



Blue Light  
Programme  
Blueprint Pack:  
**Part Three**



# Toolkit for emergency services

How to embed Blue Light  
Programme activity



Blue Light Champion Georgie



Blue Light Champion Jamie



Blue Light Champion Jim organised an event with former professional boxer and Mind ambassador Duke McKenzie at the National Crime Agency



Blue Light Champion Chris



Blue Light Champion Mai with Chief Constable Andrew Cooke



Blue Light Champion Jules

- Add a yellow post it note if you are confident in this area and happy to support others.
- Add a pink post it note if you would like further support from other services in this area.
- Add your name, service and email address.



Blue Light Champion Mark Woodward  
Credit: OurBlueLight



Blue Light Champion Mat with London Fire Commissioner Dany Cotton at the Brixton Fire Mindfulness Garden



London Blue Light Mental Health Network celebration event



Signing the pledge at London Ambulance Service



Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue pledge signing



Blue Light Champion John



North West Ambulance Service staff won an award for their mental health work



North East Blue Light Network at the Great North Run



South West Ambulance Service pledge signing



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Where is your service now?.....	7
Your organisation’s current mental health picture.....	7
Audit of current mental health initiatives.....	9
<b>Set-up</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Roles you need internally and externally .....	11
Additional roles you’ll need to develop a Blue Light Mental Health Network .....	19
Budget .....	24
Blue Light Champions.....	26
<b>Delivery</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Anti-stigma activity.....	28
Workplace wellbeing activity.....	30
Communications .....	35
<b>Evaluating your impact</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>Blue Light Mental Health Networks</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>Sustainability</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Mind’s Workplace Wellbeing Index.....	45
<b>Get started</b> .....	<b>47</b>



# Introduction

We all have mental health just as we have physical health. We know that one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem in any given year. But independent research shows that the estimated quarter of a million people who work and volunteer in our emergency services are at an ever greater risk of experiencing a mental health problem than the general population, but are less likely to get support.

In an [independent survey](#) commissioned by Mind of more than 3,500 blue light personnel, 87.5% said they had experienced stress and poor mental health while working for blue light services and almost half (44%) thought colleagues would be treated less favourably if they disclosed a mental health problem at work.

Because of this, Mind launched the Blue Light Programme in March 2015 with the mission of empowering emergency service employers, employees, new recruits and volunteers to promote and support better mental health, both individually and in the workplace.

Since then, the [Blue Light Programme](#) has continued to work towards two overarching aims:

1. that blue light staff are more aware of and responsive to their own and their colleagues' mental health issues, more resilient and better able to manage their own mental health, and have improved access to information and support
2. that blue light employers are more aware of the importance of employee mental health, better equipped to support the mental health of their staff, and prepared to address mental health stigma and discrimination.

In order to achieve these aims, the programme has delivered a range of activity across five different strands:

1. Tackling mental health stigma
2. Improving workplace wellbeing
3. Building resilience
4. Improving access to information
5. Improving pathways to support.



Since launching the Blue Light Programme, we have empowered more than 1,700 blue light staff and volunteers to become Blue Light Champions, trained more than 6,000 line managers to be better equipped to support staff in managing their mental health, taught more than 700 people to develop resilience and coping skills, and shared much-needed advice by answering more than 5,000 contacts to our Infoline and sharing information more than 330,000 times via our website.

But we know that cultures do not change overnight, and many blue light services are at the start of their journey. Real change takes time, and there is still much more work to do to make sure that all of our emergency services, in both England and Wales, can get the support they deserve.

This toolkit has been designed to support the embedding of local Blue Light Programme activity in a straightforward and sustainable way, wherever blue light services are on their journey to ensuring staff wellbeing is a priority.

You will notice a radio receiver illustration throughout this toolkit. This highlights key points at which, during your journey towards implementing Blue Light Programme activity, important communications need to take place. Later on in this toolkit, you'll find more in-depth guidance on developing a communications strategy (page 35).





## Where is your service now?

Before thinking about what types of activity you want to roll out or changes you want to implement, it's a good idea to take stock of what is already happening in your service or organisation. Consider what the picture looks like now, and what activity is in place in your service. This will involve finding out whether your service is already engaged with the Blue Light Programme, and – if so – to what extent. Below, we suggest a few key areas to review as a starting point.

## Your organisation's current mental health picture

Understanding your organisation's current mental health picture is important to be able to measure the impact of the activities and interventions you want to deliver. You can then track progress and evaluate their effectiveness at certain points along the way.

What your evaluation includes will depend on what you want to achieve. For example, if your organisation has signed the [Blue Light Time to Change pledge](#), you might want to look at your pledge action plan, which will have been created as part of your Time to Change pledge to stop mental health stigma and discrimination in your workplace. If you have not yet signed the Blue Light Time to Change pledge, visit our [website](#) to find out more. Consider setting up a working group – to include colleagues from human resources and occupational health – and decide as a group what you want to measure. You can find out more about working groups on page 12.

We suggest looking at some of the following areas to understand your organisation's current mental health picture:

- **Levels of sickness absence:** It might be useful to collate information relating to sickness absence, such as length of absence, reason for sickness, and possible peaks in the times of year that sickness absence is high, in order to monitor and highlight any trends. It is also useful to look at demographic data in relation to your levels of sickness absence.
- **Take-up of current mental health and wellbeing services:** Look at what's on offer for staff and how well they are used – for example; counselling services, employee assistance programmes, occupational health-related services, and any specific services offered through your employer or associated union (i.e., the Police Federation, Fire Brigade Union, and Unison). It is also important to measure how staff who have accessed these services feel about the support they received.
- **Staff survey regarding general wellbeing:** This is a good way to gather insight into how staff feel about their workplace mental health. Think carefully about how you word a staff survey, how people can respond confidentially, what you include and how you promote it. It's worth explaining why you are asking people to complete a staff survey, and encourage honest feedback, manage expectations and reassure staff that there will be no repercussions as a result of their responses. Questions around general wellbeing, physical health, and relationships between staff and line managers should be included to give a wide picture. You could consider using external benchmarking as a way to provide real transparency and accountability. An example of this is [Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index](#) (for which a staff survey is one of the benchmarking tools used). This will not only add credibility to your findings, but also give confidence



to your staff that this isn't just a 'tick box' exercise. A staff survey can be repeated later on to monitor any changes. There are a number of host sites you can use to create and distribute your survey and collate findings.

- **Channels for staff to raise or highlight concerns:** What other means are there for staff to raise concerns, and are there any trends in what they are highlighting?

- **Collecting feedback and short stories:** This is another useful way of gathering data. You can read more about this on page 41.

### Something to consider

It's important to remember that Blue Light Programme activity is not only for frontline operational staff. Often, non-operational staff experience similar pressures to their operational colleagues, but receive less support and can feel 'invisible'.

For example, the police's forensics services staff might deal with evidence from traumatic incidents, but may not be recognised as being at 'high risk' of developing mental health problems. We also know from Mind research that staff who work in 999 control rooms see themselves as the 'hidden service', and often feel as though they are the last to receive any support after traumatic incidents.

It is therefore important to focus on all staff within the emergency services, and tailor support accordingly. This can be most effectively done through ensuring that Blue Light Champions are recruited from all parts of a service, as they can highlight the specific pressures certain teams may be under, and organise activities or events most suitable for their colleagues.

For example, Champions in non-operational roles have organised wellbeing walks, drop-in groups or mindfulness sessions at lunchtimes. These types of activities may not be suitable for some operational colleagues, due to irregular shift patterns or being away from stations for long periods of time.

Blue Light Programme activities and resources have been designed to be tailored to whichever audience in the emergency services they are delivered to. Sometimes, something as simple as changing an image on a poster can help people engage in the information they have access to.

Try to include a diverse range of people on your working group (you can find out more on page 12), including both operational and non-operational staff. This will ensure that everyone within the service is represented and their voice is heard.



# Audit of current mental health initiatives

When auditing your service's current mental health initiatives, there are three essential points to consider:

## 1. What initiatives are you currently delivering?

There are a range of mental health and wellbeing-related initiatives that many services deliver already, but they often go unaccounted for or aren't widely shared within the service. These could include trauma risk incident management (TRiM), counselling services, a Blue Light Champions scheme, and access to rehabilitation centres, among other things. Find out if your service is involved in any other wellbeing accreditation or initiative – for example, has it signed up to the Time to Change pledge or the Workplace Wellbeing Charter?

## 2. Through what channels are these initiatives being promoted?

In addition to gathering information about the different initiatives that your service offers, it's important to know which channels are being used to promote them. Take time to think about the effectiveness of these channels and whether staff and volunteers can easily access them.

## 3. Can staff and volunteers provide feedback?

When examining the different initiatives on offer at your organisation, it's important to look at how staff and volunteers can give feedback about them. This should form a key part of your audit. Carrying out initiatives that are not highly valued by staff, or are seen as just a 'tick box' exercise, may just compound the perception of the workplace culture that mental health and wellbeing isn't a priority for senior leaders and line managers.

## Champions audit

When this toolkit was launched, the Blue Light Programme had more than 1,500 Champions across England and Wales – and this number will inevitably continue to grow. You may find that there are people within your service who are already registered as Blue Light Champions, but there may be many Champions in your service who are not officially registered with Mind. Therefore, carrying out a Champions audit is a useful way of making sure your information is up to date.

We recommend that you send an email out to all staff across your service to identify anyone who is already registered as a Champion. Consider using a subject line like 'Are you a Blue Light Champion?' to make sure the email isn't overlooked by the target group.





If you are sending an email to identify the Champions in your organisation, the email should highlight a central point of contact for Champions to get in touch with to make themselves known. This could be your Blue Light Internal Coordinator, if you have one (you can find out more about this role on page 13). This person could collect relevant data about all the Champions in your service, such as who they are, their work contact details, where they are based and what training they've received from the Blue Light Programme. There should also be a way for the Blue Light Internal Coordinator to record any future training they may take. If this is a voluntary role or in addition to someone's daily duties, think about potentially having a few Blue Light Internal Coordinators to share the workload, especially if you have a large number of staff and volunteers.

Emails can be easily overlooked, due to the volume of email traffic some staff get, so perhaps think about using your intranet page – if you have one – as an additional platform to identify your organisation's Blue Light Champions, or other creative ways that suit the structure of your service.



# Set-up

Once you have reviewed your service's current position in terms of the mental health and wellbeing agenda, you should be ready to move on to the set-up stage. This section of the toolkit sets out the important things you need to think about when delivering Blue Light Programme activity in your service. The set-up stage should be reviewed alongside the [blueprint](#), which will support you in undertaking all the necessary behind-the-scenes work required to implement and embed the programme within your organisation.

We are aware that some services started out on their own mental health and wellbeing journey before becoming involved with the Blue Light Programme. We hope the recommendations in this section will help support the work you are already doing, or inspire some actions you could take to enhance it.

In this section we will cover:

- the roles you need to have in place internally and externally
- the budget you have available
- the role of Blue Light Champions.

