

Thematic Briefing

Mental Health in Policing

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1.0 Background / Context

- 1.1 Mental Health is part of “the core business of the police” and we see it running through every kind of policing, from 999 emergencies, neighbourhood policing, crime investigation (victims, witnesses and suspects) as well counter-terrorism, sexual violence and offender management, amongst other areas.
- 1.2 In the modern world of policing, an increasing volume of demand originates from responding to people experiencing a mental health crisis. We work towards assisting those in need of help and support to the exercising of powers under the Mental Health Act in order to protect and safeguard those in immediate mental health crisis.
- 1.3 The police service does have a role to play in the operation of mental health and capacity law, because the Mental Health Act 1983 contains provisions which can only be instigated by police officers or criminal courts. That said, our role is a limited one and it is not defined by what other agencies have decided they are prepared to do.

2.0 Developments over last 6-12 months

- 2.1 During the last year we have seen the development of telephone helplines for individuals and professionals who need support and advice whilst dealing with those experiencing poor mental health. Those helplines used by police and other partners are:
- Mental Health Helpline for adults
 - Mental Health Advisory (Professionals) Helpline
 - Children’s and carers (Here4You) Helpline for advice when dealing with young people
- 2.2 Internally we have produced a series of guidance information to help officers understand roles and responsibilities and assist with decision making and pathways.
- 2.3 The continued partnership between Police, Office of Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Lincolnshire Partnership HNS Trust (LPFT) has ensured the continuance of the Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) in the Force Control Room (FCR) offering early intervention in incidents involving mental health. Advice and guidance is available 1400x2200 seven days a week and running alongside this are two Crisis Vehicular Response cars (CVRs) which can be deployed by the FCR MHP to incidents requiring a face to face contact resolution.

- 2.4 There is a continued training package for officers on Mental Health and Mental Capacity Legislation. Mental Health First Aid training also continues across the force to all staff.

3.0 Current Position / Performance (where applicable)

- 3.1 The FCR MHP has been involved in 2010 incidents from April to December 2021, which is comparable to the same period in 2020 however, since September 2021 the service has been impacted by staffing issues and covid related absences.
- 3.2 Section 136 Mental Health Act emergency police powers has seen a 19% increase for the same period (April to December 2021) with 486 detentions for that period in 2020 and 579 detentions in 2021. There is no doubt that the Covid pandemic has had a dramatic effect on people experiencing mental health crisis and requiring immediate support and safeguarding. This is broadly in keeping with findings elsewhere in the country.
- 3.3 The recording of Mental Health incident data has been improving over the last few years. In the period of April to December 2020 Lincolnshire Police recorded 4288 mental health incidents involving police deployment and attendance. In the same period in 2021 we saw 4739 incidents – an increase in demand of 11%. It is noted that national research shows that dealing with mental health incidents is far more time consuming than other types of incidents. We have also raised awareness with officers of the importance of capturing our data in this area.

4.0 Forward look 6-12 months

- 4.1 Development of pathways for service users who attend hospitals voluntarily with no physical needs.
- 4.2 Supporting LPFT with the new build facility at Boston (Norton Leas site) which may contain a new second Section 136 Health Based Place of Safety.
- 4.3 Continuing the mental health training provision for officers and staff.
- 4.4 Continuing partnership working with LPFT in the provision of the FCR MHP.

5.0 Issues of Exception – Opportunities / Risks

- 5.1 With the abstraction of officers dealing with incidents related to mental health we continue to try and manage day to day core staffing levels to enable service delivery across the County.
- 5.2 Developing relations with the new Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Mental Health Head of Transformation
- 5.3 Development of a wider expertise across the Force providing support, knowledge, and advice to officers dealing with mental health incidents from a policing and legislative perspective.

6.0 Key Public Messages

- 6.1 Lincolnshire Police will continue to respond to safeguard and support those people experiencing mental health crisis where police are called for assistance.
- 6.2 Lincolnshire Police will continue to work with partners to maintain and develop relationships, creating new and improved pathways for service users.