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| **Policy Position Summary: Mental Health 06.07.2018** |
| What does the PCVC wish to achieve?  The PCVC wants to ensure that people with mental health difficulties are supported and receive the appropriate care. This includes people who become victims of crime, people who commit crimes and people in crisis who come into contact with the police.  Residents in County Durham and Darlington need to be supported to achieve their optimum mental health and wellbeing. Every person needs to have access to early help in supporting their emotional wellbeing and mental health needs. |
| Evidence Base  Police are often facing increased demand caused by gaps in mental health services. Nationally, the Home Secretary has previously stated that 20% of police time is spent dealing with mental health issues. Up to 90% of people in prison and 40% of people on community sentences have some sort of mental health concern. Police Officers are often the first to come into contact with people in a mental health crisis, or people who have been victimised because of a mental health problem. Increasingly police are taking on the role of gatekeeper – ensuring access to appropriate support from other relevant services or the criminal justice system. The number of incidents with a mental health that the police deal with has increased year on year since 2010.  While public protection remains a priority, there is a growing consensus that prison may not always be an appropriate environment for those with severe mental illness and that custody can exacerbate mental ill health, heighten vulnerability and increase the risk of self-harm and suicide.  Any person who is in police or prison custody or before the courts charged with a criminal offence and who is in need of medical treatment for mental disorder should be considered for admission to hospital.  Public Health England Mental Health figures in the general population:   * 1 in 4 adults experiences at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any given year. For County Durham, this represents over 100,000 people aged 18+. * 1 in 5 older people living in the community and 40% of older people living in care homes are affected by depression * Up to three quarters of people with mental health problems receive no support   Historically, County Durham and Darlington has a higher suicide rate than the England average rate.  Key findings from the national At Risk Yet Dismissed report include:   * 45% of people with Severe Mental Illness were victims of crime in the past year. * People with Severe mental illness were five times more likely to be a victim of assault; and three times more likely to be a victim of household crime, than people in the general population * Victims with Severe mental illness were up to four times more likely to be victimised by their relatives or acquaintances than those from the general population. |
| How will the PCVC’s aspirations be achieved?   * Organisations need to work closer in partnership to allow people to become more resilient and receive appropriate support to prevent them from getting a mental health crisis. * There needs to be sufficient multi-agency mental health training. * Ensure adequate funding for mental health service provision and funding for preventative services. * Organisations need to work together to progress and be held to account by the work of the Crisis Care Concordat. * Implementation of the new Partnership Mental Health Plans and performance framework to enable outcomes and progress to be measured. * A refresh of the County Durham Suicide Prevention Strategy and implementation of action plan. * A united approach across relevant agencies to address issues arising from those familiar faces that present to various organisations time and time again, generating significant demand on resources, with a view to planning more effective joint management of their behaviours whilst safeguarding their wellbeing. * The PCVC is working with Criminal Justice Partners to ensure that people who come in to contact with the Criminal Justice System with mental health issues, either as victims or as offenders, receive appropriate support and sentences. |