

# Case Study: Cleveland Police Service

## Investing in our workforce with the right skills and knowledge to support better mental health

Educating our workforce around mental health and wellbeing has long been a priority for our service. We have many engaging initiatives in place to promote wellbeing and support pathways, normalising conversations around the topic, and helping colleagues to manage their own mental health. These include: an Oscar Kilo wellbeing van, wellbeing and trauma support dogs to help engage in conversations and distribute information and referral forms to colleagues, monthly wellbeing newsletters, themed wellbeing webinars, and a regular podcast with guests ranging from police staff to our Chief Constable.

Alongside these activities we recognise the importance of training as a way to ensure our people have the appropriate knowledge and skills to comfortably and confidently engage in conversations around mental health.

There is an established and active Blue Light and wellbeing champion network across the Northeast area. Cleveland's network has over 150 Champions with a dedicated Wellbeing Co-ordinator and support team in place to oversee and maintain engagement with the network's activities. All Champions receive peer support training, ensuring that they are well equipped in proactively looking out for and supporting their colleagues.

Upon joining our service, the Blue Light wellbeing team deliver sessions to transferees, newly promoted colleagues, and recruits, including those on the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship. This ensures that everyone in our service is aware of the wellbeing and mental health information and support available – and demonstrates the open and positive workplace culture we are trying to create.

We identified our service had a gap in mental health training provision to supervisors and officers. To address this, our dedicated in-house Counsellor and Wellbeing Co-ordinator – both qualified as First Aid for Mental Health Trainers – now deliver bespoke mandatory training sessions to all supervisors and police officers. To gain buy-in it was important that the training content was relatable and relevant to colleagues' working experiences, and so we engaged with a training provider that has allowed us to tailor the content around policing. It ensures that we have a consistent approach to supporting our officers and supervisors around supporting theirs and colleagues' mental health at work.

As of September 2021, we have trained over 300 colleagues including over 150 supervisors in first aid for mental health. The feedback from delegates has been wholly positive and helps to inform our approach as we roll out more sessions in the future.

**Inspector Phil Spencer**  
**Blue Light Wellbeing Coordinator**

