

14 January 2019

The Rt Honourable Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Dear Home Secretary

RESPONSE TO HMICFRS INSPECTION MENTAL HEALTH PICKING UP THE PIECES PUBLISHED ON 27 NOVEMBER 2018

I share the view expressed in the report that more needs to be done to intervene earlier and prevent the need for a crisis response.

In my Police and Crime Plan, I have prioritised protecting the most vulnerable from harm. Every person is vulnerable at some point in their life, and this report illustrates how so many people (one in four) are affected by mental ill health to some degree at some time. The public sector organisations have a duty to work together to respond effectively to those in crisis, and to the systemic crisis that is being experienced.

I welcome the acknowledgement that support is needed during 'out of hours'. The police will respond in a crisis but an emergency resulting from poor mental health may be better defined as a medical emergency requiring specialist knowledge and care where the police might be there in support of mental health professionals rather than as the support professionals.

The recommendations documented in the inspection report that require direct action within forces were:

- **All forces should carry out a 'snapshot' exercise to assess their mental health-related demand**
- **All forces should evaluate their mental health triage services**
- **All forces should review their mental health training programmes**

My comments in relation to these recommendations are as follows:

- I was pleased to see the Constabulary's work in developing visual analytic software (Qlik Sense) was recognised as having provided the organisation the ability to assess mental health-related demand.

However, the recommendation to take a snapshot of mental health-related demand can only be fully addressed in a way that will enable comparisons between forces once the definition of mental health-related demand has been agreed.

That said, the Constabulary carries out periodic snapshot exercises to assess demand and the next planned assessment is for summer 2019. In addition to this, the Constabulary has already commissioned a full analytical profile on mental health which reported at the end of 2018. The figures from the snapshot and the analytical profile indicate that between 6-8% of calls for service presenting at first point of contact related to mental ill-health. However this is not reflective of the demand experienced as counting the number of calls does not take into account the complexity of the incident and the resulting actions.

- The Constabulary is currently concluding an evaluation of the funded mental health triage arrangements within the Communications Centre.
- The Constabulary are already reviewing their mental health training provision. Frontline supervising officers have received training and there are plans to train 50-60 Mental Health Tac-Advisors who will receive enhanced training and become established as knowledgeable advisors who can over time disseminate their learning to others in the Constabulary.

There was also a recommendation related to the need to review the Crisis Care Concordat and make proposals for change. I am responding to this recommendation in the context of being a member of the Concordat, and advise that the group's terms of reference are being refreshed early this year.

I have discussed the findings of the report with the Chief and the relevant mental health lead and we jointly feel that the key message within this report is that more investment is needed in mental health support services so that the right agency provides the right support at the time it is needed.

This response is published on the OPCC website (<http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Openness/Audits-and-Inspections/Her-Majestys-Inspectorate-of-Constabulary.aspx>).

Yours sincerely



SUE MOUNTSTEVENS
Police and Crime Commissioner
for Avon & Somerset

cc. Wendy Williams, HMI
Chief Constable Andy Marsh, Avon & Somerset Constabulary

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