

# Mental health - Guidance overview

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

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The Policing and Crime Act 2017 s 80-83 introduced amendments to the Mental Health Act 1983. Due to this amendment, mental health authorised professional practice (APP) has undergone a review and has been updated where necessary.

This module wholly supersedes and replaces:

- APP on Mental ill health and learning disabilities (within [APP on Detention and custody](#)). This document was decommissioned on 10 October 2016.
- Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Department of Health (2010) guidance on responding to people with mental ill health or learning disabilities. This document was decommissioned on 3 August 2016.

Mental Health APP is intended to provide guidance to the police service of England and Wales. It is focused on the police response to people who:

- are experiencing mental ill health
- have a learning disability
- have developmental conditions
- have multiple needs relating to mental health
- are mentally or emotionally vulnerable and require assistance

The guidance highlights the actions and behaviours that may help the police address the needs of mentally vulnerable individuals. The guidance applies whether the police are acting in a criminal justice or health care capacity or in both of these roles. When acting in a criminal justice capacity, the police become involved when a person is a victim of crime, a witness to crime or is suspected of or known to have committed a crime.

When acting in a healthcare capacity, the police may be:

- acting in support of healthcare agencies that are dealing with someone who is experiencing mental ill health – for example, the police may be exercising specific police powers

- assisting a person who is experiencing mental ill health until healthcare professionals become involved
- responding to families and carers of people with mental ill health or learning disabilities who have concerns about them
- responding to members of the public seeking a service from the police in relation to suspected mental ill health or learning disabilities on the part of an individual

Mental Health APP has been developed by:

- consolidating and updating existing guidance
- collating professional expertise of police and voluntary sector practitioners
- presenting international and national legislation, statutory codes of practice and relevant case law
- learning from IPCC investigations and reports following deaths, serious injuries and successful interventions in relation to the police response to people who are mentally ill or have learning disabilities

The section on communication skills and techniques draws on findings from systematic reviews of research evidence. Where the guidance draws on any empirical evidence, it is explicitly referenced in the text.

A range of quick reference guides that complement this APP module is available as part of the Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Trainer Guide (this guide is available via [College Learn](#)).

## Tags

Mental health