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Policing Partnership Board for Wales

**Hybrid meeting - virtual via Microsoft Teams / Hafod room, Cathays Park 2, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ
Thursday 15th December 2022**

Minutes

Attendees

Jane Hutt MS	Minister for Social Justice (Chair)
David TC Davies MP	Secretary of State for Wales
Dr. Richard Lewis	Chief Constable, Dyfed Powys Police
Pam Kelly	Chief Constable, Gwent Police
Jeremy Vaughan	Chief Constable, South Wales Police
Amanda Blakeman	Chief Constable, North Wales Police
David Thorne	Assistant Chief Constable, South Wales Police
Dafydd Llywelyn	Police and Crime Commissioner, Dyfed Powys
Jeff Cuthbert	Police and Crime Commissioner, Gwent
Andy Dunbobbin	Police and Crime Commissioner, North Wales
Alun Michael	Police and Crime Commissioner, South Wales
Eleri Thomas	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Gwent
Wayne Jones	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, North Wales
Emma Wools	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, South Wales
Dan Jones	Director, Violence Prevention Unit
Liz Lalley	Interim Director, Recovery and Restart Welsh Government
Gary Haggaty	Deputy Director, Community Safety Division, Welsh Government
Tracey Breheny	Deputy Director, Mental Health, Substance Misuse & Vulnerable Groups, Welsh Government
James Gerard	Deputy Director, Justice Policy, Welsh Government
Sam Clutton	Tackling Poverty Senior Programme Manager, Welsh Government
Judith Cole	Deputy Director, LG Finance Policy and Sustainability, Welsh Government
Mike Connolly	Deputy Director, Initial Welcome and Accommodation Division, Welsh Government
Nick Wood	Deputy Chief Executive NHS Wales, Welsh Government
Lucy Akhtar	Senior Manager, Crime & Justice Team, Welsh Government
Leanne Lewis	Crime & Justice Team, Welsh Government
Chris Jennings	Executive Director Wales, HM Prison and Probation Service
Jenny Hopkins	Chief Crown Prosecutor, Crown Prosecution Service
Joanne Hopkins	Public Health Wales
Chris Batchelor	Deputy Director International & Domestic Engagement & Strategy Directorate, Home Office
Naomi Alleyne	Director of Social Services and Housing, WLGA
Mark Brace	Interim Head of the Safer Communities Network, WLGA
Chris Llewelyn	Chief Executive, WLGA
Carys Morgans	Chief Executive, Dyfed Powys PCC
Sian Curley	Chief Executive, Gwent PCC
Stephen Hughes	Chief Executive, North Wales PCC
Paul Morris	Head of Police Liaison Unit
Asif Afsar	APCC Wales Policy Manager
Joanna Huddleston	Administrator, Police Liaison Unit

Apologies

Sarah Capstick	Safer Communities Network WLGA
James Searle	Head of Crime & Justice Team, Welsh Government
Reg Kilpatrick	Director General Covid Recovery, Welsh Government
Judith Paget	Director General Health, Chief Executive NHS Wales, Welsh Government
Tracy Cooper	Public Health Wales



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Actions arising from the meeting

The Chair reinforced that she would like to invite Lynne Neagle MS to attend the next meeting to return to this discussion but stated she will raise the issue regarding Health Boards as per PCC Michael's comment.	Jane Hutt MS
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1. Welcome and Chair's Address

The Minister for Social Justice opened the meeting and welcomed members to the Policing Partnership Board for Wales. The Minister noted this is the first hybrid meeting since the Covid-19 pandemic. She welcomed David TC Davies MP, Secretary of State for Wales and apologies were noted as above.

She extended a welcome to Mark Brace joining his first meeting as Interim Head of the Safer Communities Network, CC Blakeman, who has been newly appointed as Chief Constable of North Wales Police and Chris Batchelor, who has succeeded Asim Hafeez in his role as Deputy Director International & Domestic Engagement & Strategy Directorate in the Home Office. She thanked Jon Drake for his work in the Violence Prevention Unit following his recent retirement and mentioned that Dan Jones had taken over this role and is present virtually today. The Minister also mentioned that she was pleased that Jenny Hopkins from the Crown Prosecution Service was invited and joined virtually and that Jaime Kalhan from Her Voice Wales was in attendance to observe the meeting with her chaperone Alexandra Thomas.

2. Welcome and comments from the Secretary of State for Wales

The Secretary of State for Wales thanked the board for the welcome and noted that policing is reserved but is grateful that Welsh Government and UK Government are working together and is looking forward to doing so in the future. He explained that he visited Gwent the previous day where he met with 51 newly attested Constables and stated that he would like to do the same with other forces.

