What you can do as an organisation

- Sign the Blue Light Time to Change pledge. This is a public statement showing your commitment as an emergency service employer to challenging mental health stigma and discrimination. Find out more at mind.org.uk/bluelightpledge
- Organise training for all staff in LGBTQ+ affirmative practice and mental health awareness
- Increase the visibility of LGBTQ+ people across your organisation, and support your Blue Light Champions by helping them find time to carry out their role

Helpful contacts

If you’d like to access support or talk about your wellbeing, or if you’re an employer looking for advice, contact:

**Mind**

We are the mental health charity. We won’t give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets support and respect. Through our Blue Light Programme, we’re supporting the mental health of emergency services staff and volunteers in England.

Blue Light Infoline: 0300 303 5999
blueightinfo@mind.org.uk
Text 84999

**MindOut**

Run by and for LGBTQ+ people with lived experience of mental health issues. They offer a range of support services including out of hours online chat, advice and information.

01273 234839
mindout.org.uk
info@mindout.org.uk

**Stonewall**

Campaign to achieve equality and justice for LGBTQ+ people. They also provide information for individuals and organisations about how rights and responsibilities should be exercised.

0800 055 20 20
stonewall.org.uk
info@stonewall.org.uk

**GIRES**

GIRES’ purpose is to improve the lives of trans and gender non-conforming people, including those who are non-binary and non-gender.

GIRES offers training, e-learning and information to public and private sector organisations, for instance when a trans or gender non-conforming employee needs support.

01372 801554
gires.org.uk

Your station or service may have it’s own sexual orientation or gender identity network too, or the details of a national group you could join for support.

Register for email updates:

mind.org.uk/bluelight
@MindBlueLight #mybluelight
Mind

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

Front cover image courtesy of Greater Manchester Police

Funding administered by Mind and

Challenging stigma and staying well

To support sexual and gender identity in the emergency services for staff, colleagues and employers.
Challenging stigma in all forms - why it matters

When people face stigma and discrimination at work, it has a negative impact not just on them, but on the way the whole organisation works.

People thrive in workplaces where no one is subject to negative stereotypes, where everyone can be open about what’s going on in their lives, and where they can feel confident about seeking support, if and when it’s needed. An organisation where employees don’t feel stigmatised because of their mental health, or because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, will have a more positive, engaged and effective workforce, where more people support each other and stay well at work.

It’s especially important for emergency services to challenge stigma. Our research shows staff and volunteers in police, fire, search and rescue and ambulance services are more likely than the general population to experience mental health problems, because of the nature of your role and your exposure to traumatic situations. But you’re less likely to seek support. And seven out of ten emergency services workers tell us your organisation does not encourage you to talk about mental health.

Although anybody can experience mental health problems, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or any other non-conforming gender identities, sexual orientations or expressions (LGBTQ+) are significantly more likely to than those who don’t. Being LGBTQ+ doesn’t cause mental health problems. But the stigma that exists, including at work, means LGBTQ+ colleagues often experience bullying and rejection because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, which can lead to anxiety, isolation and depression.

Mind’s Blue Light Programme is supporting the mental health of all emergency services staff and volunteers in England, raising awareness of mental health, tackling stigma and helping staff and volunteers to cope better.

We know that by challenging all kinds of stigma at work, as well as negative stereotypes around mental health, sexual orientation and gender identity, we can each play a part in improving and promoting our own wellbeing and that of our colleagues.

What you can do as an individual

● Become a Blue Light Champion and challenge stigma in your workplace. Find out more at mind.org.uk/bluelight
● Find and connect with others in your service who want to improve workplace wellbeing and challenge all forms of stigma
● Encourage your organisation to sign the Blue Light Time to Change pledge
● Invite LGBTQ+ organisations to speak at your staff events and team meetings, or guests with knowledge of mental health and wellbeing
● If you’d like to seek support for your own wellbeing and mental health, there are organisations who can help – see the back cover for contact details

Photo courtesy of the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald

1. Mind survey of 1,627 emergency services staff and volunteers, 2015
2. Mental Health: Stonewall Health Briefing, Stonewall, 2012