

Making better mental health happen

Raising awareness internally

If you believe in better mental health there's lots of ways you can help to change how we all think and act when it comes to wellbeing. Get inspired by what your peers are doing to raise awareness with their staff and volunteers; there might be an idea you can use in your service.

Get people talking at team meetings

"In my workplace, we have five teams, so I made a schedule to attend a team briefing for each team. I made some information packs containing the Blue Light Programme information booklets, and did a five minute presentation explaining all about the Blue Light Programme, how it can help and why I got involved.

My organisation were happy to give me the time to do this, and were very welcoming of the subject.

A lot of my colleagues took one of the information packs, and read through the booklets. I was approached by lots of people after this to talk about mental health, and I was also told by a supervisor that a staff member had come to them after reading the booklet to say they believed they were suffering, so they were able to get the help and support they needed."

Helen, police service

Use blogs to enable people to share their experiences

"After my blog I am still a Detective, not Defective was published by the constabulary in 2013, I wanted to give other people a voice who had been through similar as I knew the experience would be as life changing for them as it was for me. I know how writing can be both cathartic for the writer and inspiring for others. The ripple then became a wave in reducing stigma.

My organisation has been very supportive, both the Chief Officers and Corporate Comms teams who worked with me in getting blogs published. There was an amazing positive response from colleagues and it was empowering for the authors."

Lisa, police service



Involve staff from every level and don't be afraid to talk

"In Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service we have challenged the thinking that people (and in particular men) do not wish to talk in relation to poor mental health and wellbeing. We have found that through our mental health initiatives many individuals do in fact want to talk about their own experiences. We recognise that all our staff want to enable this conversation to be had is the time, the place, the right person to talk to and the confines of a safe and trusted environment. We also recognise that trying to quantify 'making a difference' is not always an easy thing to do and sometimes just talking to our staff and hearing their positive experiences lets us know that we are doing the right thing.



We have not focused on one specific vehicle in which to deliver our promotions as we have a multi-faceted and very diverse organisation. We find that by working closely with our staff, their representative bodies and senior managers that using a variety of promotional delivery methods enables us to reach the widest audience possible.

Staff engagement has been extremely positive and feedback from all of our mental health related promotions indicates an increase in awareness and knowledge regarding psychological illness and when, where and how to get support.

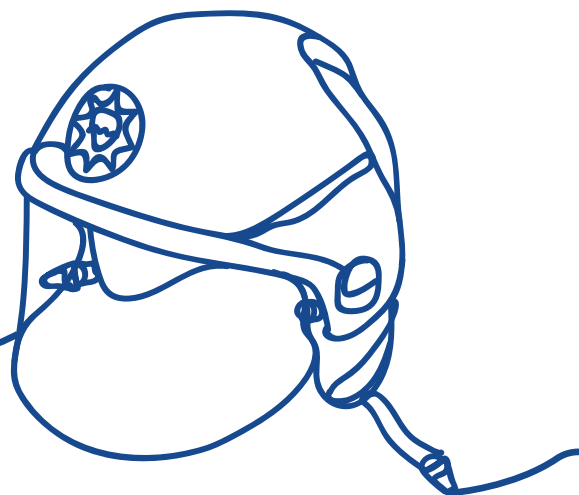
Our long-term sickness figures organisationally have shown a decrease of 50% since we began these initiatives.



We also engage regularly with other organisations locally, regionally and nationally. One of the main barriers that we find in other organisations is a reluctance to involve the work force in delivery of the message – we find this element extremely effective and it is only working with staff at every level of this organisation that we are able to deliver our promotions so successfully.

We have an Occupational Health Officer who is up-skilled specifically in the mental health agenda. Having a single point of contact for our staff in this manner is very helpful it ensures longevity of our promotions as she is focused in this area and it also allows a building of trust between the organisation and the individual."

Mark and Kelly, Merseyside Fire Service



Coordinate your efforts and work together with Champions



“We have found that it’s been vital to have some coordination to our Blue Light Programme activity. We have two force leads for the programme and we make sure that all of our Champions are informed of what’s going on and what’s next to focus on so we don’t have pockets of activity and isolation.

We’ve also found that an 18 month period of drip feeding and maintaining the Blue Light Programme on the agenda, keeping it visible in all of our communications arenas, has been key.

We have become big enough within our organisation to share roles out amongst the Champions group so the group collectively own our actions and achievements and have even begun to start delegating outside of the Champions group e.g with training initiatives around raising mental health awareness and resilience.

It’s also been really important to maintain a Champions mailing list and our Champions Yammer group so we can share good ideas and avoid the programme becoming a ‘postcode lottery’ depending on your location within the force.”

