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TO:
Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards
Chief Constables
Police and Crime Commissioners

15 November 2016

Dear All

Police and Crime Commissioners and Health and Wellbeing Boards

We are writing to highlight and support some of the important benefits that can be realised through closer collaboration between policing and health partners.

The interface between crime and public health is well-documented – in the Department of Health's public health outcomes framework, for example, which contains a number of indicators that recognise the links, including: entry to the youth justice system, people in prison with a mental illness, domestic abuse, violent crime, re-offending, drug treatment outcomes and perception of community safety.

In many areas of the country, police and health and care partners, in both the NHS and Local Government, are working collaboratively to deliver better outcomes for individuals, including the most vulnerable and local communities and there is potential for further joint working. For example, local authorities, the NHS and the police are required members of Safeguarding Adult Boards which help ensure a collaborative, inter-agency approach to the responses and prevention of abuse or neglect.

In addition, many health and wellbeing boards already include amongst their membership either their Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) or representatives from their local police force or criminal justice agencies. This has enabled boards to take a broader strategic view of their area beyond health and social care, and through Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) provides boards with the opportunity to better understand the nature of public needs and demands on local services – which can in turn influence local commissioning strategies.

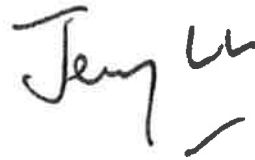
There are already a number of areas where greater collaboration has had positive outcomes including:

- Every area in England is now working to implement their local Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat action plans, involving NHS services, police forces and local authorities, and many of these local partnerships are using their Boards to ratify their plans and support progress. Local action plans and other helpful information on the Concordat can be found here: <http://www.crisiscareconcordat.org.uk/>
- In addition, around 30 police forces now have some form of street triage in operation. These models, often jointly commissioned by the PCC and Clinical Commissioning Groups, ensure mental health nurses staff support and advise police officers in their responses to people in mental health crisis. In some forces mental health workers and police officers provide joint responses in the community; in others mental health professionals work in emergency call centres in order to provide real time advice and support to frontline officers. The evaluation of nine initial pilot sites evidenced that the schemes contributed towards large reductions in the use of police custody as a place of safety for those vulnerable people detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act.
- Around 25 police forces operate a drug intervention initiative which involves policing and health partners working together to identify, assess and refer users into appropriate treatment pathways. Investment in treatment is proven to reduce reoffending, with every £1 spent saving £2.50 for the Criminal Justice System, and with access to treatment reducing the impact of wider health harms including the spread of blood borne viruses and drug related mortality.
- A recent Home Office and Public Health England initiative in Middlesbrough brought together senior partners in policing, health and probation to consider the impact of heroin misusing offenders in their area and the wider implications this was having on individuals and the community. This has galvanised further collaborative working, including the development of a joint strategy to address their local needs and consider opportunities for developing a multi-agency commissioning approach for treatment services.
- The first phase of the local alcohol action areas programme, which ran until March 2015, saw police and health partners work closely together to reduce a range of alcohol-related harms. For example, Gravesham began a one-year pilot of a Make Every Adult Matter approach to street drinkers. An operational group is led by the area's alcohol and drug treatment provider with members including the police, third sector organisations, primary care providers, Jobcentre Plus and the Prison Service. Early indications are that the project is working well and that links between partner agencies are much improved and that better coordinated services for individuals with multiple needs are emerging. Invitations to apply to take part in the second phase of the programme were sent to PCCs, chief constables and all local authorities in England and Wales last month. The programme will begin in January and will again encourage active partnerships between local agencies to reduce alcohol harms.

Given the benefits outlined above, and the pressures on health and care services and police forces, we would like to ask Health and Wellbeing Boards and PCCs to consider how they can better work together by ensuring appropriate representation from both sectors on Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Handwritten signature of Amber Rudd in black ink.

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP

Handwritten signature of Jeremy Hunt in black ink.

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP