



Agenda Item
4.4

Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	12 September 2023
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Mental Health, Vulnerability and Policing – progress update
Presented By	Amanda Coulthard, Head of Strategy & Performance
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

This report provides an update on progress made since the mental health, vulnerability and policing event hosted by the Authority in December 2022.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following discussions at the Criminal Justice Committee in May 2022, and presentations to the Authority by Police Scotland in the issue of mental health demand, the Authority made a commitment to convene a discussion on the societal-wide impact of poor mental health in the community, with a focus on vulnerability and distress.
- 1.2 This [vulnerability focused event](#), chaired by Fiona McQueen on behalf of the Authority on 9 December 2022, aimed to:
- Bring together partner agencies and other key stakeholders to establish a common understanding of the challenge and current approaches to address it;
 - Set the wicked issue in the context of a growing challenge not only to policing but also to the public and third sector and communities across Scotland, the UK and wider;
 - Describe the work being taken forward by Police Scotland both proactively and in response to displacement from under pressure partner agencies; 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.

2. EVENT OVERVIEW

- 2.1 In convening the event, the Authority sought to frame the challenge, with partners, recognising the significant impact that the policing of this demand has on the mental health and wellbeing of officers and staff, and the need to address these challenges in the widest sense possible; recognising the collaboration and collective action required.
- 2.2 A range of stakeholders and partners supported the event through attendance and contribution. Critically there were a range of partner agencies and experts involved in sharing experiences and learning on the day to ensure that this 'call to action' was informed by current and emerging practice and innovation.
- 2.3 Key speakers at the event included Audrey Nicoll MSP, Julie Cameron of the Mental Health Foundation, Diana Hekerem of Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Karyn McCluskey from Community Justice Scotland, Rose Fitzpatrick of the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group, Billy Ridler of Scottish Ambulance Service and Arlene Wilson of British Transport Police. Delegates also heard from the Police Foundation, NPCC, HMICS as well as officers and staff from Police Scotland.

- 2.4 Event evaluation highlights that attendees welcomed the opportunity to hear from a wide range of providers and experts in this area to inform discussions on what steps could be taken.

3. EMERGING THEMES AND NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Full detail of the content of the day and key themes identified through discussion can be found in the [event summary report](#). Delegates felt it was important to consider data availability and sharing, handover between agencies, strengthening prevention activity, empowering officers to take risk and evidence-based decisions, ensuring a person centred and trauma informed approach and recognising the associated trauma experienced by the workforce.
- 5.2 A series of commitments were made by Police Scotland in response to the event. These focused on development of an approach to responding to mental health demand consistently, further development of mental health data and dashboards, delivery of a new way of working with Scottish Ambulance Service, development of the partnership prevention hub, and delivery of recommendations from the forthcoming HMICS inspection on policing mental health in Scotland.
- 5.3 HMICS have now undertaken their [thematic review of policing mental health in Scotland](#), which is expected to be published by the end of September 2023. Police Scotland, the Authority, and any other relevant stakeholders, will develop an improvement plan in response to recommendations from the review. This will align to the ongoing focus on mental health as reported through policing performance and people committees, with outputs from the trauma and policing event reported through People Committee in August.
- 5.4 Work is progressing on the development of a community wellbeing strategy for Police Scotland, which incorporates mental health in the wider focus on wellbeing and vulnerability. This widening of the focus beyond just mental health will ensure the interdependencies across a range of vulnerabilities are identified and responded to in a way which is trauma informed and person centred.
- 5.5 Operational activity has also continued to make good progress, with the demand dashboard, previously reported to committee in [October 2022](#), currently being piloted across A, N and G divisions with further developments in train. This work will ensure that Police Scotland have a comprehensive picture of non-crime mental health demand on policing to inform discussions with key partners.

- 5.6 Linked to this is the development of information sharing protocols with Scottish Ambulance Service which allow for police officers, when operationally safe to do so, to make direct contact with them via a dedicated contact number, rather than passing requests through the Area Control Room. This allows SAS call handlers to use the full triage question set, direct with officers on scene, to identify the appropriate medical response. It is currently assessed that this process reduces average officer deployment time by 45 minutes. Work is underway to evaluate the impact of the current approach.
- 5.7 Finally work is progressing well on the creation of a prevention hub in partnership with Edinburgh Futures Institute. This will support the commitment made by Police Scotland and Public Health Scotland in 2021 to work together to embed a whole systems public health approach to policing and improve the health and wellbeing of communities. The Scottish Prevention Hub, due to open in Winter 2023, will build data and evidence while strengthening capacity and capability for collaborative work in this area.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications as a result of this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

9. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

10. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no social implications in this report.

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 11.1 There are no community implications in this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 EDI is embedded in this area of work. All appropriate assessments will be completed, mitigating actions undertaken and inclusive, accessible engagement will be in place.

13. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Paper submitted to Policing Performance Committee members for discussion.