

UK USES COPS AS CARERS

Mental illness alert

COPS are having to provide mental health care due to a shortage of other workers, a watchdog warned yesterday. The Chief Inspector of Constabulary said police were often being used to fill the gaps among paramedics and other key staff.

Sir Tom Winsor said officers had to lock up sufferers who had committed no crime. He said mental health care provision had reached "such a state of severity" public safety was being put at risk.

His State of Policing report says: "The severe problems in mental health provision in this country are not only failing those who need treatment; they also create an unacceptable strain on the police and imperil public safety."

It adds: "This is an unacceptable drain on police resources, and it is a profoundly improper way to

treat vulnerable people who need care and help."

He warns it will get worse until mental health gets the same priority as physical health.

Police handled almost 300,000 incidents involving mental health last year. South Wales had the most of any force at 38,712.

Campaigners said the figures highlighted a lack of funding.

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Fears... Sir Tom

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Deborah Cicurel, who has tried the new ghost experience, says: "If anyone knows how fear and the human mind works, it's Derren. His ride is not a conventional roller coaster but is just as

petrifying. I won't break the secret he asks you to keep at the start, but there are enough hair-raising demons, jolts and other surprises after you put on your headset to give even the most courageous a truly spine-tingling fright.

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but also to avoid the embarrassment of grabbing a stranger in fear. Think I'm a wimp for getting terrified of scenes created on a headset? I would have thought the same... before I tried it."

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