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Police & Crime Commissioner

Report to the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Mental Health & Wellbeing

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Strategic Context and Accountability

Ensuring an effective and resilient workforce and exercising a duty of care over officers and staff is part of the ongoing accountability arrangements between the PCC and the Chief Constable. In addition the Police & Criminal Justice Plan sets out the intention to agree an Officer Welfare Strategy.

Concern about mental health conditions has been growing in society generally and the pressurised and often traumatic nature of policing leads to obvious additional risks within the profession. The welfare of officers, both mentally and physically, is important, not simply because the Chief Constable has a duty of care to officers and staff, but also to ensure the effectiveness of policing is not adversely affected by sicknesses absence. Significant efforts are made with the Force to ensure staff welfare, through both proactive and reactive means.

Welfare Services for Staff

Thames Valley Police has a multi-disciplinary Occupational Health Unit (OHU) of OH Physicians, Force Psychologist, OH Nurses, Mental Health Nurses and Welfare Officers. They provide support and advice to individuals and line managers, including access to trauma therapy. Officers and staff are referred by managers to OHU or can self-refer confidentially to the Welfare Department.

The OH team is trained in trauma demobilising, defusing and debriefing and have recently adopted the College of Policing (COP) Emergency Services Trauma Intervention Programme. The programme is currently being rolled out to include training in trauma awareness, demobilising and defusing for supervisors and trauma trained peers. The intention is to complete the rollout over the next 12 months. The goal is to train all supervisors and recruit up to 150 trauma aware peers.

The Force has a Gold, Silver and Bronze command structure for the management of serious incidents. As part of this, a Welfare Bronze role is in place to coordinate access to support for those officers and staff involved in any significant incident. The Welfare Bronze works closely with OHU to assist in the appropriate triage of support to be provided.

An Employee Assistance Programme offers 24/7 confidential advice for life and mental health services including access to counselling and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Work is ongoing to install the EAP application on force mobile phones to allow staff quick access to the support facilities.

There is also a multi-faith Chaplaincy that officers and staff can access in confidence. If required, there is access to support via police charities such as Flint House Rehabilitation Centre, Police Care UK and the Police Mutual Foundation.

Training

Thames Valley Police signed the Time to Change Pledge in 2016 and developed the Blue Light Programme to promote mental health and reduce stigma. To date, there are approximately 200 Blue Light Champions providing information and signposting in relation to mental health. They support a mental health calendar of events. There are approximately 40 Blue Light Peer Supporters who have lived experience of mental health issues and are comfortable speaking openly. These are officers and staff of all grades and ranks. The service is currently reactive with colleagues choosing to contact a Blue Light Peer for support.

Wellbeing days have been delivered across the force by Welfare Officers, Mental Health Nurses, Blue Light Champions and Peers, together with other stakeholders such as Unison and the Police Federation. The OH Team have also provided numerous inputs at officers and staff training days in respect of mental health resilience, stress and trauma.

10th September 2021 marks National Suicide Prevention Day. During this week, the Thames Valley Police Welfare van travelled to all police stations to promote wellbeing. This initiative will be supported by Chief Officers and the PCC who met officers and staff.

There are regular Force communications in relation to mental health in line with the mental health calendar, together with monthly briefing slides and the monthly Blue on the Loo publicity campaign. Emergency Services Trauma Intervention Programme (ESTIP) training delivered around the force. ESTIP is a programme specifically designed to address the trauma needs of the Emergency Services. ESTIP is a tiered programme of peer-led escalating support and can involve trained Occupational Health support as necessary – it is designed to be an early intervention programme following trauma. This process was used following a fatal collision involving the death of mother and her 3 children within TVP. Mental Health First training given to those who are being trained to deliver the ESTIP training. ESTIP awareness is now included in the Core Leadership Programme.

Online training packages are in place, which provides an electronic platform for officers and staff to access information on mental health, together with signposting for support and resources. There are dedicated notice boards in stations and offices promoting mental health services and resources.

The Core Leadership & Development Programme for first and second line supervisors provides training in relation to mental health conditions, stress and trauma management.

TVP Wellbeing Dog, Henley, works with a Welfare Officer to provide comfort and support to officers and staff in times of stress and trauma.

Post Incident Trauma and PIM Process

A Post Incident Procedure is invoked when following any incident, the action or perceived inaction of the Police has caused or resulted in the;

- Death of or serious injury to another
- Has revealed failings in command
- Has unduly placed an officer or member of the public in danger

As well as serving as an evidence gathering process, the PIP function is responsible for:

- Facilitating the provision of welfare and legal protection to Key Police Witnesses
- Providing a central point of contact for Key Police Witnesses
- Facilitating support to officers and staff on the periphery of the incident

Thames Valley Police have Sulhamstead and Upper Heyford as nominated PIP suites; however any station may be used depending on the scale of the PIP.

This function was most recently used following the Firearm's incident in Milton Keynes with high praise of the process from key witnesses and relevant stakeholders.

