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Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convener, Criminal Justice Committee



By email

David Page
Deputy Chief Officer
Corporate Services, People & Strategy
Police Scotland Headquarters
Tulliallan Castle
Kincardine
Fife
FK10 4BE

DeputyChiefOfficer@scotland.police.uk

Dear Convener,

I am writing in response to your letter of 24 October to Chief Constable Sir Iain Livingstone QPM, in which you sought additional information following the Criminal Justice Committee informal evidence sessions. As the information sought relates to a number areas, I have provided a composite response on behalf of the Service.

TRiM

You asked about the TRiM Standard Operating Procedure, the delivery of the TRiM Model and the regulatory of wellbeing checks.

The Police Scotland Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) Standard Operating Procedure (TRiM SOP) is the overarching document to strategically inform the service of the model of post incident support for officers and staff following involvement in potentially traumatic incidents at work. Although a specific SOP it serves as part of the overarching TRiM support that is offered and the significant links that it has to other health and wellbeing activity. The TRiM SOP is subject to review in line with the annual award of the TRiM Licence.

TRiM is a proactive model of support designed to not only support officers and staff following “one off” traumatic events but also to prevent the cumulative effect trauma can have. Whilst it is accepted that supervisors have an important part to play in supporting officers and staff, individuals can also self-care.

In a recent review of TRiM it was found that 95% of users find TRiM easy to access through the current process with 87% accessing TRiM through the support of their line management and 13% through self-referral.

Through the provision of leadership, first line manager and specialist department training and awareness sessions, the health and wellbeing team have focused on raising the awareness and knowledge of trauma. Namely what it is, the impact it can have, signs and symptoms and the support mechanisms in place. Another key feature of the sessions is to emphasise the guidance within the TRiM SOP which states that following a potentially traumatic incident supervisors are required to carry out a health and wellbeing check in with the officer or staff member. Guidance to assist them in doing is readily available and contained within the TRiM referral form.

Despite the known stigma (professional, organisational, self and public) associated with accessing mental health support services there has been a year on year increase in the TRiM referrals and ongoing commitment to TRiM processes. In 2020 there were 302 organisation wide referrals which rose by 52% 2021 to 458, resulting in 3403 supportive interventions being delivered in 2021.

Existing wellbeing response

You asked about proactive health and wellbeing measures in place, clear pathways of support for issues relating to both trauma and non-trauma related experiences and provision of clear plans of action and response.

Police Scotland have placed mental health as a priority for some time which is highlighted both through the People Strategy and the inclusion of 'Psychological' as a key area within 'Your Wellbeing Matters'. Police Scotland have also signed up to the Mental Health at Work (MHAW) Commitment & Standards. The commitment and standards and actions form part of the Blue Light Together package of mental health support, which has seen The Royal Foundation working together with emergency service leaders and partner charities to change workplace culture with regards to mental health and provide specialist support to emergency responders and their families. The commitment and standards, highlighted below, will drive our work in relation to mental health.

1. Prioritise mental health in the workplace by developing and delivering a programme of activity
2. Proactively ensure work design and organisational culture drive positive mental health outcomes
3. Promote an open culture around mental health
4. Increase organisational confidence and capability
5. Provide mental health tools and support.
6. Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting

In terms of pathways of support for those experiencing trauma, TRiM is very much embedded within the organisation. At present the TRiM team consists of 16 co-ordinators and approximately 180 Assessors covering all areas of the service.

TRiM involves a full assessment of risk of further psychological harm, which is followed by support provided through a minimum of two sessions with the option for a third. All TRiM team members are selected for a key set of skills and attributes and receive in-depth training and ongoing evaluation in their role.

Over the 3 month period of the TRiM process individuals have ongoing and immediate support available to them through the TRiM team, supervisors and the HELP Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Within the TRiM Model there are also options for early education and briefings, group support, 1:1's, educational materials as well as specific and targeted trauma awareness training.

Whilst the primary focus of the TRiM team is trauma and its impact, the team also receive additional training on wider health and wellbeing (HWB) issues including mental health conditions, alcohol and drug use, and suicide prevention. As a result the TRiM assessors are not only able to identify the risks associated with trauma but with all triggers for mental health. If an individual raises other concerns out with the trauma model a key pathway for consent, support and referral and signposting is in place to the HELP EAP, Occupational Health, key partners and other agencies.

