2017/344 – Mental illness and the requirements for Appropriate Adults

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

I would ask if statistics are held by North Wales Police, on the number of known mentally ill persons arrested in 2015 and 2016?

The number of individuals who have been in Police Custody, who had a current Warning Marker (as at date of arrest) for Suicidal, Mental Disorder or Self Harm.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Individuals</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>403</td>
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I would also enquire whether the force holds information on the number of occasions, in the same period, that Appropriate Adults have been required to support vulnerable persons in custody, in accordance with the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (P.A.C.E)?

Of those individuals above, those who had Appropriate Adult involvement at any incident during the year (the individual could have attended custody on multiple occasions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Individuals</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
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There are generally 2 categories of person with mental health issues who may be brought into custody.

1. Someone who has been arrested for an offence and who has mental health issues.
2. Someone who has purely been detained under Section 136 Mental Health Act.

1. Someone who has been arrested for an offence and who has mental health issues. Deciding the need for an appropriate adult is not always automatic or set in stone. Someone may or may not have warning markers, warning markers may be old or inaccurate, there are degrees of mental illness, someone may be taking medication that controls their mental illness, how they present and talk in custody is important, etc etc. In short, there are a number of variables that will determine whether an appropriate adult is needed. The arrested person themselves are an important source of information on whether an appropriate adult is needed, as they can tell us what is needed (and they will often say if they do or do not need an appropriate adult). If there is ever any doubt, we err on the side of caution and call an appropriate adult.

2. Someone who has purely been detained under S.136 Mental Health Act. These persons are not being investigated or interviewed, they are purely there to allow them to be assessed. In view of that, the mental health worker sometimes performs the role of the appropriate adult to ensure they are properly looked after.

Can you advise me, what policies does North Wales Police follow in addition to P.A.C.E., e.g. the College of Policing’s Authorised Professional Practice (APP), regarding guidance on the safer detention and handling of persons in police custody?
I am particularly interested in the instructions Custody Sergeants are given, to enable them to determine if an Appropriate Adult is necessary to give support to a vulnerable detainee.

In the first instance, PACE and APP are the defining authorities with regards to how we deal with mental illness or vulnerable people. These will always be our primary sources of reference for guidance and best practice.

In Custody Policy/Custody Process Guidance there is a statement of the need to ensure an appropriate adult is called to assist a person with mental health issues. The custody booking in process also has triggers to ensure mental health issues are taken into account and properly assessed and supported whilst someone is in custody. Also for detainees who are released from custody. In the Custody Policy/Custody Process Guidance there are hyperlinks to Force Policy Library/Mental Health and Learning Disabilities which contains a number of documents with guidance on dealing with mental health and vulnerable person issues.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 09/05/2017