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**Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner:**  
**Chief Executive:**

**Ron Hogg**  
**Stephen White**

**10 January 2019**

Dear Sajid,

### **Policing and Mental Health: Picking Up the Pieces**

This letter constitutes my reply to HMICFRS which I will be publishing on my website in order to fulfil my responsibilities with regard to Section 55 of the Police Act 1996.

The report – *Policing and Mental Health* – correctly identifies increasing demands on police forces caused by gaps in mental health services and their increased role of gatekeeping to ensure access to appropriate support from other relevant services or the criminal justice system. However, the report fails to suggest alternative options to alleviate these increased demands. Whilst austerity has impacted on all organisations, including the police, the police service remains the service of first and last resort. We need the appropriate services to be able to respond to these incidents 24/7 so that the police are not the ones left dealing with them.

In turn, I address the recommendations for Durham Constabulary:

#### **Recommendation 2 – All forces should carry out a 'snapshot' exercise to assess their mental health-related demand**

Attempts have been made in Durham to assess mental health demand based on the force's own qualifier of mental health. Once the NPCC lead and College of Policing agree a new national definition of mental ill-health, Durham Constabulary will be able to repeat the snapshot exercise.

Recommendation 3 – All forces should evaluate their mental health triage services

The Durham and Darlington Crisis Care Concordat is in the process of evaluating the local street triage service, following full service delivery of more than 12 months.

Recommendation 4 – All forces should review their mental health training programmes

Durham Constabulary has rolled out College of Policing compliant training for the past 2 years for new officers and response officers.

In respect of other comments made by the report, aside from the above recommendations, I should equally like to comment on joint training with partners, and the incorporation of service user and 'lived experience' feedback within training programmes.

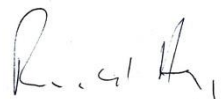
On the former, Durham Constabulary has delivered numerous joint multi-agency training sessions across partnership audiences with positive feedback and future opportunities continuing to be shared.

On the latter, service users in County Durham and Darlington are involved in delivering police officer training, and officers regularly attend service user groups. Similarly, the liaison and diversion teams in police custody and the street triage teams in the force control room seek service-user feedback.

I hope that this letter provides you with a clear outline of the work ongoing in Durham to meet the recommendations of the *Policing and Mental Health* report.

I am also copying this letter to Sir Thomas Winsor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

Yours sincerely,



**Ron Hogg**  
**Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham**