Tackling Stigma, Changing Minds

Facilitating one of the four Blue Light Network pilot projects across the country has involved Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire (CPSL) Mind in a huge range of activity - all designed to raise awareness of mental health issues and to tackle mental health-related stigma across our local emergency services.

CPSL Mind’s Blue Light team members Jo Fitzpatrick and Jenny Swain have been warmly welcomed by all our emergency service organisations - and have been truly inspired by the passion and commitment shown by those involved in this work so far. This report highlights just some of the activity over the past year and the impact it has had on the Blue Light services of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

“CPSL Mind is very proud to be part of the national Blue Light project. Our emergency services do an amazing job looking after others; our work is to support the local staff and volunteer teams in looking after themselves.”

— Aly Anderson, CEO, CPSL Mind

Our achievements at a glance...

- 278 Champions across the emergency services.
- Champion Wellbeing Networks established.
- Positive shifts in mental health attitudes across the emergency services.
- 114 managers trained in managing the mental health of their staff.
- 184 staff trained in mental health awareness and suicide prevention.
Where we Started

A survey was carried out by National Mind in 2014 to demonstrate the level of mental health issues across the emergency services. There were 3627 responses from across the country. Key findings included:

- 87% said they had experienced stress, low mood and poor mental health whilst working for the emergency services.
- 27% had contemplated taking their own lives due to stress and poor mental health while working for the emergency services.
- 63% had contemplated leaving their job or voluntary role because of stress or poor mental health.
- 96% said that people with a mental health problem experience stigma and discrimination.

Our Local Impact 2016/2017

In July 2016 CPSL Mind carried out two local surveys of emergency service personnel across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough - one aimed at all staff/volunteers and one specifically targeted at managers. We repeated these surveys in July 2017.

These surveys attracted a total of 988 responses. The results demonstrate a shift in attitudes as a result of our emergency services taking action to promote mental health and tackling stigma:

### Results from General Survey

- **11%**
  - From 66% in July 2016 to 77% in July 2017
  - I would recognise signs of unmanageable stress, anxiety disorders, depression in my colleagues.

- **8%**
  - From 61% in July 2016 to 69% in July 2017
  - I have healthy ways of managing my emotional / mental wellbeing.

### Results from Manager’s Survey

- **36%**
  - From 45% in July 2016 to 81% in July 2017
  - I am familiar with the warning signs that a staff member might display if they were feeling suicidal.

- **14%**
  - From 61% in July 2016 to 75% in July 2017
  - My service is focused on challenging the stigma related to mental health issues of staff.
Committing to Change

Our emergency services showed their commitment to challenging mental health stigma and promoting positive wellbeing. They completed a ten point action plan to keep them on track to making positive changes.

The ten point action plan includes: a communications strategy, recruiting Champions, training staff and considering sustainability of the Blue Light work.

“As a force I want to ensure that we support officers and staff in every way we can. This pledge shows the importance of raising awareness of mental health issues that can affect us all. Maintaining and improving the well-being of staff is taken seriously within the force and the Action Plan, created within the pledge, will ensure that this remains a priority.”

— Alec Wood, Chief Constable Cambridgeshire Constabulary

“We have developed an action plan in our organisation to communicate the anti-stigma message, deliver wellbeing awareness workshops and improve the support we give to our staff about mental health.”

— Chris Strickland, Chief Fire Officer, Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service

“I was very proud to sign our Time to Change employer pledge, along with Chair Sarah Boulton, at yesterday’s Trust Board meeting. The pledge is our commitment to increasing awareness, improving our services and challenging stigma when it comes to mental health here at EEAST.”

— Robert Morton, CEO, East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Blue Light Wellbeing Working Group

We facilitated the development of the Blue Light Wellbeing Working Group to support senior staff across our emergency services to find new and collaborative ways of supporting the mental health of their staff and volunteers.

“The Blue Light working group has challenged my thinking, given me confidence that there are really valuable tools to support our people, and share ideas with other blue light agencies. This group has steered some crucial activity locally and has provided an important rudder at strategic level.”
— Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Successes include:

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary supported Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service to implement a trauma risk package (TRiM).
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary is implementing Wellness Support Plans for all staff.
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service are considering sharing gym provision across stations to promote physical activity and the boost to wellbeing.

“We recognise that our staff are our most important asset. The Blue Light Initiative has started us as an organisation on the pathway to destigmatise mental health issues within the workplace.”
— Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service

Wellbeing Support Plan
Cambridgeshire Constabulary

“The aim is to have more intuitive line management with a better understanding of the impact ill mental and physical health has not only on an individual but the organisation as a whole. We want to personalise the support our employees are receiving and, through the WSP, this will help to identify triggers for poor health, how to minimise these triggers and what can be done to proactively support employees stay healthy at work, ultimately resulting in a stronger, more engaged and more productive workforce.”
— Superintendent Martin Brunning, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Guideline for managers:
Wellness Support Plans (WSPs)

How to support the health of your team members

#safercambs
Making a difference
Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough we now have an army of Blue Light Champions all doing their bit to raise awareness and support their colleagues. Here some of the Champions talk about their experiences.

