

The development of a suite of resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of pre-registration and newly qualified paramedics.

Specification



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Section One: Introduction

1. **Background**

Health Education England (HEE) exists for one reason only: to support the delivery of Health Education England (HEE) exists for one reason only: to support the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement to the patients and public of England by ensuring that the workforce of today and tomorrow has the right numbers, skills, values, and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place. Our vision is to provide the right workforce to better meet the needs and wants of patients, both now and in the future.

There is an identified increased risk of suicide amongst male Paramedics, with this group of staff being 75% more likely to die by suicide than other occupational groups, the highest amongst all Allied Health Professions. It is acknowledged that the rate is not as high as that for female nurses. Paramedics in ambulance trusts have a higher incidence of sickness absence due to mental health related issues, with a Guardian article in 2019 citing a

significant increase (186% between 2011 – 2019) in sickness absence due to anxiety, stress, depression and other psychiatric illnesses.

Paramedics also have a higher rate of referral and self-referral to HCPC for fitness to practice concerns and The Carter report (27 September 2018) detailed concern regarding the recruitment and retention of the ambulance workforce. Retention of Paramedics is of significant concern, with the average age of people leaving the profession being 42, indicating potential 'burnout' of these individuals. There is an abundance of evidence supporting the fact that there are issues with mental health and wellbeing of staff in ambulance services.

2. Context

Since the publication of the Paramedic Evidence based Education Project (PEEP) Report (2013), a number of work programmes have been undertaken by Health Education England and other stakeholders which have either sought directly to address unwarranted variation in health and wellbeing, fitness to practice referrals and attrition (both from the ambulance sector and the profession) or have had an indirect positive impact on these variables.

In May 2020, Suzanne Rastrick, Chief Allied Health Professions officer for England, commissioned a piece of work to develop a framework for best practice. The aim of this work was to reduce the risk of suicide in Paramedics. In developing the framework, a review of evidence, grey literature and best practice in the field was undertaken (Appendix 1). This work has identified very limited evidence for the effectiveness of specific interventions that reduce the incidence of suicide. Fig 1, is the draft health and wellbeing model for the ambulance sector, which has been developed through this work programme. The model details the various elements that have been identified, from the evidence that will support the health and wellbeing of Paramedics and the wider ambulance sector staff.

A preventative intervention that equips the workforce with tools and techniques to manage their own mental health and wellbeing has the potential to create a legacy where the benefits could impact positively on future employees for many years to come.

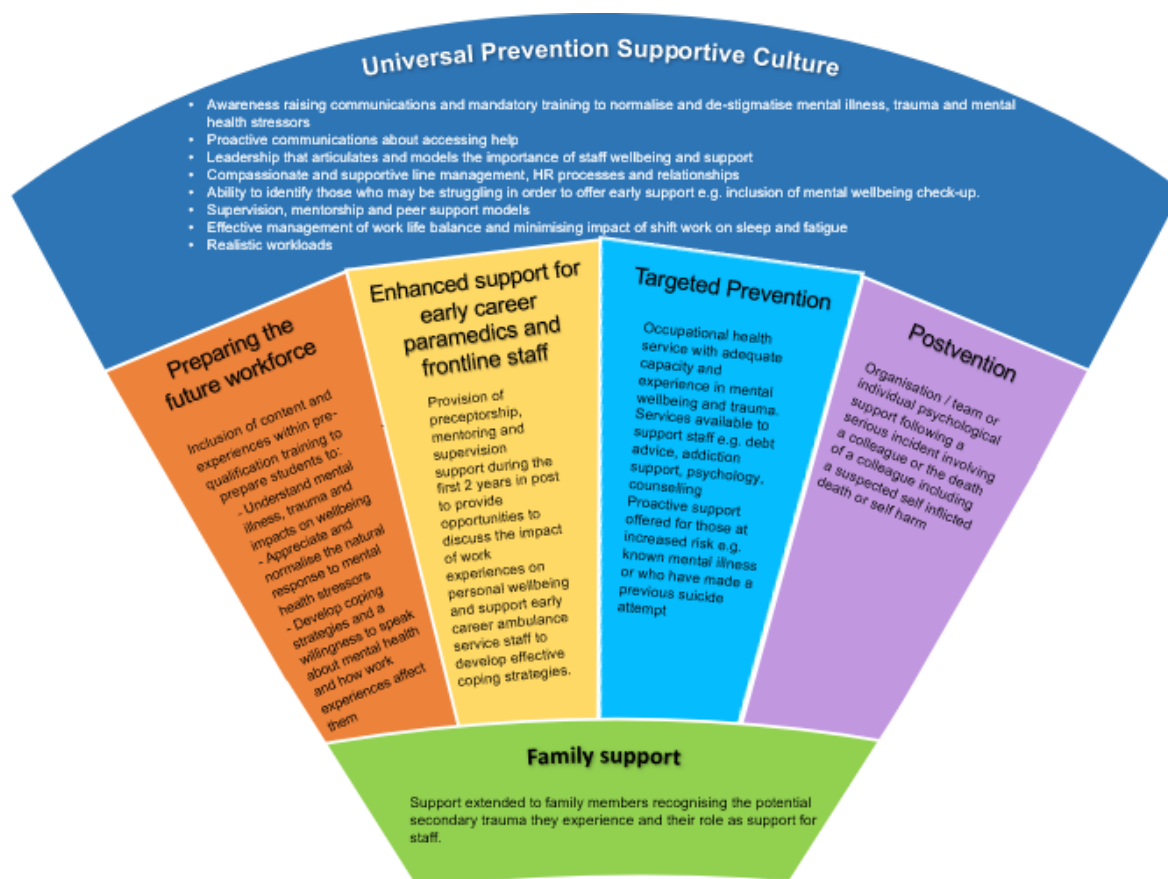


Fig 1: Proposed model for support of health and wellbeing in the ambulance sector

It has been identified that there is a gap focusing on supporting the provision on 2 elements of this model:

- Preparing the future workforce
- Enhanced support for early career paramedics and frontline staff

Preparing the future workforce

The fifth edition of the Paramedic Curriculum guidance published in September 2019, included additional content to support Paramedics in their understanding and management of mental health pathology. This revised version does not include a requirement for Higher Education Institutions to provide any content that covers the potential mental health impact, the role of a Paramedic, especially when working in the ambulance sector, can have on their own mental health, how to identify this and the possible support that they should access.