Other proactive health and wellbeing measures in place include Your Wellbeing Assessment which offers officers and staff access to a 'Mental Health MOT', delivered through our occupational health and HELP EAP providers Optima Health. The main features of 'Your Wellbeing Assessment' include that it is open to all officers and staff, it is voluntary, secure and confidential, the assessment is reviewed by a member of the Optima Health clinical team, and it can lead to early identification of issues and the provision of tailored support. In August 2022, as a result of some targeted HWB communications there were 350 officer and staff requests for a Your Wellbeing Assessment, something the HWB team will look to build upon.

Resilience assessments are in also place for a number of identified roles (i.e. Cyber Crime Sexual Offences Liaison Officer, Road Traffic Crash Investigator, and Force Negotiators) which it was felt would benefit from some additional support in order to promote resilience and positive coping mechanisms. The appointments provide the individual with an opportunity to meet with a counsellor to discuss their psychological wellbeing, the specifics of the role and how this impacts upon their health and wellbeing. The role of the counsellor is to assess their psychological wellbeing and, where appropriate, discuss additional support which may be beneficial by signposting and referring the individual to the HELP EAP or Occupational Health.

Specifically for workload pressures the main tool is the Stress Risk Assessment which is available for individuals who feel their health is being affected as a result of either work-related or personal issues. Managers and supervisors can support officers and staff by jointly carrying out a risk assessment using the Individual Stress Risk Assessment Questionnaire & Action Plan and the supporting guidance. Supervisors can then take action, if required, to support and monitor individuals who have either been identified or informed them that they are displaying symptoms of stress.

The HELP Employee Assistance Programme is the primary means of support for officers to self-refer to for advice and support with stressors, line Managers can also suggest and encourage their people make contact with them.

The 24/7 programme offers professional support and guidance via a team of trained wellbeing and counselling practitioners who offer confidential, independent and unbiased information and guidance. EAP can offer support and information on a wide variety of areas including health and wellbeing matters, money worries, caring responsibilities, consumer and legal issues, family and home concerns and work/life concerns such as job stress or bullying/harassment.

This year to date, the EAP has received 985 calls from officers and staff, of which 610 took part in a mental health assessment with 387 referred for counselling.

Occupational Health provide advice and guidance on support to facilitate a return to duties or if at work amendment to duties or hours to address issues being experienced. This year alone there have 4756 touch point with officers and staff through the Occupational Health service.

Specialist welfare

You asked us about clear pathways into appropriate specialist care, the scope to develop of an oversight and reporting mechanism to ensure a consistent approach to support and opportunities to collaborate with the NHS.

The pathway for access to health and wellbeing specialist support, namely TRiM and HELP EAP, allow for supervisor, colleague and self-referral at any time. Specialist care for mental health is generally the responsibility of the NHS although Police Scotland through our support services will provide specialist support if deemed appropriate following a full assessment. If more specialised longer term care is needed then the individual will be encouraged and supported to engage with their GP to gain long term access. Police Scotland recognise the challenges the NHS currently face in the provision of support and it is evident that these challenges are seeing individuals return to the employer to seek support, which when appropriate is provided.

Often the prime lead for the co-ordination and progression of support is the supervisor and line manager, as with all issues that may affect our people. There are a number of tools and information sources to support the supervisor and to ensure a consistent approach to support is taken. People Direct and the People Service Advisors are a focal point of support and guidance. Officers and staff are required to report absence or returning to work through the People Direct Absence Line which is used as an opportunity to inform officers and staff of the proactive health and wellbeing measures available to them i.e. HELP EAP, Your Wellbeing Assessments, and Stress Risk Assessments.

In terms of collaboration with the NHS, our HELP EAP provides a very streamlined referral process with assessed support and early intervention. Also since the beginning of 2022, Police Scotland's Mental Health and Suicide Prevention team (PPCW) and Public Health Scotland have been leading work with various partners across public services to develop a Mental Health Action Plan. This collaboration between both public services is essential to achieving an improved, person-centred and trauma informed approach to the population of Scotland. Whilst the focus is primarily the health and wellbeing of our communities, the health and wellbeing of our officers and staff is also a strong theme within the action plan currently under development.

Culture and Stigma

You asked us consider a piece of work to understand attitudes and responses towards mental ill health within the organisation and how these may be addressed, and initiatives to enable officers and staff to share work-related experiences openly and provide support to each other.

The health and wellbeing team have undertaken a significant evaluation and review of all aspects of the Health and Wellbeing programme during 2022. The review, which adopted a 4 stage systematic approach, features evidence in practice from all aspects of the organisation and aims to drive the development of next generation of the health and wellbeing programme. Mental health featured heavily in the evidence collated, particularly around the associated stigma, and as a result has been recognised as a priority.

