

REACT MH – training for supervisors to support mental wellbeing

Recognise, engage, actively listen, check risk, and talk mental health service (REACT MH) is a training package for supervisors to help monitor and support team members' mental wellbeing.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Leadership, development and learning Wellbeing
Organisation	Greater Manchester Police
HMICFRS report	PEEL 2023–25 Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Greater Manchester Police
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Region	North West
Partners	Police

Key details

Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2021
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Workforce

Aim

Recognise, engage, actively listen, check risk, and talk mental health service (REACT MH) aims to:

- enable trainees to identify officers and staff who may be struggling with their mental health
- provide a safe space for confidential wellbeing conversations
- signpost officers and staff to appropriate support services

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes are to:

- improve the mental health, wellbeing and morale of the workforce
- improve line manager and employee relationships
- raise the awareness of support for mental health and wellbeing by encouraging conversation

Description

The structure of the training is based on REACT MH, which is an acronym of:

- recognise
- engage
- actively listen
- check risk

- talk about mental health

Eight officers and members of police staff attended the 'Train the Trainer' module. These individuals were all existing trauma risk incident management (TRiM) practitioners, experienced with volunteering to support colleagues.

TRiM intelligence revealed that Greater Manchester Police (GMP) had a prevalence of officers and staff suffering from trauma. The intelligence revealed that having a supervisor who is equipped with the right emotionally supportive skills is beneficial for the individual and the organisation. The ability to recognise when someone may be struggling with their mental health and being able to offer early support is essential for recovery. By educating officers and staff about the potential impact of trauma before it occurs, there may be less chance of the individual(s) developing related conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

REACT MH has been embedded in the sergeant and inspector leadership courses. The training has also formed part of the detective sergeant course dealing with child protection. The training is aimed at those with supervisory responsibilities for both officers and staff.

The next phase of the rollout is to deliver the input to all supervisors in:

- force contact centre and operations (FCCO)
- specialist operations
- north west counter terrorism unit (NWCTU)

Cost

The 'Train the Trainer' package cost £1,750 + VAT and can be delivered to 12 delegates, who will subsequently provide REACT MH support at no additional cost. A business case was approved, and this was charged against a central wellbeing budget code.

Evaluation

An evaluation is ongoing and being led by GMP.

When the training is delivered, a questionnaire is sent out to all participants asking for their feedback.

Delegates are asked the following:

- was/were your trainer(s) knowledgeable?
- do you feel the input will benefit you in your role, substantive or voluntary?
- did the content meet your expectations?
- did you get any useful tips/tools which you can take away and apply practically?

To date, the training has been well received and gained positive feedback from users. Although the initial training was delivered by an external training provider, the force has successfully adopted the 'Train the Trainer' model to roll out delivery to their workforce on a greater scale.

The course evaluation method is internal to the force, and it is completed after each training package is concluded. The evaluation reviews understanding, course feedback and ability to act as 'Train the Trainer' in individual cases. It also allows the opportunity to adapt the course content if it is needed.

The outcome from the evaluation to date, is that the training is to a standard that meets expectations and participants feel equipped to move forward and confidently support colleagues.

The summary of feedback as of April 2025 is:

Overall feedback:

- knowledgeable trainers: all participants agreed that the trainers were knowledgeable
- recommendation: all participants would recommend the training to others
- expectations met: the training met the expectations of all attendees
- practical tools: participants found the tools provided during the training to be practical and applicable

Ratings:

- knowledge increase: 60% participants rated their knowledge increase as 5/5, with 35% scoring 4/5
- confidence increase: similarly, confidence in the subject area was also rated highly, with 60% scoring 5/5 and 34% a 4/5

Further comments:

- application to real life: participants appreciated the real-life examples and the applicability of the training both professionally and personally
- engagement and interaction: the interactive nature of the training was well-received, with participants valuing the discussions and engagement

Areas for improvement:

- relevance to roles: a few participants felt that certain parts of the training were more relevant to specific roles, such as police officers, but still found the overall training beneficial

Overall impact

- a total of 1,450 officers and staff including special constables, tutor constables, traffic tutor constables and the professional standards department (PSD) have been trained in REACT MH since its introduction in 2021
- this training has been followed by awareness sessions of TRiM and the processes involved
- GMP continues to receive requests from different departments to deliver the training who are yet to have attended the leadership courses, this will provide the tools and knowledge to help understand their own and their colleague's mental health
- the feedback received is that the training has improved the confidence of attendees to identify issues with staff and the ability to have difficult conversations

Learning

- it is essential for managers to improve their understanding of how their employees may respond to trauma
- engagement at sergeant and inspector rank level is essential for the delivery of REACT MH
- buy-in was achievable as there was an immediate interest from managers who volunteered to participate in the package
- some sessions were run with lower numbers due to conflicting operational demands. Follow up sessions were offered to engage these delegates at a later date

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