

Government opens bidding to fund health-based places of safety to stop those in mental health crisis being held in police cells.

When a person is experiencing a mental health crisis they need care from healthcare professionals in the right place. Too often the only safe place available is a police cell, which can add to the person's suffering. This £15 million fund will help to provide health and community based places of safety to prevent vulnerable people being held in police cells.

The funding can be used to:

- refurbish or improve existing health-based places of safety, for example to increase capacity
- build new places of safety
- make existing places of safety suitable for people aged 18 and under
- create mental health crisis cafes or places of calm
- provide ambulance transport to places of safety (so a police car is not used)
- provide vehicles for mobile services to respond to mental health crises in the community

Progress has already been made to decrease the use of police cells – there was a 32% reduction between April 2013 and March 2015. However, use of police cells still varies considerably across the country.

There are 23 priority areas, covering 10 police forces, where the use of police cells is amongst the highest. A joint letter from the Home Secretary and the Health Secretary is being sent to Crisis Care Concordat groups in these areas inviting them to bid for funding.

The 10 force areas, where the money will be targeted, are:

- Avon and Somerset
- Cleveland
- Derbyshire

- Devon and Cornwall
- Essex
- Lincolnshire
- Nottinghamshire
- South Yorkshire
- Sussex
- West Yorkshire