



Blue Light Time to Change Associations pledge - essential guide

Blue Light Programme
mind.org.uk/bluelight



What is the Associations pledge?

time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

The Associations pledge is an aspirational statement with meaning. By signing the pledge you will be showing support for your emergency services members to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination within the workplace.

Whilst the pledge isn't an endorsement or accreditation, it will be backed by tangible anti-stigma activity that you have agreed to deliver. And whilst it's great to plan ahead, your plan must include some immediate activity to demonstrate your commitment.

Why is an Associations pledge important?

We recognise that organisations and associations that support the emergency services play a vital role and that a separate pledge where these organisations can commit to tackling mental health stigma is important. We also recognise that these organisations will play a significant part in sustaining the momentum and keeping mental health firmly on the agenda during and well beyond the lifetime of the Blue Light Programme.

Who is the Associations pledge open to?

The Associations pledge is a pilot initiative that is being offered on an invitation only basis to a small number of associations and organisations at the national level, that currently support the emergency services. [For more information see appendix 1.](#)





What does pledging involve?

As above, the pledge isn't a quality mark, accreditation or endorsement. You don't have to pass a test or submit a lengthy application. Instead, we have set four key criteria against which you indicate an activity or activities you will commit to delivering.

Once complete, simply submit your action plan to us, and we will either approve your plan or send you constructive feedback as to how you can develop it to meet our criteria.

Once your plan has been approved we'll send you a pledge board to sign at an occasion of your choosing, add you to our online list of Blue Light pledged organisations, spread the word via our Blue Light newsletter and tweet about your signing on the day.

[See the guidance and pledge criteria on page 4.](#)

What support will we get from the Blue Light Programme?

The Blue Light Anti-stigma team will be happy to support you if you have any queries about the process or would like to 'sense check' your plan before formally submitting.

We also have a host of free resources to support you in your activity to challenge mental health stigma. These range from top tips for starting the conversation about mental health, posters, postcards and digital creative that you can incorporate into an internal or external communications campaign, along with webinars on mental health awareness, (tailored for each service), and other filmed pieces to help get people talking about mental health.

Follow up

You won't be judged on how much you are able to deliver, however we would love to know how you're getting along and the progress you're making. This will also help us assess whether the pilot has been successful and feed into plans for future work across the services.

So, between January and February 2016, we'll get back in touch to see how you are progressing with your key activities. We'll send you a simple questionnaire to complete, and also give you the chance to tell us any positive outcomes you're experiencing as a result of your activities.

Who will see our action plan?

Your plan will not be shared with anyone outside of the Blue Light Programme or wider national Mind team.

Who owns our plan?

Responsibility for the delivery of the activities you commit to remains with you as an organisation. However the Blue Light Programme team are here to support with suggestions and resources at any point.

Does the pledge mean that the Blue Light Programme supports or is affiliated with this organisation?

No, the pledge is not a badge of affiliation or endorsement that the Blue Light Programme awards an association or support organisation. Instead, it's a statement by the organisation that they are committed to doing more to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination. Sometimes it is a starting point for the organisation to begin making changes within their workplace, while for others the pledge is a platform for them to build on or highlight existing activity that's already being rolled out.



Blue Light Time to Change Associations pledge criteria

Criteria	Performance indicator (optional)
<p>1) Communicate the anti-stigma message</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refresh your existing internal and external communications messaging relating to the mental health and wellbeing of your staff, volunteers, and to your members. Look at disseminating anti-stigma messages to your members, staff and volunteers. For example, use Blue Light Programme email banners to promote the Blue Light Infoline, place an article or case study about mental health and wellbeing in a member communication. Flag the support that's available to your own teams, staff and volunteers. To access Blue Light Programme resources go to: mind.org.uk/bluelightresources. Promote the Blue Light Time to Change pledge for emergency services employers – mind.org.uk/bluelightpledge See appendix 2 for some helpful Blue Light Programme research findings, and key programme messages. Select key dates in the mental health calendar to promote your anti-stigma communications, for example Time to Talk Day and World Mental Health Day. See appendix 3. 	<p>e.g. number of click throughs in your online member communications</p>
<p>2) Review the support you currently offer to your members and your staff on mental health issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your information on mental health in inductions or training for new staff and volunteers. Consider developing a mental health policy, or incorporating mental health into a wider relevant policy if it is not already. Review how you promote the importance of mental health and wellbeing to your members. 	<p>e.g. the number of information booklets, postcards or leaflets about mental health taken at an event or distributed at meetings.</p> <p>e.g. reviewing your reasonable adjustment policy to include examples of mental health problems.</p>



