



WSP - Frequently Asked Questions

Being involved in a Post Incident Investigation and/or being suspended from work is highly stressful.

Although officers are trained to deal with stressful situations during their working shift, they are not usually trained on how to deal with these same situations when you become the subject of the investigation or are suspended from work. Although not normally directly involved, families can also be affected by the investigation or suspension and up until now there has been very little support offered which officers and their families could use together.

To assist colleagues in this situation the PFEW have created the Welfare Support Programme (WSP) with a police charity who has a proven track record in welfare support. The WSP has been running for 3 years and has made a considerable difference to those who have accessed it. Since being in place, over 1000 officers and their families have received support with 6 lives being saved. In December 2019 the PFEW agreed to enhance the support the WSP offers. Part of this enhancement is that Federation Reps will be able to access this invaluable support. Fed Reps are the backbone of our organisation, it is only right and proper that they have access to whatever support they need.

What is the Welfare Support Programme?

The WSP offers a 24 hour telephone support line, 365 days a year, for you and your family where you can speak directly to our trained staff regarding the issues that concern you. The WSP team have had training in police discipline procedures and post incident procedures. They are certificated in mental health first aid and are there to listen to your concerns and help get the best support available. With their permission, their needs can be evidenced and presented to the employer or the Federation so that they can promptly obtain the support recommended for them.

So, what would make you use this service and refer a colleague?

Stress and anxiety are part of everyday living and officers develop their own personal systems for dealing with them in order for them to get on in life. Most of the coping systems come from training and experience however, being suspended from work and away from colleagues or living with an officer experiencing these pressures, presents a whole new set of challenges that they are unlikely to have encountered before. Therefore, officers learn on the 'hoof' and sometimes don't create the best systems for dealing with this new pressure.

Who can use this service?

The phone support line is available to all serving police officers who are: -

- Part of a death or serious injury at work that results in a post incident investigation.
- Suspended from duty.
- Officer has been served with Gross Misconduct papers
- Following a consultation with the PFEW & PFOA it is decided that an officer needs being placed on the programme.

In addition, the WSP is also available for family members of officers entered onto the programme and includes: -

- Immediate family members.
- Partners.
- Any person living in the same household with officer.
- Any dependants of an officer.
- Federation reps.

Talking to someone about an issue is a key element in finding a solution. Our staff will listen to the officers without being judgemental and can be safe in the knowledge that what they discuss with them will stay between them, unless it falls into the following categories where we cannot guarantee confidentiality: -

- The officer states/infers they are going to harm themselves or someone else.
- They state or infer that they are going to or have done something to threaten National security.
- They admit/infer their part in attempting, committing or about to commit a serious offence.

Don't forget that you or your fellow reps can access the same support. Dealing with officers can impact in many ways and it is just as important that you have someone to help support you.

What can you do as a rep?

You as the rep can refer a colleague to the WSP. The officer needs to be a paying member of the PFEW to be eligible and this should be verified locally with the local branch board.

If they or a family member feel like a chat, then you can give us a call and let us help you find a solution to your problem. We're here 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – just for you.

The Welfare Support Line Telephone Number is 01354 669749

Will it mean scaling back on the existing services?

It is accepted that your local branch board may have a local Employment assistance programs that offers a similar service. This isn't about taking that ability away or replacing it. It is there to compliment such a service and save possible increased costs if that provider decides to uplift the

premiums for using the service. It is known that officers seeking help and support is on the increase, which may mean those associated costs also increase. It also means that every single officer who is a paying member of a federation branch board has the same level of service no matter what force they work in.

Should the officer inform their employer?

Officers should be encouraged to inform their employer to seek support as well as accessing other support programs. If you think long term and officers are considering IHR, they will have to evidence engagement with the force, OH, treatments taken, and possible other avenues used to resolve all avenues of treatment. It may be that if one form of treatment is taking place then other interventions may have to be delayed due to a clash of treatments.

What if the officer refuses to engage with the WSP?

They can't be made to and may have a valid reason. Your role is to offer support and ensure that the officer has the information available to them to make a choice.

Is it for emergency use?

If there is a medical crisis or emergency, then the NHS or the officers Dr / Consultant should be contacted in the first instance. It may be that the officer isn't engaging with others but may be responding to the WSP team. If that is the case contact may assist in establishing communication.

Will it replace my role as a Federation rep?

Those who deal with the call on the WSP are not there to replace the work of the federation or to advise on the work of the federation in relation to Regs, Misconduct, UPP, etc. The WSP is what it says on the label, a Welfare Support programme which provides relevant and support to officers who fit the criteria.

What are the other benefits of referring colleagues to the WSP?

Accessing the WSP should help you in dealing with them. It may allow you to focus on dealing with the very issues that the officers require federation help for. It is a fact that if officers or those supporting them get assistance, it can help the officer themselves as it may remove stress and anxiety which allows them to focus on the tasks, they need to do themselves.

What is PFEW doing to monitor the success of the WSP?

The PFEW Wellbeing sub-committee chair and secretary are conducting a scrutiny of the level of service provided and reporting to the PFEW National Board. This will allow for regular updates about the WSP and ultimately allow the NB to decide if the WSP continues.

What is PFEW doing to promote the WSP?

The WSP is a PFEW product and as such will be promoted internally by PFEW and hopefully local federation branches.

There is guidance such as this for reps, a new WSP trifold leaflet for the members. A short WSP video and podcast is being prepared and will be available for you to use in your local area when speaking to your members. All material will be available via the PFEW website on the HUB.

It will be backed up using social media and direct mails to officers informing them of the WSP.