Debbie Hill - Cambridgeshire Constabulary
“I have spoken with a colleague who was feeling down and I now know what type of things to say and how to adapt conversations to enable me to assist them.”

“Becoming a Blue Light Champion has been very informative for me and has opened my eyes to the struggles faced by members of the emergency services. The courses run by [CPSL] Mind have really motivated me to want to make Blue Light a part of my police work and I feel enabled to assist colleagues in times of difficulty. I have spoken with a colleague who was feeling down and I now know what type of things to say and how to adapt conversations to enable me to assist them. I now also have signposting knowledge which I hope will assist me and others in the future. I very much look forward to seeing the ‘Blue Light’ shine in the future.”

Juliet Burgess-Ray - Community First Responder
“Too many people have wrongly judged people in the past and I am always happy to put people right, including people close to me.”

“Since attending the one-day {Mental health awareness/STOP suicide} course, it has made me realise how important people’s mental health is. Part of why I like being a responder is to help people with any mental health issues they have. I have had postnatal depression and ignored it for a long time. It didn’t get better, it got worse. I got some help from my Doctor and it saved my life . . . We often see clues in posts on Face Book or Twitter of people struggling and I always like to try and help or point them in the right direction for help. Too many people have wrongly judged people in the past and I am always happy to put people right including people close to me. I do share a lot more information now on my social media to help people or point them in the right direction.”
Wayne Bent - Cambridgeshire Search & Rescue

“We didn’t realise how much of an important issue mental health and wellbeing of our members was until we became involved with the Blue Light project.”

“As one of the volunteer services involved with the Blue Light project, it has been humbling to be treated as equals across the other services involved. We didn’t realise how much of an important issue mental health and wellbeing of our members was until we became involved with the Blue Light project. Since the very first session we started to learn and understand the sheer value of this project and our role to maintain it. As individuals - and as an organisation - we have grown and become much more comfortable in simply being there for our colleagues and helping them when they need it most... I’m not sure it makes us champions but it does make us stronger...”

Terri Griffin - Cambridgeshire Constabulary

“I have certainly seen a change in the cultural approach to mental illness internally where it is spoken about more openly.”

“I have been able to use the training and inputs I have had as a Champion whilst carrying out my regular one to ones with staff but also for the external operational work I am involved in when responding to people who self-harm. I have certainly seen a change in the cultural approach to mental illness internally where it is spoken about more openly and less negatively, particularly when talking about stress and anxiety. I have talked about my own episode of anxiety where I was prescribed anti-depressants openly. I have never encountered negative responses but always positive and supportive ones from colleagues. As with many cultural responses we need to keep up the openness and positive stories and it will then become as natural to discuss mental ill health as it is for physical illness.”

“I feel incredibly proud to wear my Blue Light Champion badge and take every and any opportunity to raise the Blue Light Network with colleagues and friends.” — Emma Morgan, Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service

“The Blue Light programme has brought talking about mental health into mainstream conversation, exactly where it should be.” — Caroline Scully, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

“We’ve come a long way in the year since signing the Blue Light pledge, including setting up a Staff Wellbeing Hub to actively support staff. We intend to use the strong message from Mind and our Blue Light colleagues to continue to ensure we offer our staff the most supportive environment in which to work.” — Robert Morton, CEO, East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Rick Hylton - Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service

“I decided to add my support to the group by becoming a Champion myself. But you know what; mental health is a collective responsibility, for both our own wellbeing and that of our colleagues.”

“The Blue Light Champion network is made up of around 30 staff from across the Service, both frontline and professional services. I was struck by the passion and commitment of these staff to drive forward this programme. They have some really exciting ideas about how we can raise awareness and create a culture where it is OK to both recognise, and talk about, mental health issues. The Champions are also points of contact to others within our organisation, people whom others can talk to and who can guide and point people in the direction of more advanced support if needed. Having spent time with the Blue Light Champions, I decided to add my support to the group by becoming a Champion myself. But you know what; mental health is a collective responsibility, for both our own wellbeing and that of our colleagues.”

Extending our Reach

Ann, a Cambridgeshire St John Ambulance (SJA) volunteer, outlines the SJA experience.

“Early in 2016, a Mental Health Project Group was formed, of volunteers from all over the country, with support from the SJA Head of Volunteering. We met in July 2016. One of the people who did a presentation at the meeting was a Blue Light Champion in the North West. As a SJA volunteer, I then attended the CPSL Mind Mental Health Awareness and Stop suicide courses, followed by the Speaking up, Speaking out workshop. On a National level, the project continues to get support from the St John Ambulance National Volunteering Team in the People & Organisation Directorate.

Publicity and Recruitment

We publicised Champions at volunteering events, on the Intranet and on the SJA Facebook group. Between January to April 2017 we had four more people sign up. Since then we have had a further 8 join, so we now have a total of 14 Champions in the East Region, one being myself in Cambridgeshire. We now have Champions among both SJA volunteers and employees. I have done presentations at CPD events for volunteers in several parts of the region, and aimed to get publicity material to as many SJA Hubs as I can. Not bad for less than a year’s work...”
Champion Wellbeing Networks

We facilitated staff members across the emergency services to create their own wellbeing networks. Take a look at what they’ve been doing...

