

13th -19th May 2024

Mental health problems can affect anyone, any time of the year, but mental health awareness week is a great time to show your support for better mental health and looking after your own wellbeing.

Hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, the theme for **Mental Health Awareness Week**, this year is 'Movement: Moving more for our Mental Health'.

The purpose of the week is to increase people's awareness and understanding of how important physical exercise can help our mental health. For more details of the week click [here](#).

The Week is an opportunity for people to talk about all aspects of mental health, with a focus on providing help and support.

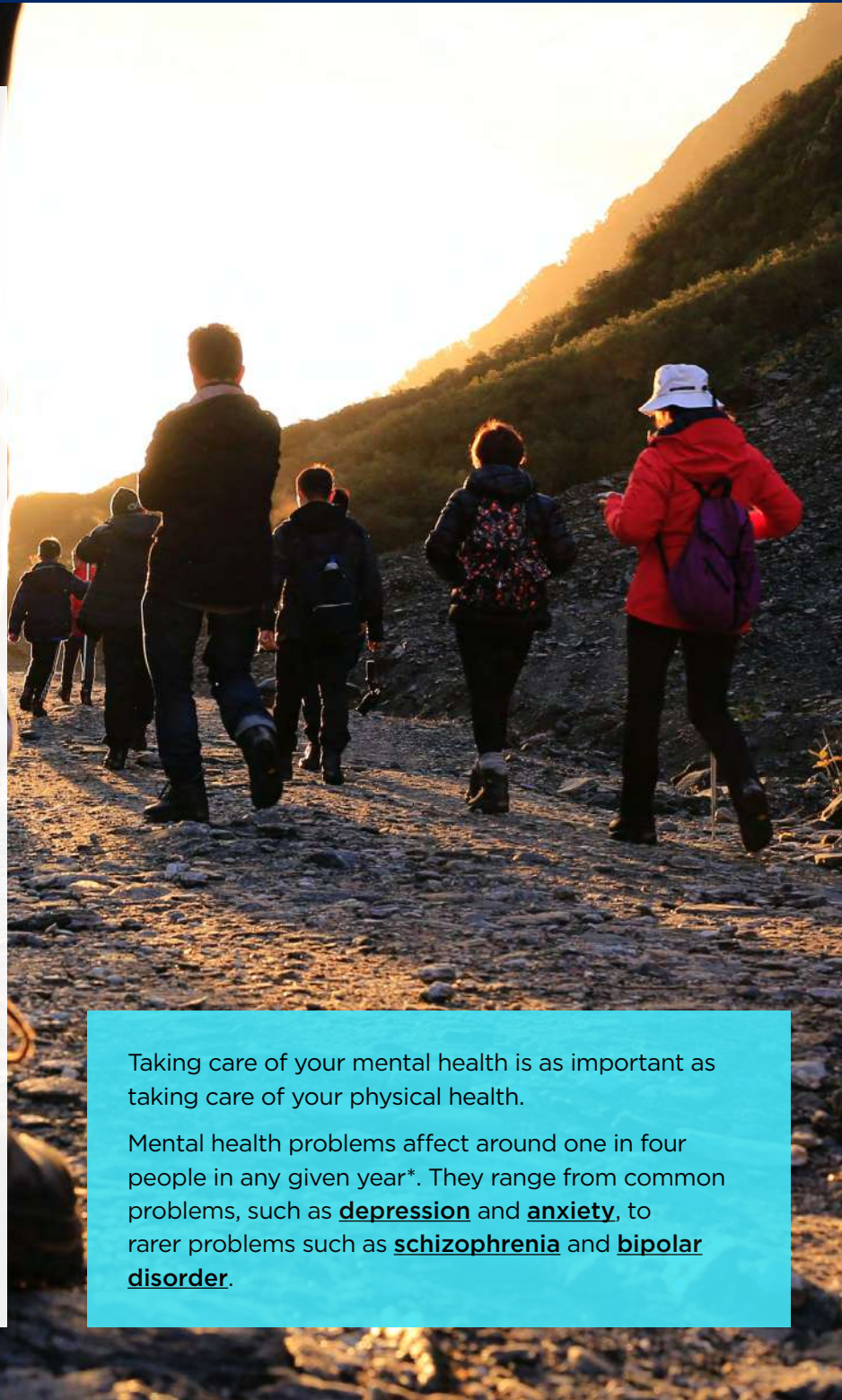
Being active is important for our mental health. But so many of us struggle to get enough exercise. There are many different reasons for this, so finding moments for movement in your daily routines is the key. This may be going for a local walk, doing some gardening or putting on some music and dancing around the kitchen.

Physical exercise can help to build your self-esteem as well as reduce anxiety and improve your mood. When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins which help to make us feel energised, happier, and less stressed.

