

National Ambulance LGBT Network



Supporting Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual, Trans staff,
patients and communities

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‘Are you okay?’

Finding the right
support for our
LGBT colleagues

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What are we talking about?

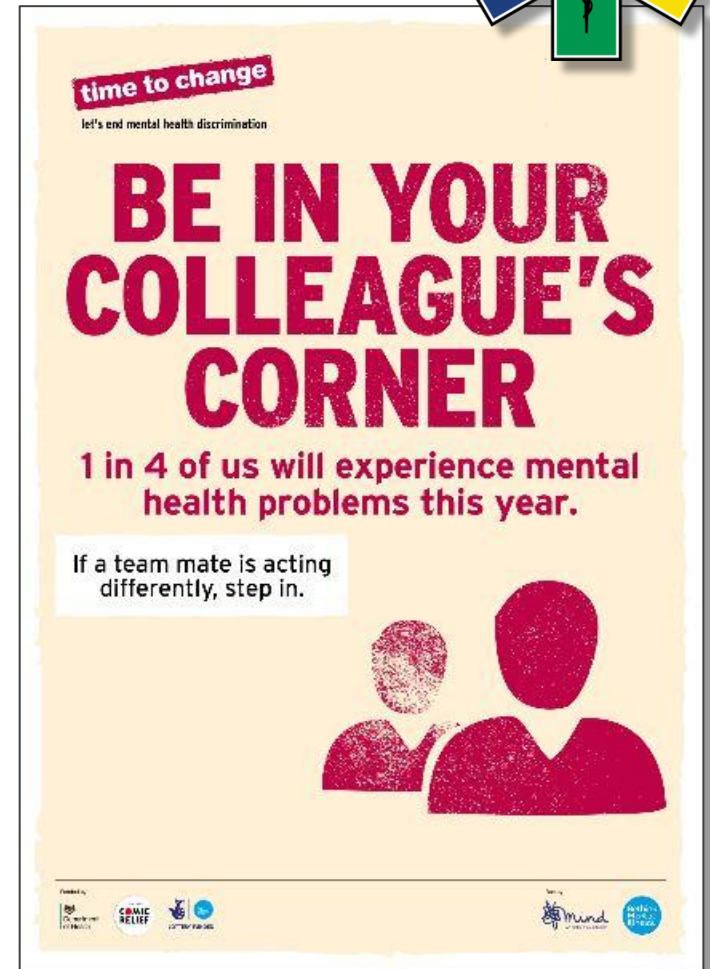


The 'Time to Change' campaign reminds us just how prevalent mental health problems. One in four people will experience a problem this year. Some may be short term; others will take a much longer time to sort out.

For operational ambulance staff, we see this all too often, but we rarely seem to consider ourselves. Repeated exposure to difficult situations increases the likelihood of stress, anxiety and other mental health problems.

LGBT staff are more vulnerable than the general population, and this is further increased when people do not feel able to be their 'authentic' self at work. This means people hiding their true identity, often because of the fear of negative reactions from colleagues.

Having the right support mechanisms available when things aren't right is the best way to keep us healthy.



Spotting the signs



Mental health problems can happen to anyone, at any time, and for wide variety of reasons. Some common reasons why people find themselves having problems are:

- ❖ Being bullied or pressured at work
- ❖ Having difficulties at home
- ❖ Financial worries
- ❖ Relationship issues

The emotions associated with mental health problems can be compounded when several of these factors come into play at one.

Some tell-tale signs that someone may not be okay are:

- ❖ Not eating properly
- ❖ Not sleeping well
- ❖ Unable to concentrate
- ❖ Feeling more emotional than normal
- ❖ Being withdrawn or more quiet than normal

At its most extreme people may self harm or feel suicidal.



Helping your colleagues



When someone we are working closely with is having problems, we are the best people to spot the signs and make a difference.

It can be hard but the greatest gift we can offer is to allow someone to say they are 'not okay'. Remember, even just saying this is a very hard thing for them to do.

Reaching out and letting someone admit and talk about their problems, is the first stage in healing someone. It might not be whole solution, but it is certainly a big step.

The irony of this is we deal with this everyday in the Ambulance Service to the hundreds of patients we see. We often overlook the people closer to us and forget to support each other.

Have you noticed how very un-British it is to be 'not okay'? We celebrate people's ability to show strength when often we know people must be feeling low or desperate.

How many times have you heard people described as 'doing well' when they show levels of fortitude after a bereavement or crisis.

Everyone – yes everyone – needs a trusted person to talk to at some point. Just listening, not judging, and trying to understand is therapy in itself.

Occasionally people may need help to access additional support. For some that nudge in the right direction is invaluable.



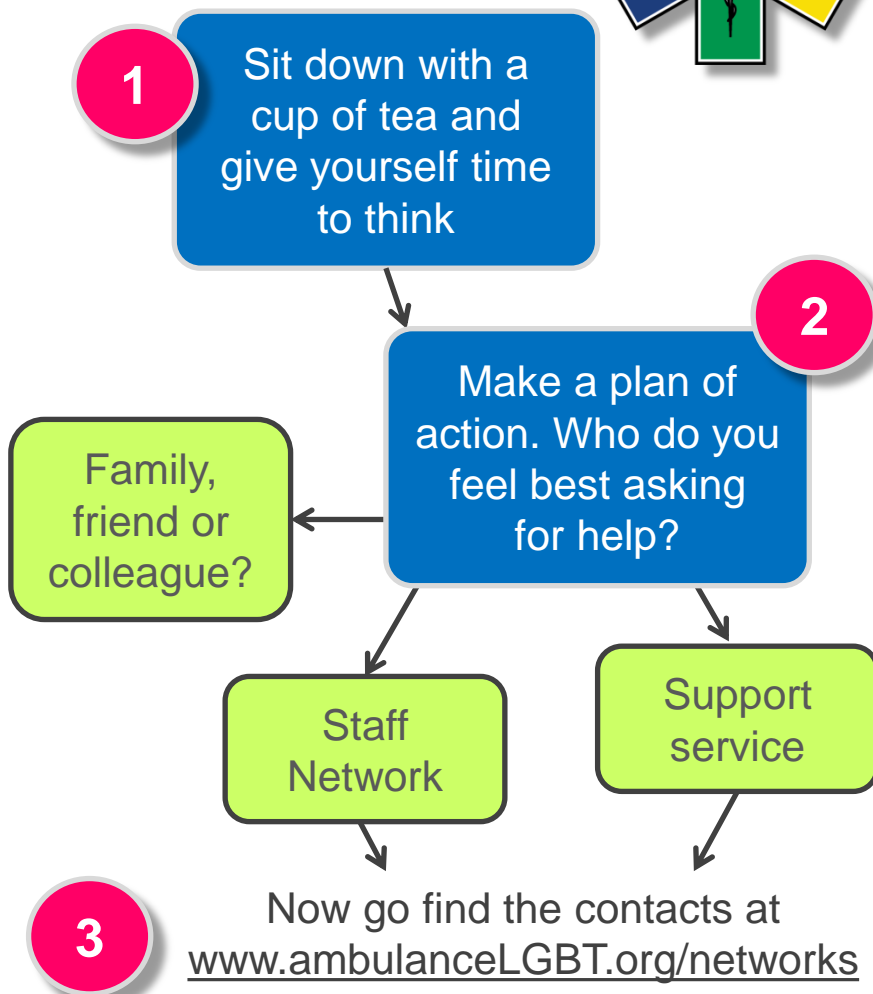
It's me that needs help!



If you are reading this and you are feeling down or that you need help then we are here to help. Every Ambulance Service has support mechanisms in place and we will help you find these.

Finding the right person to talk to can be challenging. If you have family or a trusted friend or colleague to hand, this might be the right person. Sometimes you may feel that someone close to you is not the right person. This is where staff networks can offer a helping hand.

If you identify as LGBT it can often be useful to talk to someone who also identifies as LGBT, even if the problem is not, well, LGBT! That feeling of common understanding can be very important.



How can LGBT Networks help?



There are a number of good reasons why our Trusts should have staff networks. We often forget the most basic reason, which is to provide support to people who need it.

Support comes in many forms and can be as simple as being a person who will listen when someone needs it. Make sure contact information is easy to find. Many of our services are widely dispersed and so information on websites and social media are most effective.

Advocacy support is also useful to people in minority groups. Being there alongside someone when difficult conversations are happening give someone real strength.

Other forms of support are advisory or mediation, and you need training to do this.

Some useful tips:

1. As a network, spend some time thinking about how support mechanisms will work. Make a diagram so you all share the same understanding.
2. Where possible include named contacts when promoting staff networks and support mechanisms. People find it easier when they identify with a person at the other end.
3. If you are a named contact, always respond quickly. If you don't have time to deal with it, always refer it on to someone else and make sure the recipient is informed. For emails always use 'out of office' when you are away so people know you won't be available.



