

Stress in the Police Service

Supporting mental wellbeing in the workplace: Our commitment

A Nine-Point Plan

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The organisation will sign up to the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs Council's workplace wellbeing framework 'Oscar Kilo' ensuring there is commitment from all levels within the service. The Framework provides a self-assessment standard which the organisation can follow to address wellbeing in the workplace. Not only is the commitment of Chief Officers essential but so is the subsequent buy in from rank and file officers and staff. There must be an active steering group overseeing the implementation of the framework.
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All staff will have knowledge or awareness of the Health and Safety Executive's 'Stress Management Standards'. Whilst it is not practicable for every officer or member of staff to know the full details, an awareness of the standards will suffice. Managers of the organisation must have a deeper understanding and make a firm commitment to a co-ordinated and consistent application of a risk assessment approach.
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Identify and understand the sources of stress within the organisation. The Health and Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards identify the six risk areas of the sources of stress in the workplace as being *Demand, Control, Support, Relationships, Roles and Change*. The organisation must understand how these factors impact on its officers and staff. There must be suitable arrangements to identify such risks. Many police forces conduct regular staff surveys that contain a wealth of information. This information can identify the risk areas for stress and must be fed into the well-being steering group for a coordinated response.
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There will be effective measures to share sickness data. Early recognition and support of officers and staff is crucial in minimising the impact of stress on individuals. Suitable arrangements must be made between the HR Departments and the Police Federation to share such information. The use of such information is for a common purpose, to support the officer during their period of absence and will be treated in confidence.

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Direct access to Chief Officers. Federation officers will establish and maintain regular contact with the Chief Officer responsible for welfare. There are occasional barriers within middle management and the Executive need to know what the current true picture is.

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Breaking down the stigma of stress. A huge barrier in supporting officers is being able to identify and support officers at an early stage. An openness campaign will be initiated to break down the barriers of the stigma of stress. 'Champions' ('role models' who have first-hand experience) are to be identified, recruited and trained to be in a position to provide signposting to suitable support, congruent with the philosophy of 'Oscar Kilo'.

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Ensure suitable training and empowerment of first line supervisors, managers and HR managers. In a recent survey, over 70% of line managers had not had any training in the identification and support in welfare matters. These are the officers most likely to spot the early symptoms and provide early intervention.

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The organisation will provide suitable welfare support for officers. EAP and other such schemes need to be suitably funded and readily accessible. Forces that have been successful in tackling stress have a full time welfare officer(s) that are readily contactable to provide support. Many of these posts have been 'lost' over the years with financial cuts. However, evidence clearly demonstrates that the benefits (including long term costs) far outweigh the cost of employing a full time welfare officer.

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The Police Federation will identify and train suitable advocates to support officers. These officers will have the depth of knowledge not only to signpost officers to medical/welfare support but also support the officer through any subsequent absence management processes that can further impact on the welfare of the officer. These officers will meet regularly to share best practice.

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Chief Constable
XXXXXX Police/Constabulary

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Chairman
XXXXXX Police Federation