## Roles you need internally and externally

There are five core roles we have identified as being key to successfully embedding Blue Light Programme activity within your service. It's essential that, as an organisation, you commit to ensuring there is always someone in post or someone who can take on the role's duties and responsibilities, regardless of staffing changes. This will help to maintain the momentum of your programme and its

Think about how you are going to communicate and recruit for these roles. Do you have people on-board who are already carrying out work in this area who might want to take them on, or will you have to send a wider call out internally? How will you do this?



activities. We recommend that all of these roles have a generic email address assigned to them, so there is a consistent channel of communication open if somebody leaves.

The five core roles are:

1. Internal working group
2. Blue Light Internal Coordinator
3. Blue Light Champions
4. Lead Blue Light Champion
5. Local Mind

Under each core role, we've suggested some suitable jobs that could fulfil these core functions.



## Internal working group

An internal working group should be set up before implementing Blue Light Programme activity. It should comprise key individuals from across the service to look at the mental health and wellbeing needs of staff and volunteers within the organisation, and to centrally coordinate the support available.

Skills needed:	A great internal working group member is:	Needs access to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication skills</li> <li>• decision-making skills</li> <li>• organisational skills</li> <li>• listening skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate about mental health</li> <li>• dynamic and proactive</li> <li>• open</li> <li>• confident</li> <li>• knowledgeable</li> <li>• an advocate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• budget</li> <li>• other senior management</li> <li>• authority to make decisions on behalf of the service</li> <li>• networks to communicate information</li> </ul>
Other attributes:	Relevant job roles:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lived experience of mental health problems (desirable but not essential)</li> <li>• able to deliver on commitments</li> <li>• diverse in rank and experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• human resources</li> <li>• occupational health</li> <li>• senior management</li> <li>• Lead Champion</li> <li>• Blue Light Champions</li> <li>• Blue Light Internal Coordinator</li> <li>• Local Mind Coordinator</li> </ul>	

Your internal working group will also play an essential role in a local Blue Light Mental Health Network, should you choose to set one up or take part in one, which would be facilitated by the local Mind Coordinator. You can find out more about local Blue Light Mental Health Networks on page 42.



## Blue Light Internal Coordinator

A Blue Light Internal Coordinator will have oversight of all mental health activity going on within your service. They should be able to coordinate training, events and activities as well as being a single point of contact for other local services. They will also take ownership

of the Time to Change pledge on behalf of your organisation, and have a genuine passion about making a difference. We recommend that you consider having a number of people who can cover this role, depending on the size of your service. Some services have seconded someone into this role to be able to kick-start Blue Light Programme activity.

Skills needed:	A great Blue Light Internal Coordinator is:	Needs access to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication skills</li> <li>• organisational skills</li> <li>• able to motivate others</li> <li>• strong leadership</li> <li>• able to work as part of a team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate</li> <li>• proactive</li> <li>• open</li> <li>• a good listener</li> <li>• committed to making change</li> <li>• approachable</li> <li>• authentic</li> <li>• engaging</li> <li>• credible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• budget</li> <li>• occupational health, senior management</li> <li>• good connections across the service</li> <li>• intranet and promotion</li> <li>• training – Managing Mental Health in the Emergency Services, mental health awareness workshops</li> <li>• Lead Champion</li> </ul>
Other attributes:	Relevant job roles:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lived experience of mental health problems (desirable but not essential)</li> <li>• able to deliver on commitments</li> <li>• an approachable personality</li> <li>• passionate about cultural change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• officer level</li> <li>• central mental health team</li> <li>• occupational health and human resources</li> </ul>	



## Blue Light Champion

A Blue Light Champion is an individual within an emergency service who raises awareness of mental health and promotes anti-stigma activity. They signpost colleagues in need of support to relevant resources and provide a friendly ear, when needed.

If your service doesn't already have Champions in place (carrying out a Champions audit will highlight if you do, and who they are – see section 'Audit of current mental health initiatives' on page 9), then you will need to

recruit several at the start of your Blue Light Programme journey. Once in post, they will be tasked with promoting your programme activities and recruiting additional Champions.

There might be staff or volunteers in your service who carry out a similar function as part of or in addition to their job, but who are known by a different title – such as a wellbeing or diversity advocate. Consider how you can bring all these roles together, or introduce Blue Light Champions in a way that complements what you already have in place.

Skills needed:	A great Blue Light Champion is:	Needs access to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication skills</li> <li>• advocacy skills</li> <li>• organisational skills</li> <li>• accessible and approachable</li> <li>• empathetic</li> <li>• good listening skills</li> <li>• trained in relevant courses: attended a Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop, for example</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate about challenging stigma and providing support to colleagues</li> <li>• open</li> <li>• reliable</li> <li>• committed to making a difference</li> <li>• motivated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• signposting support and information</li> <li>• training</li> <li>• networks to promote the Champion role and the Blue Light Programme</li> </ul>
<p>Other:</p>	<p>Relevant job roles:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lived experience of mental health problems (desirable but not essential)</li> <li>• voluntary</li> <li>• ability to set boundaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any and all roles</li> </ul> <p>Things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the time required to carry out role</li> </ul>	
<p>See the Blue Light Champions role description and advice to Champions <a href="#">here</a>.</p>		



## Lead Blue Light Champion

The Lead Blue Light Champion – as the name suggests – acts as a lead and supports the coordination of Champions within your service. They will work closely with the Blue Light Internal Coordinator, sitting on the working group and promoting upcoming events and training for Champions. This role will have oversight of what Champions are doing across your service, and will help create networks of Champions to ensure that no one works alone. If your service is large or operates across different locations, it might be a good idea to have in place a number of Lead Champions.

Image: West Midlands Police



Skills needed:	A great Lead Champion is:	Needs access to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trained in relevant courses: attended a Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop and/or Managing Mental Health in the Emergency Services course</li> <li>• organisational skills</li> <li>• communication skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• driven</li> <li>• creative</li> <li>• passionate about mental health</li> <li>• forward thinking</li> <li>• trustworthy</li> <li>• empathetic</li> <li>• self-reflective</li> <li>• approachable</li> <li>• flexible</li> <li>• point of contact for Champions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• signposting information</li> <li>• Managing Mental Health in the Emergency Services course</li> <li>• Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop</li> <li>• suicide prevention training</li> <li>• resources – booklets, posters</li> <li>• all Champions</li> <li>• working group</li> <li>• Blue Light Internal Coordinator</li> <li>• Time to Change pledge lead (if this is a different person to your Blue Light Internal Coordinator)</li> </ul>
Other attributes:	Relevant job roles:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• know your limits</li> <li>• voluntary</li> <li>• seeing the role as more than simply a 'tick box' exercise</li> <li>• ability to spot potential in new Champions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Light Champion</li> </ul>	





Image: Metropolitan Police

## Local Mind (without a funded local Mind Network Coordinator post)

Your [local Mind](#) is there to offer advice and support around all issues relating to mental health. Local Minds can work with Blue Light Internal Coordinators to provide training where appropriate, and can signpost to additional sources of support. It might also be beneficial if a representative from your local Mind has a role on your internal working group, to provide expert knowledge and guidance on mental health and wellbeing.

It's important to note that your local Mind will have many other commitments. Staff there will do all they can to support you in implementing your Blue Light Programme activity, but if your local Mind doesn't have a funded coordinator in post, the contribution they are able to make to your service will vary according to the resources they have.

We recommend that you have an open dialogue with your local Mind from the beginning of your journey, and make staff there aware that you are setting up your Blue Light Programme activity.



Skills local Minds can offer:	A great local Mind is:	Needs access to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support with organising activity</li> <li>• arranging training</li> <li>• experience working with a range of audiences</li> <li>• expertise in mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>• expertise in workplace wellbeing</li> <li>• in-depth knowledge of the Blue Light Programme</li> <li>• guidance around mental health issues, policy and services</li> <li>• training packages</li> <li>• guidance and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate</li> <li>• confident</li> <li>• approachable</li> <li>• proactive</li> <li>• good at listening</li> <li>• reliable</li> <li>• responsive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working group</li> <li>• Blue Light Internal Coordinator</li> <li>• human resources</li> <li>• occupational health</li> </ul>

**Other attributes:**

Connections with other local mental health services and support networks



# Additional roles you'll need in place if you develop a funded local Blue Light Mental Health Network

If you're thinking about developing a funded Blue Light Mental Health Network with other services in your area, there are some additional roles that it might be helpful to have in place, which will play an important part in facilitating and coordinating this network. You can find out more about Blue Light Mental Health Networks on page 42 of this toolkit.

## Local Mind Network Coordinator

The local Mind Network Coordinator role is funded to provide expert advice and guidance when a funded local Blue Light Mental Health Network has been created. They should work closely with the network's steering group and service coordinators to provide training and support, depending on the level of funding and requirements

of the network. They will also lead on the behind-the-scenes work required to set up and run the network, and have oversight of the activities each of the services are involved in. Find out more about Blue Light Mental Health Networks on page 42. This will ensure that everyone within the service is represented and their voice is heard.

Skills a local Mind Network Coordinator can offer:	A great local Mind Network Coordinator is:	Needs access to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impartial support and advice</li> <li>• strategic overview</li> <li>• taking a lead on organising activity</li> <li>• arranging training</li> <li>• experience working with a range of audiences</li> <li>• expertise in workplace wellbeing</li> <li>• in-depth knowledge of the Blue Light Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate about mental health and supporting the emergency services</li> <li>• confident</li> <li>• supportive</li> <li>• proactive</li> <li>• a good listener</li> <li>• approachable</li> <li>• organised</li> <li>• a great communicator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• internal working groups</li> <li>• Blue Light Internal Coordinator</li> <li>• service senior management</li> <li>• human resources</li> <li>• occupational health</li> <li>• Champions</li> <li>• Lead Champion</li> </ul>



- guidance around mental health issues, policy and services
- expertise in mental health and wellbeing
- training packages
- other local initiatives around mental health and wellbeing
- other Mind work that may be relevant
- signposting
- extra-curricular support

- Blue Light Time to Change Pledge Lead (if this is a different person from your Blue Light Internal Coordinator)

#### Other attributes:

- previous experience working with the emergency services
- experience bringing different groups of people together
- contacts in other local organisations to support with elements like communications and consulting
- able to bridge the gap between senior management and the strategic direction of the network, and its work at grassroots level
- able to conduct an evaluation of the network measuring the impact of Blue Light Programme activity
- reactive to any local or national changes to mental health policy or specific Blue Light Programme-related policy

## Network steering group

A network steering group is an essential part of setting up a Blue Light Mental Health Network. It could be overseen and led by a local Mind Network Coordinator. Members of the network steering group should be drawn from each of the member services; we recommend that each service's internal working group representative(s) sit on the network steering group, to maintain consistency.

