



# Supporting public safety leaders: Applying empirical findings to the emerging evidence

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## ABSTRACT

Following a review of the limited international evidence on the mental health and wellness of public safety leaders published in this journal, we wanted to present our findings on prison governors in the United Kingdom to see if our empirical data added further insight into this important area. Our research consisted of interviews with 63 prison governors (managers or leaders) in England, Scotland, and Wales where we aimed to explore their health and well-being. The interviews provided a wealth of data which helped us to explore how prison governors were feeling in relation to their physical and mental health, their work–life balance, and their feelings toward their role consequently exploring the impacts their work had in these areas. We mapped our findings to the points raised in the review of the evidence base to identify where our empirical findings provide support, or contradictions, to these. Our data supported the issues raised throughout the evidence review; it is imperative that public safety leaders have access to tailored, confidential support to help them stay well. Our recommendations align with those points made from the evidence base, specifically that peer support and reflective interventions could help to promote the well-being of public safety leaders, and that more research is needed into their health and well-being to develop the emerging evidence base and inform new approaches to support.

**Key Words** Public safety; prison; leaders; governors; health; well-being.

## INTRODUCTION

Public safety leaders are at the forefront of protecting members of the public with this including the services of the police, prisons, paramedics, firefighters, and border services. Alongside this role, they play a vital part in supporting employee mental health and well-being (Dimoff & Kelloway, 2017). Health-orientated leadership (HoL) is a concept gaining attention in the exploration of healthy leadership styles due to the recognition that to be able to support employees, the leader too needs to have good mental health (Vonderlin et al., 2021). Franke et al. (2014) developed the concept and measure of HoL, recognizing that the foundations of this leadership style lie in the ability of the leader to practice self-care and recognize when they may need support with their own health and well-being. Despite the understanding that leaders' well-being is important, there tends to be less focus on the support provided for this group (Barling & Cloutier, 2017) with research showing there are implicit assumptions that, as a leader, health and well-being will be better than other employees (Cloutier & Barling, 2023). These assumptions may present barriers for leaders in accessing support due to the

stigma associated with not meeting expectations, reducing their ability to practice self-care, and present barriers for organizations in being able to recognize the need for support from their leaders.

Noting the importance of understanding the health and well-being of leaders, a review of evidence on public safety leaders by Ricciardelli et al. (2025) demonstrated the limited (or arguably, non-existent) amount of research in this area. They highlighted how the focus of previous research in public safety has been on employees and the role leaders play in the support for them, rather than the support the leaders themselves require. The authors report this is often due to the isolation and expectations of leaders increasing as the person rises in rank. An overview of research into the impact of different leadership styles is discussed and notably HoL was not presented, furthering the argument that the self-care of leaders in public safety does not appear to be at the forefront of discussions. Despite this, Ricciardelli et al. (2025) show that positive leadership is associated with attributes of caring for employees, valuing them, and empowering them but that this can take an emotional toll on the leader. The paper recognizes that to support leaders, there needs to be an understanding of

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social, physical, and mental health, alongside the moral and legal vulnerabilities faced when working in public safety. In addition, the role that families play, and the impact they may feel as a consequence of poor health and well-being of the leader, is an important consideration, especially when considering work–life balance and the safe space that can be created within these relationships. The paper concludes with a call for further research into the health and well-being support needs of public safety leaders, helping to understand the specific stressors relevant to the unique roles.

The same gap in knowledge on the health and well-being of leaders found by Ricciardelli et al. (2025) was the influencing factor into our investigation into the health and well-being of prison governor grades in England, Wales, and Scotland in the United Kingdom. In our research, we focused on people holding senior roles within prisons in His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). Generally, people in prison-related senior roles hold the title of governor. They may carry many different functions as part of their role both operationally and non-operationally, and within prisons and in headquarter functions. In some respects, this means our research covered a broader range of leader than is referred to in the paper by Ricciardelli et al. (2025) as it not only focused on those in a strategic, decision-making capacity, but also those who lead and govern the operational and non-operational element of prisons. However, our data was narrower in focus as it only explored prison leaders and not the wider public safety arena. Despite this difference, we found many similarities within our empirical data to that which was presented in the paper by Ricciardelli et al. (2025). Our article aims to explore how the data from prison governors in the UK compares to the evidence base presented in the aforementioned paper on public safety leaders.