3. Key Issues for Discussion

3.1. Substance Misuse/Drug Related Deaths Update

PCC Llywelyn explained that a paper was circulated for noting to provide an update on the current situation on substance misuse, which discusses collaboration opportunities and the desire to create a new strategy going forward and he was keen for substance misuse to remain a focus at the Policing Partnership Board for Wales.

ACC Thorne added that the issue of substance misuse and deaths linked to substance misuse are continuing. The paper describes the commitment and priority which involves other agencies such as Welsh Government, Area Planning Boards and Health Boards. It is shown in the data that the issue is not improving and there are increasing numbers of alcohol related deaths as well as drug deaths.

Policing in Wales are keen to pilot a new way of working through the use of an intensive multi-agency approach and adapting current processes to provide an enhanced service which would involve clinical and psychological delivery as early as possible.

ACC Thorne feels that the long-term solution is to strengthen information sharing with other



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agencies including Welsh Government and the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust to meet the needs of communities by seeking to ensure data is shared more quickly after a non-fatal overdose.

3.1.1. The Minister thanked the group for their input and advised that she would like to return to this discussion when The Deputy Minister for Mental Health & Wellbeing (DMfMHWB), Lynne Neagle MS is in attendance. She invited PCC Michael to comment on this topic.

3.1.2. PCC Michael mentioned that he had a productive visit with Lynne Neagle MS and explained that CC Vaughan has been involved with the Joint Public Services Board who met in critical incident mode.

There has been engagement with Public Health Wales where both local authorities have been fully engaged. However, the figures indicate that there is a considerable challenge in Wales, particularly within the Swansea Bay area. PCC Michael stated that there is a need to find a way of tackling these issues more efficiently rather than doing more of the same, for example a consolidated approach to include education and young people.

He explained it would be beneficial if the equivalent engagement could occur at Health Board level as a meeting was due to take place but he had been advised that it couldn't be held as the Board responded to state that they are too busy. PCC Michael stated that the demand on policing is substantial due to being unable to tackle this.

3.1.3. CC Lewis highlighted that he is the NPCC Lead on Drugs and endorsed the ACC's work and stressed that information sharing is vital as it will also provide the ability to map drug users and target support where needed.

The Chair reinforced that she would like to invite Lynne Neagle MS to attend the next meeting to return to this discussion but stated she will raise the issue regarding Health Boards as per PCC Michael's comment.

3.2. Cost of Living Crisis/Winter Pressures

PCC Cuthbert opened by explaining that the Cost of Living crisis and Winter Pressures are connected. He stated that most issues are operational but they also impact on Police and Crime Commissioners. He feels it is important that partners are aware that with all the industrial action that is currently taking place, police officers cannot take industrial action.

The paper tabled by Policing in Wales was discussed generally highlighting the pressures that were being created such as strikes, increased domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, all of which result in an increase in call volumes as well as mental health issues.

PCC Cuthbert also addressed the issue of inflation stating that with interest rates rising, it is impacting on morale as there are concerns that implications on operational services will give rise to issues going forward as well as how this will impact on precept next year.

CC Vaughan described the current situation regarding inflation with a focus on operational issues by stating the trend in Wales has previously seen a decrease in acquisitive crime which may have been due to Covid-19 but Welsh forces have managed to maintain this in comparison to other areas. However, it has now begun to increase in the last three months as a consequence of inflation and pressures on household budgets, but CC Vaughan stated that he is keen not to criminalise those who need help and support.



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He reinforced PCC Cuthbert's point regarding increased pressure on services due to industrial action. He commented that police officers cannot withdraw labour, as a result of this other services rely on policing but stressed that they cannot provide ambulance services due to the level of medical training required but will continue to support these services where possible.

Both PCC Cuthbert and CC Vaughan highlighted that Police Officers and Staff are not immune to the Cost-of-Living crisis which was shown in the report from the Police Mutual Advisory Service. CC Vaughan explained that collective discussions are ongoing as to what help can be provided.

CC Vaughan highlighted a few related issues that Welsh forces are experiencing such as precept, Police and Crime Plan targets and the flat cash settlement and pressure on pay around policing in order to maintain Police Officer numbers.

3.2.1. Nick Wood explained that he attends the Joint Emergency Services Group on behalf of Judith Paget and feels it is important to stress the issue of industrial action. They are conscious of the issue of response to calls which is discussed on a daily basis as well as response performance. Nick Wood stated that these are currently not at a level where they want it to be, which is the same across the UK. This is being driven by the socioeconomic position and uplift in call demand. He gave the example that red response calls reached above 200 for the first time in the UK with 30% of the daily call volume having high level acuity as well as the 111 service receiving over 12,000 calls over the weekend. Nick Wood advised that there are a number of plans to improve response times which would result in the NHS not being reliant on other public services and this will continue to be monitored.