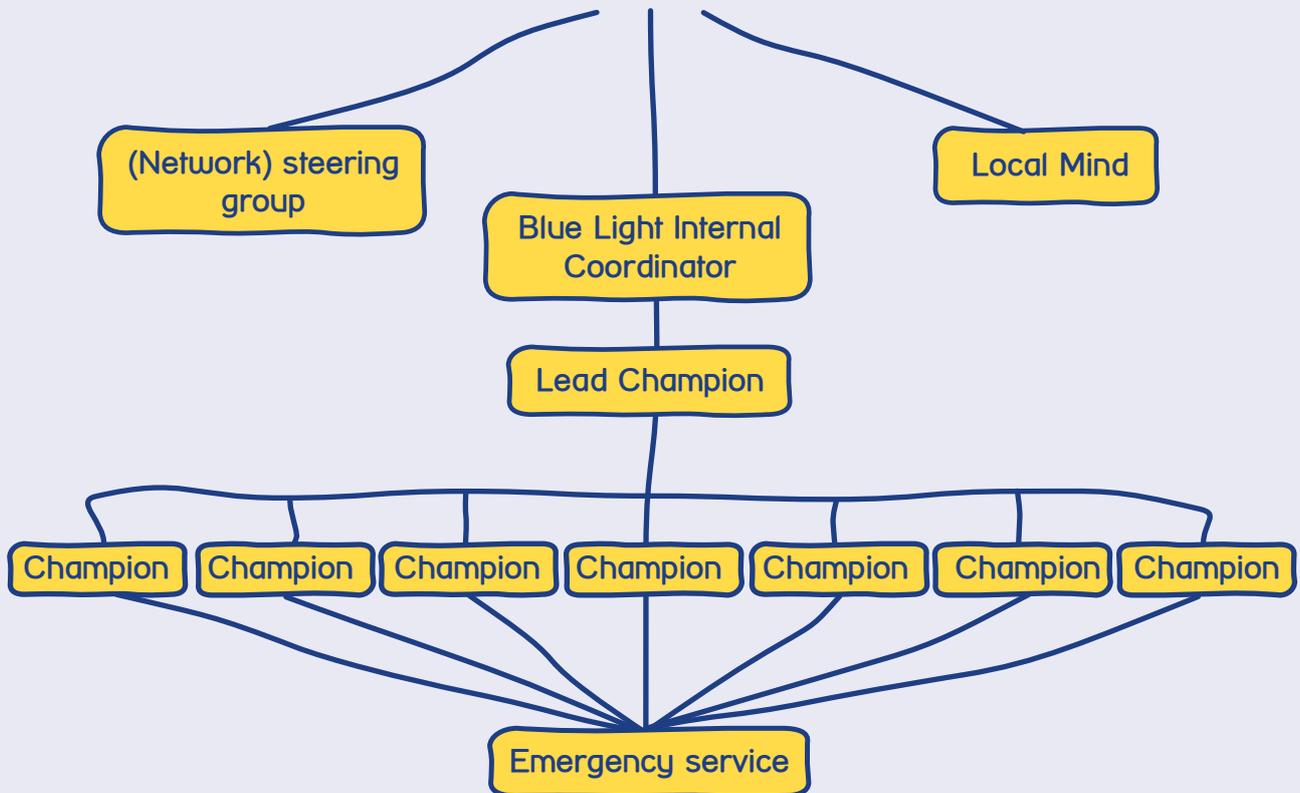
Skills needed:	A great steering group member is:	Needs access to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication skills</li> <li>• decision-making skills</li> <li>• organisational skills</li> <li>• good listening skills</li> <li>• advocacy skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate</li> <li>• dynamic and proactive</li> <li>• open</li> <li>• confident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• budget</li> <li>• other senior management</li> <li>• authority to make decisions on behalf of the organisation</li> <li>• networks to communicate information</li> </ul>
Other attributes:	Relevant job roles:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lived experience of mental health problems (desirable but not essential)</li> <li>• able to deliver on commitments</li> <li>• diverse in rank and experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• human resources</li> <li>• occupational health</li> <li>• senior management</li> <li>• Lead Champion</li> <li>• Champions</li> <li>• local Mind Coordinator</li> <li>• Blue Light Internal Coordinator</li> <li>• a member of your internal working group</li> </ul>	

It is important to recognise that all of the above roles will need the support of line managers, senior managers and the wider service to be able to carry out their functions. They will also need to be given sufficient time, space and resources to perform the role. Some services that had capacity have seconded people temporarily into a role – for example, the Blue Light Internal Coordinator – or created opportunities in existing job roles to accommodate this work.



## (Internal) working group

Senior management, Blue Light Internal Coordinator, HR/OH, Lead Champion, other representatives



### Something to consider

There are a number of associations and unions that represent emergency service organisations. We haven't listed these associations as a role, but it's worth thinking about the associations or other support organisations of which your staff and volunteers may be members. They can be great channels through which to promote your Blue Light Programme activity and to recruit new Champions. Consider how they can support you to embed

the programme internally, as well as to encourage their members to actively engage with the activities within your service. Associations may also be able to give you targeted insight into the mental health and wellbeing of their members, and work collaboratively to signpost and promote your Blue Light Programme activities.



Image: Gwasanaeth Tân ac AChub De Cymru /  
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service



## Budget

An essential part of the set-up process is determining what your budget will be. It should include funding for anti-stigma activities, sourcing and arranging training, resources and support for Champions, and Champions' activities.

Here is a list of key questions that we recommend you ask yourself when thinking about a budget:

- If your service has signed the Blue Light Time to Change pledge, has there been a budget agreed or assigned to those activities in order to achieve the points in your pledge action plan?
- How much will it cost your service to hold or attend meetings as part of networking activity, such as internal working group meetings and external network meetings? What are the anticipated costs of staff taking time out to attend or host a meeting? Who coordinates the meetings and, if an external partner (i.e. your local Mind) will incur a cost for doing so, who else could help to coordinate network meetings?
- How much will it cost to undertake activities and to provide necessary resources, such as training, booklets, flyers, posters, events (internal and/or external), Champion-specific training and resources (for example, Champions badges), and other Blue Light Programme merchandise to advertise the programme or network?

As part of a local Blue Light Mental Health Network, you may be able to share or pool budgets and other resources, and support each other in other ways. This is one of the main advantages of working collaboratively together. Talk to other members of your network about what each of you can contribute towards the network in the way of budgets and funding, what training or resources you might be able to offer and share, and how your systems work. You could consider arranging a meeting between each service's budget-holders as part of setting up the network. When doing this, keep in mind your search and rescue colleagues, who have very little in the way of budget and resources. Can they be supported to join your network?

Activity costs and budgets for services and networks will vary between services and geographical locations. On page 25, there is an example of items you could consider when determining your own budget.



### Blue Light Programme activity budget

Champions pot for activity and resources (dependant on the number of Champions you have)

Meeting costs for working groups

Printing costs (posters, leaflets, Champions badges etc.)

Blue Light Programme booklets and other materials

Training (Managing Mental Health in the Emergency Services, mental health awareness, resilience, mindfulness, etc.)

### Blue Light Mental Health Network budget

Local Mind Coordinator

Blue Light Mental Health Network launch event

Blue Light Mental Health Network website

Meeting costs for steering group

Evaluation of network



# Blue Light Champions

Blue Light Champions are essential in challenging stigma and boosting understanding of mental health in the emergency services. Champions are an integral part of delivering Blue Light Programme activity, especially at the set-up stage, and their involvement in each service successfully embedding the programme into their organisation will be crucial.

## Who are Blue Light Champions?

A Blue Light Champion is an employee or volunteer in the emergency services, who takes action in the workplace to raise awareness of mental health problems and challenge mental health stigma.

## Who can become a Blue Light Champion?

Anybody who is an employee or volunteer working in the police, fire, ambulance or search and rescue services can become a Blue Light Champion, whether or not they have personal lived experience of mental health problems. A Champion can work or volunteer in any role and at any level within your organisation.

A Blue Light Champion is a volunteer role and there are no limits on how many Blue Light Champions an organisation, department or team may have.

## What does a Blue Light Champion do?

There is no set or pre-determined level of engagement or activity that a Champion needs to be involved in, but every Champion will need support not only from their line managers, but also senior management, colleagues and all other roles and functions that are involved in supporting the implementation of the Blue Light Programme.

We asked some of our Blue Light Champions what good organisational support within their service looks like to them. Here's what they told us:

“Giving Champions space and time to fulfil the role within working hours and not in their personal time”

“Seeing senior management engaged in the programme”

“Recognising the responsibility of the Champion role”

“Renewing the Blue Light Time to Change pledge”

“Feeding back success stories to support sustainability of the programme”

## Recruiting and training Blue Light Champions

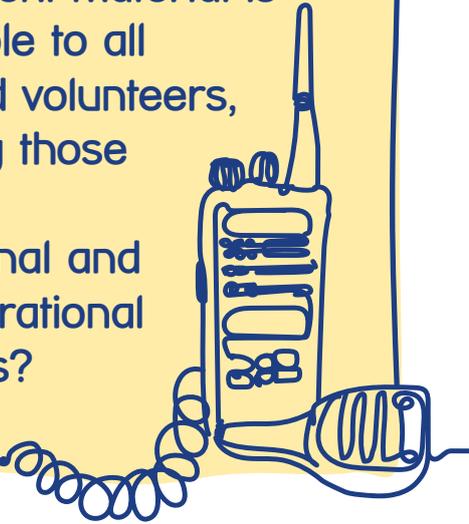
Recruiting Blue Light Champions should continue to run alongside your other Blue Light Programme activity. After you've completed an initial Champions audit you may find that you want to recruit more Champions. And, as time goes on, staff at your organisation will learn more about the programme and its successes; so you might find that more people express an interest in becoming a Champion. You can boost recruitment by:

- holding drop-in sessions or informal get-togethers in your canteen or break-out area to promote the programme and explain the role of the Blue Light Champion
- putting up posters, sharing booklets and handing out Blue Light Programme materials
- advertising the Champion role and what it entails at wellbeing boards or other relevant events and meetings
- running training sessions – this is a great place to recruit Champions!



- posting details about the Champion role and the Blue Light Programme on your intranet, if you have one.

How will you ensure that advertising for the Champion's role and recruitment material is accessible to all staff and volunteers, including those in both operational and non-operational functions?



health awareness. Your local Mind will be able to tell you what it can offer and what the costs are; it will vary across each branch. If your Local Mind is coordinating a Blue Light Mental Health Network, it may need a list of each member service's Champions so it can organise network-wide activity, newsletters and other resources for Champions.

It is important that you understand the remit of the Blue Light Champion's role and set expectations within the organisations. You can see more about the boundaries of the Blue Light Champion's role in the link below.

## Resources for Blue Light Champions

You can find guides and FAQs about the role of a Blue Light Champion [here](#).

## Supporting Blue Light Champions

It's important to have a clear and accessible support structure in place for Blue Light Champions, so they know where to go if they need advice, training or guidance. There should also be a platform through which the great work Champions continue to do can be shared across the organisation.

The Blue Light Internal Coordinator should know who the registered Champions are in your service and provide day-to-day support and information, as well as signposting other resources, bringing Champions together as a group and collecting and updating data with support from the Lead Champion.

