

Working together to prevent suicide

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Policing's commitment to preventing suicide across the service has been set out in a consensus statement

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Commitment to a joint strategy to reduce in the number of deaths by suicide across the police service in England and Wales has been agreed in a consensus statement, supported by the College of Policing, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, Home Office, Unison, Police Federation and Police Superintendents Association.

'Working together to prevent suicide in the police service' acknowledges the progress that has been made to reduce mental health stigma so far. It also recognises that the service must work together to improve the mental health of its people.

The consensus statement was developed using learnings from the ambulance service's approach to suicide prevention by Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS).

It is supported by **an additional publication that sets out the current landscape** of the risk of suicide in the police service, compared to the general public.

This is a hugely important commitment for policing, and I am encouraged by the support this has received from across policing and government. The NPCC suicide prevention working group has been working tirelessly for years and today's statement is testament to their advocacy.

Research demonstrates the police service culture is changing with evidence of reduced stigma and awareness of the impact of police work on our mental health.

Our suicide prevention approach recognises the vital role these preventative activities play in helping to reduce escalation into mental health crisis, whilst acknowledging there is more to do.

The suicide prevention consensus will address gaps in awareness, education and data collection specific to suicide and allow us to ensure that we are doing everything we can to support police forces, making sure they have the tools and guidance they need to support their staff.

Andy Rhodes, Oscar Kilo Service Director

Recommendations following the publication of the consensus include:

- improvements to the way data is recorded on police officer & staff death, serious injury and suicide, as proposed by the 2020 Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR)
- support for family and friends of police officers and staff
- commissioning a toolkit to support staff in the event of a suicide, which will be incorporated into the NPWS's Blue Light Wellbeing Framework

Policing is by its nature a stressful job and officers are exposed to some of life's most challenging situations on a daily basis. As leaders, we have a responsibility to look after the people whose job it is to keep us all safe.

As the stigma around mental health has slowly reduced in recent years, we have seen hidden issues emerge, such as high levels of stress and trauma, which can lead to serious problems if they are not properly addressed.

The NPWS, with support from leading charities and staff associations, has already done crucial work to change attitudes towards mental health in policing. By providing services like occupational health provision, along with additional training and health checks, we have become better equipped to support the wellbeing of our officers and staff. Our work has already made a difference and more police officers and staff feel ok to say they're not ok.

We recognise, however, that there is more to do, and this commitment is a vitally important and encouraging development. The work Oscar Kilo is undertaking with colleagues in the health service will undoubtedly help us to develop the consensus statement, create guidance informed by the latest best practice and research, and ultimately, ensure we are doing everything we can to support our people.

Martin Hewitt, NPCC Chair

The NPWS provides guidance and support to forces, as well as training and resources. Its current support offering includes:

- annual psychological risk assessments for higher-risk groups
- coordination of an annual national wellbeing survey
- a fleet of 10 [wellbeing outreach vans](#)
- [trauma intervention training](#) for line managers
- online materials and webinars
- anti-stigma and communication campaigns
- [access to wellbeing dogs](#)

Working in policing involves enormous responsibility, facing unpredictable and sometimes threatening situations, while being held accountable to the highest standards demanded by the public.

We joined the service to protect people and this must include our own staff. Despite our differing roles in policing, we are all leaders and have a responsibility to look out for the welfare of colleagues and remember that if we are suffering ourselves there is help available.

The National Police Wellbeing Service is there for all officers and staff and I would encourage you to go online and be aware of its work should you or a colleague ever need that support.

There is more to do, but I want officers and police staff to be reassured that we will continue our work to give the service the best guidance and tools, informed by evidence, to support them and prevent a mental health crisis in its tracks.

Andy Marsh, College of Policing CEO

Find out more

- [See Oscar Kilo for wellbeing support](#)

- [Consensus statement – Working together to prevent suicide in the police service \(pdf\) 196.21 KB](#)
- [Suicide prevention in policing – Current landscape \(pdf\) 263.27 KB](#)
- [Next steps – Working together to prevent suicide in the police service \(pdf\) 197.77 KB](#)

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