An overview of the health and wellbeing priorities and the core elements of the framework is provided below;

- Bring the health & wellbeing of our people to the top of the organisations agenda.
- Develop a coordinated national approach to health and wellbeing, which is robust and driven by investment.
- Proactive engagement of our people in an ongoing health and wellbeing conversation through listening and understanding the need.
- Recognising the significant pressures on our people and develop the support of our people enabling them to achieve a better work, life balance.
- Adopt a person centred approach to all support pathways and programmes i.e. EAP, OH, TRiM, Wellbeing Champions.
- Prevention to become a primary focus.
- Reduce the stigma which still exists around health and wellbeing, particularly mental health and the seeking of support.
- Development and training of all officers and staff, with a specific focus on those in line management and senior ranks.
- Recognise the importance and role of peer support amongst our people.

The health and wellbeing framework model is driven by our core aim which is to support our people through a positive working environment enabling them to serve the public. The framework promotes a proactive, preventative and person centred approach intended to understand and consider what our people are experiencing both inside and outside of work. The framework also recognises the impact of significant moments on our people's lives and the importance of providing 'fit for purpose' tools and support which empowers and enables our people to take positive action in relation to their health and wellbeing. The health and wellbeing team are currently in the action planning stage of the review which will bring to life the priorities and framework highlighted above.

Police Scotland are also conducting an intensive deep dive into the perceived link between long term absence and the prevalence of psychological issues.

The deep dive will consider organisational data from the last 9 years and will aim to further understand the correlation between long term absence and psychological issues, identify the primary causes of the psychological issues and trends amongst our workforce, and inform the development of 'fit for purpose' support pathways and services i.e. inform the future direction of our mental health in the workplace activity. This work is underway with findings and recommendations expected during Q4 2023. In relation to the officer and staff support of one another one of the core elements of the health and wellbeing function is the Wellbeing Champions programme. Police Scotland currently have 140 wellbeing champions spread throughout the organisation. The remit of the Champion is very much shaped by local need but at its core is to act as a point of contact for officers and staff providing them with guidance and advice on health and wellbeing issues and concerns. The Champions will also provide a safe environment to discuss wellbeing issues and concerns and will offer Line Managers Advice and Guidance in relation to the most appropriate support mechanisms for their Officers and Staff. The Champions are not trained counsellors but can signpost and support Officers and Staff. The Wellbeing Champions is an area Police Scotland will continue to develop in the coming months.

Good practice

You asked us consider how good practice can be replicated nationally.

The health and wellbeing team welcomes all feedback from officers and staff on their experiences of all areas of support as this can help us to understand the needs of our officers and staff which in turn shapes the future development of the programme.

One of the first actions to emerge from the HWB review, as mentioned above, was the need to develop more platforms for organisation wide discussion on health and wellbeing matters. With this in mind a Health and Wellbeing Advisory group has been stood up with the first meeting taking place on the 25th October 2022. This group acts as a feeder to the strategic level Health and Wellbeing Governance Board and will encourage sharing of good practice and organisation learning as well as a means of raising any issues, concerns or simply providing enhanced feedback on a regular and on-going basis. The group has representation from all organisational and business areas with staff associations and unions also forming part of the group. The advisory group will meet on a bi-monthly basis.

Return to Work

You asked us to provide details of Police Scotland's return to work policy and to clarify how Police Scotland ensures that all officers are made aware of these options.

Line managers within the organisation are responsible for return to work interviews for all absence including absences due to mental health issues. This interviews should provide the officers and staff with awareness of potential options such as phased returns, reduced hours, light and adjusted duties are available to officers for both mental and physical conditions and issues.

These can be put in place in conjunction with the member of staff and can be guided by information from the person's GP and Specialist, our Occupational Health provider or just identified by the line manager and the member of staff in agreement. For example the Stress Risk Assessment and other assessments can be used to inform these discussions.

Rest Days

You asked us to advise if there are agreed procedures between Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, and if these include the provision of appropriate notification periods for officers and a procedure for excusal on the grounds of an officer being unavailable.

The current court scheduling system is being redesigned in collaboration with key partners. The new system being developed by Police Scotland in conjunction with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and Scottish Court & Tribunal Service (SCTS) will allow users to better schedule their availability. This should reduce wasted officer time and costs. Testing of the new system is due to commence in 2023.

Training

You asked us to provide details of the mental health training that is provided to officers, if any feedback from officers is gathered to determine its effectiveness and to consider the Police Treatment Centre pilot programme.

