

Sources of help for those in need of mental and emotional support

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 4 July 2016 Updated 11 January 2024

Written by College of Policing

10 mins read

A comprehensive support directory is available by downloading the [Help is at Hand PDF](#). This resource is also available to first responders as a [pocket sized 'z card'](#).

Note: All of the contact information provided on this page is correct at the time of printing but you may need to check. The College of Policing is not responsible for, nor endorses, the information and advice of the organisations listed.

Samaritans

Samaritans provide emotional support to anyone who is struggling to cope and needs someone to listen. [Read more about Samaritans on their website.](#)

Local branches can be visited during the day.

- Helpline: 116 123 every day, 24 hours
- SMS: 07725 909090
- Email: jo@samaritans.org

Mind

The mental health system can be complicated and it can be hard for those that come into contact with the police to know where to go for support. [Read more about Mind on their website.](#)

Mind has provided some [guides](#) to help those in need to decide what the best option for them is.

Two additional helpline services are available.

Mind Infoline

The Mind Infoline team provides information on a range of topics, including:

- types of mental health problem
- where to get help
- medication and alternative treatments
- advocacy

Lines are open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except for bank holidays).

- Call: 0300 123 3393
- Email: info@mind.org.uk
- Text: 86463

Mind Legal Line

Mind Legal Line provides legal information and general advice to members of the public on mental health-related law, covering:

- mental health
- mental capacity
- community care
- human rights and discrimination/equality related to mental health issues

The Mind Legal Line can be contacted via email or post.

- Email: legal@mind.org.uk
- Write: Mind Legal Line, Unit 9, Cefn Coed Parc, Nantgarw, Cardiff CF15 7QQ

Social media support

The following text has been provided by Public Health England as a sample response to social media posts that cause concern.

If you or someone you know is feeling desperate, help is always available. The best way to honour [person's name] is to seek help if you or someone you know is struggling. If you're feeling lost, desperate or alone, please get in touch.

Samaritans: 116 123

Childline: 08001111

Papyrus Hopeline: 0800 068 41 41

CALM: 0800 58 58 58

Young Minds Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544

Websites

CALM: thecalmzone.net

Harmless: harmless.org.uk

Papyrus: papyrus-uk.org

Young Minds: youngminds.org.uk

Support for police officers and staff experiencing mental illness or distress

Forces are advised to provide sign-posts to support for officers and staff via occupational health, staff associations and outside organisations so that they may access these services easily (and anonymously) as required. Additionally, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) provides [guidance for employers and managers](#) when supporting a member of staff who is experiencing grief or bereavement.

The Mind charity has developed the [Mind Blue Light Programme](#) to provide mental health support services and resources specifically to people who work and volunteer in the police, fire, ambulance and search and rescue services across England.

The following resources are available.

- The [Blue Light Infoline](#) offers confidential, independent and practical support, advice and signposting around mental health and wellbeing. The Infoline is just for emergency service staff, volunteers and their families, to help keep you or those you care about well for work.

- **Blue Light information booklets**. (These booklets explain how to manage personal mental wellbeing, including how to build resilience and where to go for support.)
- **Blue Light webinars**. (In these webinars, Emma Mamo, the Mind Head of Workplace Wellbeing, talks through a three stage approach to promoting positive mental health at work for line managers, provides practical tips to spot the signs that someone may be experiencing a mental health problem and gives guidance on how to approach a conversation with them.)

Call, email or text the Mind Blue Light Infoline 0300 303 5999 (Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Text 84999 or email bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk

[Find out more about the support on offer and what you can expect from the Blue Light Programme.](#)

Assessment and support of the bereaved

Bereaved people should be given information about available support at the earliest opportunity. During the early stages of loss, bereaved relatives and friends should be advised to see their GP regularly, so that they have the opportunity to talk about how they are coping and to give the GP an opportunity to assess them for traumatic grief reactions and depression.

In cases of suicide, support services information should ideally be provided by the police who attended the scene. If a Community Action Plan (CAP) is developed a member of the suicide response team should be identified to offer ongoing support and be available for the bereaved. Wherever possible this should be someone from an agency with the appropriate experience, for example, a bereavement service or charity.

- Any information provided should include contact details for local and national bereavement support agencies, the Samaritans and other relevant local voluntary organisations.

Further support resources produced by the Samaritans

- **Help is at Hand** (a resource for people bereaved by suicide or other sudden, traumatic death that may be given out by police officers).
- **Working with bereaved families in the aftermath of a suicide.**

- The Samaritans work with Cruse Bereavement Care to provide jointly-facilitated, tailored [support groups](#) for people who have suffered bereavement through suicide. These groups are free to attend.
- [Step by Step support service for schools following a suicide](#). Step by Step provides advice and practical guidance to help schools prepare for, and deal with, the repercussions of suicide or attempted suicide in ways which avoid inadvertently promoting suicidal feelings.

For further information, see the University of Oxford's Centre for Suicide Research, Bereavement by Suicide Guidance for Responders (including police officers) (document forthcoming).

Child bereavement

Households with children should be given contact information for local child bereavement services or charities. These agencies have skilled staff who are experienced in supporting families and schools. They can also help parents to explain the nature of their loved one's death to siblings and other children.

Relatives should be made aware of '[health talk online](#)', this provides resources for those experiencing suicide bereavement.

Bereavement support after a death by suicide for adults

- [Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide \(SOBS\)](#)

SOBS offers support for those bereaved or affected by suicide through a helpline answered by trained volunteers who have been bereaved by suicide and a network of local support groups.