Your local support provider



NHS Trust	Support Provider	Telephone
East of England	Wellbeing Hub	01234 243 060
East Midlands	PAM Assist	0800 882 4102
London	PAM Assist	0800 882 4102
North East	Occupational Health	0191 430 2061
North West	Occupational Health	0161 419 5677
Scotland	Employee Counselling Service	08000 329 849
South Central	Employee Assistance Programme	0800 282 193
South East Coast	Wellbeing Hub	0300 123 9193
South Western	Staying Well Service	01392 453 974
Wales	Care First Employee Assistance	0800 174 319
West Midlands	Staff Advice and Liaison Service	01384 215 880
Yorkshire	Optima Health	0800 011 6737

Most of the services listed are available 24/7.
Please visit your Trust's intranet site to confirm
operating hours of services.



Challenging stigma



Mind's Blue Light Programme has published an excellent leaflet which looks at challenging stigma and additional concerns for LGBT people.

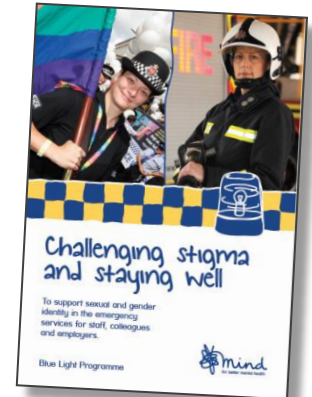
It states; 'When people face stigma and discrimination at work, it has a negative impact not just on them, but on the way the whole organisation works.'

'People thrive in workplaces where no one is subject to negative stereotypes, where everyone can be open about what's going on in their lives, and where they can feel confident about seeking support, if and when it's needed.'

The leaflet also goes on to explain why it is important to address these issues:

'It's especially important for emergency services to challenge stigma. Our research shows staff and volunteers in police, fire, search and rescue and ambulance services are more likely than the general population to experience mental health problems but you're also less likely to seek support. Seven out of ten emergency services workers tell us your organisation does not encourage you to talk about mental health.'

The full leaflet is available online at www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-policy-work/equality-human-rights/mental-health-and-being-lgbt/.



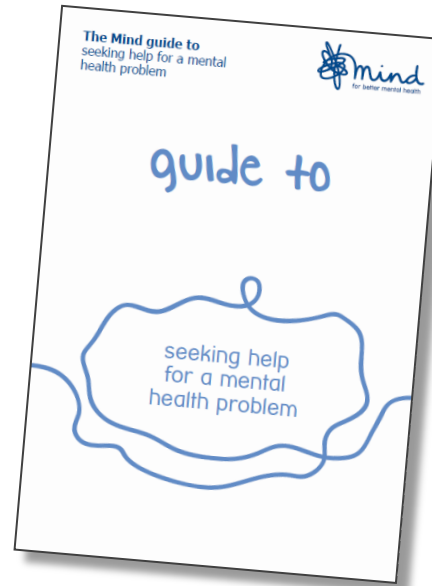
Useful resources



There are some excellent resources available to support you. Here are a few useful links.

The mental health organisation, Mind, offers some excellent resources. On their website you can find details of their Blue Light Programme which is set up to support members of the emergency services.

You might also want to become a Blue Light Champion.



www.mind.org.uk



www.time-to-change.org.uk



<http://marchonstress.com>





A range of really useful resources can be found at the Time to Talk website at:

www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/timetotalkday2019

This includes downloadable materials to help raise awareness of some of the issues and conversation packs for the workplace or community.


Help to make a difference to people in your workplace by arranging an event and letting people know that support is there when needed. Find out how you can be a change maker.



let's end mental health discrimination



#AskTwice and #TimetoTalk








I'M FINE

Sometimes we say we're fine when we're not.

With 1 in 4 of us experiencing a mental health problem each year, if your mate says they're fine, they might not be.

To really find out, #AskTwice.

time to change
let's end mental health discrimination

Run by     

#AskTwice (above) resources are available online:

www.time-to-change.org.uk/resources/create-download-materials#/~/embed/resources/collection/11

#TimetoTalk LGBT poster (right) available online:

www.ambulanceLGBT.org/resources/supporting-our-staff/



time to change
time to talk day
07/02/19
let's end mental health discrimination

#TimetoTalk

to your LGBT colleagues and let them know they have your full support.

Find out more at
www.ambulanceLGBT.org

 National Ambulance LGBT Network  @NatAmbLGBTUK

Support services in detail [1]



Important Notes

The following information about each NHS Ambulance Trust was correct at the time of compiling (4 January 2019). Please note that changes do frequently occur and if you have any problems contacting a service listed, you should use one of the alternative listings.