Champions now have Blue Light noticeboards around various offices and stations across the county – these help to raise awareness and also start to help to have the conversations about mental health.

To mark World Mental Health Day 2016, pledge boards were developed, so that staff could start to think about what they could do to manage their mental and emotional wellbeing. The boards were distributed around the emergency services to start to raise awareness and to have conversations around mental health.

“"We have developed an awareness of the need for staff to take time out during their working day when needed. Mental health is a collective responsibility, for both our own wellbeing and that of our colleagues.""

— Rick Hylton, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service
Skilling up our Emergency Service Colleagues

A range of training courses and workshops were provided across the emergency services to challenge perceptions, change attitudes towards mental health and to support colleagues who may be struggling. These include Speaking Up, Speaking Out; Mental health awareness and suicide prevention workshops.

Number of champions:

278!

Champions per service

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary: 141
- Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service: 71
- St John Ambulance: 35
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust: 23
- Cambridgeshire Search & Rescue: 8

Speaking Up, Speaking Out

The aim of the Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop is to empower Champions by increasing their confidence around supporting colleagues and managing their own mental health. The workshop also gives guidance on how to have conversations around mental wellbeing while maintaining organisational and personal boundaries, together with following safeguarding guidelines.

To date 62 people have attended the workshop.

“I felt that the group work and discussions were really useful to discuss issues around other blue light services. It helps me to feel more supported and acknowledge that similar problems are shared across services.”

“I like] people’s willingness and openness to be frank and talk openly about their experiences. I also like discussing ways to promote wellbeing.”
Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention Workshops

Staff across the emergency services attended a full day workshop to increase their knowledge of mental health challenges and recognise suicidal warning signs in a colleague, and importantly to ask directly if the person was feeling suicidal.

“Great workshop for anyone who is interested in mental health and wellbeing. Insightful, engaging and excellent content. Took a lot on board which will be useful to help myself and others.”

“Just wanted to say thanks for the certificate and badge, which I will wear with pride. Good to be part of a campaign instead of a sole person fighting the cause.”

Empowering Staff Around Suicide Prevention

Average scores over 12 workshops:

- I am aware of the warning signs that suggest someone could be feeling suicidal
- If a persons words or behaviours suggested that they might be feeling suicidal, I would ask them directly about suicide
- I feel I would be able to respond appropriately to someone who discloses that they are having suicidal thoughts
- I am more aware of the factors that suggest an increased risk of suicide

Total attended: 126
114 Cambridgeshire Constabulary managers attended the ‘Managing Mental Health in the Emergency Services’ half day course. The following illustrates the biggest shift in opinions three months following completion of the course.

 Supporting Staff Wellbeing

“Definitely worthwhile training. Made me reflect on my own mental health and signs amongst my team. I found the input very helpful into what I do to help others and what I feel I shall be able to help extra to everyone around me.”

“Right amount of formality to informality, very informative and thought provoking, good mix of interaction. I think the final slide of the presentation should be a handle for a bucket because I feel that is what you’ve given us.”

(...in reference to the stress bucket).

Said they can recognise signs that a colleague may be experiencing a mental health problem / challenge.

94%

Now feel confident that they would support a colleague experiencing a mental health problem / challenge at work.

88%

Now know / understand what factors at work can have a negative effect on mental health.

93%

We would all ask!

Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue have signed the ‘STOP Suicide Pledge’...have you?

We would all ask!

Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue have signed the ‘STOP Suicide Pledge’...have you?

Total attended: 88%

93%

Now feel confident that they would support a colleague experiencing a mental health problem / challenge at work.

94%

Said they can recognise signs that a colleague may be experiencing a mental health problem / challenge.

Now know / understand what factors at work can have a negative effect on mental health.

93%
Cambridgeshire Constabulary presents cheque to CPSL Mind

The Safer Cambridgeshire Policing Awards, held at Burgess Hall in St Ives, on Friday (July 14), recognised the outstanding contributions of officers, staff, Specials, volunteers and cadets. £798, which was raised through a raffle, was presented by Chief Constable Alec Wood to Jo Fitzpatrick, Blue Light Wellbeing Community Developer, and Jenny Swain, Blue Light Network Coordinator.

“I take great pride in presenting this cheque to CPSL Mind. The generosity of the Force’s officers and staff and their guests was phenomenal and I am delighted with the amount we raised. Prior to the event we asked the Force which charity they wanted to support and CPSL Mind won with 35 per cent of the vote. Knowing the money we raised will be used to improve the lives of people living with mental health problems is amazing.”

— Alec Wood, Chief Constable

Thank you to our emergency services!

About CPSL Mind

We are a dynamic, county-wide charity that supports local people in their recovery from mental health issues, promotes wellbeing and campaigns against stigma & discrimination.

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