

MEDIA RELEASE

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Praise for Leicestershire's mental health triage service

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Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and Leicestershire Police's mental health triage service partnership has been highlighted as good practice in a report looking at mental health and policing.

The report, by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS), praises the force's "Street Triage" car service which sees officers and health professionals work together to respond to people with mental health problems in public places.

It says that "The aim of understanding mental health demands isn't just to reduce it but also to respond to people in crisis in the most effective way."

The report adds that street triage in Leicestershire, which was among the first forces to introduce the initiative in 2012, has "evidence of success" which has since been rolled out elsewhere.

Leicestershire's service is available seven days a week, 365 days a year and has reduced the number of people detained by the police and taken to a place of safety for a Mental Health Act assessment from around 450 per year to 158.

Last week HMIC Inspector Zoe Billingham praised the "extraordinary" work of the mental health triage team in Leicestershire following a visit in which she witnessed the team, alongside other officers and negotiators, safely talk down a man from the seventh floor of a multi-storey car park.

PC John Dalby, who is among those who provide the service said: "We've managed to reduce the number of people police detain using their powers under the Mental Health Act by around 70 per cent, and most importantly we have improved the ways in which we respond to persons in crisis, signposting them to the most appropriate support.

"It means we can easily share information, particularly medical information which might be pertinent to any on-going issue and direct them to the most appropriate person or service, whether that's a GP, crisis team, hospital or family member.

“We also provide vital tactical advice to the control room or police officers on the ground thanks to our specialist knowledge on the law and Mental Health Act, and the specialist knowledge and access the mental health practitioners from Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) who work alongside us have. This combined multi-agency approach helps us to achieve the best outcomes for persons in crisis.

“In addition, the team offers training in mental health first aid to others.”

The HMICFRS report, which looked at police forces nationwide, their approach to mental health and its impact on services, said that constabularies were “generally supportive, considerate and compassionate.”

However, it added that there was “only so much the police can do to improve the overall picture” as there were too many aspects of the broader mental health system that were “broken”.

It said: “The fact that almost every police force now has its own mental health triage team indicates that there isn’t nearly enough emphasis on early intervention and primary care to prevent the need for a crisis response.”

The report said this was “placing an intolerable burden on police officers and staff. It is a national crisis which should not be allowed to continue – there needs to be fundamental rethink and urgent action.”

Vicky Noble, senior mental health practitioner, clinical lead for LPT’s criminal justice, liaison and diversion, street triage teams, said: “Our partnership work with police through the street triage service is an effective and much valued part of our work to provide timely mental health care for people before during and beyond times of crisis.

“Through our innovative work together we are able to support people with mental health needs who come into contact with the police and ensure that people who might otherwise be detained inappropriately are assessed and receive timely support or advice. It’s also helping to reduce demands on valuable police and medical resources.”

And Dr Fabida Noushad, clinical director for adult mental health and learning disabilities services at the Trust, said: “We are very fortunate in Leicestershire to have excellent examples of partnership working between police and mental health services and one of these teams also works with Turning Point to help people who have substance misuse problems . These teams enable people to get the advice and support that will most help them at their first presentation. It helps us use resources more efficiently to enable our emergency services to help more people.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides community health, mental health

and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk

2. **Raising Health** is our registered charity (number 1057361) which raises funds to support LPT's excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision, to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff.

www.raisinghealth.org.uk

3 **Carers Rights Day**, hosted by Carers UK, is held to raise awareness of carers' needs, support carers to know their rights and help them know how to find help and support. For further information contact: Sheila Ashton, communications manager, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Tel: 0116 295 0042, E: sheila.ashton@leicspart.nhs.uk