

# Front line emergency workers to get access to tailored mental health resources



Front line emergency workers will get access to tailored mental health resources, following the extension of a wellbeing programme.

The Scottish Government is committing £138,000 of funding for the Lifelines Scotland initiative to cover Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

This will provide online information and resources for responders, their friends and family as well as training courses on wellbeing and resources to help organisations embed wellbeing in the workplace.

Announcing the extension during a visit to Springburn Ambulance Station in Glasgow, Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said, "Our emergency services work hard to keep people across Scotland safe every day and like all our NHS staff, their welfare is crucially important. They often face challenging and dangerous situations, which can have an impact on mental wellbeing.

“Extending the Lifelines Scotland programme will support the resilience and welfare of front line responder staff in blue light services across the country, to ensure they feel supported, informed and valued.”

Representing Police Scotland at the event at the Scottish Ambulance Service’s Springburn base, Superintendent Ian Thomson, Safer Communities said, “The organisation is committed to the welfare of our officers and staff. A range of support mechanisms are already in place across Police Scotland, including Your Wellbeing Matters, occupational health and the Employee Assistance Programme, all of which have been further enhanced through the creation our network of Wellbeing Champions.

“I welcome this investment by the Scottish Government which will provide another avenue for officers and staff to access additional support, and which is also open to their support network at home, namely friends and family.”

Gill Moreton from NHS Lothian’s Rivers Centre for Traumatic Stress and clinical lead for Lifelines Scotland, said, “The Rivers Centre team has worked with blue light colleagues for almost 20 years and are passionate about supporting the wellbeing of emergency responders.

“We are delighted to be extending Lifelines Scotland and are looking forward to working together to create wellbeing resources and training materials for all of Scotland’s emergency responders.”

The Scottish Government funding of £138,000 will be used to deliver:

- tailored online resources for blue light staff and volunteers, including a new website and online learning module
- information and resources for family members, as well as for retired responders on where to access help if they

need it

- 'lifeline leaders' within each service who can promote resilience
- the development of an online module on Staying Well for each service
- training materials for those providing mental health support to emergency service workers
- evaluation of the intervention to assess the transfer of learning to the workplace.

Action 36 of the Scottish Government's ten year [Mental Health Strategy](#) commits to working with employers on how they can act to protect and improve mental health, and support employees experiencing poor mental health.

Lifelines Scotland was initially established in 2016 by NHS Lothian's specialist trauma service, the Rivers Centre, to promote the resilience and wellbeing of volunteer emergency responders.

Lifelines Scotland will complement existing sources of support offered by Scotland's emergency services, including their employee assistance programmes and occupational health support.