

Police Mutual Men's Health Week

15-21 June 2020

Wellbeing and health are topics that are often overlooked by men. Hardly surprising, after all wellbeing is a female topic right? Wrong:

- Men are three times more likely to take their own lives than women.
- Men in mid-life remain overwhelmingly dependent on a female partner for emotional support.
- Relationship breakdown and financial worries are more likely for men to lead to suicide.
- Men have a much more negative view on counselling and therapy than women.
- When men do use therapy, it is at the point of crisis.
- Men between the ages of 18 and 44 are less likely to go see a doctor than women.
- **67 per cent of men feel their mental health is secondary to that of a partner.**

It is vital that men start to feel more comfortable talking about their health and wellbeing especially during this current pandemic.

For more information about the week [click here.](#)

Physical Health

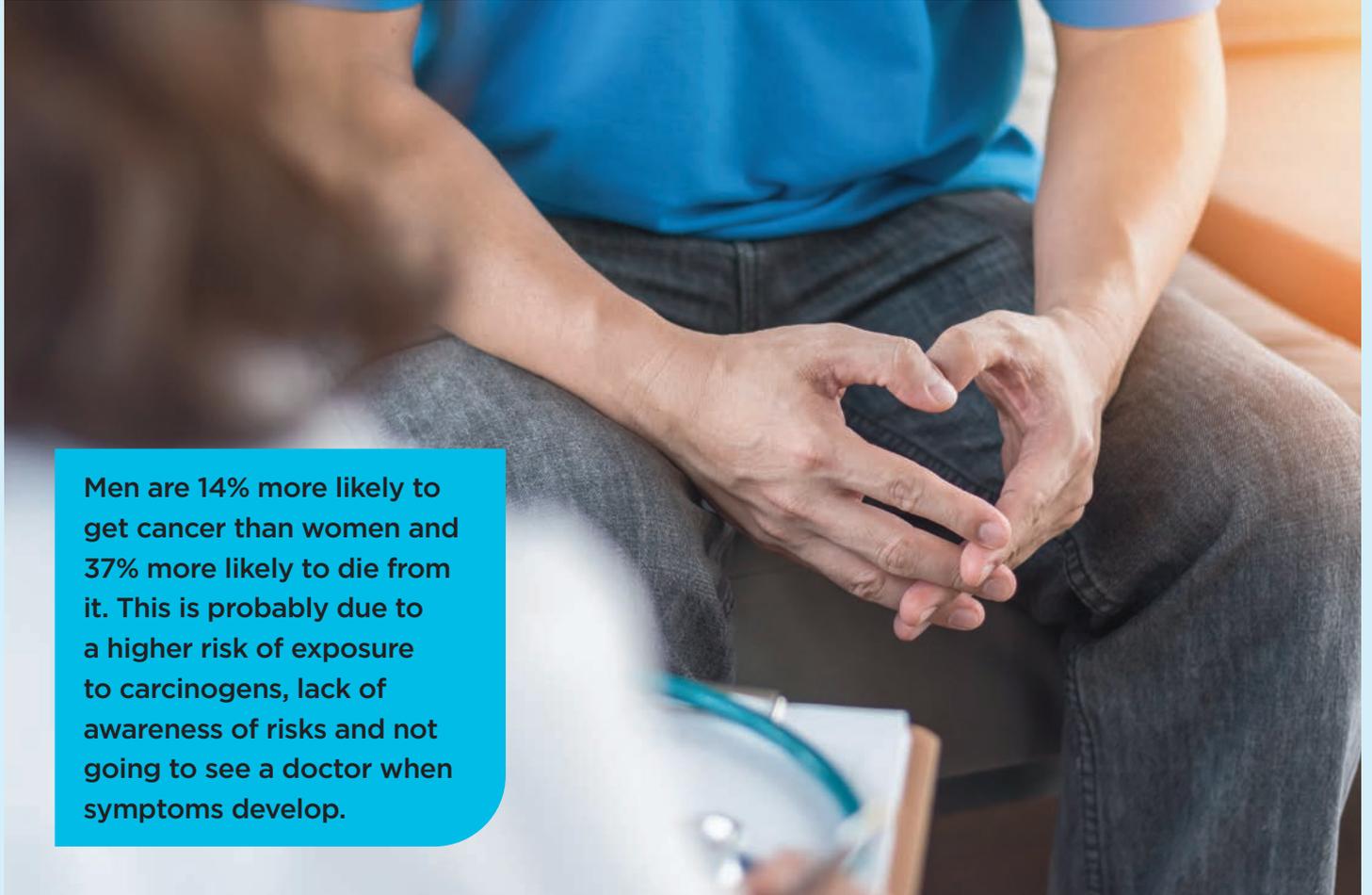
Most Men love statistics, but did you know:

- 1 man in 5 dies before age 65
- 2 in 5 die before 75
- A waist over 37 inches puts you at increased risk of many serious health conditions
- You can have a NHS health check from age 40
- Women live longer than men
- Three-quarters of suicides (75%) are male
- Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 49



The main physical health issues that men face are:

Heart attacks strike men at younger ages than women. On average, a first heart attack strikes men at age 65. For women, the average age of a first heart attack is 72. It's not entirely clear why middle-aged men have more heart attacks than women in the same age group. But historically higher rates of unhealthy habits, including smoking and stress, may be partly to blame.