## METHODS

Our research was conducted using semi-structured interviews with 63 prison governors (43 male, 20 female) who were members of the Prison Governors' Association (PGA; the main Trade Union body for prison governors in the UK). The age range of participants was from 28 to 61 years (mean = 49.7, SD = 7.30) and most classified themselves as White British (95%). The length of time they had been in the prison service ranged from 2 to 35 years (mean = 24.2, SD = 7.79). Participants included people from a range of functions within the governor role including heads of functions (security, operations, residence, safety), deputy governors, governing governors, and strategic leads, and from a range of settings including women's and men's estate, juvenile secure estate, high security, and headquarters.

During interviews, the participants were asked general demographic questions followed by six questions to explore their health and well-being including describing it, strategies to support it, changes in these due to Covid-19, the impact of work on their home life, and feelings toward their roles. The interviews were conducted online during the summer of 2021 using Microsoft Teams and lasted between 35 and 150 minutes. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University of Lincoln Ethics application service (Ref: 2021\_6526). All interviews were placed into NVivo version 12 and analysis was undertaken using the principles of

thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings can be found in various publications exploring elements of the rich data obtained (Harrison & Nichols, 2023; Harrison et al., 2024; Nichols et al., 2024; Smith et al., 2022, 2025; Smith, 2023).

## RESULTS

Overall, our findings suggested that the health and well-being of the participants was not good. Issues around macho cultures, high workloads, not feeling valued, and a lack of autonomy were a detriment to the physical and mental health of governors and impacted significantly on their work–life balance. The remainder of this article explores our data against the consideration of Ricciardelli et al. (2025) to collectively advance the field of public safety leadership.

### Leaders Support Others and No Time for Self-care

Ricciardelli et al. (2025) explain how leaders are the providers of support for their employees rather than the recipients of support. Our findings echoed this, with participants explaining that support is for their staff, not them. In addition, they discussed the impact of supporting staff and that they do not always feel equipped to do this:

*It really traumatizes managers...a number of staff do now come to you, you can see the cuts along [their arms], they try to cover it up ... it's knowing what to do and how to deal with that. (PGA 20)*

This evidence demonstrates the emotional burden that supportive leaders may face when supporting staff, and that this can have a negative consequence on their own health and well-being. This aligns to the call from Ricciardelli et al. (2025) for trauma-informed leadership training that helps to recognize and navigate challenges that may be faced within their roles.

As mentioned, the leadership style that is often conducive for supporting employee well-being can be draining for their own well-being. Our data aligned with this, with participants stating they give everything they have to the job, then their family, and that nothing is left for themselves:

*I spend a lot of hours in work. And when I'm away from work ... I need to spend my time with my family first. And so, time for me comes third, at best. (PGA 3)*

This was in part due to heavy workloads and the pervasive nature of the job affecting every day of their lives:

*It really is genuinely a seven day a week job. And I'm not pretending for one minute, the Saturday or Sunday I'm sat in front of the computer for eight hours a day. But every day, all seven days are interrupted by work. (PGA 31)*

As a result, many participants described a significant negative impact on their physical and mental health:

*I think I'm overweight and I think, my health's not been the best and that's because I tend to be knackered when I go home. So, I'll just sit on the sofa, eat crap ... I think it's got worse over the last well, since I've been governor, it's been tough. (PGA 20)*

Our data suggests the governors in our study were not able to practice self-care, neglecting their health and well-being often at the expense of supporting others. Exploration of health-promoting leadership styles could be paramount in helping to address this problem and raise the importance of self-care in effective leadership.

### Identity of a Leader

Holding a leadership role was felt to be synonymous with an expectation to have good well-being (Ricciardelli et al., 2025). This expectation reinforces an unwillingness to show vulnerabilities, and in many cases, this is actively discouraged, which can lead to alterations in self-identity and self-perceptions. This was borne out in several ways within our data. Most notably, governors described adopting a macho, impenetrable persona where vulnerabilities were masked, and they struggled under a weight of expectations, including from staff within their line management, senior managers above them in their employment hierarchy, the public, and the government:

*Being in the prison service, you have to have armour, especially being an operational governor because you get it, not just from prisoners, you get it from staff. You're the one in the middle and you're getting all the crap flying between and you have to be quite thick skinned to be honest. (PGA 49)*

This was further exacerbated by a perception that they could not ask for help, because they were still in a culture whereby the expectation is that people kind of soldier on (PGA 35) and there were fears about the repercussions of asking for help: *if you were to open up and say something, you could potentially affect your reputation or your career, or your progression (PGA 17)*. Participants further reported that the support available was not appropriate for them at their managerial level: *we don't believe some of the stuff there, is specifically, or useful, for us (PGA 23)*.