Your local Mind can provide mental health training that is required and has been agreed. This may include, but is not limited to, [Managing Mental Health in the Emergency Services](#), resilience, mindfulness and mental



# Delivery

Once you have completed the set-up stage, you should be in a position to move into delivering key Blue Light Programme activity. This section of the toolkit will support you in doing just that. In this section, you'll learn about delivering different aspects of programme activity, including:

- anti-stigma activity
- workplace wellbeing activity
- resilience activity
- information
- branding.

## Anti-stigma activity

The activities listed in this section are designed to help tackle the stigma surrounding mental health, encourage people to speak out about their own mental health and experiences, and to support others in being able to do the same.

## Blue Light Time to Change pledge

The Blue Light Time to Change pledge is an essential part of implementing Blue Light Programme activity. If your service has not yet signed the Blue Light Time to Change pledge, you can find out more about the pledge and how to sign it by visiting our website [here](#).

If you have already signed the pledge, then your action plan and the activities you listed within the plan will be the foundation for the anti-stigma work in your service. You will need to think about how any activity supports you in achieving the points on your action plan. If the pledge was signed a considerable time ago, it's worth thinking about how you can refresh both the pledge, and the service's commitment to supporting the mental health of your staff and volunteers. If your service is particularly large, has many departments or is spread over several geographical locations, it might be beneficial to look at creating and signing individual pledges for each department or location, each one covering specific elements of mental health and wellbeing relevant to its team.

Whether you have signed the Blue Light Time to Change pledge already, or are planning to sign the pledge, we advise thinking carefully about how you are going to communicate it internally, and then externally. Do you want to make your action plan public? Would you like to sign the pledge at a public or staff-wide event, like an open day or staff away day?





## Blue Light Champion activity

Training Blue Light Champions is important to not only help them be the best Champions they can be, but – most importantly – support them in looking after themselves and their colleagues. Read more in the section on Champions and these [activity guides](#) for more information on what types of activity Champions could get involved in.

## Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshops

We developed a one-day workshop – called Speaking Up, Speaking Out – to explore ways for Champions to challenge stigma surrounding mental health problems in their workplace, share ideas and work with other Blue Light Champions. We have created resources for services to deliver this training in-house for free. Find out more by visiting our [website](#), where you can access the course and supporting materials.

We recommend that all Blue Light Champions attend the Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop to enable them to successfully and effectively fulfil their role.

## Peer Supporters

A Blue Light Peer Supporter is a registered Blue Light Champion with their own personal experience of a mental health problem, who uses this shared experience to support colleagues with their mental wellbeing and signpost relevant services. Peer support can happen in many different ways, such as one on one, or in weekly group sessions in the cafeteria or break-out area.

Local Minds will be delivering peer support training to Blue Light Champions for free from autumn or winter 2017. For more information please contact [bluelight@mind.org.uk](mailto:bluelight@mind.org.uk).

## Workplace wellbeing activity

Workplace wellbeing activity needs to run parallel with anti-stigma activity to ensure that staff and volunteers at all levels are more aware and responsive to their own and colleagues' mental health problems.

## Training

Line managers play a vital role in supporting team members who may be experiencing mental health problems. However, often managers feel ill-equipped to have open conversations about mental health – and this can lead to staff and volunteers across blue light services feeling unsupported.

Mind's Managing Mental Health in the Emergency Services (MMHES) training course has been specifically designed for blue light managers. Nearly all (95%) of participants who attended the training in the first year of the programme found it useful, and 90% still believed it had been useful three months later.

To find out more about the MMHES training and how you can access it, visit our [webpage](#).

In addition to the MMHES course, Mind and local Minds deliver a range of other courses that may be of interest to your service. Local Minds that were involved in our pilot Blue Light Mental Health Networks provided training in:

- mental health awareness
- mental health first aid
- mindfulness
- suicide prevention and awareness.

To find out more about the training Mind can offer, view the list of courses [here](#). To find out what training your local Mind offers, find its contact details [here](#).



## Something to consider

Think about whether training will be mandatory as part of your learning and development portfolio, or if it will be optional. Consider the channels and platforms through which you will advertise training.

## Webinars

We host a range of useful webinars on YouTube, which can be shared among everyone in your service. Staff and volunteers can watch them at any time for suggestions, tips and practical guidance about looking after their own mental wellbeing. Be sure to think about any restrictions or firewalls you may have in place blocking access to external websites. You can find the webinars [here](#).

## Wellness action plans

[Wellness action plans](#) (WAPs) are an easy and practical way for people to support their own health – including mental health – at work, and allow managers to better understand the health and wellbeing needs of people in their teams. Anyone can use a WAP; you don't need to have a mental health problem. It's a great way to help you to think about how you, your line manager and your workplace can help you to stay well, and to put into place practical steps to make sure you're supported when you're not.

We have produced two wellness action plan guides – one for employees and one for managers – which you can access and download from our [website](#). You can use these guides to develop your own version of a WAP that suits you and your service, and you could call it whatever you like, as long as it covers everything it should do to be effective. For example, one of the blue light services in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire introduced mandatory WAPs for all staff but renamed them Wellness Support Plans.

## Resilience

Resilience is not simply a person's ability to bounce back after a difficult or traumatic event: it also entails their capacity to adapt in the face of challenging circumstances while safeguarding their mental health and wellbeing.

During years one and two of the Blue Light Programme, we developed, delivered and evaluated two targeted resilience-building courses for staff and volunteers in the emergency services. Mind's model of resilience builds on the five ways to wellbeing, a set of evidence-based public mental health messages that have been identified by the New Economics Foundation, which are aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population. This model recognises both that an individual must build and maintain their own wellbeing, and the importance of social networks and relationships in supporting that activity (since we do not exist in a vacuum).

Having a focus on resilience is an important component part of a holistic approach to mental health support for staff and volunteers, which empowers them to learn tools they can draw on in times of difficulty. Our research shows that organisational factors trigger poor mental health in emergency services more than exposure to trauma, so building resilience to deal with all of these triggers is essential.

You can find up-to-date information about our resilience courses on our [website](#).



In addition to this, local Minds have offered a range of other resilience, self-care or coping skills workshops, including mindfulness and distress management. Get in touch with [your local Mind](#) to find out what courses it offers that could help your service's staff and volunteers to build and maintain resilience.

## Information

Throughout delivery of the Blue Light Programme, we have provided evidence-based, quality-assured and up-to-date information to help people working in blue light services, and their friends and family, to look after their own mental health and wellbeing. Providing empowering, high-quality information around mental health is central to enabling effective self-management, choice and access to further help and support.

## Booklets

We have produced five information booklets, each designed to support staff and volunteers from the emergency services with their mental health. They are:

- Mental wellbeing
- Stress and anxiety
- Seeking help for a mental health problem
- Supporting a colleague with a mental health problem
- For friends and family: how to look after someone's mental wellbeing.

We would encourage you to hand these booklets out to staff and volunteers and to leave copies in communal areas, such as canteens or break-out areas. It might also be a good idea to make sure your occupational health team has copies of all the booklets to give to people when needed. You can find PDFs of all the booklets and order printed copies [here](#).

## Infoline

Our confidential [Blue Light Infoline](#) provides useful information and advice on mental health, and signposts other relevant local support services. Our trained advisors offer a friendly and understanding ear, and can suggest other options and sources of support, to help you to make informed choices about your own mental health or that of someone else you're supporting or worried about. The Infoline is also there for family and friends of 999 workers, if they're worried about their loved ones.

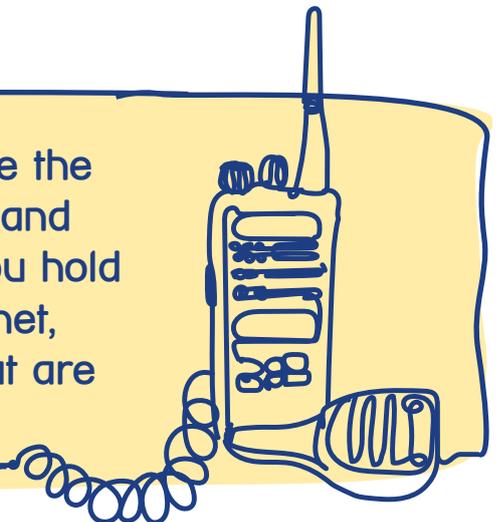
Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm, calls are charged at local rates. You can also contact us at any time by email or text, and one of our dedicated advisors will respond during the Infoline's opening hours.

0300 303 5999 (local rates)

[bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk](mailto:bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk)

Text: 84999

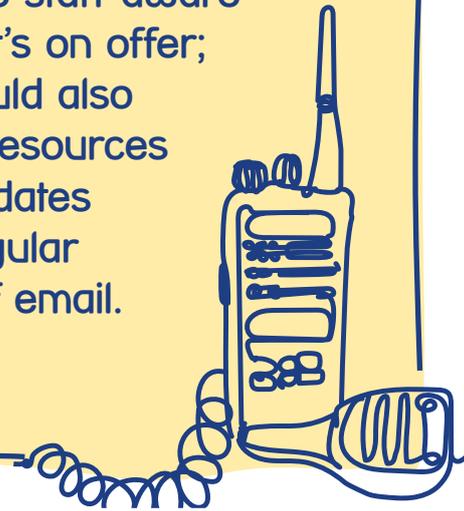
Think about how and where you will share the booklets, and information about webinars and the Blue Light Infoline. We suggest that you hold all information electronically on your intranet, as well having printed copies in places that are accessible to all staff and volunteers.



## Resources

We have a list of all the resources mentioned in this toolkit, and links to access them, [here](#).

How will you advertise or share all of the available resources with staff? Your intranet is a great communal online space to make staff aware of what's on offer; you could also share resources and updates in a regular all-staff email.





# Communications

A good communications and media strategy will greatly increase the impact of your Blue Light Programme activity, both internally and externally.

We recommend that you have a fully comprehensive communications strategy that's divided into two distinct phases: initial set-up communications and ongoing communications.

It is vital that the information and communication you provide about Blue Light Programme activity is accessible to everyone, and that you keep people up to date with successes and developments in its implementation. Your communications should also promote your Blue Light Champions, what they do and how they can be contacted, in order to maximise their reach and ensure that anyone who might need to call a Champion can do so easily.

Before you begin your communications, make sure that an initial point of contact (your Blue Light Internal Coordinator if you have one in post) is adequately supported and equipped to field any enquiries. Setting up a generic email address would be useful at this point.

## Initial set-up communication

A comprehensive communications strategy for the set-up phase is essential to engage staff and volunteers from the start, and will, in turn, help to successfully embed the programme activity within your service. Your initial communications strategy should include early recruitment of Blue Light Champions: getting them on-board as soon as possible will mean they can help to implement your communications plan, spreading the word about and running activities.

There are a number of methods you could incorporate into your initial communications about the programme. Different services will have different communications channels – you are best placed to know which are likely to be the most effective for you and your colleagues. Here are some examples:

### 1) Sending emails and intranet posts

Internal emails can be useful in introducing the programme and targeting specific departments and people who might be interested in being Champions or early adopters.