Ali and Kerry, Thames Valley Police



Make sure your leaders are on board and be creative in how you engage staff

“My top-tips are:

1. **Full support from the Executive team is an absolute must.** All our activities and innovations have full buy in from the Chief Constable and the Executive team and are supported fully throughout the organisation.
2. **Visibility and flexibility across the organisation in the activities you run.** All means of communication are designed to reach a maximum target audience whilst taking into consideration the nature of the business i.e shift workers and the organisation covers a large geographical area. We will adopt different modes of communication dependent upon the needs of the staff.
3. **When sending global emails, be imaginative with the subject box.** When I first began the awareness raising around mental health, I used the title ‘Birds and

Bees’. The majority of staff opened the email as they were intrigued – I made a reference that mental health is like the ‘Birds and Bees’ – one of those conversations that you don’t know how to start. This was accepted within the organisation, so now, when I am talking about mental health, I always use ‘Birds and Bee’s’ within the communication.

Be imaginative and creative and capture the interest of your staff.

Another example, we have recently ran a week of awareness on ‘sleep’ – I titled this ‘Are You Getting Enough’ and myself and my staff spent the day at HQ with all relevant information in pyjamas. This was a very successful initiative which we are following up with support from a doctor from a Sleep School.”

Donna, Staffordshire Police

Use posters to promote wellbeing

“We produced a poster to recruit new champions for our workplace. We’re also designing a newsletter to send out to current champions.

It was the easiest way to get hold of all staff as not everyone has access to the bulletin on emails.

My organisation paid for the printing of the posters, and I designed them myself. We worked well as a team to deliver this activity.”

Paul, North-West Ambulance Service

#ourbluelight

Wanted: Blue Light Champions!
Do you want to help support your colleagues?

Can you help tackle mental health stigma in the workplace?

Then your area needs you!
Join us as a Blue Light Champion

Contact your local representative:

Cheshire & Mersey: Paul Bannister	Cumbria: Amanda Ferguson	Lancashire: Daniel Farnworth	Greater Manchester: Esmail Rifai
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Kate Walsh

Or contact the team via: Mind.BlueLight@nwas.nhs.uk

What is a Blue Light Champion?
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.

What is the time commitment?
There isn't one! You can do as much or as little as you want.

Do I need any experience?
No. Just the drive and enthusiasm to help your fellow colleagues in times of need or crisis and to rid the stigma of mental health issues in the service.

North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust **Mind Blue Light Programme**



Activity ideas from across services

- Publicise the Blue Light Programme website, downloadable resources and webinars via Yammer or other internal platforms.
- Post regularly to your all-company internal groups about the Blue Light Programme and mental health issues.
- Establish a link person within Corporate Communications to support activity by releasing information via your intranet eg. events, on mental health awareness days and launching new initiatives.
- Establish a Blue Light Programme internal newsletter e.g. Thames Valley Police created 'Blue on the Loo' distributed via Champions and displayed on the back of toilet doors.


- Run a tour of all your different sites, using a bus for example, and provide health assessments and support in relation to stress and mental health at each site.



- Advertise for interested people to register as Champions.
- Establish a 'closed' group on Yammer or similar for Champions to use as a discussion forum to share ideas and support.
- Use the mental health calendar days to hold events to encourage discussion eg. Time to Talk Day.
- Encourage all Champions to use noticeboards in their workplace to display Blue Light Programme and mental health material – use an internal communications group to ensure that core information is consistent.






Blue on the Loo



In 2014 Mind completed a survey of Emergency Services Personnel – of the Police respondents 91% reported stress or mental health issues at some point in their careers. This compares to 25% in the general workforce. Survey also suggested that emergency services were less likely to seek professional help or to take time off sick.

Did you know that in TVP:
We have around 65 officers and staff signed up as Blue Light Champions
We had over 150 officers and staff attend Mind's 5 week Resilience course in 2015/16
With Mind we trained over 280 Line Managers in Mental Health Awareness & Supporting Staff
We have 11 Mind trained Peer Supporters and are launching the TVP Peer Support Network Pilot soon

Book of the month available to borrow from Forces library via intranet
Website of the Month <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression>
Let's make this a thing of the past
If you are interested in learning more about Blue Light please contact Ali Smith in Welfare: 700 6909 or Kerry Sharp RMTN on 700 6940
Need confidential advice on your mental health or wellbeing? Call, email or text the Mind Blue Light helpline 0800 300 3000 (Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) Text 94555 or email bluelight@mind.org.uk



mind.org.uk/BlueLight

 @MindBlueLight

 Mind

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 **mind**
for better mental health