

National Police Chiefs' Council

Mental Health & Policing Strategy

2022 - 2025



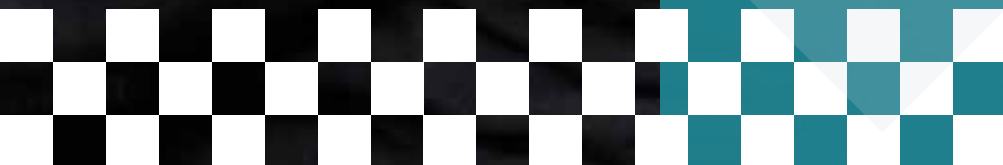
Responding
to Mental
Health





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Mental Health & Policing Strategy 2022 - 2025

Foreword by Rachel Bacon

Deputy Chief Constable South Wales Police
NPCC Lead on Mental Health

"I am pleased to introduce the NPCC National Strategy on Policing & Mental Health (2022 – 2025). This will outline the current focus required in addressing the core challenges in policing & mental health.

We have seen significant social and economic change, notwithstanding a global pandemic that has created unprecedented demands on what was an already finely balanced system. As a result, it is an appropriate time to adapt our approach, reflective of an environment that has rapidly evolved.

We have consulted widely to understand the current demands that both policing and our partners are facing. I am confident that we have developed a strategy that allows a collaborative response that all stakeholders who have a role in policing and mental health can align with, which will improve our approach through five key objective areas.

Our contact with people suffering from poor mental health should facilitate a compassionate response, being mindful to always maintain a person's dignity and safety, whilst adopting a trauma informed approach to embed upstream prevention. The most effective response consists of three components: the right agency providing an intervention; within an agreed timescale;

and in an appropriate setting. It is this combination in partnership we must get right.

Legislation changes including Sení's Law (The Use of Force Act 2018), and Place of Safety changes (Mental Health Act 1983) will require policing to further professionalise training and guidance to ensure officers understand and are equipped to meet these demands. In conjunction with the College of Policing we will promote good practice; producing a framework to develop partnership responses which support better outcomes within what is a complex area of policing.

In support of the NPCC Strategic Plan (2022 -2025) this Mental Health Strategy will provide guidance to policing on the coordination of their strategic partnership arrangements. Focusing on the local, regional and national structures required to respond to the most prevalent challenges having the greatest impact on service delivery. This will be achieved whilst embedding diversity, equality and inclusion as core principles through everything we do in our drive to overcome issues of disproportionality that persist within policing and mental health."

The Role of the NPCC



The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) helps the police cut crime and keeps the public safe by joining up the operational response to the most serious and strategic threats, developing national guidance.

The NPCC works closely with the College of Policing which is the professional body for everyone working across policing. The College sets out the national policing curriculum as well as holding the Approved Professional Practice for policing, which focuses on what works and evidence based knowledge. The College provides a national coordination role for mental health and works in partnership with the NPCC to identify and set good practice. The College are collaborating on the delivery plan in support of the implementation of the objectives set out within this strategy.

Defining Mental Health

Policing requires a definition that is capable of encompassing the broad spectrum of situations where policing intersects with mental health. As such we have retained the existing NPCC definition of a mental health related police incident:

“Any police incident thought to relate to someone’s mental health where their vulnerability is at the centre of the incident or where the police have had to do something additionally or differently because of it.”