Emails and intranet posts can be multimedia, using images, videos or other resources and materials.

Your service's intranet can be a great way to engage people, as emails can easily get lost in busy inboxes. It can also be a useful platform for larger files or resources that contain a lot of information, which can't be easily shared via email.

Think about including on your intranet people's own stories and lived experiences to get everyone thinking about the importance of mental health. Champions are often ideal candidates for this, as they can also talk passionately about the importance of the programme.

### 2) Posters, leaflets and materials

Printed versions and hard copies of information and materials – like booklets, leaflets and posters in toilets, kitchens, communal areas and on noticeboards – are a really great way to communicate about the programme. Takeaway resources, such as 'top tips' flyers and postcards advertising key contact details or signposting other channels of information, can be a good method of engaging people.

There are lots of [printable materials](#) that you can use and adapt to suit your service and programme.



### 3) Events and activities

Events and activities are often the most effective ways to engage people, because presenting information in person can make it feel all the more relevant and important. A staff event is an ideal way of introducing your Blue Light Champions and other key people; to showcase the friendly face of the programme and answer questions.

Think about the best type of event for your service, such as coffee mornings, drop-in sessions, talks, wellbeing events, or leisure group and activities like the [Blue Light Choir](#). Shift patterns and structures might mean some events are hard for everyone to attend, so think about what would be best for your service and staff. Time to Change has some brilliant [resources](#) and tips for activities that can get people talking.

### Blue Light Time to Change pledge signing

If your service hasn't yet signed the Blue Light Time to Change pledge, hosting a public pledge signing event can be a fantastic way of showing staff and volunteers in your service and in the local community about the programme, and demonstrating your commitment to reducing mental health stigma and discrimination.

You can find out more about the Blue Light Time to Change pledge and the support that Time to Change can offer [here](#).

If your service has already signed the pledge, starting your Blue Light Programme journey is the perfect opportunity to review the action plan you may have created at the time, and, if appropriate, to re-sign the pledge publicly. You can contact the Time to Change employers team on [employers@time-to-change.org.uk](mailto:employers@time-to-change.org.uk) for more information about this.

### 4) Social media

It's a great idea to harness the power of social media to reach a wide and diverse audience, especially when talking externally about your Blue Light Programme activities. If you have the capacity and resources, you could think about setting up programme-specific or mental wellbeing accounts on your social media channels – such as a dedicated mental health support Facebook page or Twitter account for your service – and add the page details, handles and hashtags to any communications.



Some services have found really engaging and creative ways to use social media as part of their programme communications strategy. You can see what others are doing on our Twitter account [@MindBlueLight](#) or by searching the hashtags [#mybluelight](#) and [#ourbluelight](#).

We have developed a guide on how services can communicate internally about the Blue Light Programme, which you can access [here](#).



## Branding your programme

Branding your programme (or your local network if you have chosen to work with other services to create one) is a good way to give your communications about your programme and associated activities an identity that stands out from that of other, unrelated communications. You can think about branding your communications and information by using a specific font and colour scheme, or perhaps creating a logo to add to your materials.

You might also want to think about developing guidelines around the way your organisation talks about the programme – and about mental health more widely – including key words and phrases, and the style and tone of what you say and how you say it in written information. This can help you to pin down a clear and consistent message that everyone can understand and recognise. Time to Change has some [useful guidance](#) about how to talk about mental health, including words and phrases to avoid and alternatives you can use instead.

## Ongoing communications

Continuing to review and update your communications strategy as time goes on will support continual engagement with the programme. As more Champions sign up, they will be able to work with your Blue Light Internal Coordinator to deliver communications, information, activities and peer support.

There are a number of methods you could incorporate into your ongoing communications about the programme. Here are some examples:

### 1) Blogs and storytelling

Sharing personal stories is one of the best ways to tackle stigma and to raise awareness of mental health. Your Blue Light Champions may want to share their experiences as part of their role – and this could be a great way to encourage more people to think and be open about mental health.

It's important to bear in mind that sharing stories can be difficult for some people: not everyone will feel ready or able to talk about their experiences. We've provided some guidance on preparing people to tell their stories [here](#).

Champions and other people in your service with lived experience could write blog posts, which could be shared in newsletters, on your intranet or via your social media channels. A number of Champions from difference services have blogged about their experiences and shared their own personal stories with Mind. You can read them [here](#).

[Here is a piece](#) written by an Avon and Somerset Constabulary police officer about her experience of depression.

### 2) Videos and podcasts

These are fantastic ways to engage people and tell everyone in your service about what your programme or network has been doing. It's also a good channel through which to talk about mental health and wellbeing, and issues that might be affecting your staff.

If this sounds like something you want to try, remember that it doesn't have to be a fancy or high-tech production to be effective. A simple video of someone talking in front of a smartphone camera, and shared on a suitable platform (like YouTube or through social media) can work really well.

Here you'll find some fantastic videos featuring Blue Light Champions talking about their experiences.

- [Mind's Blue Light Programme films](#)
- [Wirral Mind's Blue Light Programme film](#)



### 3) Specific campaigns

There may be targeted campaigns that you can run as part of your Blue Light Programme around topics that specifically affect staff at your service. For example, you could do something aimed at highlighting issues that affect shift workers, or think about a campaign about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to encourage people to open up and seek support in the wake of a major incident or trauma.

### 4) Fundraising activities

[Fundraising for your local Mind](#) or other mental health organisations is a really great way to boost awareness of your programme. It's also a vital stream of funding for frontline support services that your staff might need to use. Events can range from cake sales to marathons, and everything in between!

### 5) Training

The more people in your service who take part in relevant training, the more voices you have to spread your message and to talk about mental health. Sharing feedback and the experiences of people who have attended training can be a great way to continue to promote training, as well as expanding mental health conversations more generally. Training sessions can also be a good place to recruit Blue Light Champions and inform participants about other Blue Light Programme activity that is taking place within the service.

### 6) The Mental Health calendar

Use the Time to Change Mental Health calendar to time your internal communications activity and target it appropriately. Events like Time to Talk Day (February), Mental Health Awareness Week (May) and World Suicide Prevention Day (September) are great opportunities to get some traction on social media and to add value to your communications. Have a look at the events listed on the Mental Health calendar [here](#).

### 7) Update everyone!

A crucial aspect of a successful communications strategy is to update everyone at regular intervals throughout your programme, and at specific times; for example, when a part of your action plan has been completed, a policy has changed or a new idea is being launched. Celebrate successes to let staff and volunteers at your service know that the programme is moving forward, and – importantly – that it is having a positive impact on people's mental health and wellbeing in your service.





# Evaluating your impact

Evaluating the impact of your Blue Light Programme activity is vital if you want to get continued buy-in from your staff and volunteers, as well as encouraging new streams of support from other external organisations and groups. People are more likely to take notice of what you're doing if you can show that it's effective – and evaluation is a great way to do that. An evaluation is also important to identify areas where you could make changes and improvements, in order to maximise the success and impact of the programme.

Your service may have its own ways of evaluating initiatives and projects, but here are some ideas and tips that we've put together:

## • Set objectives

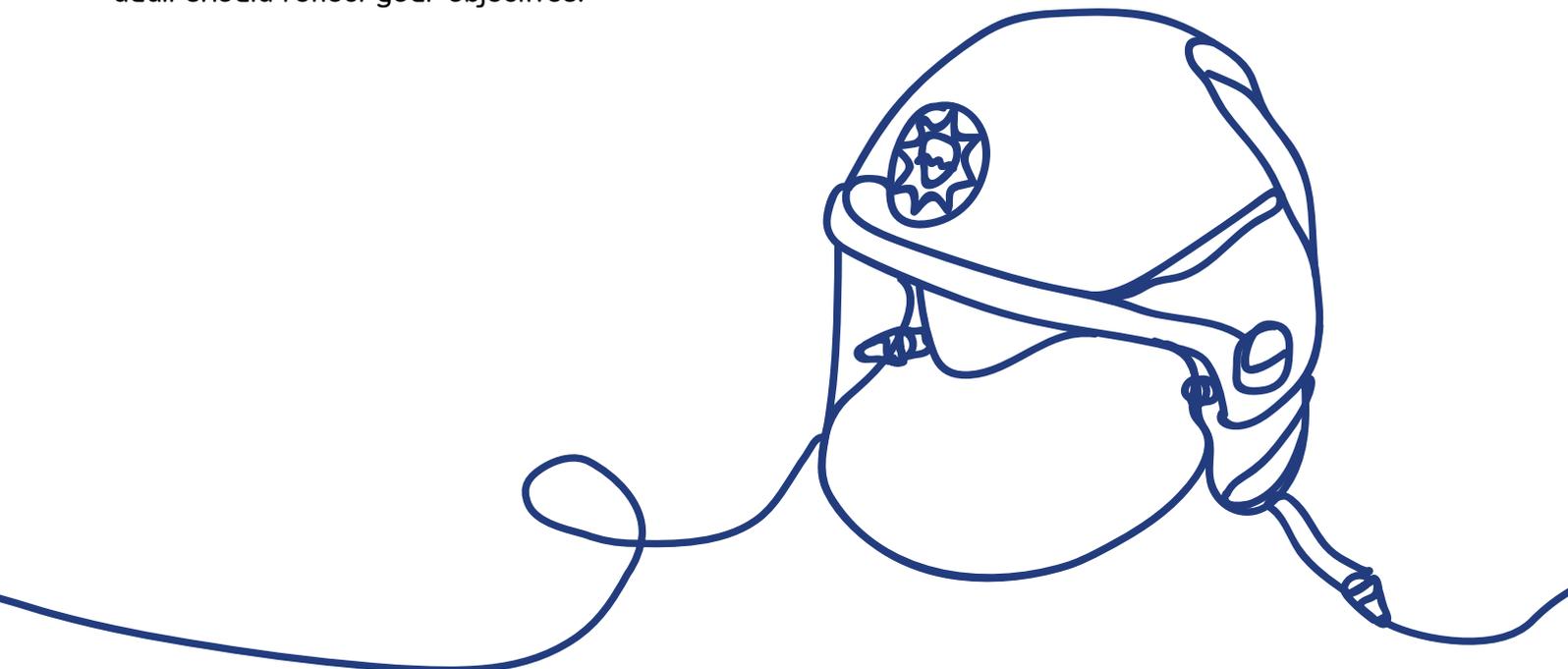
It should be clear from the start what your objectives are and what you want to achieve. For example, do you want to reduce sickness absence or tackle discrimination? Your objectives should help you focus your activities and give you a benchmark against which you can evaluate them and the programme. Any data and evidence from your initial scoping and audit should reflect your objectives.

## • Use statistics

We recommend that, as part of your programme's set-up stage, you work with your human resources or occupational health team to gather data and statistics about your service, its approach to mental health, and any measures already in place aimed at supporting wellbeing. You could collect information from results of old surveys or any that you undertook early on in setting up your programme. If you then repeat these surveys or re-examine statistics at set points along the way, you can see how much of an impact you are making – and demonstrate that to everyone else throughout the service.

