



Responding to People with Mental ill Health or Learning Disability

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Author	Mental Health Liaison Officer
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Policy

Statement

Nationally, the police service is committed to improving the service it provides to people experiencing mental ill health or who have learning disabilities. Merseyside Police Force will make every effort to deliver this commitment at a local level by working effectively with all relevant partner agencies. These include organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

We recognise that the police service is often the first port of call for many people experiencing, or being exposed to mental ill health, so will work closely with mental health practitioners to successfully resolve all such situations.

Aims

This policy aims to help ensure that a proper and consistent police response is provided in all circumstances when needed. The policy is underpinned by detailed procedures designed to provide context and give clear, definitive and unambiguous direction for all those officers and staff involved in its deployment

Objectives

The overriding objective is to ensure that all officers and staff, involved in responding to people with mental ill health or learning disability, understand what options are available to them so they can make informed decisions and provide the correct response. Associated objectives are to:

- a) Develop joint working protocols with our partners for more effective partnership working
- b) Improve information sharing with our partners
- c) Ensure individuals the police encounter are referred to appropriate agencies
- d) Improve the risk assessment process for more accurate risk assessments and better outcomes
- e) Reduce police officer time spent awaiting handover to a mental health professional
- f) Comply with all relevant legislation
- g) Reduce numbers of people detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act in favour of other less restrictive outcomes.

Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This policy document sets out principles to help guide decision making and is in some parts quite prescriptive. However, it is vital that officers and staff have the freedom to innovate, exercise discretion and take risk based decisions centred on the needs of the victim and the merits of each case. Non-statutory policies, including College of Policing APP, provide guidance only. They are 'living documents' and it is recognised that there may be a better way of doing this. Accordingly, if staff depart from a policy but are able to give a good rationale for their actions, and have acted with honesty, integrity and professionalism, to make the best decision for the community we serve, they will be trusted and supported

All officers will be held accountable for the adoption of this policy. Chief Officers and managers will show strong leadership in addressing relevant issues.

The Chief Officer lead for this policy is the Assistant Chief Constable responsible for Investigation and Intelligence

Outcome Evaluation

Progress against specific objectives should be measured on a routine basis. The Head of Crime/ Chair of PVP performance will determine responsibilities and activities cross strand involved in measurement and report to the Chief Officer lead.

Outcomes should reflect the specific objectives outlined above. In broad terms, deployment of this policy should result in improved outcomes for service users and detainees.

The Head of Crime/ Chair of Protecting Vulnerable People Performance is responsible for monitoring success via bespoke governance arrangements (including MAPPA) that span partner agencies.