Men are 14% more likely to get cancer than women and 37% more likely to die from it. This is probably due to a higher risk of exposure to carcinogens, lack of awareness of risks and not going to see a doctor when symptoms develop.

Testicular cancer tends to mostly affect men between 15 and 49 years of age. Typical symptoms are a painless swelling or lump in 1 of the testicles, or any change in shape or texture of the testicles. It's important to be aware of what feels normal for you. Get to know your body and see a GP if you notice any changes.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK. It usually develops slowly, so there may be no signs for many years. Symptoms of prostate cancer do not usually appear until the prostate is large enough to affect the tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the penis (urethra).

When this happens, you may notice things like:

- **an increased need to urinate**
- **straining while you urinate**
- **a feeling that your bladder has not fully emptied**

These symptoms should not be ignored, but they do not mean you have prostate cancer. It's more likely they're caused by something else, such as prostate enlargement. See a GP if you experience these symptoms.

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that causes a person's blood sugar level to become too high. There are 2 main types of diabetes:

Type 1 diabetes - where the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produce insulin.

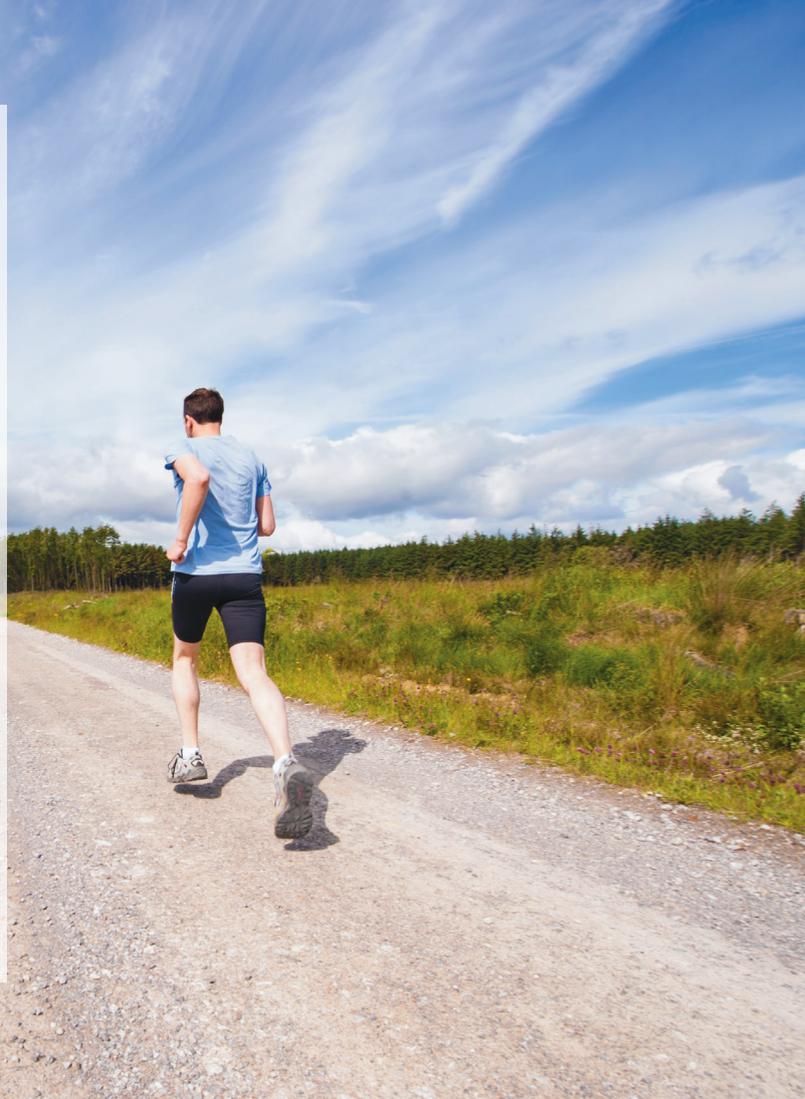
Type 2 diabetes - where the body does not produce enough insulin, or the body's cells do not react to insulin.

