning.
- 9 Managers have participated in attendance management training, and this is documented on their personal records.
- 10 The organisation monitors absence trends. The organisation designs and implements specific programmes to address the issues identified.
- 11 The organisation's return-to-work policies are designed to support rehabilitation and early return to work, with adjustments made to accommodate this when necessary.
- 12 The organisation has a proactive system in place to support staff on long-term sick leave with returning to work. The organisation will raise awareness of, and support, staff with long-term conditions.

Creating the environment

- 1 All employees are aware of the need to create a workplace environment that is conducive to wellbeing and can communicate this to others.
- 2 All leaders can articulate the importance of creating an environment where people can experience meaning and purpose in their working life.
- 3 All employees, volunteers and contractors can demonstrate an awareness of the legal obligations in relation to health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace.
- 4 Systems are in place for staff to raise and resolve environmental issues, including management decisions and the way that work is arranged.
- 5 All employees, volunteers and contractors are empowered to raise issues in relation to working conditions, such as those that create stress and fatigue.
- 6 There are identified health and safety representatives (trade union and/or company representatives). All employees, volunteers and contractors are expected to engage with these representatives if issues arise.
- 7 All employees, volunteers and contractors are aware of their duty to act with ethics and integrity.
- 8 There is a clear emphasis on preventing ill health across all policies. There is also clear direction and organisational support around attending work while unwell (presenteeism) and working at home whilst unwell (leaveism).
- 9 All those with supervisory responsibilities have received health and safety management training.
- 10 The organisation holds regular meetings to discuss the working environment. The organisation actions and records general analysis, interventions and needs (GAIN) assessments.
- 11 The working environment should include family representation, and organisations should have mechanisms in place to engage with families.
- 12 The organisation should have a defined and published process for officers and staff voluntarily leaving the organisation, which is supported by leaders at all levels, to recognise the leavers' contribution.

Mental health

- 1 A mental health and wellbeing statement of intent is in place and is followed. This statement of intent highlights promoting mental wellbeing to the organisation and addresses investment in workforce mental wellbeing.
- 2 The organisation engages with, and regularly reviews the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework.
- 3 The organisation provides information to employees about, and actively promotes reducing the stigma around, mental ill health.
- 4 The organisation provides information about mental health and wellbeing, including work-related stress and additional information which is readily available to staff at all levels.
- 5 The organisation has an effective means of identifying high-risk roles and monitoring rotation of staff and officers.
- 6 The organisation promotes regular mental health checks and provides support for those in high-risk areas of work.
- 7 The organisation has implemented a mental wellbeing policy that follows the principles of the Health and Safety Executive's Management Frameworks for Stress and promotes mental health awareness.
- 8 The organisation ensures employees are aware that mental health and wellbeing issues are valid. People seeking to address these issues are fully supported by the organisation at all levels.
- 9 The organisation has an individual performance and development review system in place that enables any training needs to be identified. This system also allows employees to comment on work-related, family and personal issues that affect their performance.
- 10 The organisation has a protocol in place for the use of risk assessments to prevent stress. These risk assessments are conducted on an individual and an organisational level and are regularly reviewed.

- 11 Education and development opportunities are routinely available to managers and staff, to enhance their skills and knowledge around workplace mental health issues.
- 12 Mental health awareness training is documented on personal records and is positively regarded as continuous professional development.
- 13 Officer and staff consultations and surveys take place that seek information on mental wellbeing of officers and staff. These also cover working conditions, communication, work-life integration, officer and staff support and work- related or other causes of stress, with action plans drawn up to address major issues.
- 14 The organisation provides a confidential support service in-house or externally to individuals who come forward with a problem.
- 15 The organisation ensures that change programmes are accompanied by support, information or targeted intervention programmes.
- 16 The organisation provides appropriate avenues of communication to keep staff at all levels informed of changes.
- 17 The organisation acknowledges the requirement to provide specialist mental health support for complex conditions, for example, social support groups for those experiencing post-traumatic stress. Officers and staff know where and how to access this.

Protecting the workforce

- 1 The organisation has a statement of intent around all activity related to employee physical health and healthy eating.
- 2 Food provided by, or sold within, the organisation meets government buying frameworks for healthy eating.
- 3 The organisation has an embedded Operation Hampshire strategy/ policy and demonstrates a commitment to improving their response to assaults against officers and staff as outlined by NPWS guidance. This includes clear governance processes and responsibilities. The organisation demonstrates a commitment to gather and provide accurate assaults data in support of a national police assaults dataset.
- 4 The organisation has procedures in place to acknowledge, support and signpost employees with financial problems or crisis.
- 5 A variety of wellbeing interventions are available to staff that are signposted, governed and monitored.
- 6 The organisation actively promotes raising the awareness of key physical health indicators, for example, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar.
- 7 Alcohol policy includes guidelines on the use of alcohol on duty, including alcohol in the system during working hours.
- 8 Employees are supported in seeking help to treat alcohol or substance misuse issues, including providing readily available sources of further information and support.
- 9 Organisational code of conduct and behaviour in relation to alcohol and substances has been well established and well publicised.
- 10 New employees are made aware of how to access relevant policies, information and support services at the point of induction.
- 11 The organisation has protocols in place to identify risks associated with a changing workforce profile and strategies in place to support and monitor those individuals.