Please keep us updated if you spot anything that is not correct. Please email alistair.gunn@nhs.net.

For up-to-date information on Trust LGBT Network Leads please visit www.ambulanceLGBT.org/networks.

East of England Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is the Wellbeing Hub who can be contacted on 01234 243 060.

The 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme not supplied is also available and this can be contacted on 0800 085 1376.

East Midlands Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is PAM Assist who are available 24 hours a day. They can be contacted on 0800 882 4102.

London Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is PAM Assist who are available 24 hours a day. They can be contacted on 0800 882 4102.

The Trust Wellbeing Lead is Nicola Bullen who can be contacted at Nicola.Bullen@lond-amb.nhs.uk.

The Trust Mental Health Lead is Carly Lynch who can be contacted at Carly.Lynch@lond-amb.nhs.uk.

North East Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is the Occupational Health Department which can be contacted on 0191 430 2061.

The Lead person for Occupational Health is Lesley Ellison who can be contacted at Lesley.Ellison@neas.nhs.uk.

North West Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is Occupational Health who can be contacted on 0161 419 5677. Services are provided by Stockport NHS Foundation Trust.

Scottish Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is Employee Counselling Service who can be contacted on 08000 329 849. Staff can also call the Breathing Space helpline on 0800 838 587.

South Central Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is OPTUM - Employee Assistance Programme Service who can be contacted on 0800 282 193. The web based service can be accessed at: www.livewell.optum.com.

South East Coast Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is The Wellbeing Hub who can be contacted on 0300 123 9193.



Support services in detail [2]



South Western Ambulance

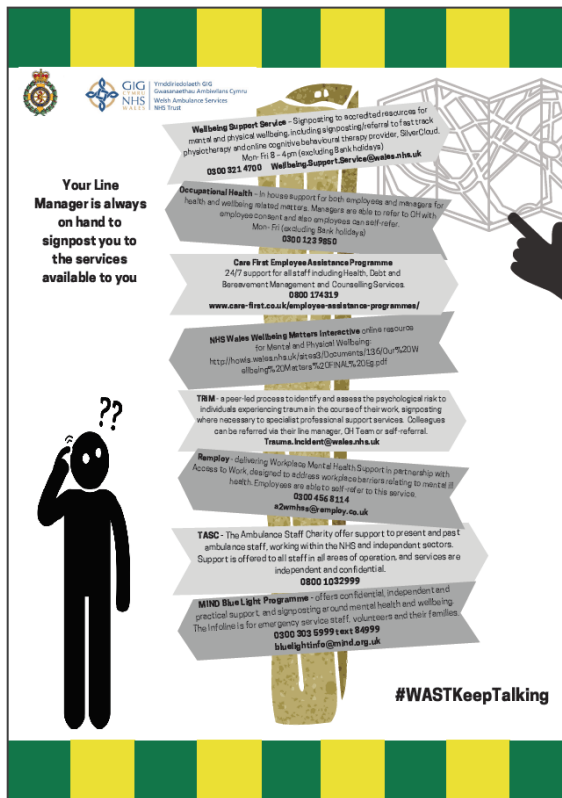
The contact for emergency support is The Staying Well Service who can be contacted on 01392 453974.

Welsh Ambulance

The main support provider we use here at WAST is Care First Employee Assistance Programme. This is available 24/7 for all staff and offers Health, Debt, Bereavement and Counselling Services. The contact number is 0800 174 319, and information is available online at: www.care-first.co.uk/employee-assistance-programmes.

The Trust also has its own internal Staff Wellbeing Support Service that any member of staff can self-refer to. The contact is 0300 321 4700.

A fantastic poster (see right) is available for Welsh Ambulance Service employees and includes a range of support mechanisms available to everyone. This poster can be downloaded from <https://bit.ly/2GUGXWE>.



Poster reproduced here with the permission of Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

West Midlands Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is the Staff Advice and Liaison Service (SALS) who can be contacted on 01384 215 880.

Yorkshire Ambulance

The contact for emergency support is Optima Health who are available 24 hours a day. They can be contacted on 0800 011 6737.

Optima Health offer a range of services, including mental health support, and you can find out more information at: www.optimahealth.co.uk.

The Trust Wellbeing Team are also available and the main contacts are as follows:

- Helen at Helen.Houghton5@nhs.net
- Jo at Joanne.Donnison@nhs.net

Yorkshire Ambulance Service has trained a number of staff in mental health first aid, and contacts are available from the Trust Wellbeing Team.