

What works in wellbeing: a randomised controlled trial of mindfulness in policing

This randomised controlled trial (RCT) tests whether providing either one of two types of online mindfulness training to officers and staff across five UK police forces improves their resilience, wellbeing, and job performance.

Key details

Status	Complete
Lead institution	College of Policing
Principal researcher(s)	Dr Helen Fitzhugh research@college.police.uk
Police region	West Midlands
Collaboration and partnership	In partnership with Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, and South Wales Police.
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	June 2018
Date completed	September 2019

Hypothesis

Online training in mindfulness will improve wellbeing, life satisfaction, resilience and performance for police officers and staff (primary outcomes) – accept hypothesis.

Online training in mindfulness will reduce sick leave, presenteeism and leaveism (secondary outcomes) – accept hypothesis for reducing presenteeism, do not accept hypothesis for sick leave and leaveism.

Bespoke training aimed at police officers (Mindfit Cop) will improve wellbeing, resilience and performance for police officers and staff more effectively than a generic mindfulness intervention (Headspace) – do not accept hypothesis.

Mindfulness training is more likely to be effective for people with high levels of job control in terms of how they structure their day and do their tasks – do not accept hypothesis.

Geographical area

UK: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Avon and Somerset, South Wales.

Target sample size

1,322 participants (after 15 withdrew).

Participants - inclusion criteria

Any police officer or staff member within the five forces who was not (one of the following):

- actively using a mindfulness app already
- receiving talking therapy

Interventions

Treatment one – receives free access to the 'Headspace' app/online course

Treatment two – receives free access to the 'Mindfit Cop' web app/online course.

Study design

All officers and staff in the five forces were invited to take part in the trial. Those who volunteered were randomly allocated to one of three groups (Headspace, Mindfit Cop or a waiting list). This study was a basic randomised design comparing two treatment groups (mindfulness training) to control.

Outcome measures

- Wellbeing – measured using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (7 items).
- Life Satisfaction – measured using a single item from the Office of National Statistics personal wellbeing questions.
- Resilience – measured using the Brief Resilience Scale (6 items).
- Work performance – measured using a question from the WHO HPQ survey.
- Presenteeism and leaveism – measured using custom single items for this study.

Summary of findings

For more information on the findings, go to the [full report in the National Police Library](#).