## • Evaluation activities

When you are running activities or training, it's always useful to get participants to fill in an evaluation form after each session. If a local Mind is facilitating training or hosting activities, it might be worth asking to see some of the evaluations or to collect feedback of your own as well.



## • Regular reporting and evaluation milestones

Consider establishing with your working group a clear set of guidelines outlining how often you will monitor and evaluate your Blue Light Programme activities – for example, after three, six or twelve months, and annually thereafter.

As part of our pilot Blue Light Mental Health Networks, we undertook quarterly monitoring, which included written feedback on progress against each outcome, how many Champions each service had, what events the Champions had organised or been involved with, a list of training sessions that been completed and how many participants attended, details of upcoming training, and an up-to-date budget spreadsheet. This was really useful for services to have clear sight of the progress they were making.

## • Qualitative ways of evaluating

Stories can be an effective communications tool to engage people with the topic of mental health, but they can also be a hugely valuable method of giving feedback as part of an evaluation exercise, because they represent a tangible connection to a real person and their own personal story. Our experiences suggest that statistics can be useful at times, but qualitative information – in the form of real-life, relatable stories – can be so much more powerful in breaking down the stigma attached to mental health, and in raising awareness of the programme and the support available.

Feedback and storytelling can be included in the overall reporting and evaluation, as well as in highlighting part of the wider impact and achievements of the programme within your service.

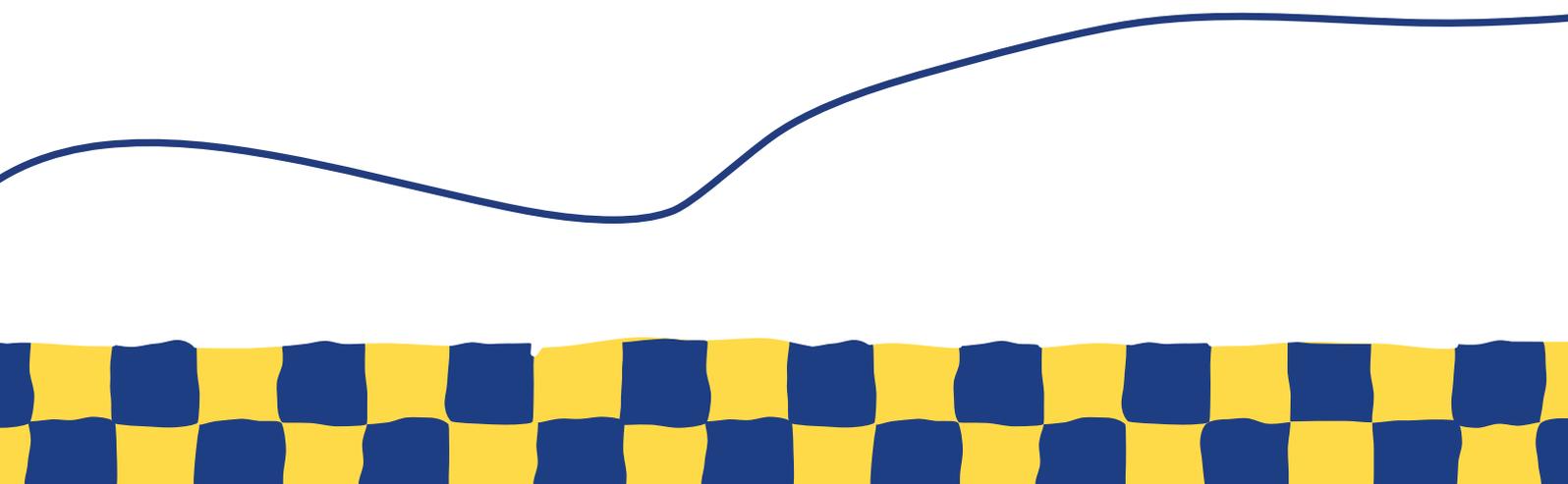
## • Collecting stories

There are various methods of doing this. You could consider reaching out to people who have taken part in training, workshops or events and asking them to write a short piece on their experience of the programme. You could also encourage other people in your organisation who are passionate about mental health to get involved, or use comments left on feedback forms, intranet posts or social media anecdotes.

You can find more information and guidance for people who want to share their stories [here](#).

## Blue Light Programme reports and evaluations

Throughout the Blue Light Programme, we have produced a number of reports and evaluated many of the different parts of the programme. Please feel free to use these resources to guide or inspire you to create your own reports and research for your programme and network. You can see all this research [here](#).



# Blue Light Mental Health Networks

In 2016 to 2017 we piloted four Blue Light Mental Health Networks across England. These networks were built on what we'd learned in year one of the Blue Light Programme, enabling emergency services in each pilot area to work together to apply Mind's three-pronged approach to wellbeing activity in their service – promoting wellbeing; tackling work-related mental health problems; and supporting employees with mental health problems.

Each network had access to funding to support a programme of activity, which was designed to improve access to mental health information and support for all blue light employees across that network area.

To ensure a joined-up approach to working with mental health support in the community, each network had a dedicated coordinator, based at the local Mind, tasked with facilitating partnership and networking activity between all the network's member services.

The purpose of the pilot Blue Light Mental Health Networks was to promote collaboration, and to share knowledge, resources and budgets across services and sectors. It was also to improve mental health support pathways for blue light employees, from prevention and early intervention through to recovery and rehabilitation.

The networks built on approaches that had been shown to be effective, such as peer support, mental health training and awareness raising, anti-stigma activity, and provision of targeted information and support. Before the launch of the pilot networks, these activities had been tested individually – but the networks provided the opportunity to bring those different strands of activity together, in

order to develop a holistic approach to mental health across blue light organisations that could be replicated.

From the pilots and subsequent networks, we know that being part of a local Blue Light Mental Health Network can yield a number of important benefits for your organisation and its own Blue Light Programme. For example, it enables you to join together with peers from other services to share knowledge and best practice, and can result in forging strong and lasting relationships between members, on both a professional and personal level. Many networks also have a shared budget, and pool resources to derive the best possible value for each member service. Our evaluation of the pilot networks highlighted that services did not always feel that Mind nationally understood their needs locally, which is why we believe the local Blue Light Mental Health Network model is so effective.

We also received feedback from Blue Light Champions in our pilot network areas. They told us they felt reassured by their local Minds' involvement in the programme, because it meant it was backed by a respected organisation. We believe that local Minds – with their extensive expertise in mental health – are best placed to support services in implementing, expanding and maintaining their Blue Light Programme activity.

An independent evaluation of the pilot networks, and wider learning from the Blue Light Programme, have also demonstrated that real change can be driven across all services when they work together and embed Blue Light Programme activities.

You can see the full, comprehensive overview and evaluation of our four pilot networks [here](#).



Some of the benefits that services experienced through being part of our pilot networks included:

- ❖ stronger working partnerships between services, and joint access to amenities (such as fitness facilities) and other wellbeing initiatives
- ❖ increasing the profile of mental health internally
- ❖ increasing the profile of the mental health of emergency services in local and regional media, supporting relationships with the local population
- ❖ more extensive peer support for all staff and volunteers
- ❖ improved support structures internally
- ❖ Champions setting up a range of initiatives, such as drop-in groups, to support colleagues
- ❖ mental health conversations becoming normal internally and staff and volunteers beginning to open up more regularly sharing good practice and challenges with other services
- ❖ a cross-service wellbeing knitting group – members created knitted angels for Christmas and chicks for Easter, which were given out to staff and in the community
- ❖ production of a joint network mental health strategy to ensure that wellbeing strategies locally were aligned while still reflecting the differences between what each service offered personnel
- ❖ recognition for each service's hard work – the North East Ambulance Service was nominated for an equality award as a result of its involvement with the Blue Light North East Network.

## First steps to creating your own Blue Light Mental Health Network

To support you in setting up your own network, we have created the Blue Light Mental Health Network [Blueprint](#), which is included within the Blue Light Programme Blueprint document. This document is a visual guide that describes, step by step, the different actions needed to deliver a great service within a network.

There are two 'journeys' mapped out on the blueprint: the first, for embedding Blue Light Programme activity within your service, and the second, for setting up a Blue Light Mental Health Network. We recommend that you read the blueprint and consider how you can put it into practice when thinking about setting up your local network.

We recommend that you contact [your local Mind](#) to help you to set up a funded network. Many blue light staff and volunteers have told us they felt more trusting of and confident about being part of their network because it was coordinated by an authoritative and expert organisation.

Your local Mind coordinator will be able to bring together different services in your area for an initial meeting, where you can discuss as a group how to go about creating a network. It is important that the roles listed on page 11 are put in place early on, and involved in any discussions about the network, because they will each will play a key part. We recommend ensuring that your service is represented by a Champion, human resources and occupational health, and your Blue Light Internal Coordinator at initial meetings.

Search and rescue services have a very different organisational structure to the other emergency services. So, we suggest that, when setting up a network, you get in contact with your local search and rescue colleagues and encourage them to join. They may not be able to engage in a formal network in the way the other services can, but it may be useful to keep them up to date with how the network and its initiatives are progressing. You should also share any meeting minutes with them so that, even if search and rescue members can't attend, they are at least kept in the loop.

It's worth noting that the search and rescue service's contact person should also have access to their management meetings; this could be their training lead, and you could further involve them by inviting them to your network's training sessions.



**Search and rescue volunteers need to know they are part of the blue light family and the support is there for them, too. Being a Champion means I get a sense of doing something right for my colleagues. We need to look out for each other.**

Regie, Blue Light Champion



## How can your local Mind support you?

At Mind, we are stronger together because we work in partnership, and our local Minds are one of the main ways we do this. Throughout this toolkit, you will have come across different suggestions and ways in which your local Mind can support you in implementing and embedding Blue Light Programme activities, through training and guidance. As part of funded Blue Light Mental Health Networks, local Minds take on a facilitation and coordination role, as well as providing wider support to member services.



# Sustainability

The blueprint, the case for support and this toolkit have all been created to support the sustainability of national Blue Light Programme activity, within a local context. In addition to forming local Blue Light Mental Health Networks, there are other ways in which you can continue to enhance your Blue Light Programme activity in the future to support you on your mental health and wellbeing journey.

## Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index

[Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index](#) is the recommended next step in your journey to support staff wellbeing. The Workplace Wellbeing Index is a benchmark of best policy and practice. It is designed to celebrate the good work employers are doing to promote and support positive mental health, and to provide key recommendations on specific areas where there is room to improve.

The Index will enable you to measure the impact of the initiatives you have put in place as part of the Blue Light Programme, and to analyse what you're doing well and where there is room to improve.

### Key reasons to take part in the Workplace Wellbeing Index:

- You can find out how your employees really feel about how your organisation supports their mental health and gather feedback on the initiatives you have put in place as part of the Blue Light Programme.
- You can benefit from Mind's recommendations around workplace wellbeing once the support from the Blue Light Programme has ended, so you know where to invest your resources in the future to continue to support the mental health of your staff in the best and most effective way.