Our physical and mental health are undeniably linked, so it's important to stay active.

Taking care of your mental health is as important as taking care of your physical health.

Mental health problems affect around one in four people in any given year\*. They range from common problems, such as **depression** and **anxiety**, to rarer problems such as **schizophrenia** and **bipolar disorder**.



To stay healthy, adults should try to be active every day and aim to achieve at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week or 10,000 steps per day through a variety of activities. If you would like to improve your fitness level, then you may need to increase this amount and also include some stretching and strengthening exercises into your routine. For any type of activity to benefit your health, you need to be moving quick enough to raise your heart rate, breathe faster and feel warmer.

If you are concerned about your health in any way always consult your doctor before starting exercise.

**You don't need to be at the gym seven days a week to improve your mood. Here are some ideas to help you incorporate workouts into your daily life:**

**Don't do it alone** - If you're committed to doing exercise with a friend, you're less likely to back out. Try an exercise class, dance or yoga with a friend. This has the added benefit of keeping connected with people.

**Enjoy it** - Most importantly, you need to discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness. If the exercise you choose is enjoyable you are more likely to stick with it. There are so many different ways of exercising you just need to find the one that works for the time you have and that you enjoy.

**Go outdoors** - Fresh air, natural light and exercise combined are great for our mental health. Whatever the weather it's great to get outside, it may be for a quick stroll around the block or a longer walk with the dog. You could also invite a friend for a catch up.

**Set yourself a challenge** - Give yourself a goal to work towards, start small and get bigger as you get more confident and fitter.

**Log it** - In order to monitor your progress, keep a record of your workouts. This could include the time and distance of your walk, run, ride or workout, but you may also want to include how you feel, in order to track your mood.



Research has shown that emergency services workers are twice as likely as the public to identify problems at work as the main cause of their mental health problems, but they are also significantly less likely to seek help. So it's even more important to look after your own mental health when working on the frontline.

**Here are some tips:**

**Think about your purpose:** Be clear about why you are doing this job.

**Be clear on expectations:** Make sure you know what is expected of you and whether it is realistic.

**Keep your boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life, don't take work home with you.

**Talk to colleagues:** Make time to talk to your colleagues about your experiences and share fears and concerns.

**Value your own family and relationships:** While work is important, your family and relationships need to be valued.

**Exercise:** Regular exercise can boost your self esteem, can help you concentrate, relax and increase your overall wellbeing.

**Get plenty of sleep:** Sleep helps regulate the chemicals in our brain that transmit information. These chemicals are important in managing our moods and emotions and an imbalance in those chemicals can result in us becoming depressed or anxious. Read our sleep guide [here](#).

**Eat well:** A balanced diet that is good for your physical wellbeing is also good for your mental wellbeing. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well. Read our healthy eating guide [here](#).

**Avoid alcohol:** The numbing effects of drinking are only temporary and can often lead to mental health issues. It's advised that if you do drink, that you stay within the governing bodies recommended unit guidelines.


**Keep in touch:** It's good for you to catch up with friends and family face to face or over the phone.

**Take a break:** A change of scenery or pace is good for you.

**Do something you're good at:** Enjoying yourself can help beat stress

**Care for others:** Supporting others uplifts you as well as them.

**Ask for help:** If at times, life gets too much for you, it's important that you speak to someone, this may be a family member or trusted friend, your GP or a professional organisation, see the list at the end of this guide for details.



Making positive change is more important than ever, but it's difficult to know where to start. Do one thing today, whether it's going for a walk, learning a new skill or doing something creative, taking the first steps to getting support for yourself, or reaching out to someone else, take the opportunity to do one thing during Mental Health Awareness Week.

Whatever you've been through this year, Mental Health Awareness Week is a chance to make a positive change for your mental health.

## Useful links:

[NHS](#)

[Samaritans](#)

[Mind](#)

[AnxietyUK](#)

[Mental Health  
Foundation](#)

Worrying about money can be extremely stressful and may lead to mental health conditions. Police Mutual are here to help. We want to break down the stigma surrounding debt and get people talking about money.

We've teamed up with **PayPlan\*\***, one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call **PayPlan\*\*** on **0800 197 8433**.

## Police Mutual Services

Our Care Line Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support.

## Wisdom App



Download the **Wisdom App** provided by **Health Assured** and register today - your code is **MHA107477**

# Police Mutual

To read more of our wellbeing guides take a look at our [Wellbeing Hub](#) here.

Call us **0151 242 7640** Visit [policemutual.co.uk](http://policemutual.co.uk)  
We're open from 9am - 5pm Mon - Fri

\*Time to Change. Attitudes to Mental Illness 2014 Research Report

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