Exploring charity sector wellbeing support for police

Dr Helen King, PuLSE, The Open University

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Overview of presentation

• Introduce study
• Context
• Method
• Results
• What’s next
Introduction

• Co-Is

Dr Gini Harrison

Prof Graham Pike
Introduction

• Centre for Policing Research and Learning
• Health and Wellbeing Priority Research Area
• Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership
Request for help!

- Study - largely applied in nature
- Help with framing/ theoretical angle/ refs
- How to make relevant outside policing?
The study

• Exploring charity sector provision of health/wellbeing support to police
• Occupational charities
• Initial findings from interview and research workshop
Context for the study
Police 'dealing with more mental health incidents'  

Austerity causing stress and trauma to officers, say police  

Budget cuts and rising demand driving up mental illness among 'exhausted' police officers, review finds
Police wellbeing support

• Public sector
  • Via line manager/HR/OH
  • Delivered by EAP/NHS

• Voluntary sector
  • Via variety of routes
  • Delivered by numerous agencies
  • Police wellbeing charities (PWC)
Research aims

• Obtain a broad understanding of the role of charities in police wellbeing
• Identify what is provided and how
• Examine whether policing charities fill a unique service gap
Methodology

• Exploratory pilot
• Qualitative
• Data collection:
  • Research workshop (x7 PWC)
  • Semi-structured interviews (x16 PWC)
  • Review of charity accounts (n tbc)
• Data analysis: coding and clustering, mapping
PWC sample

• Registered with The Charity Commission
• Providing *wellbeing*-type services to police
• National, regional and local
Results
Types of PWC

1. Local force providing localised service
2. Regional forces providing regional service
3. Sector-related providing localised service
4. Sector specific providing national service
5. Special interest providing national service
Services provided by charities

- Direct service provision
- Grants
- Signposting
- Research
- Peer support
- TLC
- Culture change / campaigns / training
Beneficiaries (local)
• 1. 2. & 3. members only (serving officers, retired officers, civilian staff - differs by PWC)
• 4. Serving and retired officers, members
• 5. Individuals linked to PWC special interest
Why police need wellbeing support

• Impact of ‘austerity’
  • Shift work
  • Single crewing
  • Changing call types- vulnerability
• No downtime to regroup/ limited debriefing
• Isolation
• High rates of complex PTSD, heart attacks
Barriers to employer-led support

- Stigma / disclosure impacts upon career
- Subjudicy and official secrets
- Safety issues with public services
- Policing ‘identity’
- Vulnerability
Criticisms of employer-led support

- Limited treatment options - biomedical
- Perceived limited effectiveness (‘6 sessions’)
- Time delays
- Reactive not preventative
- Unsupportive culture - ‘man up’
- Practical support not always addressed
Approach taken by charities

• Immediate
• Preventative
• Flexibility and discretion
• Tailored / person centred support
• Biopsychosocial
• Independent / confidential
• Non-judgemental
Mode of referral

- Flexible routes in
- Online, telephone, in force champions
- In partnership with HR or independent
- Forms and informality
- Relies on professional diagnosis
Fit with public sector services

• Inconsistent and undefined links
• Shared staff and resources
• Overlapping care
• Synergies: standardisation vs flexibility; formalised vs independent system
• Inconsistency provision across forces
Challenges for the sector

- Dependency on unusual funding model
- Reliance on anecdotal evidence of good
- Offer not easy to navigate
- Flexible process can make access uneven
- Overlaps and gaps
- Fragmentation/ lack of network
Random questions

• Are PWCs conceptually distinct from forces?
• Is a thriving PWC an indicator of force health?
• Would PWCs benefit from showing wider social value?
• Might police wellbeing be further improved by integrated PWC learnings?
What’s next?

• Finish analysis
• Future research?
  • Help with framing/ theoretical angle/ refs
  • How to extrapolate/ broader relevance
• Potential applied outcomes?
  • Need for higher level organisation
  • Floated idea- portal, monitoring tool