

## **Right Care, Right Person implementation in London**

### **Briefing – June 2023**

#### **Introduction**

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley wrote to health and social care partners on 24 May to inform them that the MPS will be implementing the Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) model, withdrawing police officers from responding to most mental health related calls, by 31 August 2023.

The MPS have taken this step following the pilot of the programme in the Humberside Police force area, which has significantly reduced the amount of frontline police officer time spent on a range of mental health related calls. The RCRP approach is based on medical and social care professionals dealing with the majority of people in mental health crises, rather than police officers, except when there is a risk of immediate harm. In London, the MPS estimates that over ten thousand hours of police officer time a month is currently spent on mental health related cases.

#### **National Roll out of Right Care, Right Person**

In February 2023, the Home Secretary wrote to Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners on the national approach to Right Care, Right Person<sup>1</sup>. The DHSC, the Home Office, NHSE, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing have worked together to create a National Partnership Agreement on incorporating the principles of the Right Care, Right Person operating model that was piloted in Humberside, which is due to be signed off shortly.

The Home Secretary has encouraged local areas to work to identify how to implement the model once the National Agreement is finalised. We understand that the NPCC is due to publish a national RCRP toolkit, which will be available from early July 2023 and that a national team, funded by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), will also be available to support forces to implement the toolkit between July and December 2023. The DHSC has also committed to working with NHS England to develop guidance for Integrated Care Boards and Mental Health Trusts by July 2023.

#### **Background to Humberside Police's model**

The Humberside Police force area covers four local authorities, is approximately half the area of the Humber and North Yorkshire ICB and serves a population of around 920,000. Humber and North Yorkshire ICB has 3 Mental Health Trusts.

RCRP was piloted in Humberside over 3 years working with partners including the ambulance service, mental health, acute hospitals and social services. It was set up in response to the increase in calls to the police in relation to mental health, including many from other agencies who were unable to cope with demand.

They undertook a baseline exercise to assess the number of calls received under different mental health related call types:

- Concern for welfare
- Voluntary mental health patients

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<sup>1</sup> Mental Health and Policing: Letter from the Home Secretary

- Walk out of health care facilities
- Mental Health Act s136
- AWOL after s17
- Transportation

RCRP in Humberside required an agreement between health and social care partners and police to ensure that those with the right skills, training and experience respond to the call for service. They developed a toolkit and training package for police staff, as well as various policies and memoranda of understanding for the police and partner agencies. The police then did not accept or attend calls that should be carried out by skilled health and social care professionals.

RCRP in Humberside uses a triage process for incoming calls to decide on the appropriate course of action. As part of the threshold tests for police intervention the following were included:

- Is there a real and immediate risk to life or serious harm to an identified person?
- Is it a medical emergency?
- Is a child at risk of significant harm?
- Is the person suspected to have a mental health problem?
- Has a crime been committed?

It is acknowledged in *College of Policing's report Right Care Right Person – Humberside Police*<sup>2</sup> that the Humberside model had two main barriers to implementation: internal culture and partnership relations, particularly with mental health providers due to a lack of capacity, and a perception that this would increase demand for services. The College of Policing's report focused on the need for a clear shared vision with staff and partners to help overcome these issues.

### **Implications for London**

The MPS implementation of Right Care, Right Person would involve a significant reduction in the deployment of police officers to mental health related calls, on the grounds that these calls should be responded to by health and/or social care staff. The MPS has announced the rollout of a triage model to its call handlers to implement the changes.

There is widespread concern about how existing mental health and social services will be able to cope with an increase in demand, including from Mind, Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Centre for Mental Health.<sup>3</sup> This has not been addressed in the RCRP work in Humberside, and, as London has considerably higher levels of demand, as well as a more complex geography, it is not clear how health and social care services will be able to build capacity by the end of August to be able to manage this increased workload.

The Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) Leads network has raised concerns that when RCRP has been introduced by other police services it has sometimes been misinterpreted, with some people excluded from receiving the same level of support as others, and situations that meet the threshold for police attendance being declined by call agents. The MPS needs to provide assurances that call agents will receive appropriate training and guidance to ensure an appropriate response.

The majority of mental health cases that the MPS currently attend are for people over 18 years old. However, the introduction of RCRP will have implications for children and young people experiencing

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<sup>2</sup> [Right Care Right Person – Humberside Police | College of Policing](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Met plan to stop mental health response will leave thousands 'without support' | Metropolitan police | The Guardian](#)

mental health crises. Therefore, it is important that children's services professionals are part of the discussions on how this approach progresses, and that the triage process developed addresses the specific needs for children and young people in mental health crisis.

### **Next Steps**

The Chair and Vice Chair of London Councils wrote a private letter to Sir Mark Rowley on 9 June to raise concerns about the proposed implementation of Right Care, Right Person.

The MPS is setting up a partner delivery group, including health services and local government. A Chief Executive, DASS and DCS have been asked to sit on the group to ensure that the voice of London local government is represented.