

RESPONSE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER OF DEVON, CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY TO HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES' REPORT

POLICING AND MENTAL HEALTH - PICKING UP THE PIECES

In November 2018, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) conducted a thematic review of all 43 police forces to understand how effective forces are at protecting and helping those with mental health problems.

This report <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/policing-and-mental-health-picking-up-the-pieces.pdf> made five recommendations, of which three are for individual forces to consider.

These are

Rec 2. All forces should carry out a 'snapshot' exercise to assess their mental health-related demand

Rec 3. All forces should evaluate their mental health triage services

Rec 4. All forces should review their mental health training programmes

Chief Constable's comments

The Chief Constable is pleased to see the observations of the HMICFRS and the recognition of the role police officers and staff play in supporting those in mental health crisis. Devon and Cornwall was not subject to this thematic inspection so there are no local findings, but all recommendations have been allocated to leads to progress in 2019. See table below.

Police and Crime Commissioner's comments

I welcome the findings from this report which set out the increasing pressure being placed upon the police service dealing with those who are mentally unwell.

In particular one area where a great deal of improvement still needs to be made is in the locking up of those people who have committed crimes while being mentally unwell.

Around a quarter of women who we incarcerate in this country, and 16 per cent of men, have received treatment for a mental health problem the year before they entered custody, according to the Ministry of Justice. In a 2016 Prisons and Probation Ombudsman report showed that of the prisoners who take their own lives while behind bars 70 per cent had been identified as having a mental health issue.

There's also a huge opportunity to save public money. It costs around £35,000 per inmate to jail someone for a year, yet a pioneering project in Plymouth which is costing £50,000 is already preventing mentally ill people from being locked up by providing an alternative sentence. Known as a Mental Health Treatment Requirement, this sentence ensures that offenders who suffered from poor mental health while breaking the law get some intensive and high quality help over a period of up to 12 weeks instead of being sent to prison.

My office helped the Criminal Justice Board set up a Mental Health Treatment Requirement. Since December 2018 this has given magistrates and district judges the chance to approve mental health treatment orders therapy provided by mental health workers from Livewell Southwest.

The Mental Health Treatment Requirements aren't a soft option. Progress is carefully monitored by the team and the threat of prison can remain for those who don't complete the course to the court's satisfaction, but the early signs are extremely encouraging. Having an option like this gives real focus on an individual. It puts some focus and help in their lives. It's about looking at a human being and asking what's stopping you from being able to function.

I will monitor the Force's progress towards the HMICFRS' recommendations.



Alison Hernandez
Police and Crime Commissioner
Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Recommendations	D&C Response
<p>1. By January 2019, the NPCC lead for mental health and the College of Policing should draft and agree a new national definition of mental ill-health. This should be included within the new national strategy on policing and mental health that they are developing together. All forces should then adopt this definition as soon as reasonably practicable.</p>	<p>To be delivered Nationally, Following which local adoption agreed to be progressed at Executive Board December 2018 Force Lead – ACC Innovation, Contact and Demand</p>
<p>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. This would help them see where their mental health demand is concentrated and identify any gaps in their data. The NPCC mental health lead should set out how the data was collected during the Welsh forces’ snapshot exercise.</p> <p>This exercise will help forces understand the strain on the service by assessing the combination of demand and workload. This will then help forces when establishing and reporting mental health demand in their force management statements (FMSs).</p>	<p>Recommendation agreed to be progressed at Executive Board December 2018 Force Lead – Ch Supt Demand & Contact</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>If forces find any deficiencies in their triage services, they should take steps to address them as soon as reasonably practicable.</p> <p>The College of Policing has agreed to devise some practice guidelines to help forces benchmark their triage activity. We will inspect on progress in this area as part of our integrated PEEL assessments inspection framework.</p>	<p>Recommendation agreed to be progressed at Executive Board December 2018 Force Lead – Head of contact Management</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>If forces find any deficiencies in their training programmes, they should take steps to address them as soon as reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Where forces invite outside organisations to train staff, they must make sure its content and quality are checked against College of Policing APP.</p>	<p>Recommendation agreed to be progressed at Executive Board December 2018 Force Lead – Director of HR</p>
<p>5. By 30 September 2019, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Home Office should review the overall state response to people with mental ill-health.</p>	<p>To be delivered Nationally.</p>