NPCC, 2018



Core Principles

The NPCC Mental Health & Policing portfolio aligns with the NPCC National Strategic Plan (2021-2025) through a set of aligned core principles:

- **Approach** - which details the overarching strategic governance towards mental health
- **Partnerships** - which recognises the importance of multi-agency working
- **Response** - which shapes operational delivery



Mental Health & Policing Portfolio Strategic Objectives

Approach

Objective 1

Strategic Oversight

Assisting forces to develop their strategic approach to mental health

Partnerships

Objective 2

Data & Information Management

Enable police forces to access and interpret mental health data, to understand demand and ensure service delivery

Objective 3

Prevention Approaches

Support the identification of upstream interventions to reduce escalation of vulnerability and associated demand

Response

Objective 4

Benchmarking & Good Practice

Drive continuous professional development at all levels to deliver high standards of service and develop best practice principles

Objective 5

Criminal Justice & Diversion

Promote effective case management decision-making through early identification of mental health within the criminal justice system





Assisting forces to develop their **strategic approach to Mental Health**

Disproportionality

Disproportionality in mental health is a particular concern as highlighted by police detention data. We will work alongside national diversity leads to ensure the issues are better understood. The College of Policing is supporting this work to address racial disparity within this field (Police Race Action Plan, 2022). We will listen to those with 'lived experience', so we can be better at understanding the challenges being faced and work together to improve our response.

Overarching Strategic Approach

We will work with key stakeholders to develop a strategic response to mental health demand, to ensure the police are involved in mental health only where necessary, and work with agencies to support service delivery.

The most recent 'snapshot' exercise of mental health demand on policing undertaken in 2019, highlights that 5.1% of all police recorded incidents are mental health related, which translates to the police attending an average 54 mental health related incidents every hour. The police often attend mental health calls in the absence of more appropriate agencies who are better placed to provide the necessary support required to people who are unwell.

Changing the view of policing being a primary responder for mental health related incidents is a key challenge. A health led response model should be the primary goal that will only be achievable through improved working practices with partner agencies. However, there will always be a place for the police in responding to high-risk incidents where there is a likelihood of serious harm, or a criminal investigation is required.



Strategic Objective 1: Strategic Oversight

Escalation

The NPCC will work to develop and embed a refreshed escalation policy across policing in collaboration with statutory partners to ensure effective service delivery. The development and enhancement of regional reporting structures will support governance and ensure that the problems are identified and understood ensuring the voice of the service is heard. Embedding escalation processes at local, regional and national levels will be key to ensure that services are delivered and performance monitored.

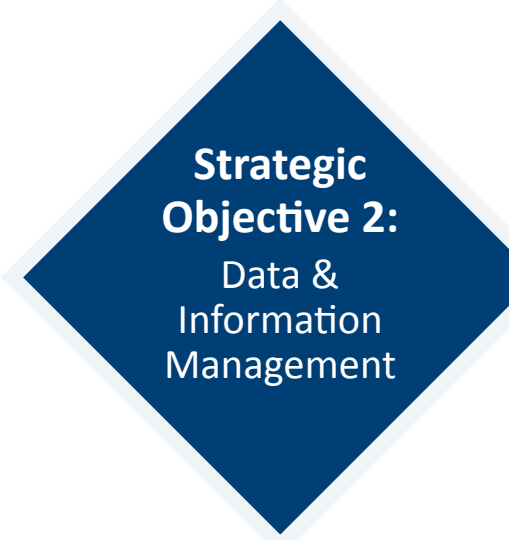
Mental Health Act Amendments

The government has made a commitment to remove the use of police custody as a place of safety following the Review of the Mental Health Act. The NPCC is working closely with the Home Office and Department for Health and Social Care to fully understand the impact of the recommendations. This work will support the implementation of legislative change by ensuring that forces are well equipped to understand the potential impact and identify the services that will need to be in place. The changes will be managed through an agreed national governance structure.

Whole System Approach

Diverting people who are unwell away from police contact and preventing them from entering the criminal justice system and guiding them towards more appropriate health care pathways is part of a whole system approach. Mental ill health should not routinely be viewed as a policing issue, it is a medical condition that requires appropriate medical intervention. The NPCC will evaluate how a 'whole system' approach can be applied in policing & mental health.

“We will listen to those with ‘lived experience’, so we can be better at understanding the challenges being faced and work together to improve our response.”