Helpline: 0300 111 5065 every day 9am to 9pm. Email: email.support@uksobs.org

- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#)

Cruse supports people after the death of someone close. Their trained volunteers offer confidential face-to-face, telephone, email and website support, with both national and local services. They also have services specifically for children and young people. [Facing the Future](#) is a new local support group service for people bereaved by suicide run by Cruse Bereavement Care and Samaritans. Check the website for details of available groups.

Helpline: 0844 477 9400, Monday and Friday, 9.30am to 5pm. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 9.30am to 8pm. Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

- supportaftersuicide.org.uk

A website with details of organisations who offer support to people bereaved by suicide and information about relevant resources. The website is provided by the Suicide Bereavement Support Partnership, an alliance of organisations with a focus on providing timely and appropriate support to everyone bereaved or affected by suicide.

- [The Compassionate Friends](#)

The Compassionate Friends support people when a child of any age dies through any cause. They have local support groups and online message boards with special sections for those bereaved by suicide and childless parents.

Helpline: 0345 123 2304 every day 10am to 4pm and 7pm to 10pm.

- **If U Care, Share Foundation**

If U Care, Share Foundation provides practical and emotional support to people bereaved by suicide. It also offers training in suicide prevention and support to young people at risk of suicide around north east England. It is run by people who have experienced a loss by suicide. **The Road Ahead** is a free resource available on the website that is written by people bereaved by suicide giving their perspectives of dealing with the daily impact of loss.

Contact If U Care Share Foundation on 0191 387 5661 or email share@ifucareshare.co.uk. Or if you're outside of the north east area, contact SOBS National Helpline on 0844 561 6855.

- **Age UK**

Age UK provides services and support at a national and local level to older people.

Find useful information about bereavement on the Age UK website.

Helpline: 0800 169 6565 every day 8am to 7pm.

- **Kinship**

Kinship supports carers, for example, friends or family who raise a child when their parents are unable to.

Helpline: 0300 123 7015, Monday to Friday, 9,30am to 2pm.

- **Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service**

Support for any member of the Jewish community who has been bereaved.

Helpline: 020 8951 3881. Email: enquiries@jbcs.org.uk

- **London Friend**

The helpline for London Friend now incorporates the Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project and offers support to anyone who has been bereaved.

Helpline: 020 7837 3337, Monday to Wednesday, 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

- **Muslim Community Helpline**

Confidential support for any members of the Muslim Community.

Helpline: 020 8904 8193/020 8908 6715, Monday to Friday, 10am to 1pm.

- **WAY – Widowed and Young**

WAY is a membership organisation for anyone who has lost a partner and provides self-help support and guidance for widows and widowers under 50 through local groups, social activities and online forums.

- **ACAS**

ACAS have produced guidance for employers, '**Managing bereavement in the workplace**'. This guide was developed in partnership with Cruse Bereavement Care and others to help employers manage this difficult situation through appropriate and sensitive discussions with their employee, both in the immediate aftermath of bereavement and in the longer term.

Bereavement support for adults supporting children and young people

- **Winston's Wish**

Winston's Wish offers support and guidance to bereaved children and families. They have produced Beyond the Rough Rock, a booklet on supporting a young person or child bereaved through suicide, and can provide information on children seeing the body and attending funerals.

Helpline: 08452 030405, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Wednesday 7pm to 9.30pm (extra hours). Email: chris@winstonswish.org.uk

- **Childhood Bereavement Network**

The Childhood Bereavement Network provide a searchable directory of local child bereavement services and other helpful information.

- **Child Bereavement UK**

Child Bereavement UK provides support, guidance and information for anyone supporting a bereaved child or young person. Also support for parents when a child of any age has died.

Helpline: 0844 477 9400, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

- **ChildLine**

ChildLine offers free and confidential support for children and young people up to the age of nineteen. No problem is too big or too small. The website has links to message boards where young people talk to other young people: one topic area is about bereavement.

Helpline: 0800 1111 every day, 24 hours. One-to-one online chat:
www.childline.org.uk/Talk/Chat/

- **Hope Again**

Hope Again is a web-based resource for bereaved young people, created by young people who have been bereaved. It is part of Cruse.

- **Papyrus-UK**

Papyrus-UK offers support and advice to young people who may be at risk of suicide and to those concerned about a vulnerable young person.

Helpline: 0800 068 4141, Monday to Friday 10am to 10pm, weekends and bank holidays 2pm to 5pm. Text: 07786 209697. Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Bereavement support for parents

- **Child Death helpline**

The Child Death helpline is answered by trained volunteers who have experienced a child's death. It offers support to anyone affected by the death of a child of any age, under any circumstances, however recent or long ago.

Helpline: 0800 282 986, Monday to Friday 10am-1pm and 7-10pm, Tuesday and Wednesday 1-4pm.

- **Muslim Bereavement Support Services**

Support for Muslim parents after the death of a child – face to face, group, helpline support in several languages.

Helpline: 020 3468 7333.

- [The Compassionate Friends](#)

The Compassionate Friends support people when a child of any age dies through any cause. Local support groups and online message boards. There are special sections of the message boards for those bereaved by suicide and for childless parents.

Helpline: 0345 123 2304 every day, 10am to 4pm and 7pm to 10pm.

- [Relate](#)

Relate offers counselling support for relationships which may be struggling after, for example, the death of a child. Relate can be contacted through a booked phone conversation; face-to-face support or live webchat.

Helpline: 0300 100 1234 (to access the booking system for one-to-one support).

Bereavement support for people with learning disabilities

Someone with a learning disability will grieve in the same way as anyone else when they lose someone they love. The following resources may provide help or support.

- [Mencap](#)

Mencap may be able to offer advice on some of the ways a parent or carer can help a person with a learning disability to understand and cope with loss, bereavement and death.

- [Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities](#)

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities has produced a range of guides to support frontline staff working within criminal justice roles.

Tags

Mental health