

HMIC Report - A joint inspection of the treatment of offenders with learning disabilities within the criminal justice system (- phase 1 from arrest to sentence)

Comments from Leicestershire Police

We welcome the report. Its authors were “impressed” with the unique joint triage car operated by Leicestershire Police and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust. The car is crewed by a police officer and a mental health nurse, who use their different skills when dealing with an incident involving someone with a mental health issue or learning difficulty. This ensures the individual is dealt with appropriately, and can signpost them to services which may divert them from further incidents. The triage staff also provide sound advice and guidance to operational staff on the front line and the force control room.

Since the inspection, the government has announced funding to extend similar schemes across the country. Leicestershire is helping to pass on its experience to those other areas.

The report also praises the appropriate adult provision within Leicestershire. Of the six forces inspected, Leicestershire was one of two that had appropriate adults available day or night to support detainees with learning difficulties.

We will use the report’s other findings to strengthen our work with people with learning difficulties and others who are vulnerable.

Response from PCC Sir Clive Loader

“I note the concerns in the HMIC report regarding police officers’ knowledge of learning disabilities, and it is clear that there is work to be done nationally to raise awareness in this area. That said, it is pleasing to see the positive comments regarding the use of the triage car in Leicestershire, and to hear that Leicestershire Police will be passing on its experience to other Forces. Detainees with learning disabilities (or mental health issues) should be assessed by an appropriately trained person as early as possible and receive the necessary support throughout the Criminal Justice process. I have consistently emphasised my determination to make sure that police officers are spending their time on the duties for which they are intended; the triage car is part of this. We will continue to work with partners including the NHS, to make sure that we provide the best service and value for money.”