

## Police

The police may be the first point of call for people facing a mental health crisis, with individuals coming into contact with officers while at their lowest points in life. This can be in varying situations that may involve the person making contact with police directly, or because they are in a risk situation and police have been contacted.

This contact may be in a variety of different environments, from Emergency Departments to private addresses or public areas. Police have a specific power under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act when they find someone in crisis in a public place. They also have a responsibility within Section 135 of the Act when a crisis is within a private address.

## Expert by Experience

Central to the Respond initiative is the vital role played by 'experts by experience' – people with lived experience of mental healthcare who are dedicated to improving the systems they have been through in the past.

The panel of experts providing support to training participants always includes a member of the Expert by Experience group, which is part of the Fulfilling Lives Programme in Newcastle and Gateshead funded by the Big Lottery.

## Crisis nurse

The place of safety suite is supported by the Crisis Resolution Home Based Treatment Team (CRHT). All Section 135/136 applications are telephoned through to crisis triage by the arresting officer, and details are taken of presenting circumstances and rationale for Section 135/136. The most appropriate place of safety is decided at this point.

The place of safety suite is used unless the detained person needs immediate medical care (in which case they will be directed to the nearest emergency department) or is behaving in an extreme violent manner (in which case they may be directed to police cells). A health-based place of safety is the preferred option where possible.

Upon receiving the call from the arresting officer, the nurse is dispatched to the place of safety suite. The nurse and police officer then complete a joint risk review to decide whether the police need to stay at the suite. The nurse reads the person their rights under the Mental Health Act and will then continue to support the person through the process.

Respond is a totally immersive experience. It encouraged me and my professional colleagues to leave the comfort zone of role and remit and face more honestly the considerations of a critical incident which involves mental health crisis. As a learning tool this cannot be underestimated.

*Anthony, Police Officer*

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## Multi-agency mental health simulation training

### What is Respond training?

**Respond** is a unique multi-agency simulation training package for professionals involved in mental health crisis care. By increasing collaboration and knowledge, it equips staff to respond quickly and appropriately to improve patient experience.

The **Crisis Care Concordat** has brought together relevant agencies with a shared commitment to improve the system, so that people in mental health crisis get the support they need – whatever the circumstances and whichever service they turn to first.

Respond is a key step towards making that vision a reality. Using an immersive training technique, it offers a safe learning environment to explore problem solving and decision making skills, where mistakes can be made with no long-term consequences.

Working alongside professionals from other agencies, participants are presented with a series of real-life situations, with constant support from a mental health professional, paramedic, police officer, psychiatric doctor, crisis nurse and, crucially, an expert by experience.

Respond-trained professionals take their learning forward with a clear understanding of each other's roles, so that every agency in the crisis pathway can respond quickly and effectively - without the tensions and time delays that can arise from uncertainty about who should do what.



## Why choose Respond?

Respond training models the collaborative behaviour that is essential to an effective and joined-up crisis response. Designed with active involvement of experts by experience, this immersive training method helps the learner to experience as closely as possible the emotions and the style of thinking of someone in a stressful situation.

Agencies in the North East developed Respond after recognising that experiential training is the most effective way to gain the skills to handle crisis situations effectively, with the full range of relevant agencies learning together.

The training can be delivered in a variety of ways, recreating incidents in a vivid and realistic way in a classroom environment or a designated simulation suite.

## Benefits of Respond

Streamlined, more efficient crisis care can bring clear benefits to patients, professionals and agencies alike:

- A safer and better patient experience, with service users getting the right care at the right place, in a timely manner
- Reducing the stress of a crisis, to improve clinical outcomes
- More efficient use of time, through better understanding of the role of each agency and increased confidence in individual roles
- Improved understanding and knowledge of mental health, with participants better equipped to recognise mental health problems, ensuring they are identified and treated more quickly
- Improved knowledge of legislation and what the different agencies can and can't do - such as when the Mental Health Act can be used, and when restraint is appropriate

## Making it happen

Respond was developed through the Northern England Strategic Clinical Network (SCN), and is supported by organisations including Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW); North East Urgent and Emergency Care Network; Fulfilling Lives Newcastle Gateshead; Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust; Northumbria Police; North East Ambulance Service; and Newcastle City Council.

Further information about Respond is available from Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust:

**Claire Andre, Clinical Police Liaison Lead, email: [claire.andre@ntw.nhs.uk](mailto:claire.andre@ntw.nhs.uk) or call: 0191 245 6662**

**Dr Mary-Jane Tacchi, Consultant Psychiatrist, email: [Mary-Jane.Tacchi@ntw.nhs.uk](mailto:Mary-Jane.Tacchi@ntw.nhs.uk)**

I have learnt so much today, more than I ever expected to. I now understand how professionals work, their focus, why they make certain decisions and do certain things.

*Terry, Expert by Experience  
Fulfilling Lives Newcastle Gateshead*

I found it very helpful to better understand the roles colleagues play, and the constraints their roles put on them. Collaboration has been much more apparent since the training, making the whole process less stressful for the patient.

*Peter, Approved Mental Health Professional*

## Learning together, responding together

A streamlined, joined-up response depends on a clear understanding of every role, and how they fit together under the pressure of a real situation.

Respond recognises that it's simply not practical for each agency to train its staff separately, and instead creates a rounded experience by bringing together the full range of relevant staff, alongside experts by experience.

Some of the key participants in the initial scenario for a Respond session are set out below – with each of these specialisms also represented among the panel of experts providing advice and guidance to participants:

### AMHP (Approved Mental Health Professional)

The AMHP decides whether or not an application should be made for detention in hospital under the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007). This role includes convening the assessment, considering available information, interviewing the person with the Section 12 medical practitioner(s), consulting the nearest relative and arranging conveyance to hospital.

The AMHP must ensure the person meets the criteria for detention under the Act (usually section 2 or 3) – that the person is suffering from a mental disorder, the nature/degree of which makes it necessary for them to receive assessment and/or treatment in hospital due to risk to self and/or others.

### Ambulance services

Ambulance services provide unscheduled care to patients with a range of mental health conditions who dial 111 or 999, as well as providing transport for patients at the request of police, AMHP or medical staff to suitable locations for continued care. This includes helping individuals with an isolated mental health problem or with inter-related physical and mental health problems, often when they are feeling highly vulnerable or do not know where else to seek help.

Working alongside partner agencies, their role is to provide service users with the responsive and compassionate care or to signpost them to other appropriate services, as part of a holistic and co-ordinated approach to supporting patients in crisis.

### Section 12 Doctor

A 'Section 12' doctor is shorthand for a doctor who is 'approved' under Section 12 of the Mental Health Act on behalf of the Secretary of State (or Welsh Minister) as having special expertise in diagnosis and treatment of 'mental disorders'. The doctor is usually a psychiatrist.

The role of the doctor in a Mental Health Act Assessment is to liaise with the AMHP, interview the patient together and make recommendations for treatment. This involves making an assessment, discussing options with the AMHP and agreeing a treatment plan using the least restrictive option. This could include admission under the Act, home-based treatment or discharge to other services.

For a Section 136 assessment, only one Section 12 doctor is required. For other sections of the Act, a second doctor is required and two recommendations are made. The other doctor either has previous knowledge of the patient (such as the GP) or is also Section 12 approved.