Strategic Objective 2: Data & Information Management

Enable police forces to access & interpret Mental Health data to understand demand and ensure service delivery

Data Protection & Information Sharing

Challenges have been identified in relation to data protection regulations & sharing information where mental health is concerned. We will work to increase understanding of where information sharing should be encouraged to allow a more efficient and effective service provision, whilst maintaining a person's right to privacy and confidentiality. The benefits and scope of multi-agency data linkage with statutory partners is an area of focus to better understand our communities' needs and shape commissioning of local and national services.

Data Capture

Our ability to present local, regional and national mental health data for policing is an area where we will focus on improvement. Creating a strong evidence base relating to the core issues will ensure partnership discussions at strategic level are strengthened. To this end the NPCC will support the development of a comprehensive mental health dataset. We will encourage innovation in data collation to ensure efficiency and effectiveness and reduce the burden on policing resources. We will continue to work at a governmental level to ensure the data captured through such processes as the Annual Data Requirement (ADR-125) is relevant and drive consistency in data capture.


Demand Monitoring

The 'snapshot' style collection exercises have been useful to understand mental health demand. However, they are time consuming to undertake and do not allow ongoing monitoring of trends. What they have provided is evidence that mental health permeates through all areas of policing and necessitates resourcing considerations. We will build on the evidence base developed to inform strategic oversight and understand the impact across the spectrum of policing, including public contact in control rooms, front line community engagement, and investigations.

Flagging of Mental Health Cases

The reliance on mental health flagging as a means of recording incidents will need to become more sophisticated. Systems across policing do not universally allow the extraction of mental health subcategories, specific conditions, or qualifying information, which therefore limits their usefulness. We will work on methods to better identify mental health at the point of contact, identifying 'hidden demand' and allowing the recording of data on disproportionality.

“We will work to increase understanding of where information sharing should be encouraged to allow a more efficient and effective service provision, whilst maintaining a person's right to privacy and confidentiality”



DATA & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

"We will build on the evidence base developed to inform strategic oversight and understand the impact across the spectrum of policing, including public contact in control rooms, front line community engagement, and investigations"

Support the identification of upstream interventions to reduce escalation of vulnerability and associated demand

Public Health Approaches

The wider determinants of crime are often reflected in the factors causing mental ill-health. Therefore, at a strategic level we will promote the development of a tailored and targeted public health approach in policing and mental health that aims to:

- Prevent primary issues emerging / re-emerging by focusing on social determinants (primary prevention)
- Prevent emerging issues from becoming an established problem (secondary prevention)
- Prevent established problems escalating and mitigating risk (tertiary prevention)

Partnership Problem Solving

The development of community safety style problem solving as used in neighbourhood policing should be replicated in responding to mental health.

The NPCC will promote early intervention and risk management as a means to increase community cohesion. In order to promote this, we will support training and guidance on public health approaches and ensure good practice is shared.

Trauma Informed

Ensuring officers are trained on the impacts of trauma will improve our ability to respond to individuals, whilst supporting justice for victims.

Trauma informed approaches will be incorporated in the development of future policing and mental health interventions.

