| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 23-1515Responded to: 14 August 2023 |
| --- | --- |

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding.

We have received an unprecedented volume of requests lately and that has, unfortunately, impacted on our ability to meet the statutory timescales in some cases.

Before answering your questions, we would stress that the wellbeing of our officers and staff is absolutely fundamental to the delivery of policing in Scotland and we offer a range of support, detailed as follows:

Your Wellbeing Assessment (YWA) - mental health MOT

This is a ‘Mental Health MOT’, delivered through Optima Health, designed to identify early signs of psychological ill health as well as indicators of depression, anxiety disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Where appropriate it will lead to support via counselling or signposting to their GP.

Resilience Assessments - support of high risk roles

An annual resilience assessment is conducted for a number of identified roles - for example where there is a likelihood of a more regular exposure to trauma. This is counsellor led and allows for an assessment of psychological wellbeing.

Wellbeing Champions Network - peer to peer support

The Wellbeing Champion Network provides peer to peer support and is locally positioned across all parts of the organisation. There are currently around 130 champions but we are recruiting to increase this to around 230.

A key theme we hear from trauma and mental health specialists and our officers and staff themselves is around the benefit of peer-to-peer support and lived experiences and this is an area we focus on heavily.

Communications - Mental health / Suicide focus

Our Lived Experience Series - a new way of highlighting mental health, suicide and further breaking down mental health stigma. The series focuses on real life experience relived by our own people, with one piece specific to an officer’s recovery from considering suicide.

Mental Health Awareness week 2023 - Communications campaign focused on anxiety and the sharing of lived experience.

HWB Newsletter features resources from Optima Health on mental health and suicide.

People Direct - absence due to mental health issues/ psychological conditions.

We launched a revised support offering via our People Direct Service Desk which handles circa 5,500 wellbeing-related calls per month, ranging from those that report sick/ report fit and those that are looking for advice and guidance. The advisors on the desk have been trained (‘Lifelines Scotland’ and ‘Scottish Mental Health First Aid) enabling them to provide further advice on how to seek support and signpost the person through the right pathway.

Learning, Training Development - Line Manager role in support and spotting signs and symptoms

People Manager Development Programme has now been developed with the focus being supporting our people and ‘Promoting a Positive Workplace’. The programme is mandatory for all line managers. The first ‘module’ is ‘Health and Wellbeing’ with the main focus being mental health and the role of the line manager around having supportive conversations, how to spot early signs of mental health and what tools they need to engage their people and ask about their wellness.

Learning, Training Development - Lifelines Scotland Project

The ‘Lifelines Scotland’ training is delivered by NHS Lothian’s centre for Traumatic Stress. 1,281 officers and staff have attended training, which consists of 3 modules:

* Staying well, understanding resilience and self-care
* Supporting your colleagues
* Post Trauma Support providing Psychological First Aid.

A ‘train the trainer’ programme delivered by Lifelines Scotland is nearing completion and will see 50 of our officers and staff from throughout the organisation trained in the facilitation of crucial Lifelines resilience, self-care, supporting colleagues and post trauma support training.

Suicide Prevention with SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health)

Locally delivered ‘Lunch and Learn’ sessions by SAMH.

HELP Employee Assistance Programme - Support in crisis and for mental health

Following a mental health assessment, officers and staff can access 6 to 8 sessions of support where this has been deemed appropriate. If more are required, the EAP clinical psychologist will review the case and again, if clinically appropriate, these will also be provided. The support provided is specialist trauma focused support TF-CBT/ EMDR sessions for work place trauma. Officers and staff with symptoms of PTSD for personal trauma will be referred to their GP by EAP for the appropriate support. The service is available 24/7/365 and includes family members.

Moving on to your questions:

**Are you able to provide the number of Police Officers and Staff who have sadly taken their whilst employed by The Police Service of Scotland?**

**Could you provide this data since the inception of Police Scotland?**

In response to these questions, I can advise you that between 2013 and 2023 to date, 14 police officers and 3 police staff have completed suicide, broken down as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| Individuals | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

**Can the police officers age and gender of be provided?**

The information sought is held by Police Scotland but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that an exemption applies - section 39(1) - endangerment to mental health.

Whilst I appreciate that deceased individuals do not have data protection rights that would allow me to apply section 38(1)(b) (personal information) of the Act to this information, it is my assessment that a broader expectation of confidentiality exists even upon death.

There are very few deaths in service within Police Scotland in any given year, and whilst we cannot stop speculation, it is for families to decide the level of detail that is shared about their loved ones.

It is our assessment that disclosure of information that would identify individuals as having died from suicide could only lead to increased stress and anguish for their loved ones.

The public interest lies in favour of protecting the expectation of confidentiality that exists and not causing any further distress to the bereaved.

If you require any further assistance please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by email or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by email or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.