Our findings support the notion that leaders are expected to have good well-being (Cloutier & Barling, 2023) but that this only perpetuates the expectations that leaders should not need to ask for help. However, research has demonstrated that leaders who show vulnerability create psychologically safe climates and in turn, are viewed to be more competent in their roles as a result (Perez, 2024). Understanding that leaders too can be vulnerable and promoting leadership styles that incorporate this could be a positive move forward.

### Impact on Personal Identity and Family/Home Life

Ricciardelli et al. (2025) highlighted that identity in the workplace had an impact on personal identity which can then affect home life. Our data paralleled with this as participants noted the job had changed them as a person, partly to protect their own health and well-being. This influenced their work and impacted on interactions in their home life. For example, one participant noted how he was:

*... almost becoming robot-like ... that's got to happen because you're so driven by what you need to get done and your results that the more personalized side of me has had to go by the wayside because that was damaging me because I was taking too much on and getting too emotionally involved. (PGA 34)*

Families may feel vicarious distress because of the line of work the leader undertakes. To avoid this, governors described how they frequently felt unable to talk to their family about work because of the potential distress this would cause:

*I don't ever bring anything home. My wife would never know what goes on in a prison. (PGA 39)*

However, unlike the previous paper, our data highlighted that this was often mitigated by having a partner who also worked in the profession, who therefore understood the challenges:

*My other half works for the service as well. And he's been incredibly supportive. And, you know, he was making me kind of on the weekends, do nothing so that I could rest ready for Monday. (PGA 4)*

The concept of within-service spousal support therefore appears to be missing from existing literature on leaders and thus presents an opportunity for future research development in this area.

Ricciardelli et al. (2025) also noted how families are impacted by difficulties in maintaining a work–life balance. This definitively came through in our governor data too:

*They'll say things like, "We never see you Mummy," and then they say things like, "Mummy, you're so exhausted at the weekend you don't want to play with us anymore." (PGA 16)*

Where governors had been able to maintain a work–life balance, they reported having to sacrifice progression prospects so that they could achieve this:

*I'm a band 7 and I'm not interested in promotion; I'm more interested in watching my children grow up and stuff so that's my focus now and I don't want work to get in the way of that. (PGA 38)*

### Isolation of Leading

The isolation of leading organizations and establishments, due to reduced informal support, was described by Ricciardelli et al. (2025). In our data, this was due to pressures from multiple sources, as described earlier, and because the availability of support was perceived to be reduced with increasing seniority:

*... there's no one you can really talk to, to have a rant with in the prison because you probably manage them ... Now I've got governor, we can moan and groan to each other because we have that shared experience but when you're on your own, you're on your own. (PGA 23)*

There were fewer colleagues that the governors could call on for support and, linked to the earlier discussion about leadership identity, less appropriate support was available to them. For example, prisons in England and Wales have care teams – a group of staff who make themselves available to support their colleagues on a rota basis. Governors did not feel this support was appropriate for them due to the power

imbalance of being supported by someone junior to them and further concerns about being seen as a “weak” leader if they did access the support:

*Personally, I wouldn't go to them because they're junior to me, and it would be a bit weird if I went and said to them and said, "Oh, I'm feeling stressed." (PGA 16)*

Participants did, however, specifically emphasize the importance and value of informal peer support:

*I'll sit and have a cup of tea with one of the other governors...we do talk about work usually, but it's sometimes nice to chew the fat over a cup of tea and not have a formal meeting about it, just kind of have an informal meet, and sometimes... we need to let off steam, we'll talk about the stress we're feeling, and we'll give each other a bit of a moral support session. (PGA 16)*

Our data, and the evidence from Ricciardelli et al. (2025), highlights the need to prevent isolation in leadership and that peer support mechanisms may be an appropriate format to address this issue. Alternatively, external support that is tailored and specific to senior leaders, such as coaching, mentoring, counselling, or reflective practice, has been found to be effective in both our data and in a review on leader well-being (Bachman et al., 2023).