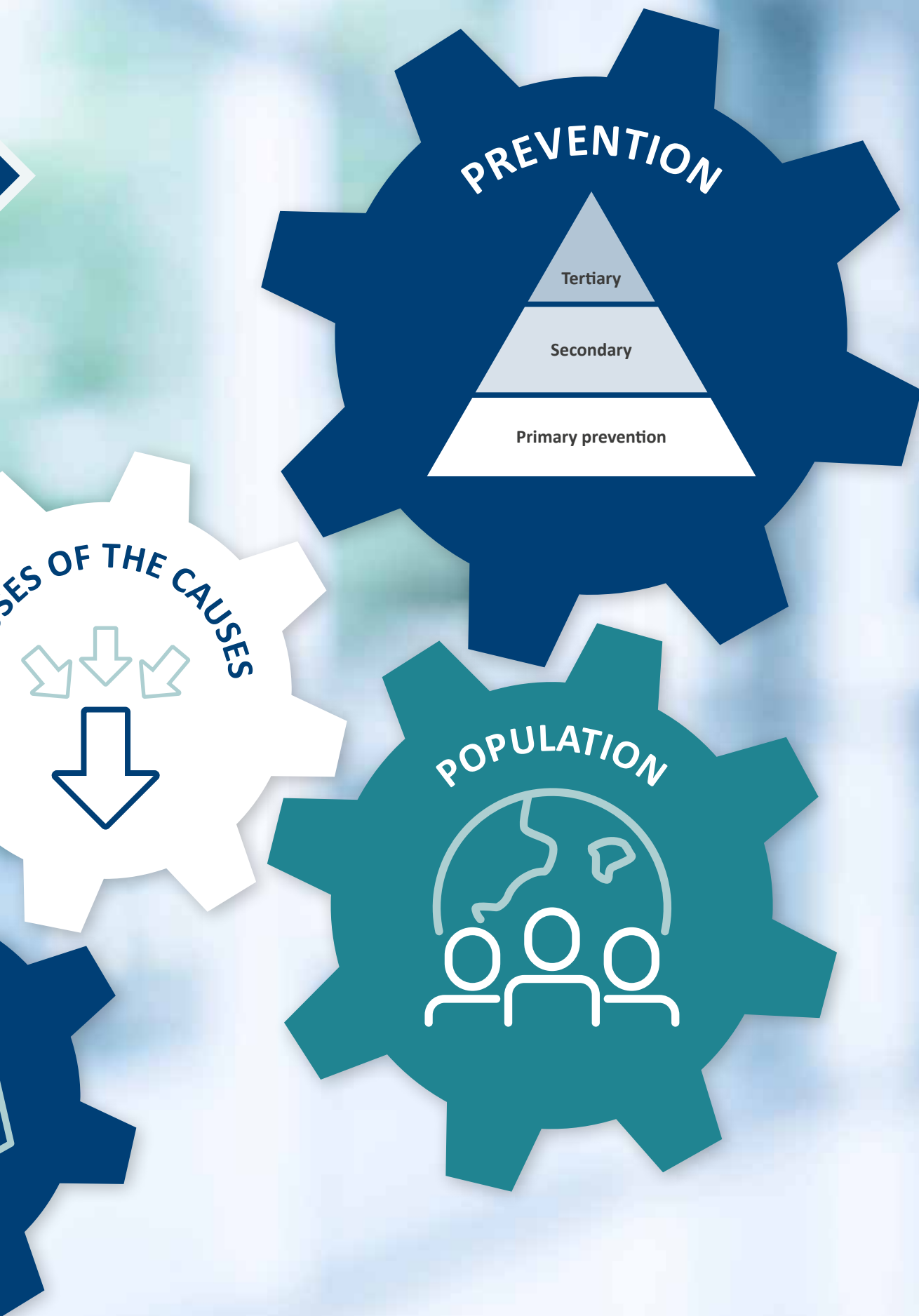
Strategic Objective 3:
Prevention Approaches

CAUSE

PARTNERSHIP



PREVENTION APPROACHES



Drive continuous professional development at all levels to deliver high standards of service and develop best practice principles

Strategic Objective 4:
Benchmarking & Good Practice

Risk Management

Mental health related incidents can often be complex as well as high risk. It is therefore important that learning opportunities are embedded in our future approaches. We will work with the IOPC (Independent Office for Police Conduct), identifying learning from safeguarding practice reviews and coroners' (Reg.28) reports to ensure we inform and share lessons learnt.

Mental Health Triage

A key to understanding what works, arises from effective evaluation. The NPCC will support police forces in consistently evaluating their responses to mental health, encouraging innovation and problem-solving approaches. This includes use of the Street Triage Evaluation Toolkit developed with the College of Policing, which assists forces to better understand the output of their schemes and inform ongoing commissioning decisions.