Psychological Screening

A core component of the Force's Wellbeing Strategy is the psychological screening programme which is run by the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) and Welfare Dept. This provides screening for high risk roles that expose Officers and Staff to traumatic experiences on a regular basis.

The screening programme purpose is primarily to assess Officers and Staff and their psychological fitness to undertake their role. As with all health screening and surveillance it is designed to monitor year on year the wellbeing of Officers and Staff and to be an early indicator of any issues that may have arisen through exposure to harm. It also enables OHU & Welfare to provide advice and support for those individuals who are experiencing work related mental health issues; to facilitate recovery by providing access to clinical psychological services, assessments and therapies.

The surveillance programme is based upon a risk assessment process that is undertaken by the OHU & Welfare team in conjunction with senior managers in the high-risk departments.

The risk assessment enables OHU to identify the impact that a role may have on individuals. The risk assessment framework has been developed for the policing environment and assesses the level of risk based on various criteria of exposure linked to the role.

The Force's psychological screening programme consists of the following key stages:

Questionnaires are automatically scored and depending on their individual score they are:

- Assessed as fit to undertake the role
- Attend a structured interview with a member of OHU or Welfare
- Referred to the Psychologist for a Psychological assessment

Subsequent 'Statement of Fitness to Work' guidance is issued by OHU should the individual not be fit for role.

The following roles are currently assessed within the screening programme:

- POLIT
- CSI IIOC
- RP SCIU & Collision investigators
- Dog Section
- Negotiators
- CAIU
- DAIU
- CT Digital Team
- SEROCU Digital Team
- CSE
- MASH
- Media Viewing (SECTU)
- Public Protection (ViSOR)
- Specially Trained Officers (STOs)
- Hi Tech Crime Unit
- Forensic Audio Visual Unit
- IIOC Op Secutor
- Firearms

Governance for Wellbeing

The following governance structures are currently in place within the force to monitor staff and officer welfare.

- Op Restore/Renew
- Op Restore/Renew People Group. Convenes every week.
- Op New Wellbeing. Convenes every 4 weeks.
- Wellbeing Champions meetings. Convenes every 2 months.
- Wellbeing, Health, Safety and Environment Board. Convenes every 2 months.
- CCMT – Wellbeing strategies presented to CCMT on a monthly basis
- Chief Constable's Wellbeing Task and Finish Group. Monthly meeting which commenced at the start of 2020, tasked to review current Welfare and Wellbeing provisions and make changes where necessary.

Forthcoming work on wellbeing

- Possible implementation of Suicide Prevention Training (Zero Suicide Alliance)
- Foundation Training will now include a whole day for Wellbeing on the new recruits training (both entry routes).
- Autism awareness training
- Investigators Wellbeing – week of action will be planned later this year / early next year
- London School of Economics roll out of study to all the LPAs following the Pilot in S&V and Slough
- Covid Support Task and Finish Group started on 3rd September in response to the findings from the Long Covid Survey

A summary of support services available is set out below

CORPORATE HEALTH & SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Clinical Advice from: OHU Physicians, OHU Nurse Advisors, Health Surveillance Nurses, Psychologist**
 - Management referral consultations
 - Health screening & surveillance
 - Psychological assessment
 - Trauma therapy
 - Physiotherapy
 - Hep B vaccinations
 - Flu vaccinations
 - Health checks via Health Surveillance Nurse
 - Private treatment scheme
- **Non Clinical Advice from: Welfare Officers:**
 - Self-referral service to support any non-clinical issues
 - Death in service and death of retired officers & staff
 - Proactive support and training in relation to stress and trauma
 - Welfare loans
 - Benevolent Fund grants
 - Wellbeing dog – Henley
 - Single accommodation
- **Trauma Support:**
 - Mandatory psychological screening for high risk roles
 - ESTIP
- **Multi Faith Chaplains**
- **Blue Light Network (Champions & Peers)**
- **EAP (24/7 access to life services & mental health support incl counselling)**

OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Welfare Bronze:** to co-ordinate the support provided to officers and staff as a result of any significant incident.
- **TRiM:** Trauma risk management available to JOU Officers and Staff
- **Oscar Kilo:** National Police Wellbeing Service. Offers best practice guidance, training, webinars, wellbeing van.
- **Staff Support Networks:** Offers support to individuals and the Organisation.
- **Staff Support Groups:** CEV & Long Covid, Menopause cafes, Cancer Buddy, Maternity Buddy etc.
- **Unison & Federation:** Welfare support programmes. Federation Wellbeing Van.
- **PFOA:** Offers support and therapy to members.
- **Flint House:** Residential physical and mental health support programmes
- **Pilgrims Bandits:** Raises funds for expeditions and grants for injured emergency services personnel
- **Police Care UK:** Provides psychological support and funding for therapy officers, staff and their families. Also those IHR or injured on duty.
- **Gurney Fund:** Distributes money to children of police officers where a parent has died or been retired on ill health grounds.
- **Police Mutual Foundation:** Offer grants and respite breaks.
- **COPs:** Supporting families of police officers who have lost their lives on duty.