



Metropolitan Police Service submission to the Place of Safety Joint Overview and Scrutiny
Committee, 6 October 2016

The Metropolitan Police Service submission to the 26 April 2016 Joint Overview and Scrutiny committee remains relevant and is attached. The urgent need for safe and timely access to medical care following the use of s136 Mental Act 1983 is as acute as ever. Set against the impact of an apparent national bed management crisis, this remains a significant risk for all partners within the South London and Maudsley (SLaM) area.

Physically the new suite appears to be a significant improvement on existing facilities. The MPS welcomes the commitment to a maximum wait time, with a timely review after 30 minutes, within operating protocols. This will greatly improve upon the existing provision and make the process safer.

There are some issues that remain to be resolved that will impact upon JPoS delivery; these are being managed through the existing project management structure. It is expected that these will be resolved before the Joint Place of Safety (JPoS) opens.

Risk

We see a risk that there may be occasions where the JPoS cannot meet demand; principally because the JPoS is full or staff occupied with existing patients. At present, this will likely be because of:

- A spike in demand above the median rate used to calculate demand for JPoS
- Slow vacation of the JPoS

In both cases we expect SLaM to resolve these at the time. A contingency needs to be in place to manage demand (both for space and staff).

The ongoing difficulties around AMHP provision will impact on timely vacation – particularly for those patients who are not resident on any of the SLaM boroughs. Whilst SLaM have a contingency in place, a coordinated approach by the local authorities would seem to be more helpful and resilient. The MPS appreciates the difficulties for the Local Authorities; however the JPoS offer is at the very least physically better than the current provision and as such must be better and safer than the status quo.

It is predictable that the new process will not function fluidly at its inception. A robust escalation policy needs to be agreed by all partners. For the police, and our responsibilities up to the handover at JPoS, this will mean having a clear contingency if waiting times are breached or JPoS is not available. The MPS is involved in a wider piece of work with SLaM around escalation of issues.

The MPS continues to support the JPoS as an improved provision from the current position which is untenable. A swift, appropriate and seamless street to suite process for those in crisis requiring s136 minimises risk and maximises welfare, safety and care. SLaM, the acute trusts and the local authorities can achieve this – JPoS has the potential to be a key element in it.

Nick Collins

Chief Inspector

On behalf of the police Borough Commanders for Southwark, Croydon, Lambeth and Lewisham.

30 September 2016