



## **Mental health and wellbeing – preventing staff suicide**

### **Position statement**

In 2016, given a perceived increase in suicides of staff members within the English ambulance, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) commissioned research to determine whether people who work in paramedic or other ambulance service roles are at higher risk of suicide than people who work in other professions. The research was also intended to determine whether any common trends were discernible in ambulance service staff suicide cases that occurred in 2014 or 2015 and, if so, what they were.

The Yorkshire Ambulance Service and the University of Bristol undertook this research, which was informed by analysis conducted by the Office of National Statistics. The research received ethical approval from the Health Research Authority and was eligible for National Institute for Health Research Clinical Research Network support.

The research showed that the risk of suicide amongst male paramedics was significantly higher than the national average. The suicide risk for female paramedics or other ambulance staff was not possible to discern due to the low number of deaths. As a result of the study's findings, ambulance services are implementing a number of recommendations, which include: the production and introduction of a mental health strategy with a specific emphasis on suicide prevention; the ongoing collection and monitoring of data on ambulance service suicides; and reviews of support and training provided to staff at trust-level.

AACE and its constituent organisations are committed to providing and signposting ambulance service staff to appropriate support mechanisms that can help them in times of need. The sector hopes that its work in this area will contribute to a reduction in the suicide rate amongst ambulance service employees and contribute to their improved mental wellbeing. The mental health charity, Mind, is supporting and contributing to the AACE's work alongside the College of Paramedics and The Ambulance Staff Charity (TASC).