



8<sup>th</sup> September 2021

The Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorate on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 published their report 'Criminal Justice Joint Inspection: Neurodiversity in the criminal justice system: A review of evidence'. Cheshire Constabulary responded to the call for evidence and was involved in the inspection fieldwork earlier in the year. I am pleased to see included in the report some examples of good practice exhibited by Cheshire Constabulary.

Whilst the recommendations in the report are for the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), I welcome the report as I am committed to ensuring Cheshire Constabulary offer fair treatment to everyone. Neurodiversity covers a number of conditions related to how the brain functions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autism, intellectual disabilities, traumatic brain injury and motor disorders and many of these conditions can often be hidden.

There are a wide range of initiatives across the Constabulary to ensure we are accessible. A working group has been formed involving a wide range of Criminal Justice partners to examine disproportionality and fairness to cater for a diverse range of needs and vulnerabilities. Through the disproportionality working group each Criminal Justice partner is asked to provide data and report upon this to ensure the best possible service.

Cheshire Custody Suites have an embedded health care provision which ensures every detainee is assessed to ascertain whether they are fit for detention, this covers a screening tool to ascertain any additional bespoke needs or vulnerabilities. The liaison and diversion offer extends beyond Custody and follows the individual as they progress through the Criminal Justice pathway. My Independent Custody Visitors provide me with independent scrutiny and reassurance that people detained in our custody suites are being treated appropriately.

In Cheshire, a pilot has been commissioned which provides distraction items and activities for detainees with bespoke needs. The items include foam footballs, chalk, and colouring implements. The items have been used by both adults and Juveniles with various neurodiversity needs. The feedback has been very positive and will be further embedded into Custody practices.

Officers and Staff are trained to ensure neurodivergent people are treated fairly. A dedicated Diversity Equality and Inclusion team has been established within the Constabulary to complement existing practices both internally and externally. A Neurodiversity Custody toolkit and bespoke Custody training has been produced and delivered to Custody staff. This training is also being cascaded to frontline officers.

Whilst there is excellent work happening in the Constabulary, the report has evidenced how much needs to be done and I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account in improving experiences for neurodivergent people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Dwyer'. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'J' and a prominent horizontal stroke at the end.

John Dwyer  
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire