

Welfare Provision For Police in High Trauma Areas

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POLIT

The Police Online Investigation Team are a team of specialist officers dedicated to the investigation of offences involving child sexual abuse material.



- Due to the way in which we can so readily access the internet, this has made accessing indecent images easier & this is shown in the below figures:
- In 2010 the NCA received 400 referrals from internet providers per month. In 2017, this had risen to 6180 and in 2019, the NCA received over 7500 referrals a month.
- The NCA received 72,161 referrals in 2023 - a 63% rise compared to 2022.

The Need for Outreach



- Peer and organizational stigma are associated with decreased help seeking, leading to poor mental outcomes for officers (Wheeler et al 2018)
- Stigma is a significant concern given that police officers are more exposed compared to psychologically challenging environments when compared to the general population (Soomro & Yanos 2019)
- ‘Whether someone develops a psychological injury or experiences psychological growth is likely to be influenced by the way in that they are supported before, during and after a challenging incident.’ Greenberg et al., 2020:1.

Pre-Service Implementation Focus Group Delivered by Inclusion, MPFT

What isn't going well?



Most respondents felt the completion of questionnaires was simply a tick box exercise with no follow up

"Support is only there when it's too late"

"No support for officers that are experiencing social/family issues"

"Staff don't feel there is any merit in going to occy health"

"Waiting times are not suitable for seeking support"

"People do not come forward for fear of losing the role they love"

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What do officers want?

"More than just one to one counselling"

"No waiting times"

"Make the support package compulsory"

"a culture of knowing that support is normal"

"More probing and coping techniques"

"Formalized peer supervision as peer support"

"Therapist to be part of a team"

"Support for ex POLIT staff"

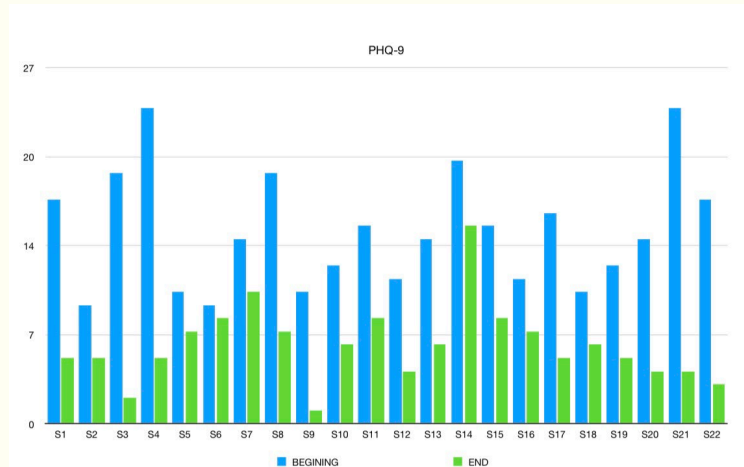
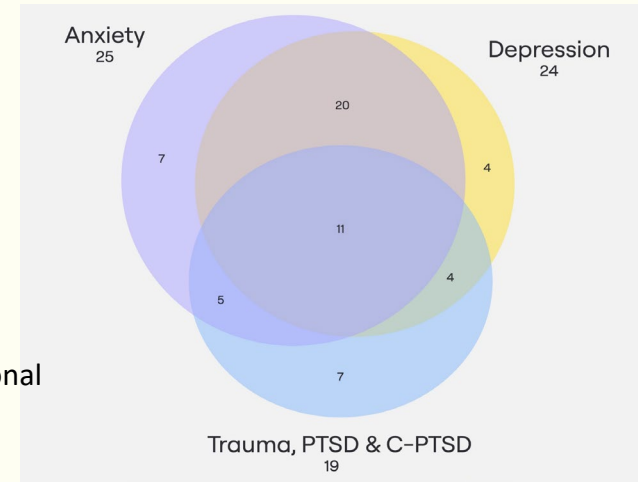
Service Provision