Evidence Based Evaluation

Understanding what works based on evaluation and good practice provides confidence and reassurance to police forces in developing their strategic and operational responses to mental health related demand. The NPCC will support the College of Policing with innovation and good practice forums with a view to identifying & sharing best practice and supporting professional development. This includes developing standards at local, regional and national level focusing on the transferability of identified good practice schemes.

Conveyancing

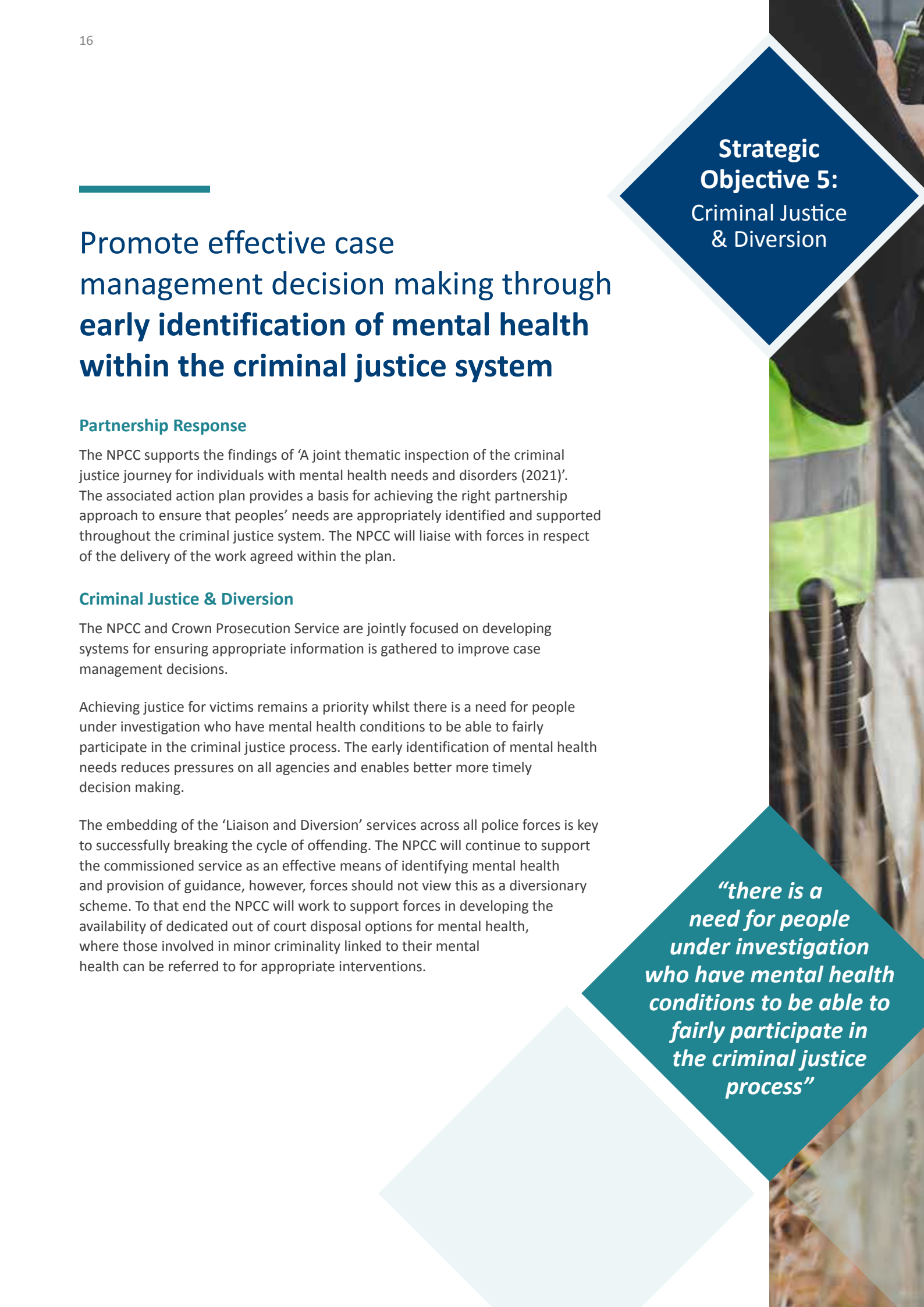
Innovation in the development of dedicated mental health conveyance services has demonstrated the potential for significant reductions in demand on police and ambulance resources. This improves the care provided to the person who requires mental health support and ensures better risk management and cost reduction. Such schemes which incorporate the provision of mental health triage provide enhanced opportunities for collaboration between service providers. The NPCC will work with partners to produce a national conveyance framework based on good practice.