### Transformational Leadership

Ricciardelli et al. (2025) introduced the function of different leadership styles. They highlighted how the existing evidence base indicates that transformational leadership, characterized by innovation, inspiration, and transparency of communication, positively affects job satisfaction and performance. While our research did not specifically explore leadership styles, we did note some crossover in governor descriptions of autonomy. Governors reported a sense of having limited autonomy to effect decisions in critical areas of their prisons: *I'm responsible for the quality of prisoner education, but I have no influence whatsoever on the contract that's been provided (PGA 17)*. When governors did take some autonomy over decision-making, they were fearful of the consequences or had received negative consequences (e.g., *when you do try and do something that's different or innovative, sometimes you get in trouble about that as well (PGA 41)*), or they described themselves as “mavericks,” indicating a sense of pushing boundaries, an innovation that would be important within what Ricciardelli et al. (2025) highlight as transformational leadership: *We view governors who just go, we're doing it anyway, as maverick, that shouldn't be the case (PGA 56)*. This indicates that the working conditions for governors do not allow for transformational leadership, highlighted as important for well-being and performance by Ricciardelli et al. (2025). As discussed above, we found evidence that the governors in our research were not taking time for self-care, a fundamental element of HoL. This emphasizes the need for training on the impact of different leadership styles to help promote and develop health-promoting leadership.

### Responsibility

Ricciardelli et al.'s (2025) examination highlighted that leaders shoulder responsibilities of their organization which can feel

oppressive. In addition, they discuss that leaders have limited or no training for responding to adversity, while being concerned that every decision made could have significant consequences, including media scrutiny, and that black and white legislation fails to see the grey areas in leadership. Again, we saw these features within our governor data where it was linked to a lack of autonomy. Governors described having all the responsibility but none of the power, and the negative impact this had on them: *Hold me to account but give me the autonomy to do things and deliver things... [holding the risk but no control] increases stress. (PGA20)*

Our research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and issues around responsibility were reported by participants to be further exacerbated during this period: *As the governor of the prison, particularly at the start, [I] felt a huge responsibility on my shoulders really... more under pressure than I ever have in my career (PGA 30)*. They described the weight of decision-making: *You do ultimately make life-or-death decisions. It's just they're few and far between, I think Covid has heightened that (PGA 45)*. In parallel to Ricciardelli et al.'s (2025) discussion, the pandemic was adverse and governors and those above them were not prepared for it, leading to uncertainty about direction:

*It was chaos, quite frankly, no one's fault. No one's expecting this and no contingency planning can really prepare anyone for this. (PGA 45)*

Ricciardelli et al. (2025) also highlighted that the empowerment of leaders is positive. However, in addition to the previously described lack of autonomy, governors felt particularly disempowered during the pandemic:

*We were in command state,<sup>1</sup> it is about orders and following the orders, it's not necessarily about going away and thinking of a better way to do things. (PGA 56)*

Autonomy has been well documented as being a positive influence on well-being and has been linked to transformational leadership styles (Desgourdes et al., 2024). Fostering autonomy and appreciating the impact of responsibility and decision-making is essential for supporting the health and well-being of leaders.

### Responding to Reductions in Resources

Ricciardelli et al. (2025) highlighted the pressure organizational leaders are under in needing to respond with reduced resources. Our data showed the pressures arising from this too. For example, responding to additional work during the pandemic with no additional staffing:

*On top of all the normal stuff that we have to deliver, you've then got all of the Covid stuff... we're being asked to deliver additional tasks without an [additional] officer resource... video messaging, level visits... testing for staff and prisoners, that all comes with a resource, but there's no resource to do it. (PGA 4)*

<sup>1</sup>Command state: circumstances where all movement and activities are restricted and controlled by a prison management team during a major incident.

However, being asked to do more with less had also been a feature prior to Covid, following a period of austerity and benchmarking<sup>2</sup> which saw large reductions in resource and staffing numbers driven by government policy: *But at this moment in time, sorry, not just this moment in time, through my service, we have been working under pressure with staff shortages* (PGA 46).

In addition, governors in our data reported negative feelings about not having a say about how money was spent, also linked to the perceived lack of autonomy and the level of bureaucracy needed to gain approval. This was in terms of a lack of decision-making about contracts, as outlined above, as well as a lack of ability to spend money on staff well-being provisions:

*We tried to do a [year] anniversary barbecue because the prison was [number] years old, and we got shot down in flames and we're not allowed to spend public money on staff... staff, personal work, care and welfare, you spend to save in my eyes.* (PGA 39)

Responding with a lack of resources, either in crisis or in day-to-day work, requires specific training and support to help facilitate strategic decision-making. This is in addition to organizational support to provide provisions where possible, and to support the autonomous decisions made by their leaders.