Criteria	Performance indicator (optional)
<p data-bbox="161 371 1035 456">3) Create space for people with personal experience of mental health problems to share their story</p> <ul data-bbox="161 495 1066 891" style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what activities or events you could plan or support which involve your members, staff or volunteers with personal experience of mental health problems talking about this experience and how they look out for their own wellbeing. • You could do this in a variety of ways, for example you could include a personal case study in your member communications, or in online resources, give a platform to a staff member or volunteer at an event to speak about their personal experience, or invite them to write a blog. • If this isn't possible, you could feature one of our Blue Light Programme blogs. time-to-change.org.uk/emergency-workers-mental-health 	<p data-bbox="1139 495 1430 692">e.g. number of views of a member blog, number of attendees at an event where you create space for the personal experience perspective</p>
<p data-bbox="161 949 1010 1034">4) Map your ongoing mental health and wellbeing initiatives for the next 12 months.</p> <ul data-bbox="161 1072 1086 1126" style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about how you can sustain activity past the lifetime of the Blue Light Programme and ensure mental health stays on the agenda. 	

What next?

Download the action plan table [here](#), complete and send to bluelightpledge@mind.org.uk using Associations pledge as the subject line. And if you're unsure as to whether your actions meet our criteria, don't worry. We'll give constructive feedback should your plan need developing or advise if you have any queries.

Once approved we'll send you a pledge board pre-signed by Mind Chief Executive Officer Paul Farmer with space for one additional signatory from your organisation. Please note that we will need a minimum of 2 weeks notice in advance of your chosen signing date in order to send a pledge board to you.

Deadline

Please send us your completed action plan no later than **Friday 2nd October 2015.**



Appendix 1

As the Blue Light Time to Change Associations Pledge is a new and additional offer in the Blue Light Programme, we have taken into consideration the time and resources we have available within the current programme with regards to the format and process for the pledge.

The pledge is a pilot initiative that will be offered on an invitation only basis to a small number of associations and organisations that currently support the emergency services. We will be inviting associations and organisations that:

1. **Are already involved with the Blue Light Programme**
2. **Are a national association or body that is:**
 - Providing direct support and guidance to emergency services staff and volunteers on both physical and mental health and wellbeing issues
 - A large national body that is currently reaching and can influence a large number of emergency services staff and volunteer
 - Able to cascade learning to and influence other local bodies and associations that are working alongside and supporting emergency services staff and volunteers at a local level



Who else has been invited to participate in the national pilot?

Ambulance

College of Paramedics
 Association of Ambulance Chief Execs
 Unison
 The Ambulance Services Charity

Fire and Rescue

Chief Fire Officers Association
 The Fire Fighters Charity
 Fire Brigades Union

Police

Association of Special Constabulary Chief Officials
 Disabled Police Association
 National Black Police Association
 Association of Police & Crime Commissioners
 National Association of Muslim Police
 Police Superintendents Association
 The National Police Chiefs Council
 College of Policing
 Police Federation
 Police Rehabilitation Centre
 Police Treatment Centres

Search and Rescue

Due to the structure of Search and Rescue services being different to those within Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance, the Associations pledge is not relevant to this emergency service. We are working with Search and Rescue staff and volunteers at all levels to ensure that the Blue Light Programme is embedded. We also encourage Search and Rescue services and groups to look into signing the Blue Light pledge for emergency service employers. More information here:

mind.org.uk/bluelight/pledge

Appendix 2: Blue Light Programme key messages

Anti-stigma

- We're all human and we all have mental health
- Having mental health doesn't mean having a crisis – it just means making sure you feel ok
- We all need support sometimes
- It takes strength to talk
- It helps to talk about mental health
- Mental health problems are common and can be treated
- You're still you at work – look beyond your uniform
- How are you? It's ok to ask for help and to offer help
- See the signs of stress in you or a colleague – you might need to take better care of yourself
- Mind's support is independent and confidential
- Mental health is just as important as physical health
- Staff and volunteers need support and understanding around mental health from their employer and colleagues
- Dealing with stressful situations every day can build up over time
- Mental health is just as important as physical health
- Worrying about being fit to work can make existing problems worse
- Lead the change in your workplace – sign the Blue Light Time to Change pledge and develop a meaningful action plan to help promote wellbeing
- Most people experiencing a mental health problem are able to manage their condition and perform their role to a high standard
- Make sure your staff and volunteers know it's ok to talk about mental health and that they won't be treated differently
- It helps to talk about mental health, but it can take courage. Just asking 'how are you?' – and taking time to listen properly to the response – can make an enormous difference