Type 2 diabetes is far more common than type 1. In the UK, around 90% of all adults with diabetes have type 2. Men are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than women.

For more details on men's health [click here](#).

Tips for staying healthy:

- Drink less than 14 units of alcohol a week (equivalent of 6 pints of average strength beer)
- If you smoke, STOP! On average a cigarette smoker will die 10 years younger than a non-smoker
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and veg a day
- Walk 10,000 steps a day
- If it comes in brown choose this over white (rice, pasta, bread)
- Drink at least 2 litres of water a day
- Aim to do at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week
- Regularly have your cholesterol and blood pressure checked
- Aim to get 7-9 hours of sleep each night (or day if you are working nights)



Men and Coronavirus

Young or old, rich or poor, men are **TWICE** as likely to die of Covid-19 as their female counterparts.

Take action to beat 'underlying conditions' - some people will have medical conditions that mean they are more at risk of the virus than others and will be in the category of high or moderate risk, to check if you come into one of these categories [click here](#).

Take action to avoid the spread of coronavirus

As frontline officers and staff, you are playing a critical role in the response to this crisis, it is therefore even more important for you to stay fit and well. You may feel more vulnerable both physically and mentally to coronavirus, with the added fear of taking the virus home to your loved ones. For more police specific guidance, take a look at the links below:

- [Oscar Kilo Coronavirus Hub](#)
- [Police Federation](#)
- [Guidance to First Responders](#)

Mental Health

The coronavirus outbreak is having an impact on everyone's lives. During this time, you may be bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also feel low, worried, anxious, or be concerned about your health or that of those close to you. Remember it's OK to feel this way. In the current situation where we're at home far more and social distancing, the time we spend alone with ourselves inside our heads is increased. If you're not feeling great, you're not alone. One in four people will experience some kind of mental health problem in the course of a year. This may increase during 2020 due to the pandemic.

For many of us talking about mental health is difficult and often men find this even more difficult. It's hard to put how you're feeling into words. Remember you can be strong without being silent.

As a police officer your role is to serve and protect, this means that you are less likely to ask for help, as you think it's seen as a sign of weakness.

We all need to stop thinking that talking about emotional or mental health is a sign of weakness. Police officers are dying because they aren't asking for or getting help.

Between 2015 and 2017 more than 20 police officers took their own life each year. That's almost two a month.

Research has shown that emergency services workers are twice as likely as the public to identify problems at work as the main cause of their mental health problems, but they are also significantly less likely to seek help.

With a quarter of emergency service workers admitting to thinking about taking their own lives, the 'Man up' campaign through the Police Federation encourages officers to take each other's mental wellbeing as seriously as they take each other's physical safety, and questions whether we are too dismissive of a colleague who may be showing signs of mental health issues - something that has potentially fatal consequences. When you hear 'Man Up', think 'Man Down' offer help. For more details of this campaign [click here](#).

If you're struggling with your mental health, help is available:

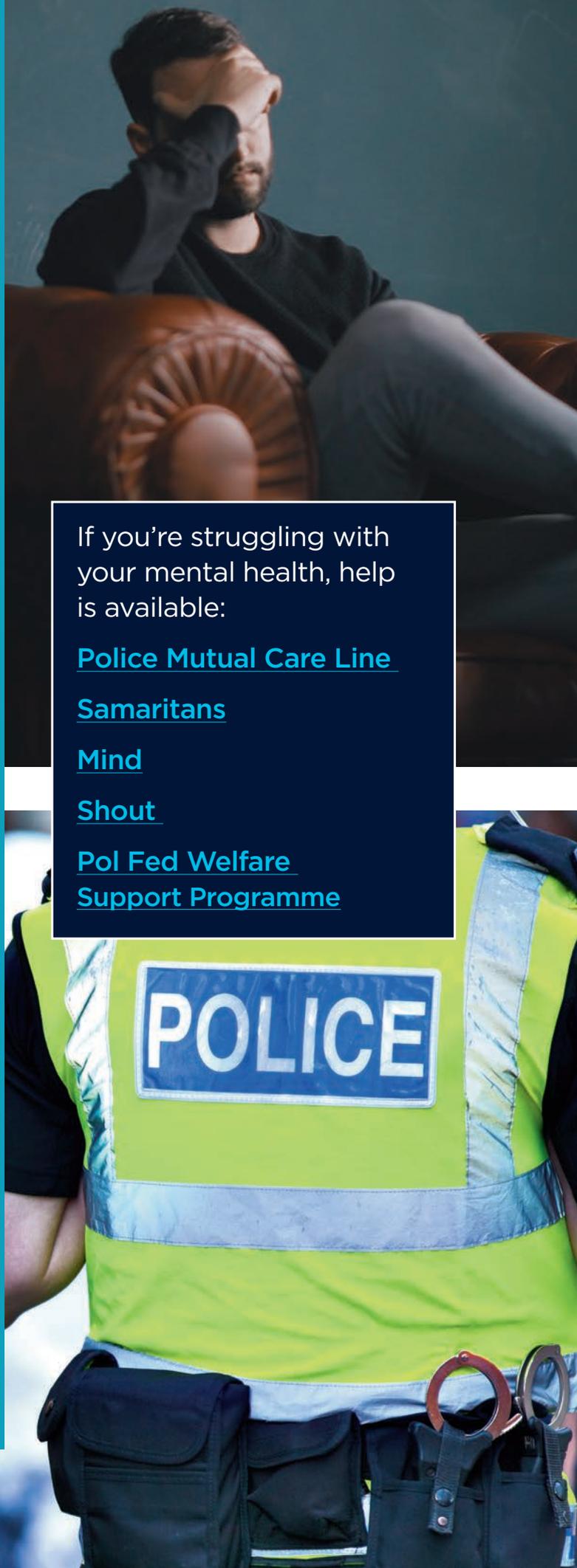
[Police Mutual Care Line](#)