The health and wellbeing team provide a wide array of awareness and training sessions to department's and teams throughout the organisation. These sessions include leadership and wellbeing, wellbeing support services, trauma and TRiM, bereavement support and suicide prevention. A general theme within all the sessions is to highlight the impact of poor health and wellbeing, recognising signs and symptoms in ourselves as well as others and self-care measures. These sessions have been provided to officers and staff within Divisions, Specialist Divisions (Road Policing, PPU, SCD, FLC, FLO, Crime Scene Attends, Forensics and C3) and line manager forums.

Across 2021/22 Police Scotland and SPA worked with Eleos to deliver a mental wellbeing programme which came to an end earlier this year. Whilst the programme was severely impacted by Operation Urram and Operation Talla a substantial impact was made across the organisation. Over the course of the programme there were 2310 unique attendees, all of whom attended virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions. The programme, which was delivered in 3 phases, consisted of 2 core modules;

- Creating Pioneers – destigmatising psychological challenges, which discussed the stigma relating to psychological wellbeing and helped people to become a confident, person-centred colleague who supports improved individual and organisational psychological resilience. Some of the outcomes of the session included:
 - 36% increase in awareness
 - 36% increase in skills

- 34% increase in confidence

- It's all about you - Wellbeing Conversations – this was designed to help people to hold effective and meaningful discussions with team members around wellbeing and resilience and to enhance working relationships built on trust and mutual respect. Some of the outcomes of the session included;
 - 35% increase in awareness
 - 37% increase in skills
 - 37% increase in confidence

The health and wellbeing team took some very useful insights from the roll out of the programme which are helping to shape both current and future HWB learning, training and development activity. Some of the insights include;

- Prioritisation over other commitments and ring fencing diary time - Working priorities and pressures compete with the ability to attend sessions and mean staff wellbeing is pushed down the priority order.
- Optional attendance - The optional nature of programmes means that typically, sessions are only attended by enthusiasts. This limits the reach and impact of the programme investment across the organisation.
- Access to technology - Many officers and staff missed out on live training due to not being able to access the sessions through a laptop, desktop or other device.

The Lifelines Scotland project, which is being delivered across the tri-service in Scotland, has now been in place since summer 2021, with enforced breaks for Operation Urram and Operation Talla during this time. The project has adopted a targeted approach in terms of the training delivery with particular areas within Police Scotland and SPA, namely Cybercrime, C3 and Forensics undertaking the training. The sessions have also been offered out to Wellbeing Champions and the SPF due to their crucial roles supporting and assisting our people.

814 officers and staff have participated in the 98 Lifelines training courses delivered to date, with all sessions being virtual to this point. The Lifelines project consists of 3 modules, each of which should be done in order, these include;

- Staying well, Understanding resilience and self-care (half day) - Learn more about what keeps us well. Discussion occurs on the things that threaten our wellbeing in our roles and what protects us, and how to stock our Psychological 1st Aid kits. Understand the impact of trauma and stress so we can recognise when we might need some help and where we can find this).
- Supporting your colleagues (full day) - This workshop looks at what we can do to strengthen supportive relationships. Participants learn how to have helpful conversations with colleagues, how to recognise signs that someone may be struggling and what to do when you are worried about someone.

- Post Trauma Support providing Psychological First Aid (full day) - This workshop helps participants to understand trauma and traumatic stress so they can recognise when themselves or colleagues may be at risk of psychological injury. It will equip them to give Psychological First Aid, the international best practice model for supporting people following trauma exposure.

The Lifelines Scotland project team provide the health and wellbeing team with 6 monthly evaluation reports which are shaped by both pre and post course feedback. Some of the comments received are included below;

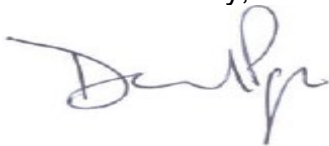
- *'I've recommended that my line managers attend, as they can contribute (in often very simple ways) to the resilience of staff'.*
- *'All staff should attend this input. Even those who feel their resilience is high, it's important to understand how that is achieved'.*

The delivery of the Lifelines Scotland Project continues into 2022/23 with the aim of establishing a consistent approach to emergency services response in supporting those exposed to traumatic incidents.

Police Scotland are open to exploring all opportunities to collaborate to meet an identified health and wellbeing need amongst our officers and staff and would certainly like to discuss the outcomes of the pilot programme further with both Police Care UK and the Police Treatment Centre once concluded.

In conclusion, it is well recognised that the significant demands placed on both police officers and staff are ever increasing which in turn increases the stresses and strain they are under in terms of their own health and wellbeing and in particular their mental health. Police Scotland are committed to not only further understanding this growing health and wellbeing need but also to ensuring that a positive working environment is in place enabling officers and staff to serve the public.

Yours sincerely,



David Page
Deputy Chief Officer