

News story: Policing minister listens to first-hand experience at police wellbeing roundtable

The Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd has heard from experts and senior officers on police wellbeing, including a chief superintendent who wrote a personal memoir on policing and mental health, at a roundtable on Tuesday 16 January.

The roundtable, chaired by the minister, focused on how the government can assist police chiefs in their statutory duty to manage the welfare of their officers. It was attended by police leaders, including Chief Constable Andy Rhodes, who is the National Police Chiefs Council Lead on Wellbeing, as well as experts from across government, Public Health England, and mental health charities.

Metropolitan Police Chief Superintendent John Sutherland, author of 'Blue: A Memoir', which details his struggles with mental health during a 26-year career in policing, also addressed the event about his personal experiences.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

Policing can be a very demanding job. Officers have demonstrated extraordinary courage and fortitude in the face of major challenges over the past year, including terrorist attacks and the Grenfell Tower fire. I am grateful to them for their tireless work and dedication to duty.

It is imperative that policing provides excellent support to its officers and staff – which is why I'm keen to listen to those with the most experience on how to do this best.

The government takes the issue of police welfare very seriously, and this event provides an opportunity to review progress so far and put plans in place for the future.

The roundtable builds on existing work by the sector. In July 2017, the Home Secretary awarded £7.5 million from the Police Transformation Fund over 3 years to pilot and, if it is successful, fund a dedicated national service to help provide enhanced welfare support. The new service will complement the support already delivered at force level to serving police officers and staff.

The government has also awarded £7 million since 2014, using funds from the LIBOR fines imposed on banks, to the charity Mind, which has funded targeted support and programmes for emergency services.

The College of Policing has also carried out important work in this area. CC Rhodes and Dr Ian Hesketh of the College have led the design of The Blue Light Wellbeing Framework – the first ever sector-specific self-assessment management tool. It is available via Oscar Kilo, a website that brings together those responsible for wellbeing and shares learning and best practice.

Chief Constable Andy Rhodes, National Police Chiefs Council Lead on Wellbeing, said:

Our police officers and staff work in a physically and emotionally demanding environment, putting their bodies and their minds on the line 24/7 to keep us safe.

This roundtable sends out a clear message that we are relentless in our commitment to provide the world-class welfare support police need to deliver a high-quality service for the public.

The event brought together experts and national leads to review progress and agree priorities for the future, including significant investment from the Police Transformation Fund. This investment will enable us to accelerate our efforts and significantly step up our activity over the coming years.