

**MAYOR OF LONDON****Steve O'Connell AM**

Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee  
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**Our ref:** MGLA070219-5181**Date:** 17 APR 2019**Improving the Met's response to mental health**

Thank you for your letter of 7 February. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

Improving mental health services in London is a key priority for me. I have made it one of my top priorities in my Health Inequalities Strategy. For anyone experiencing a mental health crisis it can be a distressing and extremely worrying time and it is vital that Londoners receive the best possible care across all our emergency and healthcare services. However, we must also ensure that enough support is in place to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Londoners before the point of crisis is reached.

Specialist mental health services are being replaced by generalist services, which lack focus on specific vulnerable groups. London's third sector organisations have often been successful in filling some of the gaps in provision but are unable to meet growing demand in a difficult financial climate.

The cuts we have seen to youth mental health services across London in particular need to be addressed to ensure vulnerable young Londoners are being supported. I have invested £45 million in my Young Londoners Fund which is supporting the rolling out of Youth Mental Health First Aid to all London state schools.

Thrive LDN, the citywide movement to improve the mental health of all Londoners, has worked in partnership with Team London to set up Young London Inspired - a grants fund to support social action and volunteering projects for vulnerable children and young people, aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing.

Nevertheless, there also needs to be more investment by central government into mental health services. Not having access to appropriate services unquestionably contributes to poor outcomes, increasing the likelihood of being involved in crime. I welcome the greater focus on supporting mental health in the NHS Long Term Plan, but the Government's promise of funding does not paper over the significant cracks their cuts have made to the health service.

The overwhelming pressure that police officers can find themselves under to quickly and safely identify an appropriate mental health pathway for people in their care can have a huge impact on both the experience of the individual with mental health needs, and the overall capacity of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).

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As the Police and Crime Committee has acknowledged, the MPS has made good progress around mental health in recent years. As well as significant cultural change at all levels, there have been substantial practical changes made.

All of Lord Adebowale's recommendations have seen positive action, and most have been completed. The MPS has appointed an NPCC force lead for Safeguarding and implemented a governance structure to oversee delivery of the Safeguarding Strategy, which promotes equality in relation to those with mental health conditions. A two-year Mental Health Business Plan is being delivered, driven through a number of delivery groups. This incorporates work to improve provision and partnerships across several areas including community assessments, investigations and criminal justice, mental health in custody, suicide prevention and drug and alcohol abuse.

Current policy for policing mental health is published via a 'Toolkit' on the MPS Intranet. This is continuously updated in line with changes to legislation, partnership agreements and guidance. Thematic Organisational Learning Reviews are completed on a Basic Command Unit (BCU) basis, and at a national level the MPS is represented at both the Regional and National Police Mental Health Forums, which serve as a platform for sharing best practice and learning.

There are now Liaison and Diversion practitioners available for all custody suites in London, who are funded by NHS England. The removal of the use of police custody as a place of safety has already been implemented in London, meaning that vulnerable people are no longer being held in an inappropriate environment when they have not committed a criminal offence. Several Clinical Commissioning Groups have funded a Mental Health Nurse to accompany officers and assist in both assessment and diversion to services.

Nevertheless, with the increasing demand on the MPS and pressures being placed on services across London, there is further work to be done. To this end, I have made an additional £12 million available to the MPS over four years, to improve the response to mental health and reduce the impact on capacity.

I welcome the Police and Crime Committee's recent examination of this important issue and will respond to the findings and recommendations in turn.

## **Training for officers**

New recruits are provided mental health and suicide awareness during Recruit Training and additional inputs at Professional Development Days as well as Officer Safety Training. The central Mental Health Team provides input into officers' promotion courses as well as bespoke courses for specialist departments. This compliments training for officers on BCU mental health teams, training on the Vulnerability Assessment Framework and mental health awareness training through Blue Light Champions. The MPS Mental Health Toolkit provides guidance on legislation and policy for front-line officers.

However, there is an outstanding need for more robust training for frontline officers which is being addressed by the MPS, and a new training package has been designed. Training will run over an 8-hour day, facilitated by associate trainers and Borough Mental Health Officers to provide up-to-date knowledge. The day will see input from service users and subject matter experts before moving onto legislation and policy, which drive scenario-based learning around the framework of the National decision model. This will be based on guidance from the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice which has been recommended for use by all police forces.