- 12 The organisation has the facility to ensure that all significant incidents are debriefed and staff are aware of the support available.
- 13 Staff representatives from various levels of the organisation are involved in developing or reviewing the policy, which addresses alcohol and other substances.
- 14 Managers have access to information on how to identify the signs of addiction and substance misuse and are aware of where to obtain support or signpost employees with a problem.
- 15 Employees have access to substance abuse awareness training, which has been delivered to the majority of the employees.
- 16 Peer support panels are established and are regularly used to challenge workforce wellbeing by the organisation, which then takes action on recommendations emerging from peer support work.
- 17 The organisation has policies that are understood and applied consistently to support reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities.
- 18 Effective procedures are in place to enable discrimination or bullying to be reported and managed.
- 19 Dietary advice, particularly for shift workers, is available and accessible by all, and the organisation supports healthy living programmes.

Occupational health

- 1 The occupational health (OH) service is proactive and acts with integrity and financial propriety.
- 2 The OH service maintains adequate clinical records and implements and complies with systems to protect confidentiality. The service will ensure that informed consent is obtained, understood, and continually reviewed.
- 3 The OH service develops its services in consultation with the host organisation (force) and its people and demonstrates its benefits to the organisation.
- 4 An OH service should develop strategies to improve the health of the force through health needs assessment, to promote positive workplace health and prevent ill health; the OH service must keep the organisation (the force) informed in relation to health risks.
- 5 The OH service should provide comprehensive support for the management of mental wellbeing; this includes managing ongoing risk in relation to high-risk policing roles and managing risk in relation to incidents.
- 6 An OH service should support and, where appropriate, lead on any response to a large-scale disease outbreak / pandemic, to minimise the risk of harm to the organisation's people.
- 7 The OH service has a tried and tested clinical governance framework and demonstrates a programme of continuous improvement in the approach to clinical practice; the OH service has the clinical capacity and capability to resource these needs effectively.
- 8 The OH service conducts its business in facilities that are safe, accessible, maintained, and appropriate. These facilities have the correct standards of hygiene for the services provided; medical equipment is safe and appropriate for the services provided.

- 9 The OH service leadership team should contribute to future OH sustainability and development of the discipline and should ensure development opportunities for all staff.
- 10 An OH service should develop collaborative and/or strategic external partnerships with other forces to further enhance team support and wellbeing / facilitate clinical supervision.
- 11 An OH service should demonstrate its working relationships with key stakeholders across the host force to improve the health of the workforce and promote OH services.
- 12 The OH service must ensure that all service users are treated equally, fairly and with respect, in line with professional standards and policing codes.

Personal resilience

- 1 Resilience training is available to help all employees identify potential issues.
- 2 The organisation actively promotes improving personal resilience and openly commits to workplace wellbeing programmes.
- 3 The organisation actively seeks ways to reduce sleep deprivation, for example, overtime policies, turnaround times and working day limits.
- 4 Any on-site catering facilities provide healthy options that are actively promoted.
- 5 A rolling schedule of planned events to promote the importance of healthy eating is in place.
- 6 Internal or external support is on offer for those who wish to lose weight and commit to a healthier lifestyle.
- 7 Information is made available on the benefits of physical activity and the organisation actively promotes physical activity.
- 8 The importance of minimum legally required breaks taken by all staff is communicated at all levels. Employees are encouraged to undertake physical activity if they are engaged in sedentary roles, for example, office-based roles or home working settings.
- 9 Staff are encouraged to take part in regular physical activity and opportunities to do so are actively promoted, for example, social, sports and leisure facilities.
- 10 Physical activity in the workplace and in the local area is actively encouraged and supported by the physical environment.
- 11 The organisation provides appropriate, acceptable and accessible information on healthy eating.
- 12 The organisation offers tailored programmes to improve understanding and take-up of physical activity.
- 13 The organisation promotes self-efficacy and encourages individuals to recognise their own limitations in the workplace.
- 14 The organisation promotes alternative methods of travel.

About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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About Oscar Kilo

The National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS) provides support and guidance for police forces across England and Wales to improve and build organisational wellbeing.

It is an evidence based, sector specific service which has been developed for policing, by policing, and is designed to meet the unique needs of police forces, officers and staff.

Sitting with the College of Policing, and working closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Home Office, we want to:

- help police forces build world-class wellbeing support for everyone who works for them.
- improve knowledge and understanding of help and support available.
- reduce stigma around seeking support or help.
- encourage people to support themselves and realise their own potential.
- improve personal resilience and self-help skills.

oscarkilo.org.uk