

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP,
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
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22nd January 2019

Dear Secretary of State

**SUBJECT: HMICFRS Report 'Policing and Mental Health, Picking Up the Pieces'
- November 2018**

I write in response to the recently published inspection report which looked at how effective the police service is at protecting and helping those with mental health problems.

As I stated in my response last Spring to the PEEL Effectiveness inspection, I am proud of how the police service in Greater Manchester identifies and responds to vulnerability, as was highlighted in that inspection.

Supporting vulnerable victims, including those with poor mental health, remains one of my key priorities. However, as this thematic inspection identified, the most effective responses are those which are planned and undertaken in partnership. The police should not be seen as the backstop position to pick up the pieces, the service is one of many that can and should positively contribute to providing high quality outcomes for the most vulnerable victims.

For this model to succeed it is essential that the police service is able to work consistently to an agreed definition of poor mental health and that support and advice is offered to develop further the Crisis Care Concordat. As such, I would strongly support the actions stated within Recommendations 1 and 5 of the report.

In respect of the three remaining recommendations from the report pertaining to the police service, I can respond as follows:

Recommendation 2 - By December 2019, forces should develop a better understanding of their mental health data, and the nature and scale of their demand. All forces should carry out a 24-hour snapshot exercise, using the new national definition of mental ill-health in Recommendation 1.

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) will be supporting this recommendation in 2019 with a 24 hour snapshot exercise to understand further demand, using the new definition of a mental health incident. This will be supported by the Greater Manchester Control Room Triage Service, which I will explain in more detail below, and the Vulnerability Support Unit in the police control room.

GMP is also currently collaborating with Manchester Metropolitan University on a research project aimed at supporting local understanding of policing demand in relation to Mental Health. The project has access to police incident data from the last six years and I am looking forward to seeing how we can utilise academic tools to help enhance our understanding.

An analytical working group will be drawn together to review demand in partnership. This group will include representation from GMP, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Greater Manchester's three NHS Mental Health Trusts. It will begin by reviewing high volume service users presenting to each service.

In the longer-term, a strategic task and finish plan will ensure an efficient but consistent system response following the detention of members of the public under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983. This will build on recent collaborative successes in the City of Manchester, which culminated in the establishment of the City's first s.136 suite. Supported by the analytical working group partners will examine the experience of s.136 across Greater Manchester with a view to ensuring a common offer for all members of the public experiencing a mental health crisis.

Recommendation 3 - By August 2019, all forces should review their existing partnership mental health triage services to assess their effectiveness, and the environment they are operating in. This will help them make decisions about sustainable future services with partners to make sure mental health care needs are being met.

I have been working closely in partnership with the Greater Manchester Clinical Commissioning Groups on this issue. Joint funding has been provided to invest in an 18 month 'Control Room Triage' pilot. The service, which operates on a 24/7/365 basis, situates mental health nurses in the vulnerability team at the police control room. The nurses have access to patient health data that enables them to advise and support front line police officers when dealing with an individual in crisis.

Early indications demonstrate extremely positive results: section 136 detentions have been diverted, support and advice has been offered where this may have otherwise ended with a visit to Accident and Emergency departments and many of the interactions have saved police officer time.

An interim evaluation will be ready to report back in June 2019, and will be used to inform future investment. I would be happy to share this more widely with colleagues and perhaps arrange for a presentation on the work to be provided at the College of Policing Conference in October, if that would be of interest.

Greater Manchester is also host to an integrated custody healthcare and wider liaison and diversion service. This service is already promoting the more effective management, de-escalation and care planning for mentally vulnerable individuals flowing through the criminal justice system at the point of arrest, and will be a crucial part of the triage offer in Greater Manchester.

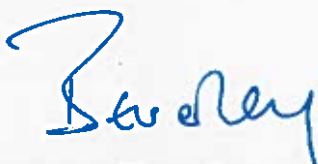
Recommendation 4 - By August 2019, all forces should review their mental health training programmes, using the College of Policing learning standards, to establish whether they are giving their officers the right tools to understand and respond to people with mental health problems.

Regular access to high quality training is fundamental for effective front line policing. For implementation in 2019, GMP has developed a Continuous Personal Development (CPD) training session in relation to mental health, 'Responding to people in crisis'. This one day event is a collaboration of work between the police and the NHS Foundation Trust and is delivered jointly.

The training, which has been quality assured against the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP), will provide learning to front line officers around health, social care, relevant legislation and the National Decision Making Model. It also instructs officers how to engage with the Control Room Triage Service when dealing with real time incidents. The overall objective is to provide the best possible service to people experiencing a Mental Health crisis.

This training will be run in addition to an e-learning training package which embeds the College of Policing content for all officers and staff. I will ensure officers from my office monitor the provision of training to officers over the coming months.

Yours sincerely



Baroness Beverley Hughes
Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester
Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice