

Changing the Narrative on Wellbeing: Moving to a Preventative Approach in UK Uniformed Public Services



Professor Emma Williams

a.r.u.

Anglia Ruskin
University

Centre of Excellence for
Equity in Uniformed Public Services



**WE BELIEVE EVERY
SERVICE MEMBER**

DESERVES...

Thriving at work happens when individuals can realise their capabilities, are enabled, trusted, supported and sense belonging.

It is not one thing and what people need differs



Hundreds of police off sick with mental health issues



GETTY IMAGES

Top stories

LIVE UK terrorism level raised to 'severe' following Golders Green stabbing attacks

7.7k viewing

It's a miracle I survived Golders Green violence

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

4 hours ago

HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN POLICING:

Exploring occupational morbidities and pathways to care through primary care services
Part 1: Findings from a systematic literature review



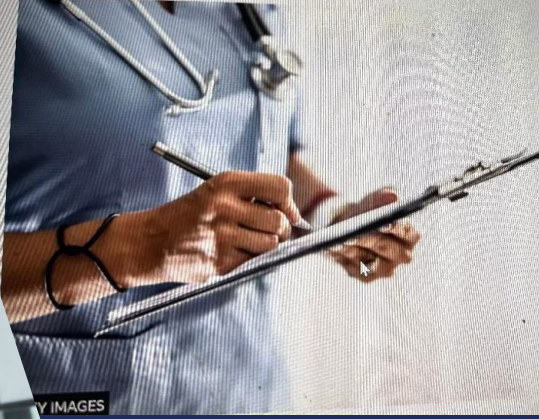
Authors: Richard Harding and Dr Sarah Colley
Contributor: Hannah Tolentino

FROM ACADEMIA TO THE FRONT LINE

CONNECTING WORLDS

Together, we create global solutions through research.

Mental health 'main issue' behind NHS absences



Top stories

LIVE UK terrorism level raised to 'severe' following Golders Green stabbing attacks

7.7k viewing

It's a miracle I survived Golders Green violence

4 hours ago

Teens who kill rocks and a boy

4 hours ago

More to see

Almost 12,000 key workers stuck on long term sick leave

15 Feb 2024

EMBARGO: Immediate Release

- Over 8,600 NHS nurses currently on long term sick leave, along with 2,752 police officers and 568 firefighters

Ambulance pressures taking a significant toll on staff, says UNISON

Ambulance staff, like so many in the NHS, can't just leave their stress at the door when they get home.

Posted on 25 April 2022

Tagged 2022 Health Care Service Group Conference Ambulance Sara Gorton

Increasing pressures on ambulance services are leaving workers "overwhelmed" and struggling to shake off work stress when they finally finish their shifts, according to a new UNISON survey published today (Monday).

Emotional breakdowns, sleep problems, mood swings and the use of anti-depressants are among the issues reported by staff who have been dealing with unprecedented demand for months, says the union.

Latest news

Healthcare staff welcome political leaders' support

Posted on 19 March 2022



Press release

Firefighters to benefit from bespoke health support

Government to back firefighters with tailor-made, research-backed health support during and after service.

From: [Department of Health and Social Care](#), [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#), [Samantha Dixon MBE MP](#) and [The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP](#)

Published 16 April 2026



Emotional Labour and Moral Injury In Police and Paramedicine



LISTENING TO WORKERS

A Speak Up Review of Ambulance Trusts in England

National Guardian / Freedom to Speak Up

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade

November 2022

By Nazir Afzal OBE

An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service

Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB

March 2023

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Independent Culture Review Publication

Your Safety & Wellbeing

HMPPS Professional Standards Review

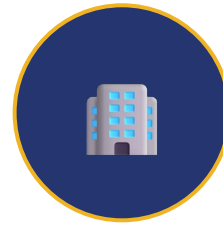
Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

Antecedents of Workplace Psychological Safety in Public Safety and Frontline Healthcare: A Scoping Review

Ip, Srivastava, Lentz, Jasinowski & Anderson

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (MDPI)

**Wellbeing is
contentious and
complex!**



CONFLATED



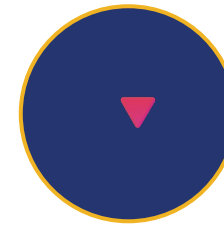
**DEFINITIONAL
AMBIGUITY**



**LACK OF PROBLEM
DEFINITION AND DATA**



**PERSONALISED
RESILIENCE**



**DEFLECTION /
SILENCING**

The blanket approach



Or ... activity
based
symbolic
change



OUR THEORY of CHANGE

"PLANTING FUTURE POSSIBILITIES"

A THRIVING and HEALTHY POLICE FORCE

↳ who SERVE the PUBLIC WELL!

GOALS



MEASURES

- ✓ Retention
- ✓ Culture & engagement surveys
- ✓ Sickness rates and trauma exposure
- ✓ Recruitment-rates & people profiles
- ✓ Sentiment analysis

PEOPLE



VALUES

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------|
| AUTHENTICITY | RESPECT | INTEGRITY |
| EMPATHY | EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE | |

BEHAVIOURS

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| LISTENING | PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY | TRAUMA INFORMED |
| VULNERABILITY | TRANSPARENCY | OPENNESS |
| COLLABORATION | | |

Challenges and 'perhaps' solutions to change

- *Genuine transformational reform and governance*
- *Outcome focused planning and metrics to measure progress*
- *Collaboration, engagement and codesign*
- *Data and problem profiles*
- *Operationalise values and resource with meaning*