“A key to understanding what works, arises from effective evaluation. The NPCC will support police forces in consistently evaluating their responses to mental health.”



DATA & EVIDENCE BASE

"The NPCC will support the College of Policing with innovation and good practice forums with a view to identifying & sharing best practice and supporting professional development. This includes developing standards at local, regional and national level focusing on the transferability of identified good practice schemes."



**Strategic
Objective 5:
Criminal Justice
& Diversion**

Promote effective case management decision making through early identification of mental health within the criminal justice system

Partnership Response

The NPCC supports the findings of 'A joint thematic inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders (2021)'. The associated action plan provides a basis for achieving the right partnership approach to ensure that peoples' needs are appropriately identified and supported throughout the criminal justice system. The NPCC will liaise with forces in respect of the delivery of the work agreed within the plan.

Criminal Justice & Diversion

The NPCC and Crown Prosecution Service are jointly focused on developing systems for ensuring appropriate information is gathered to improve case management decisions.

Achieving justice for victims remains a priority whilst there is a need for people under investigation who have mental health conditions to be able to fairly participate in the criminal justice process. The early identification of mental health needs reduces pressures on all agencies and enables better more timely decision making.

The embedding of the 'Liaison and Diversion' services across all police forces is key to successfully breaking the cycle of offending. The NPCC will continue to support the commissioned service as an effective means of identifying mental health and provision of guidance, however, forces should not view this as a diversionary scheme. To that end the NPCC will work to support forces in developing the availability of dedicated out of court disposal options for mental health, where those involved in minor criminality linked to their mental health can be referred to for appropriate interventions.

“there is a need for people under investigation who have mental health conditions to be able to fairly participate in the criminal justice process”

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & DIVERSION



Delivery Plan - Enabling Change

Our Key deliverables for 2022-2025 are:

Approach

Strategic Oversight

- Work to remove police custody from legislation as a place of safety
- Assist forces to develop and implement their mental health related policies, protocols & partnership structures
- Publish the NPCC Mental Health & Policing Strategy 2022 – 2025
- Review the NPCC Escalation Protocol and develop an agreed local, regional & national escalation structure



Partnerships

Data & Information Management

- Support forces to develop their understanding of mental health related demand through improved data capture, management, and analysis
- Develop & publish guidance on data sharing with partners for mental health
- Ensure consistent National Reporting of mental health data (Inc ADR 125)

Partnerships

Prevention Approaches

- Reduce disproportionality in use of Mental Health Act
- Develop and increase availability of Out-of-Court Disposals to reduce further offending
- Develop an understanding of the links between mental health & homicide to inform prevention approaches
- Introduce Trauma Informed Practices in responding to mental health

Response

Benchmarking & Good Practice

- Encourage and support continuous professional development in accordance with the College of Policing standards & recognised best-practice
- Support forces in responding to recommendations of the HMICFRS, Coroners and IOPC
- Evaluate models of good practice particularly those providing a whole-system approach of responding to mental health related demand

Response

Criminal Justice & Diversion

- Develop an implementation plan for the recommendations of the Joint Inspection of Mental Health in Criminal Justice
- Work with the Crown Prosecution Service to improve case management decision making for mental health
- Ensure the consistent use of disposal outcomes for cases involving mental health
- Improve early identification of mental health and flagging for risk management purposes

