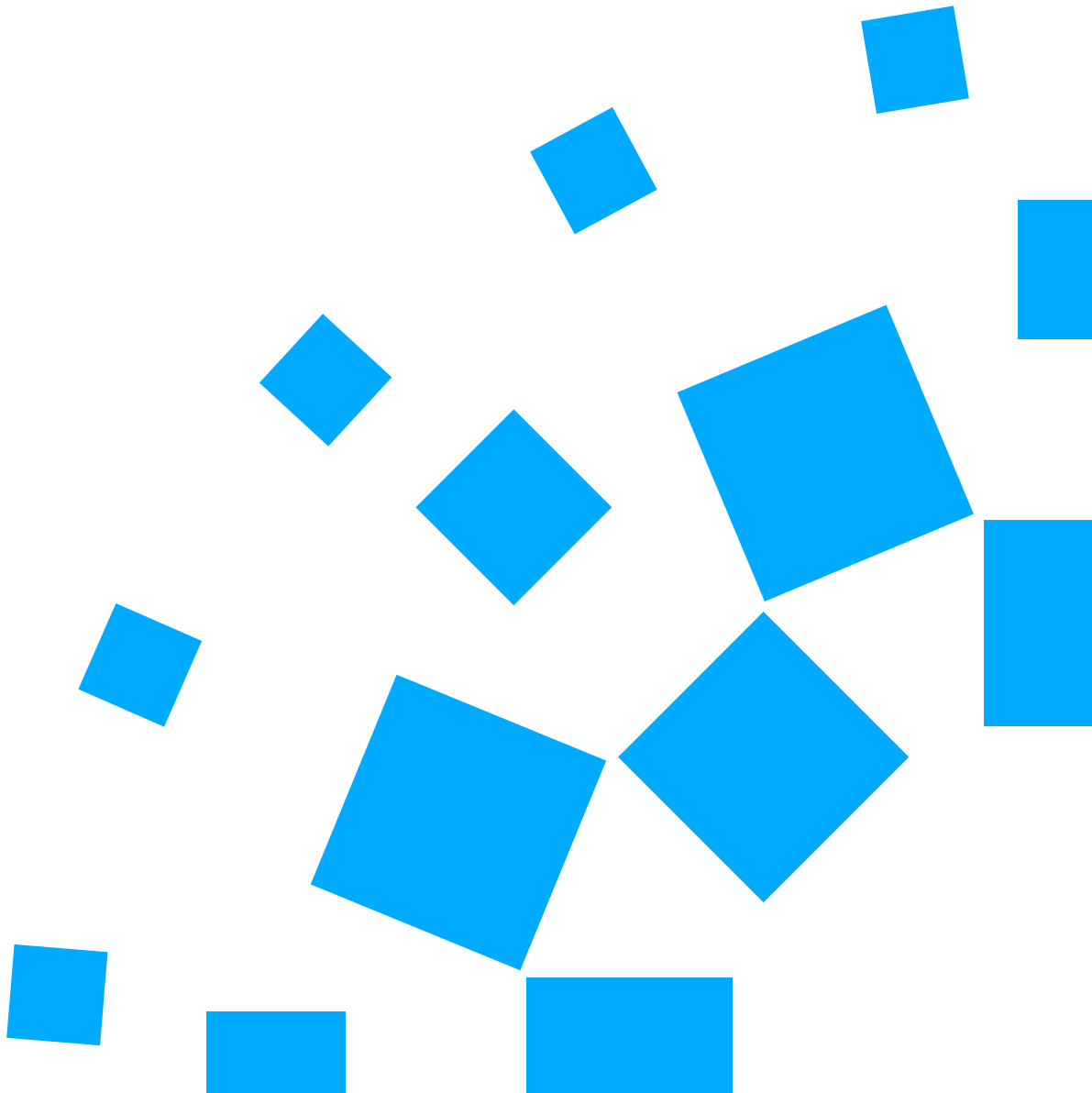




Working together to prevent suicide in the police service

A national consensus statement
for England and Wales



Working together to prevent suicide in the police service

This consensus statement sets out our joint commitment and intent to work together to develop joint strategies for a continual reduction in the number of deaths by suicide across the police service in England and Wales.

Using our collective capabilities, we seek to:

- advance the knowledge and understanding of suicide in policing
- promote good mental health and wellbeing
- provide appropriate care and support
- signpost to specialist support in a timely manner where required

The consensus is supported by the additional publication, **Suicide prevention in policing: Current landscape**. This document outlines the information that we currently know about suicide in policing in England and Wales. It explores the background and potential risk factors, along with stakeholder knowledge and observations. In addition, it sets out suggested next steps, which will be further developed in line with this consensus.

Suicide is complex. There are many risk factors and many reasons why someone may choose to take their own life, but there may be no outward signs or obvious reason why someone may feel suicidal. However, with the appropriate, supportive culture and interventions at the right time, we aim to improve overall mental health and reduce the incidence of suicide.

Primary signatories

The following associations are signatories to this document:

- Home Office
- College of Policing
- National Police Wellbeing Service
- National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
- Police Superintendents' Association
- Police Federation of England and Wales
- UNISON

Collective strengths

Working collaboratively is the key to improved wellbeing. A shared purpose and an integrated approach will provide improved coordination, prevention and early intervention, to support good mental health. There are key actions that can be taken nationally, in order to support local action taken by individual forces.

Together, we will:

- Develop shared communications for our collective networks, to raise awareness of the benefits of a more connected approach.
- Pledge to make recommendations that support sustainable change across policing.
- Develop the conversation around suicide, including the use of language and appropriate terminology, through our ongoing commitment to transforming attitude and increasing confidence, in order to encourage open communication in relation to depression, mental illness and suicidality in peers.
- Continue to support and encourage the de-stigmatisation related to mental ill health and break down barriers to help-seeking, ensuring

that the policing culture does not ignore or place low priority on mental health.

- Support police forces to build and improve on existing work to improve staff mental health and wellbeing, including supporting those practices that promote good mental health, such as regular reviews of shift patterns, working hours and arrangements.
- Support a health promotion culture that encourages self-care measures, including physical and mental health initiatives, along with suicide prevention.
- Encourage the employment of strategies to promote positive outcomes from stress and to help others in need, such as prevention and early intervention measures, including health screening in high-risk roles.
- Explore, identify and promote good practice in order to share learning within policing and beyond.
- Encourage training measures at all levels, in order to reduce stigma, raise awareness and empower staff to manage their own wellbeing and that of their teams.
- Encourage a broad integrated approach to improving wellbeing, with organisations working cooperatively with staff. Initiatives should aim to assist in developing adaptive responses to stressful situations.
- Continue to develop systems to record the number of in-service deaths in policing, including those by suicide (current NPCC project).
- Commit to having a better understanding of the supportive roles played by families and loved ones, and work to ensure they are properly supported.
- Strive to ensure that when there is a death by suicide, that the best support possible will be available for colleagues and family, and that lessons are learnt from any such deaths.

Full recommendations for collaborative delivery of this consensus statement will be set out in the forthcoming publication, specifically related to the next steps required.

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About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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