- You will gain public recognition of your service's commitment to workplace wellbeing.
- You can learn how well you are performing in comparison with other emergency services and public sector organisations participating in the Index.
- You can access best practice learning from other employers participating in the Index.
- You will be part of Mind's movement towards change in workplace mental health.

The Index has already delivered a positive impact for organisations.

"I am hugely proud of what we've achieved at the Environment Agency. This recognition is great to know where we are in terms of supporting our colleagues and where we go from here. Coming top is a complete surprise. Workplace wellbeing is something that all employers need to take seriously and we are thrilled to be at the cutting edge when it comes to creating a mentally healthy environment for our employees."

Dr Andy Croxford, Deputy Director,  
Environment Agency, Gold Index 2016/17

To find out more, visit our [webpage](#) or contact the team on [index@mind.org.uk](mailto:index@mind.org.uk)



## Supporting other services

Many services that have been involved in the Blue Light Programme for some time want to share their experiences and what they've learned with other emergency services in different parts of the country. This could be in the form of a buddying system, informal guidance and support, or sharing materials and resources they had produced, such as newsletter templates, Champions posters or staff questionnaires.

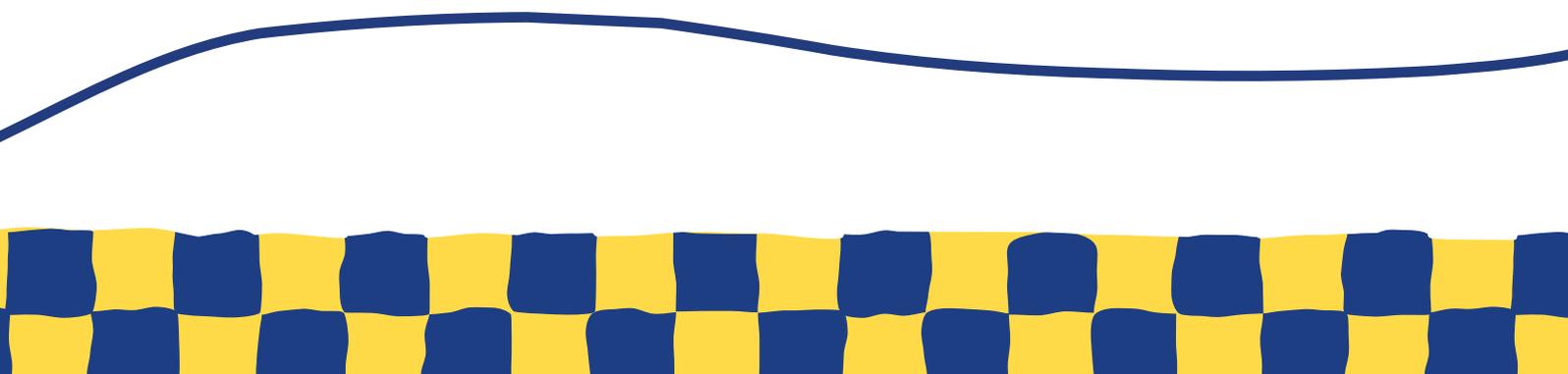
## Further policy change

Another positive benefit of signing up to the [Blue Light Time to Change pledge](#) is that it sets actions for you to review and to continually adapt your relevant policies and procedures, such as absence sickness procedures.

This will ensure that these policies and procedures are not only fit for purpose, but that they are underpinned by and support good practice around the mental health agenda.

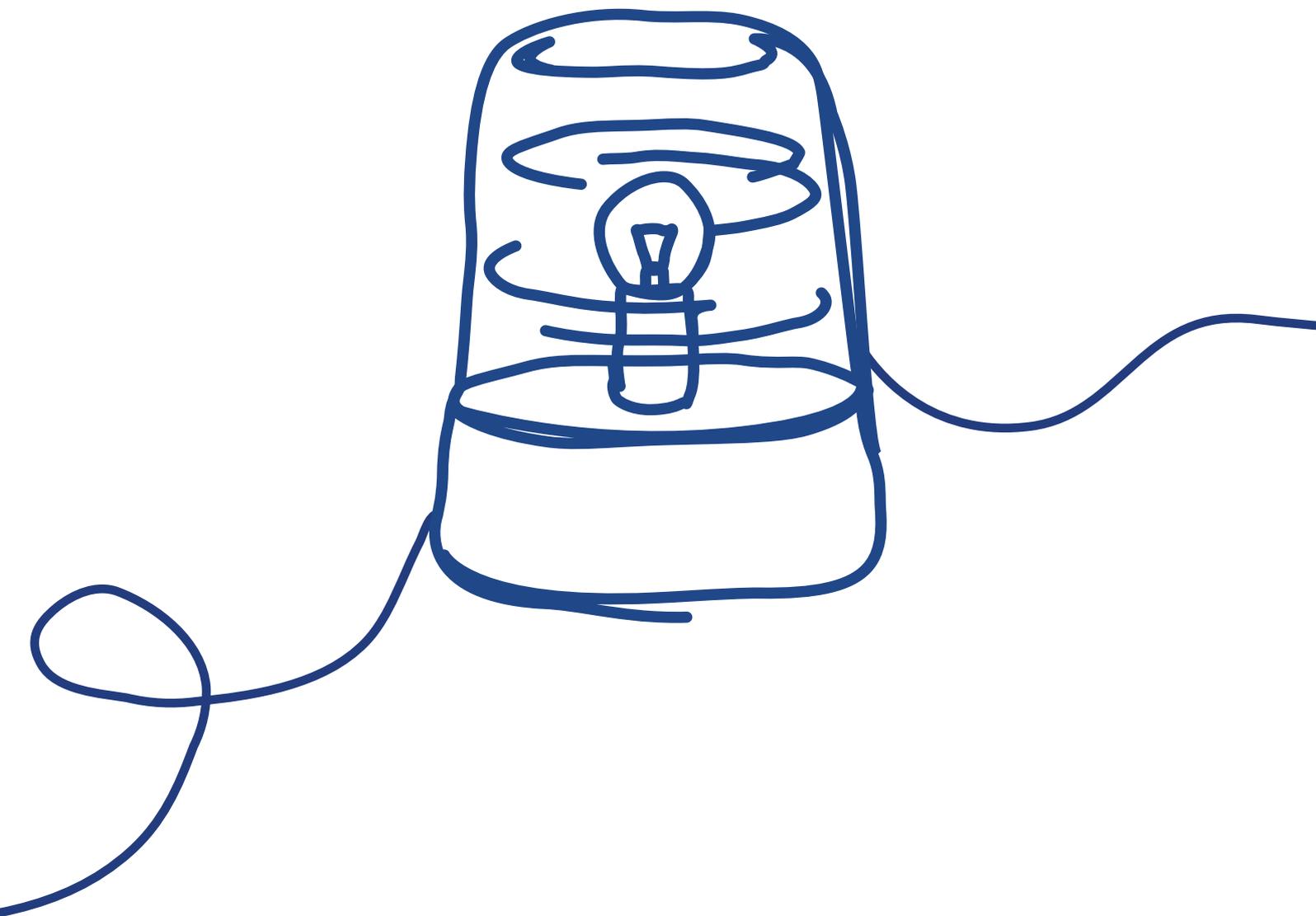
For example, if a sickness absence policy and its wording is punitive in nature it can alienate people who have a mental health problem, discourage them from opening up about it, and exacerbate stigma. Reviewing the policy in line with your Blue Light Time to Change action plan and amending it where appropriate will ensure it reflects a positive approach to mental health and wellbeing, rather than working against it.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Blue Light Mental Health Network worked closely with Cambridgeshire Constabulary to review and amend its sickness absence policy wording.



# Get started

For more information, support and resources, and to help you get started on delivering your Blue Light Programme activity, visit [mind.org.uk/BlueLightBP](https://www.mind.org.uk/BlueLightBP).



# Appendices

## Resources

### Useful websites

[Mind.org.uk](http://Mind.org.uk)

[Mind's Blue Light Programme](#)

[Local Minds](#)

### About the Blue Light Programme

[Year One activity](#)

[Year Two impact](#)

[Years Three and Four – our goals and plans](#)

### Research and evaluations

[Initial scoping survey full results](#)

[Blue Light Programme Research Summary](#)

[Further evaluation reports](#)

### Signposting to support

[Blue Light Infoline](#)

[Elefriends](#)

Elefriends is a supportive online community where you can be yourself. We all know what it's like to struggle sometimes, but now there's a safe place to listen, share and be heard.

[Samaritans](#)

[Big White Wall](#)

Anonymous, online community and forum overseen by trained advisors. Available free in many areas of the UK via the NHS, employers, and universities. Also free to all UK serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

### [Unison There for You](#)

Membership-based trade union with welfare support via the There for You programme (financial, listening services, debt advice, wellbeing breaks and employment support). Unison has employee assistance specifically for the health and police services.

### The Blue Light Time to Change pledge

[Signing the Blue Light Time to Change pledge](#)

[Pledge toolkit](#)

[Time to Change Employers campaign](#)

[Who has signed the pledge](#)

### Champions

[About Blue Light Champions](#)

[The Blue Light Champions toolkit](#)

### Training

[Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshops](#)

[Managing Mental Health in  
Emergency Services courses](#)

[Resilience training](#)

[Peer Supporter training](#)

[Other training from Mind](#)

### Information

[Blue Light information booklets](#)

[Blue Light webinar films](#)

### General resources

[Supporting the Blue Light Programme](#)

[Badges and banners](#)

[Printable resources \(posters, top tips, leaflets\)](#)



# #honestconversations

Mark Butler, T/Detective Inspector at Cambridgeshire Constabulary describes, in his own words, the police force's experience of being part of a pilot Blue Light Mental Health Network



In March 2016, Cambridgeshire Constabulary became one of the fortunate forces that would benefit from dedicated and focused support in the county through a pilot Blue Light Mental Health Network, led by Jenny and Jo at Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire (CPSL) Mind.

## Key support

The Blue Light Programme network has had an extremely positive impact on the force. The below outlines some of the things that have been done and what they have provided.

### Line manager training

Over a seven-month training programme, approximately 114 supervisors have been trained to be aware of mental health, the symptoms and conditions and how supervisors can support their staff.

Such is the importance of line manager interaction, the force has taken the elements of the line manager training and merged it with the Mind wellness action plan to implement the Cambridgeshire Wellness Support Plan (WSP). This document, launched this year, provides line managers with the tools to learn more about their staff and, more specifically, how to look after them. We would not have developed this without the Blue Light Programme.

### Blue Light Champions

With the assistance of Jo, Cambridgeshire Constabulary has implemented and developed a peer support network of Blue Light Champions. As of June 2017, Cambridgeshire Constabulary has around 130 Blue Light Champions countywide – a mixture of roles, ranks and experience.

The Champions meet monthly to discuss issues and share information. These meetings have provided important information, which has then influenced policy review. This has included moves to adapt our absence management policy, particularly with regards to changing the pro-forma letter that HR sends to line managers. Not only was this issue raised and escalated by Champions, the work put forward, presenting a solution, involved external scrutiny from CPSL Mind, which read and reflected on the policy and made recommendations.