Enhanced support for early career paramedic and frontline staff

In addition to ensuring student paramedics and newly qualified paramedics are supported to understand the potential mental health impact the role may have on them. It is equally important to ensure Paramedics undertaking practice educator roles have this understanding and can identify and support those students that may be struggling with their mental health

Section Two: Specification

Overview

3. The requirement

To implement evidence based preventative solutions designed to equip paramedics with the prevention skills that are available to address poor mental health and improve wellbeing in the early career paramedic workforce.

4. Areas for development

4.1. Development of **curriculum guidance** regarding personal mental health and well-being for pre-registration paramedic training, which will include content and experiences within pre-qualification training to prepare students to:

- Understand mental health/ illness, trauma and the potential impacts of the role of a paramedic on personal wellbeing.
- Appreciate and normalise the natural response to mental health stressors.
- Develop coping strategies and a willingness to speak about mental health and how work experiences affect them.

The ability to influence adoption of the curricula will be essential in embedding this at course providers across England.

4.2. Development of a **wellbeing and recovery support tool** for use by paramedic students and early career staff in ambulance trusts. The tool will:

- Support self-reflection and signposting and be suitable to support conversations with line managers and supervisors if required.
- Be in a form that could be adopted at minimal cost by all ambulance trusts.
- Be evidence-based and appealing to users.
- Build on existing initial work undertaken by 2 pre-registration Occupational Therapy students.
- Be developed in collaboration with users and the ambulance wellbeing group.
- Develop guidance for students in how to take action or seek further support.
- Provide a directory of external organisations providing help and support.

4.3. Development of a **learning and development package** for student and preceptorship supervisors, which will enable:

- Student and preceptorship supervisors to have a better understanding of the potential impact the role of a student or newly qualified paramedic can have on mental health.

- Identification of potential mental health issues in student and newly qualified paramedics.
- Provision of appropriate support to students and newly qualified paramedics or signposting to appropriate support.
- Guidance in creating local networks to support students and preceptors.

5. Key considerations

The supplier will be required to:

- Review current curriculum content provided by higher education institutions to identify best practice.
- Develop clear curriculum guidance for pre-registration training based on best practice and embed this within the curricula adopted by HEIs in England.
- Link where appropriate to the previous work undertaken by Yorkshire Ambulance Service, the University of Lincoln and AACE regarding paramedic health and wellbeing.
- Build on the work undertaken to date building on best evidence to develop a wellbeing and recovery support tool.
- Identify best practice in supervisor training.
- Develop a training package that can be delivered to all practice educators and preceptorship supervisors.
- Link to the *Blue Light* work that the HEE Mental Health team are undertaking in 2020-21 and beyond.

In developing these products, it is expected that the supplier will utilise the available literature, focussed on supporting student and newly qualified paramedics. The resources developed as part of this program of work will be branded jointly by Health Education England and the supplier and be available for use free of charge to all users.

6. Key performance indicators

The Supplier should provide outputs / products capable of realising the following demonstrable system benefits:

- Effective system engagement throughout ambulance services, course providers and professional groups.
- Positive engagement with user groups.
- Strong educational governance procedures.
- Ability to deliver equitably across and throughout the geography of England.
- Utilisation of feedback to enhance future provision.

- Accurate, timely and effective reporting to HEE.

7. Payment mechanism.

The contract value for this provision is up to £125,000 +Vat.

HEE will make payment upon contract signing subject to receipt of an uncontested invoice.

Parties agree to implement an information sharing agreement to enable the sharing of information in relation to tracking performance and progression of this contract.

Section Three: Information

8. Data management

The supplier will abide by public sector requirements for data security and management and will abide by GDPR regulations.

9. Intellectual property

All Intellectual Property Rights used or owned by a Party prior to the Commencement Date (Background IP) is and shall remain the exclusive property of the Party owning it (or, where applicable, the third party from whom its right to use the Background IP has derived).

Each Party grants to the other royalty-free, non-exclusive licence to use its Background IP during the contract terms for the sole purpose of developing and delivering the Programme, but for no other purpose. Neither Party shall be entitled to grant and sub-licence over or in respect of the other Party's Background IP.

Any modification or amendment to the service or training materials shall be subject to the Authority and the Supplier approval.

The Authority will hold Intellectual Property of all products developed as a part of the delivery of this programme, although the intention is for products to be openly available free to access.

10. Confidentiality

The Supplier agrees to comply with the following:

- That they shall keep permanently confidential the information contained herein or sent herewith or made available in connection with further enquiries (in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2005), and

11. Freedom of information

Submissions will be subject to the FoIA. All information submitted will be treated as 'commercial in confidence' during the tender process.

Potential Suppliers should be aware of HEE's obligations and responsibilities under the FoIA to disclose on request recorded information held by HEE provided by potential Suppliers in connection with this procurement exercise, or with any contract that may be awarded as a result of this exercise, unless it considers one of the statutory exemptions under FoIA applies.