Blue Light Programme key messages

Support

- Day in, day out. Whatever your role, different things can get us down at work or home. You or your family can pick up the phone and contact the confidential and independent Blue Light Infoline, Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm.
- You work shifts at different times, but information on managing mental health is available at all times at mind.org.uk/bluelight
- You can discretely text or email the Blue Light Infoline at any time, for a response in working hours
- Whatever your role or rank, you are not alone with your mental health – get practical support and help yourself stay well for work
- Learning more about mental health means you can better support yourself and others
- Look out for colleagues and let them know that support is available
- Mind's support is independent and confidential
- Stop work stress taking over your personal life – pick up the phone and contact the Blue Light Infoline
- We can signpost you to the best source of expert support for you and are linked with other emergency service support providers across different regions
- Looking after your mental health can lead to better physical health too
- Accessing support early gives staff and volunteers a better chance to prevent bigger problems from developing
- Providing practical support with mental health encourages positive coping mechanisms
- Staff and volunteers have a high level of interest in more information around mental health
- Better support your staff and volunteer wellbeing day to day and help keep them well for work
- Make sure your staff and volunteers know what support is available and how to access it – provide information on your staff intranet about the Blue Light Programme (and order promotional packs at mind.org.uk/bluelight)
- Don't just do digital – some staff or volunteers don't have access to computers but they still need support



Appendix 3

Key dates

Time to Talk Day - February

The Time to Change campaign challenges mental health stigma and discrimination by getting people talking about mental health. This event has a key 'ask' every year which you can plan activity around. Time to Talk Day is normally the first Thursday in February.

time-to-change.org.uk/timetotalkday

World Suicide Prevention Day

World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) is an initiative of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), a co-sponsor of meetings and events related to WSPD 2015. Since 2003, WSPD has taken place on 10th September each year. It serves as a call to action to individuals and organisations to prevent suicide. This year, the theme encourages us all to consider the role that offering support may play in combating suicide.

The theme of this year's World Suicide Prevention Day is 'Preventing Suicide: Reaching Out and Saving Lives'. You can reach out to your colleagues and team-mates on this day by getting involved with the Blue Light Programme activities.

mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/bluelight/world-suicide-prevention-day/wspd-landing-page

World Mental Health Day - 10 October

World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year. The overall objective is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilise efforts in support of mental health. It is promoted by the World Health Organisation.

who.int/mental_health/world-mental-health-day/en



Image: West Midlands Police

Other dates to consider

Aside from these key dates there are plenty of other opportunities throughout the year around which you can plan targeted activity. Here are just a few:

January

Beat Blue Monday: normally in mid-January each year.

'Blue Monday' is a chance for people to overcome the more immediate side of life's downs, to reflect on what makes them depressed, and consider what can be done to help and overcome the issues surrounding depression.

beatbluemonday.org.uk

February

OCD Week: Raising awareness of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

OCD Action

ocdaction.org.uk

March

World Bipolar Day

The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of bipolar disorders and to improve sensitivity towards the illness. It is promoted by the International Bipolar Foundation and partners. ibpf.org/blog/world-bipolar-day

April

Depression Awareness Week

Promoted by the Depression Alliance, the day works to raise awareness about depression and what it means to live with depression. depressionalliance.org

May

Mental Health Awareness Week

Raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing every year, promoted by the Mental Health Foundation. For more information and future dates, go to: mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/mentalhealthawarenessweek

June

Men's Health Week

A focus on healthy living for men normally held in June. menshealthforum.org.uk/mhw

October

OCD Awareness Week - normally in October each year.

A week dedicated to raising awareness of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, promoted by OCD-UK. ocduk.org

November

National Stress Awareness Day - 4 November 2015

Normally held on the first Wednesday of November each year, this day is promoted by the International Stress Management Association (ISMAUK). The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of the effects of psychological distress in the workplace and of the many coping strategies and sources of help available to address it. For more information go to: isma.org.uk/about-national-stress-awareness-day-nsad



We're Mind, the mental health charity.

We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.

mind.org.uk/BlueLight

bluelight@mind.org.uk

 @MindCharity #mybluelight

 Mind

We're a registered charity in England (no. 219830)

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