### Lack of Recognition and Appreciation

Ricciardelli et al. (2025) provided evidence about how a lack of training and recognition feeds into a lack of motivation and leaders feeling unappreciated. Our data similarly showed the impact of a perceived lack of value:

*They don't care who I am. They don't care about me. They don't care if I'm in this role or if it's someone else. They don't have any kind of belief in me ... they're not rooting for me ... You're here at the current time, you are all disposable.* (PGA 43)

This was exacerbated by Covid, along with other occupational culture factors highlighted throughout this article, eventually leading to a path to disenchantment. Feeling disenchanting was the case for many who had previously felt they would stay in the profession until retirement:

*After everything I've given and the amount of commitment over the years and the amount of dedication to a very specific, important role. The treatment I had was appalling, and it's kind of [I] have lost faith in the service.* (PGA 29)

Being valued and recognized at work is known to increase well-being. Santos & Lousa (2022) present five social values that are important for well-being at work: respect, trust, equity, help, and gratitude. Interventions that are developed for supporting leaders' well-being should ensure these different elements of social value are considered.

<sup>2</sup>Benchmarking: process of measuring key metrics, practices, and resources against similar areas of business to understand where organizations need to improve performance.

### Impact of Trauma

The impact of trauma, often compounded over a long period of time, was highlighted by Ricciardelli et al. (2025). Trauma was featured within the feedback from governors. It had arisen from direct contact with prisoners through incidents of self-harm and violence, from managing prisons through Covid-19, and from incidents involving staff:

*We're very aware of a member of staff in [prison area] that committed suicide not too long ago, probably just before Covid hit. We're very, very aware of that and some of our staff knew them and ... understandably they were traumatized and shocked by it. And the managers were shocked ... I'm fearful for expecting that it is the first of many.* (PGA 45)

Alongside this, there was also evidence of poor coping strategies, further compounding the issues:

*My manner of dealing with it is a classic sort of male approach and very much a military approach as well. An issue goes in a box ... and it gets put in that cupboard. Unfortunately, sometimes the lid comes off the box. And eventually it's inevitable that lids will come off most of the boxes, but it's out of the way it's dealt with, it's compartmentalized. And I'll deal with it that way ... [however] the lids have been rattling quite a lot over the last year.* (PGA 36)

Development of trauma-informed leadership styles could help to promote a safer and healthier work environment that promotes collective well-being, helping to create a help-seeking culture (Fisk & Daoust, 2025).

### Moral Injury

Continuing the discussion on trauma, Ricciardelli et al. (2025) bring to the fore that leaders frequently experience moral injury due to facing challenging social situations which have complex and often unavailable solutions. While moral injury amongst governors was not previously identified in our data analysis, upon re-examining the data, there was evidence of moral injury occurring. For example, we argue that the challenges outlined above in relation to having responsibility but not having the autonomy to effect change creates moral injury for governors. In addition, there were uncomfortable dissonances during the Covid-19 pandemic whereby governors felt they were not always able to do their best for prisoners:

*I've got classes working with two prisoners in it, when actually I could have eight in there, if I could put different cohorts together. And that's really frustrating feeling like you're not doing the best for the people in your care, because you can't.* (PGA 5)

### Confidential Support

Access to support that could be accessed confidentially was reported as being essential in both Ricciardelli et al.'s (2025) presentation of evidence and in our governor-specific data. Existing evidence highlighted a lack of due regard for the well-being of leaders and that support offered should also include health promotion initiatives. In addition to concerns about the appropriateness of support offered, as highlighted

above, worries about the lack of confidential access to data were reported by governors:

*I know I've got PAM Assist and all the rest of it, but I don't think it's anything I'd use. To be honest. I don't know if I trust it, to be honest, being confidential. (PGA 28)*

This meant participants discussed not accessing support, not only due to the lack of confidentiality but also due to worrying about being perceived as weak for needing to access support:

*I've not asked for help, because I don't want to be seen as a failure... (PGA 7)*