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Training will be evaluated through an on-the-day assessment and followed up with a 3-month survey to determine whether officers have seen a change in their own behaviour and application of work. There will also be a survey of line managers and partner agencies, and the MPS aims to also collect statistical data to determine change in behaviour.

My Office for Policing And Crime's (MOPAC) public voice surveys provide an opportunity to seek the views of people who have mental health issues. The User Satisfaction Survey captures data relating to whether respondents self-report having a disability, and the nature of this disability. This includes those who self-identify as having mental health disabilities. Recent results show that those who self-declare a mental health disability report lower levels of satisfaction (62%) than those with a physical disability (68%) or no disability at all (67%). We will continue to monitor these figures following the delivery of training.

## **Prompt referrals to appropriate mental health services**

Since 2015, London's crisis care system has been working to improve the quality and consistency of care for people in mental health crisis. In 2016, I joined London's NHS, ambulance, police, mental health and social services to launch new guidelines to improve the care of vulnerable Londoners facing a mental health crisis.

Implementation of a pan-London model of care for individuals detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act is progressing across the Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships. South London and Maudsley's centralised place of safety, which piloted this new model of care, is an excellent example of how service users and carers are working in partnership to improve the care and provision for people in mental health crisis. An evaluation of the service in October 2018 has shown a reduction in inpatient admissions, quicker handovers between services and improved patient and staff experience.

In order to continue our good work on cross-agency approaches to addressing the needs of vulnerable people, all decisions on the use of the additional funding I have made available to the MPS, are being undertaken in partnership. This funding has the potential to be transformative, but any commissioned services must be fully integrated into existing interventions.

A current area of focus is the development of the NHS 111 pilot, which provides a one-number solution officers can use to seek advice when responding to service users with mental health needs. Another is the expansion of the London Ambulance Service's work to integrate mental health nurses into the dispatch and response process, with the potential to create a blue-light collaboration response to high risk mental health calls.

My commitment in the Police and Crime Plan was to trial dedicated mental health teams in two areas of London. This has been completed, and the learning has been used to inform the rollout of dedicated teams in each BCU. As of the end of February 2019, all teams are in place. This represents a significant uplift in dedicated mental health resource, from the previous 32 Mental Health Liaison Officers to 12 sergeants and 62 officers.

The BCU teams will incorporate three primary roles. These include Partnerships and Crisis Co-ordination Officers, Mental Health Prevention and Intervention Officers and Serenity Integrated Mentoring, (SIM) Officers. SIM London is a programme where each SIM Officer will work alongside a mental health nurse to work intensively with high intensity service users to break the cycle of mental ill health and prevent repeated presentations in crisis. The role of the police officer in the

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team is to work with the service user to agree acceptable behaviours and to put response plans in place. In the Isle of Wight, where the model was initiated, SIM resulted in an 82% reduction in the use of s.136 over a five-year period. The MPS is working with the mental health trusts to provide pan-London SIM coverage by the end of 2019.

## **Monitoring the impact of the MPS' response to mental health**

It will be important to measure the impact of interventions to improve the policing response to mental health in London. This includes evaluating commissioned services, but also to look at how effectively BCU mental health teams support other officers and the impact of training. It is intended that robust evaluation will be included in the spending of the additional funds made available to the MPS, and MOPAC's Evidence and Insight capability will support this work. There is, however, a wealth of data already captured on the response to mental health.

The central Mental Health Team is working closely with MPS Strategy and Governance to contextualise the data that is already being supplied as part of the Home Office Annual Data Returns, as it is important to note that the raw data does not always paint an accurate picture.

Demand and equalities data are routinely monitored through the MPS Mental Health Dashboard, which contains a detailed breakdown by BCU as well as monthly trend data. This provides a comprehensive ability to capture and monitor data relating to mental health incidents and use of police powers within the Mental Health Act. Work is also being scoped to extract new data to the dashboard captured on the Mental Health Incident Form within MERLIN.

The MPS is in early conversation with NHS England to provide some of this data to the public facing London Mental Health Dashboard.

The inequalities faced by BAME communities in relation to mental health and policing are significant, and this is an area of focus which is being developed through the refreshed Memorandum of Understanding on justice devolution. These conversations involve London Councils, the Ministry of Justice and NHS England and will seek to address disproportionality through offender pathways more widely.

As the Police and Crime Committee has stated, there has been a great deal of progress in recent years but there remains work to be done to improve the support available to vulnerable Londoners. This remains a key priority for me and for partners, and we will continue to drive improvements across the capital.

Yours sincerely,



**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London

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