

To: Kent Community Safety Partnership
Subject: PCC update - mental health
Date: 24 March 2022



Introduction:

1. This paper provides a brief update on developments relating to mental health.
2. As reported previously, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has stepped down as the Association of PCCs lead for Mental Health, but remains committed to supporting those who are vulnerable as well as reducing mental health demand on Kent Police.

The Police and Crime Plan:

3. The [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) sets the requirement for PCCs to issue a police and crime plan that covers their term of office within the financial year they are elected.
4. The PCC was re-elected in May 2021 and so following significant consultation, a new Police and Crime Plan titled 'Making Kent Safer – April 2022 to March 2025' will be launched on 1 April 2022.
5. The Plan retains a focus on mental health, with one of the principles that will guide the actions and decisions taken by both the Chief Constable and the PCC being as follows:

*'Ensure that vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health get support from the right agency
People with mental health problems or other vulnerabilities may have a range of complex needs, which the police alone are not fully equipped to meet. In some circumstances police involvement is necessary and unavoidable; they are often the first point of call in an emergency or for people in distress or crisis. However, on other occasions it is not in the interests of the person, nor the police or public to have officers taken away from their core front line duties unnecessarily.'*

Whilst police officers have the training and skills necessary to identify when a person is vulnerable, they are not experts in specific illnesses or disabilities; rather they need to be able to recognise when intervention is necessary and refer the person to the right agency to ensure they receive timely and appropriate support.

Multi-agency working including information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated action are key to the effective identification of risk to vulnerable people, preventing those risks from escalating and ensuring the continued well-being of those concerned.

The Chief Constable and I will continue to work with others to both reduce demand on policing and ensure vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health receive the right help from the right agency at the right time.'

6. The Plan will be published on the [Office of the PCC's website](#) and shared with partners.

Section 136 detentions:

7. Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 allows a police officer to take a person to a place of safety where they appear to have a mental disorder, are in a public place and in need of immediate care or control. Before detaining an individual, the officer (where practicable) must consult a healthcare professional.
8. The Policing & Crime Act 2017 quite rightly placed severe limitations on the use of police stations as a place of safety.
9. Kent Police continues to focus on improving the partnership response to people in crisis, ensuring they receive a first-class service from the relevant agency at the first point of contact.

10. The table below shows the number of Section 136 detentions from 2018 to January 2022. Detentions have continued to reduce since December 2019:

- 2020 saw a 13.0% decrease compared to 2019;
- 2021 saw a 27.1% decrease compared to 2020 and a 36.6% decrease compared to 2019;
- January 2022 saw 76 detentions compared to 110 in 2021.

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Jan	117	152	146	110	76
Feb	101	148	155	144	
Mar	152	155	138	132	
Apr	147	161	113	99	
May	141	205	160	125	
June	146	149	150	128	
July	159	200	189	117	
Aug	166	194	201	112	
Sep	146	196	157	96	
Oct	156	200	150	89	
Nov	139	170	125	84	
Dec	127	136	114	74	
Total	1697	2066	1798	1310	

11. The step change has resulted in less vulnerable individuals being detained by police officers. Consequently, there is a much-reduced burden on frontline policing with appropriate interventions taking place by the right service at the right time. However, when officers do use Section 136 powers they continue to often experience protracted waits at Emergency Departments.

12. Internal training continues to be delivered by the Mental Health Team ensuring that people are not unnecessarily detained under Section 136 and appropriate advice is sought prior to every detention, with alternative powers and services considered.

13. Use of the 836 street-triage advice line continues, with a focus on improving availability and quality of clinical advice to front line officers dealing with persons in crisis. The Mental Health Team is supporting partners to review processes and practices to improve the quality of service to patients. This includes a CCG led deep dive into the response to children detained under Section 136.

14. The ambition is to create a 24/7 age appropriate crisis care service via NHS 111 by 2023/24 with a 24/7 crisis function for adults during 2022.

Crisis care governance:

15. The PCC continues to chair the Kent and Medway Mental Health Crisis Care Board which replaced the Crisis Care Concordat.

16. The Board met virtually in November and agenda items included:

- Draft Terms of Reference
- Development of key indicators
- Review of Safe Havens
- Update from the Mental Health Urgent & Crisis Care Oversight Group

Recommendation:

17. In light of the PCC stepping down as the national lead for Mental Health and to align with other strategic meetings, that an annual update on mental health is provided to the KCSP in March of each year (instead of each meeting).