In the governor's data, and in alignment to the discussions by Ricciardelli et al. (2025) about preventative interventions, structured reflective practice had been helpful. This was where governors were offered opportunities to discuss and reflect on their work with an external person. It was a desired part of the confidential and impartial support some of the governors wanted moving forward:

*They did roll out structured professional support to us as governors ... And it's not counselling at all, it's pretty much like the supervision that we've done at [prison name] for many years with all of our colleagues where, you know, it's a trained professional, where you get the space and time to talk about effectively how we feel about our work ... So, I was mandated to have that at the end of 2019 ... and I was a bit in a huff about it really like: "I don't need help," and actually, I did it, and it was fabulous. (PGA 8)*

Building in mechanisms for confidential and independent support could help provide a tailored intervention for supporting leaders in their roles. This dovetails with the suggestion above in relation to peer support for helping to overcome isolation, as well as fostering a culture where leaders are able to show vulnerability.

### Role Models

The importance of role models who are comfortable in openly discussing mental health, as well as engagement in preventative interventions, was of importance within the existing literature (Ricciardelli et al., 2025). A small number of participants in our research described how it was important to role model help-seeking behaviours and open discussions about mental health:

*I've got a few people in my team who are more emotionally intelligent than me ... I think that's been really helpful, because I think that's helping me think differently. And I think then, if you've got your governor thinking differently, and prioritizing this more and thinking it's more important, and creating that expectation amongst the leaders in the organization. (PGA 35)*

When this does happen, it can help people to open up. One of the participants discussed a meeting where someone asked when support would be available for governors:

*... and it was almost like somebody had lit a gun powder keg, because it just erupted. And all these people that had, you know,*

*very stoic, silent, civil servants, keeping everything quiet, all of a sudden, it was like, the genie was out of the bottle. And it was just, it was so moving, some very experienced governor said, you know, I'm struggling. I mean, I'm really struggling here. I'm in a bad way. (PGA 17)*

However, this was not the norm:

*We're a funny breed in the prison service when it comes to sharing things...it's a funny thing in terms of support because what they offer, people don't use. Because they're cynical about it. Because historically [it has] been so poor. (PGA 12)*

Changing the culture is therefore pivotal and this can be supported by role models who are willing to discuss their experiences and vulnerability, and provide dissonance with the strongly held expectations of leader well-being.

### Network of Leaders

Based on the evidence presented, Ricciardelli et al. (2025) argue that a network of leaders should be developed to help one another. Findings to support this were found in the responses from governors:

*Telephone conferences, and this sort of stuff, with governors across our group. I think those have been really, really, helpful from the point of view of sharing information, just having a laugh together, having a bit of a moan occasionally. But just that, that kind of camaraderie, and also just that learning ... I think that has been probably the single most supportive thing that I've done. (PGA 35)*

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

As a result of the evidence they explored, Ricciardelli et al. (2025) argued that support is needed for leaders. Our findings lend empirical support to this, as one of our participants eloquently said *as a governor, you've got to be everything to everybody ... that's the exciting part of the role. That's the good part, you know, but everyone has saturation points* (PGA 17). Alongside confidential and tailored support for leaders, suggestions also include training and development for leaders in how to consider their own needs, as well as the need of their employees, with an understanding of the impact trauma can have on self and others. A culture change is needed, where leaders role model that it is OK to not be OK and actively seek support for their own health and well-being. Research is needed to understand the longitudinal impact of factors such as leadership styles on the health and well-being of leaders, helping to build an evidence base on effective and healthy leadership styles. More research into the specific stressors within each role would help to fill the research vacuum, alongside greater awareness of the coping strategies employed in response, some of which could be ideas for future interventions. A greater understanding is also needed on how relationships and informal support structures change over leadership careers, including those relationships with partners who are in public safety roles, and how this interacts with the isolation of leadership, to help mitigate the impacts of this.

Public safety leaders need support, and it is not OK to assume *Cura te ipsum* (cure yourself) due to the positions

they hold. The current article provides empirical data on the health and well-being of prison leaders, supporting the wider evidence base reported by Ricciardelli et al. (2025). Support for public safety leaders is essential, not only for their own health and well-being but for the employees they support, for the benefit of the organizations they lead, and for the benefits that are then cascaded to people who receive the services they are leading. We believe further investigations into public safety leaders is essential for developing an evidence base which can be used to support the design and implementation of future interventions.

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#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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