[Samaritans](#)

[Mind](#)

[Shout](#)

[Pol Fed Welfare Support Programme](#)



Stress and anxiety are normal, especially in these uncertain times. It's what we do about it that matters. There are various steps you can take to cope with being under pressure, remember, different things work for different people.

Identify your triggers and take control – working out what triggers your stress can help you anticipate when you may feel stressed and what you could do about it in advance.

Organise your time – making some adjustments to the way you organise your time can help you feel more in control and able to handle the pressure you are feeling.



Be active – exercise can help clear your head and then let you deal with your problems more calmly. Go outside to exercise, as fresh air and spending time in nature can really help.

Talk to other people – friends, family & colleagues can help support you through the stress you are feeling, you may even have a laugh and start to relax. You may also want to consider talking to a professional counsellor.



Do something you enjoy – spending time doing something you enjoy will take your mind off how you are feeling. Everyone needs to take time for themselves, it can be as simple as having a bath or reading a book.

Avoid unhealthy ways to cope – many people use alcohol, smoking, chocolate and gambling to try and relieve the stress they are feeling, none of these things will help in the long term, use healthy coping strategies like going for a run, listening to music or walking the dog.

Challenge yourself – learning new skills and setting yourself new goals will help build your confidence and make you feel good about yourself.

Help others – people who volunteer in the community or for a worthwhile cause tend to be more resilient.

Try to be positive – think of all the things you are grateful for, write down or say out loud 3 things that went well each day.



Address some of the causes – where possible improve some of the issues that are putting pressure on you.

Accept the things you can't change – it's not easy, but accepting that there are some things happening to you that you can't do anything about will help you focus your time and energy elsewhere.



Mental Health and Coronavirus

Take action to get the best out of lockdown and the 'new normal' - we all need to live in the best way we can during lockdown, this may be creating your own routine of things you enjoy doing, running, cycling, bingeing on Netflix or tidying the garage, it doesn't really matter what it is as long as you feel like you are achieving something and spending time looking after your own physical and mental wellbeing.

For more information on looking after your mental health during lockdown [click here](#) to access our guide.



Financial wellbeing

Worrying about money can be extremely stressful and may lead to mental and physical health conditions.

According to the Police Federation of England and Wales Pay & Morale Survey:

- 1 in 8 said they sought financial support in the last year to cover day to day expenses
- 51% of respondents told us that they found themselves worrying about the state of their personal finances every day or almost every day
- 17% of respondents said that they had sought advice because of money issues in the last year
- 46% of people in problem debt also have mental health problems
- 86% of respondent with Mental health problems said that financial situation made their mental health worse
- Mental Health makes you three times more likely to be in problem debt
- Individuals with multiple debt problems are at a 'significantly high risk of suicide' than those with just one problem debt.





During the coronavirus, in March 2020, the number of bets made online has increased by 40% compared to March 2019, this is mostly due to boredom, but may lead to gambling addictions and problem debt.

If you're struggling with debt or finding it hard to manage your finances then we're here to help:

- [Police Mutual Budget Calculator](#)
- [Police Mutual Financial Fitness checker](#)
- If you are concerned about the effect of Coronavirus on your finances [click here](#) for help
- National Gambling Helpline (24 hours) 0808 80 20 133

We've teamed up with [PayPlan](#), one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

To get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call PayPlan on 0800 197 8433

Our [Care Line Service](#) provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information at the end of a phone, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support.

To talk to someone please call 0800 028 1708 or take a look at the e-portal:

Health & Wellbeing e-portal

<https://healthassuredeap.co.uk>

Username: policemutual

Password: careline

For more information about the products and services available from Police Mutual:

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