



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Policing Performance Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>11 June 2024</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Video Conference</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Mental Health, Distress and Policing Update</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Amanda Coulthard, Head of Strategy &amp; Performance, SPA</b> <b>Chief Superintendent Matt Paden</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

This paper provides the Committee with an overview of work underway across the policing system, and with partners, in relation to mental health distress, vulnerability and policing.

## 1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The Scottish Police Authority has maintained an increased focus on vulnerability and mental health demand, specifically how policing best responds to calls for service, for over two years. In line with that sustained focus the Authority agreed that mental health would be a board priority, with board member Fiona McQueen asked to lead as Board champion on the issue.
- 1.2 In early 2022, following discussion at Authority and committees on pressures being faced by Police Scotland in responding to mental health related demand, Martyn Evans made a commitment that the Authority would place a greater focus on the appropriate police response to calls for service around mental health issues and Fiona McQueen was asked to lead this work on behalf of the Authority. Since then, there have been several public Board and committee discussions and sessions at Members Seminars.
- 1.2 The Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee also expressed an interest in this area of policing and held an [evidence session](#) in May 2022 which the Authority and Police Scotland contributed to. To take these discussions further, the Authority convened a discussion on the societal-wide impact of poor mental health in the community; with a focus on vulnerability and distress in December 2022. This [event](#) aimed to:
- Bring together partner agencies and other key stakeholders to establish a collective understanding of the challenge and the current approaches to addressing it;
  - Set the wicked issue in the context of a growing challenge not only to policing but to the public and third sector and communities across Scotland, the UK and wider;
  - Describe the proactive and prevention focused work being taken forward by Police Scotland in collaboration with key partners; and
  - Recognise the interdependencies, partnership interfaces and opportunities in the system, identifying current best practice that could be adopted as common practice and then nationally consistent approaches.

- 1.4 A number of commitments were made as a result of the event in December 2022, with [progress reported](#) to Policing Performance Committee in September 2023. Following this event the Authority also published a briefing on [mental health and policing](#), which details the strategic position in relation to mental health related calls for service and the Police Scotland response to these.
- 1.5 The Authority, Police Scotland and Scottish Government agree that mental health distress related demand on policing, requires a multi-agency and multi-faceted approach including effective partnerships, training, community engagement, and support mechanisms for officers.

## **2. Progress to date**

- 2.1 The Authority, Police Scotland and partners are committed to making progress on this key areas of focus and have committed to a series of activities which are being progressed with support and leadership from colleagues across a range of sectors at a local and national level.

### NHS Board Transfer of Care Workshops

- 2.2 In December 2023 Scottish Government Directors for Justice and Mental Health wrote to NHS Board Chief Executives seeking their support for a series of local workshops focused on understanding transfer of care practice and variation across Scotland. These sessions, led by the Authority in March and April 2024, focused on understanding the local relationship between policing, mental health services (NHS and Local Authority) and acute NHS services.
- 2.3 Workshops took place across NHS Forth Valley, Highland and Lanarkshire attended by colleagues from local policing divisions, mental health community teams, acute mental health services, adult social care services and public health.
- 2.4 The facilitated sessions were discussion based, with an introductory overview of current provision in each area. Attendees discussed what works in their current model, the processes that cause a challenge, and suggestions of what improvements could be made to current processes.
- 2.5 A range of good practice examples have been identified through the workshops, including a direct referral telephone-based triage, proactive multi agency case planning and shared risk assessment

tools. These examples will be cascaded to allow consideration of scaling nationally to provide consistent service.

- 2.6 Additionally Police Scotland has hosted a series of unscheduled care workshops with key partners and stakeholders, supported by the service design team. These workshops have focused on understanding functions and responses currently delivered by Police Scotland but not within the core responsibility of policing, such as transporting individuals between locations.

#### Partnership Delivery Group

- 2.7 To support and coordinate the work underway a partnership delivery group, chaired by the Authority, was established in January 2024, attended by representatives from policing, NHS, government, lived experience, academia, voluntary and third sector, local government, and emergency service partners.
- 2.8 The partnership delivery group is currently working on a framework which will support collaboration and consistent, equitable practice across Scotland in relation to mental health distress. This work is linked to the Mental Health Unscheduled Care Network and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 2.9 A national action plan to support delivery of the framework is also in development, looking to complement and add value to workstreams already in progress.

### **3. Next Steps**

- 3.1 The Partnership Delivery Group will continue to develop the framework and action plan over the next few months. This will then be shared with internal and external stakeholders as part of a programme of engagement before being finalised for publication in the autumn.
- 3.2 Scoping work will also be undertaken with the mental health strategic oversight board chaired by DCC Spiers to ensure alignment of commitments to work progressing within Police Scotland.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no direct financial implications in this report.

**5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. There are no direct personnel implications in this report.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1. There are no direct legal implications in this report.

**7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. There are no direct reputational implications in this report.

**8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. There are no direct social implications in this report.

**9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1. There are no direct community implications in this report.

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. There are no direct equalities implications in this report, however the framework and action plan will be fully impact assessed.

**11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are no direct environment implications in this report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.