



Christian Mitchell

Chairman
Sussex Police and Crime Panel

First Class Post

Chief Executive
Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation
Trust
Arundel Road, Worthing,
West Sussex
BN13 3EP

24 February 2023

Re: Sussex Police's Capacity for Mental Health Support

Dear Dr Padmore,

Sussex Police and Crime Panel scrutinises the actions and decisions of Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, who is in turn responsible for delivering an efficient and effective police force for Sussex.

On behalf of the Panel, I'm writing to you following our meeting on 27 January 2023, at which Panel members considered a report on ['The Role of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner in Ensuring Sussex Police Provides an Effective Response to Mental Health'](#).

Members shared deep, collective concern upon learning of the frequency and significant time spent by police officers responding to and dealing with mental health incidents, particularly those arising under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983. It was felt that the supplementary care and support officers provide is above and beyond the role of a police officer, and that the Force cannot sustain providing the current level of operational support, which diverts policing resources from legitimate frontline policing work. Overarching concern was also expressed for officers' own mental wellbeing, resourcing pressures absorbed by the Force and the knock-on negative impact on police callout response times.

Members' wide-ranging discussion on the subject led the Panel to agree that, as a recommendation, I should write to you and propose that Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust strongly considers taking the following strategic actions:

1. Urgently review the mental health practitioner support available to Sussex Police.
2. Reduce the unavailability of police officers carrying out regular duties due to the time spent accompanying individuals in Accident and Emergency departments.
3. Reduce the growth and use of Accident and Emergency departments as a police-staffed place of safety.

On behalf of the Panel, thank you in advance for your consideration and we should be grateful to receive your response in due course.

With best wishes,

Christian Mitchell

Councillor Christian Mitchell

Chairman, Sussex Police and Crime Panel

cc: Mrs Katy Bourne OBE, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner – PCP Website