- Completely confidential and independent self-referral pathway
- Two therapists
- Face-to-face sessions in the station, in an independent clinical space or online
- Psychoeducation and wellbeing group sessions
- Flexible appointments to suit shift patterns
- Mandatory yearly wellbeing meetings
- Drop-in clinic
- Team/shift break out sessions
- Perinatal/Sickness pathway
- Entry and Exit meetings
- Therapists attend CSAM grading training
- Support for ex POLIT staff

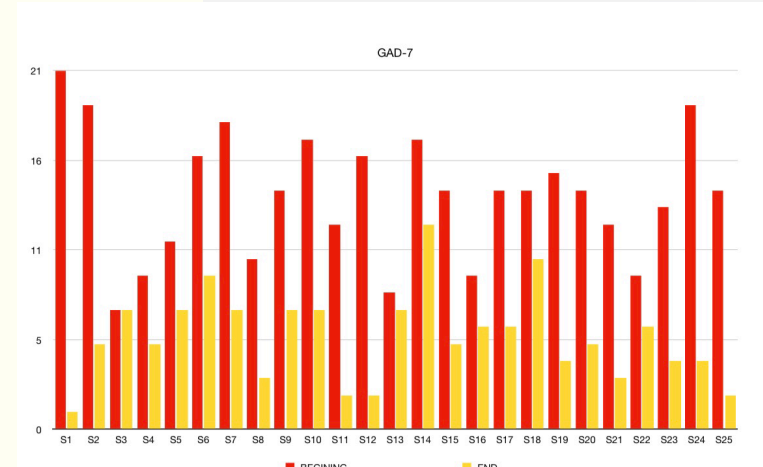


Engagement and Presenting Problems

- Currently 43 POLIT staff, 77% of the current team have used the service
- 44 police officers and staff have voluntarily engaged in treatment/intervention
- Response to CSAM or previous traumatic work-related incidents, inc PTSD 25%
- Anxiety Disorders (inc. work related stress and burnout) 65%
- Depression (PHQ-9) 60%
- C-PTSD (PCL-5 and ITQ) 22.5%
- Plus, Poor assertion/self esteem, complex grief and relationship and organisational issues



Service users who met criteria for depression before and after treatment



Service users who met criteria for generalised anxiety problems before and after treatment

Service user feedback

"I started my session...feeling "slightly stressed"...on reflection I was actually at the edge of my breaking point....

My sessions were truly transformative, I **feel positively different, more understanding and under control** owing to these sessions, and in turn that makes me a better Officer.

"My sessions with Sally have been life changing...

have learnt excellent coping mechanisms...

Without her, and now Louise, we would be lost."

"[my sessions] have been invaluable to me as a person...she [therapist] has helped me **recognise the signs of burn out and with her support I am learning ways to deal with this ...without Sally's arrival within the department when she did I often wonder if myself or others would be still be able to carry out the job we do...**It truly has changed my life for the better and I'm very grateful that we have access to this service."

"Although I do not use them personally, other than the yearly check-up, **it is nice to know that if my colleagues are experiencing problems, there is a back up there..."**

"EMDR has really helped with removing **trauma from viewing disturbing images...** It took away that feeling of distress, so that I could get back to work without worrying about this feeling creeping back in...I don't think I'd be in the place I am mentally now without it."

What's next

- Prep for new staff entering POLIT
- Office posters for prevention
- Research/formal service evaluation - Dr SJ Lennie
- Better links with Essex Police Wellbeing Service
- Formalised peer supervision and peer support
- Training to supervisors regarding active listening skills etc
- Therapists to attend further training on Police Systems and methods

Benefits of an in-house private provision in comparison to current Essex Police service

Therapists know the staff and can monitor change more effectively

The service has 'a face' and is more accessible/yearly reviews

Problems can be work related or personal

Sessions can be accessed from non-police locations

No session limits

Therapist are trained in multiple therapeutic modalities

Directly challenges existing police culture 'it's ok to not be ok'

Therapists understand the nature of the work