The Champions network has broadened the knowledge of mental health within the force and has allowed staff to access support information. Alongside the Occupational Health Unit employee assistance programme (EAP), there is now a pillar of welfare information that is available to personnel.

There have been a number of occasions now where Champions have engaged with staff who are in distress, supporting them and providing vital information of how they can get assistance. We know that in one case, a member of staff who was struggling accessed support because they saw programme literature in their station. When they sought assistance and began to talk about it, we identified that their line manager was completely unaware. That member of staff was suffering in silence but reached out because of the programme.

"A member of staff who was struggling accessed support because they saw programme literature in their station."



## Dedicated resource

CPSL Mind recruited dedicated members of staff to support the Blue Light Programme, and we put Jo and Jenny through vetting so they could be issued with ID and passes. This has allowed them to move around the organisation, engaging with staff and providing inputs and advice without the need for a chaperone.

Having this available has been excellent and we could not have achieved what we have in this first year without Jenny and Jo. They have positively engaged with the Constabulary at all levels, working flexibly to support Blue Light Programme implementation.

One of the key benefits of this has been buy-in. As Jenny and Jo work for Mind and are not part of the force, there is credibility in what we have been trying to do. If this work had been attempted by me or other members of the force in isolation, it would have been generally dismissed as just another tick box exercise.

By having dedicated Mind staff in the organisation, we have been able to gain the trust and confidence of staff. Staff have signed up to become Champions and invested in the process in many areas because they believe that Cambridgeshire Constabulary want to do things to support their staff.

**"By having dedicated Mind staff in the organisation, we have been able to gain the trust and confidence of staff."**

Cambridgeshire (along with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) pay in to. Although a good resource for staff, it is very much underutilised in the force and some of the reasons for this involve communication, buy-in and the fact that it is remote (at the initial reporting period). Although the details are rightly confidential, I know that members of staff in crisis have contacted Jo and Mind for support. Some of these people were contemplating suicide and it is therefore not an exaggeration to claim that the Blue Light Programme, specifically the presence of Jenny and Jo, have potentially saved lives.

## Drop-in sessions

Jo has held a number of drop-in sessions around the force. At the start of the project, Jo went to our police buildings in the county, speaking to staff, providing advice and recruiting Champions. This has developed into targeted drop-ins in vulnerable departments (e.g. the Child Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit (CAISU), Rape Investigation Team (RIT) and Domestic Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit (DAISU)).

## The strategic wellbeing network

Jenny has established monthly wellbeing network meetings where strategic matters are discussed with Blue Light Programme representatives from Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and the East of England Ambulance Trust.

This has led to closer collaboration with the fire service in particular, and led to them integrating with our Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) programme. This has also led to the development of potential shared gym access and resilience, to our Occupational Health Unit (though the latter is at an early development stage).

The national direction is for the police and fire services to align, under Police and Crime Commissioners. The Blue Light Programme has provided an early opportunity for this work to start in the key area of staff wellbeing.

## National and collaborative training programmes

Mind has brought in national training programmes and we have hosted multi-agency Speaking Up, Speaking Out courses.

Mind has also made available to us their Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), which teaches the skills to become more ready, willing and able to help persons at risk of suicide.

Training has also included areas already discussed like the line manager training and the Champions training inputs. By providing this dedicated support and training, we have been able to equip our staff with skills they wouldn't have had without the rollout of the Blue Light Programme.



## Documentation

Mind has provided a large amount of reference material that has been disseminated throughout the force. This has also included a list of signposted services that includes the offer of free talking therapy at Mind's offices, which can be accessed without referral or diagnosis. We know that the dissemination of this literature has benefited staff.

## Further steps and future support

The Blue Light Programme is now embedded into Cambridgeshire Constabulary and its presence is known throughout the force. With the support of CPSL Mind, we continue to build and develop the programme, exploring new ways in which we can support the staff of Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

We now have a dedicated Yammer (business social media) page, which gives us a platform to share information and receive updates about what is happening.

CPSL Mind has run surveys to inform our work and is providing an opportunity for new recruits (officers and staff) to shape national work through a dedicated forum.

We have begun to extend the scope of the Blue Light Programme and are now working with the Special Constabulary and the Police Cadets.

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Blue Light Mental Health Network has had a very positive impact on the force and has begun to address issues of stigma and perceived lack of support for staff who have a mental health challenge.

We can say with much certainty that we would not be in the positive position we are in without the programme and enormous support provided by CPSL Mind. It has also been achieved due to the actions of Superintendent Brunning, who has been instrumental in making this programme

a success. He has invested a lot of time and energy into the programme, giving it the senior management support it needs to keep going. He has also invested personally, through the sharing of his own journey, building credibility among the Champions (not just a tick box exercise) and encouraging them to spread the message.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary was recently inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), with regards to wellbeing. Although the full report has not been received, we know that the inspection was very positive, based on successes driven by the Blue Light Programme.

I attended this year's Newsam Memorial Lecture in March, which looked at links between work and health in policing. The guest speaker was Dame Carol Black and the topic had been chosen in recognition of the increasing awareness in policing of the importance of health and wellbeing issues.

During the lecture, it was apparent that the messaging and content were already in place within Cambridgeshire Constabulary. During networking after the event it was clear that Cambridgeshire Constabulary was more advanced than other forces and, since the lecture, I have been working with forces that are looking to replicate what we have done.

Despite these successes, there is a lot of work still to do. We need to ensure that the Blue Light Programme continues to thrive as our staff face unprecedented demand and pressure.

**"Despite these successes, there is a lot of work still to do. We need to ensure that the Blue Light Programme continues to thrive as our staff face unprecedented demand and pressure."**

<sup>1</sup>The Newsam Lecture has been delivered annually since 1965 and aims to cover topics which are 'of public importance connected with the administration of justice or the discharge of police functions'. The College has hosted the annual Newsam Memorial Lecture since 2015.

<sup>2</sup>Dame Carol Mary Black, DBE, FRCP is Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge. From 2006 to 2016, she advised the British Government on the relationship between work and health.



# A Letter to Mind

In a letter to Mind, Sue Hadden, Wellbeing and Engagement Manager at Northumbria Police, discusses the benefits the force has experienced as a result of embedding Blue Light Programme activity



**VERA BAIRD** QC  
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER



**NORTHUMBRIA  
POLICE**  
Proud to Protect

Human Resources Department  
Newcastle City Centre Police Station

Dear Blue Light Programme team,

In signing the Blue Light Time to Change pledge on 4 February 2016, Northumbria Police underlined its commitment to ending mental health stigma and empowering its officers, staff and volunteers to talk more confidently about mental health and wellbeing and to respond to both colleagues and the public appropriately.

Investment in the Blue Light Programme came at a time when Northumbria Police was setting out its vision for the future delivery of policing services, including defining the core values that underpin our efforts to deliver an outstanding service to our local communities through investment in our people. Commitment to the programme was considered to be aligned to our intention to support and develop our workforce in being the best it could be.

Northumbria Police has a well-developed wellbeing framework in place, developed over several years; however commitment to the programme has enabled the introduction of Blue Light Champions (workplace volunteers – 72 in total across all ranks and grades), training in workplace mental health, introduction of mindfulness sessions (two staff trained), access to an emergency services helpline, information booklets and webinars, and development of a regional network all with a common purpose to support mental wellbeing in the workplace. The regional network is recognised nationally for its success, innovation and significant contribution to workplace wellbeing.

Northumbria Police invests heavily in the wellbeing of its staff, adopting a psychosocial approach that considers a range of factors impacting on overall wellbeing, and therefore commitment to the Blue Light Programme has been seen as a natural extension of support already in place.

That aside, one of the greatest barriers faced in introducing the programme has been that of cultural change associated with the stigma around mental health issues in the workplace, and particularly so in a disciplined and hierarchical service where open conversation around mental health was simply unheard of in the past.



This has been successfully overcome through the commitment of senior leaders to the programme, including the Chief Constable, and the fact that many of our workforce have opened up and spoken publicly around their lived experiences, including how they have overcome the challenges faced. A very positive example to demonstrate the significant progress that has been achieved is that of one of our Blue Light Champions who has spoken at various national events of his lived experiences and happens to be a firearms officer – traditionally seen as a male-dominated environment, where openness around wellbeing was previously frowned upon.

One of our Chief Officers has taken on the strategic lead for the programme and regularly attends events, speaking openly about the positive impact the programme has had on breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health. This has extended to local radio and television interviews to mark significant calendar dates promoting mental health. Recently this has included a video published on the force's home website pages.

The effects of the programme are felt right across Northumbria Police. During the period the organisation has seen unprecedented change in realigning service delivery as a consequence of funding challenges and the emergence of new threats. The work of the Blue Light Champions has positively contributed to those changes by providing support to staff who might be struggling to adapt to workforce change, but also by contributing to the cultural changes that are necessary to support the force in repositioning itself to meet future policing challenges.

We see an organisation where staff have a 'voice', are engaged and empowered to contribute to future development and improvement of our services. The second staff survey within an 18-month period has recently been completed, and the findings from this are very positive with increasing levels of public sector motivation and high levels of engagement and emotional energy. Staff also report positively with regards to organisational support.

The programme, including the work of the Blue Light Champions, is also effectively supporting those experiencing psychological ill health to either remain in the workplace or commence periods of sickness absence. This in turn is leading to reduced sickness absence levels, both in terms of a reduction in the number of absences and also in the duration of any absence (as evidenced through data capture used to compare against all forces).

Yours sincerely,

**Sue Hadden**  
Wellbeing and Engagement Manager  
Northumbria Police







The OurBlueLight team at an event  
Credit: OurBlueLight



Police Federation of England and Wales signs the pledge



Northumbria Police pledge signing



Blue Light Champion Regie at the Emergency Services Show



Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service signs the pledge



OurBlueLight has brought together all of the services  
Credit: OurBlueLight



Cleveland police with Redcar RNLI, Coast watch, Coastguard and Zeltand Lifeboat museum staff on Redcar Beach



Signing the pledge at London Ambulance Service



Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service signing the pledge



Cleveland FRS on the River Tees as part of the 'Our Blue Light torch relay'



Cleveland Police staff, friends and colleagues during the 40 mile 'Lyke wake walk' in a day to raise funds for Mind



Mind Cymru staff met some of the Welsh Ambulance Service team



This document was co-written by:

- Mind
- Mind in the City, Hackney and Waltham Forest
- Hammersmith and Fulham Mind
- Wirral Mind
- Tyneside and Northumberland Mind
- Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire Mind.

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

## Get involved

Contact us at [bluelight@mind.org.uk](mailto:bluelight@mind.org.uk)  
[mind.org.uk/BlueLight](http://mind.org.uk/BlueLight)

 @MindBlueLight #mybluelight

 Mind

We're a registered charity in England (no. 219830) and a  
registered company (no. 424348) in England and Wales.

All links correct at the time of publishing.



Funding administered by:



Department for  
Digital, Culture  
Media & Sport