3.2.2. The Minister for Social Justice noted that these are important ongoing issues and advised that she is the Lead Welsh Government Minister on tackling the Cost-of-Living crisis and regularly meets with partners. Welsh Government will help where possible and gave the example of the current benefits take up campaign and warm spaces scheme, where she would like to invite PCSOs to provide support and information to those attending and will continue discussions on this matter.

3.2.3. PCC Michael submitted a paper on the Partnership Ethos of Policing in Wales which was designed to illustrate the issues that policing engage with and gave the example of the 101 service. He stated that the majority of the calls are not policing matters and when other services are not available, policing is required to help. He explained that community safety work has increased through partnership work and the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic has led to this being maintained in Wales and he is keen not to lose this now during a period of financial challenge.

PCC Michael mentioned that the First Minister's wish for a One Public Service for Wales was on the Partnership Council for Wales agenda so he would like to create a discussion to see how this would work.

3.2.4. CC Blakeman reflected on both papers and noted an increase in acquisitive crime such as theft during periods of financial hardship. Those involved don't appear to be persistent offenders so she is not keen to see communities marked as a result of desperation. She stated that there is a need to aim for balance in regards to the way that issues are measured for the Beating Crime Plan as this could create difficulties.

CC Blakeman stated that HMICFRS has set out a clear position regarding vetting which may put individuals off from declaring any financial issues so she would like to find a fair approach in the way that forces use the recommendations.



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3.2.5. DPCC Thomas also stated that she is keen not to lose services for youth provision as forces move into a difficult position with budgets. The Minister responded to highlight that Jamie Kalhan is working with youth services in the Vale of Glamorgan, in relation to girls' safety on the street.

3.2.6. CC Kelly pointed out that services are currently unsure on what the new normality is post-covid so would like to discuss these details. She added that the National Police Chiefs Council Productivity review will explore the barriers to policing efficiency, but she is keen to look at the broader work with Area Planning Boards etc. CC Kelly feels there is a requirement to figure out what the issues are as policing is currently having to constantly provide support on a wide variety of fronts, such as expecting prisoners in police cells due to a lack of space and strikes etc.

The Minister thanked the board for their input and stated that this resonates across Wales but demonstrates the partnership work and that prevention is key.

3.3. Police Funding Pressures and Precept Implications

PCC Cuthbert discussed the financial pressures in relation to precept implications; he mentioned that he attended a webinar with the Minister for Policing regarding the Police Grant which seemed to focus on issues in England. He emphasised that the administration is different in Wales causing an imbalance with the grant, as a result it is difficult to balance operational need with public affordability, therefore his plea was to look closely at sharing resources, knowledge and responsibility.

The Minister added that the financial situation in Wales is challenging and Welsh Government has sought to deliver a draft budget that was as supportive as possible, as many Welsh Government responsibilities including substance misuse and the National Health Service will have an impact on policing.

3.3.1. CC Vaughan stated that the situation is different this time as forces are held to account for Police Officer numbers due to Operation Uplift. Forces want to maintain PCSO numbers unlike previous periods of austerity but the situation is challenging this time around. CC Vaughan added that there was a desperate need for a new firearms training facility for the three forces in the south of Wales. This is vital for areas such as Counter Terrorism, but the cost of the scheme has doubled since first proposed so support is needed from UK Government.

3.3.2. PCC Cuthbert stated that he was grateful to Welsh Government for maintaining key aspects such as PCSOs as this helps to demonstrate the level of support for communities. He advised that he raised the issue of the Joint Firearms Range with the Minister for Policing who agreed that a review of funding available for capital projects is needed.

3.3.3. DPCC Wools feels there is a need to learn from the last period of austerity and that work has been done in how to make these decisions and in prioritising the most critical areas.

3.4. Public Trust and Confidence in Policing and other Public Services

PCC Cuthbert advised he is aware that the current issues surrounding Gwent Police had given rise to debate. He explained that an investigation was fully underway in which he properly has no formal role, however he is confident that it will be dealt with appropriately by CC Kelly and DCC Williams. He acknowledged there is a need to address the issue of culture and explained that reviews are undertaken regularly which include issues such as ethics but is aware that it is



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not just a matter for policing, rather it is a societal problem which is likely to affect all public services including the London and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services. He questioned how public service leaders can help resolve this matter. He stressed that the actions by the individuals involved is not acceptable and due to policing being held to a higher standard, there is a requirement to restore confidence in the service.

CC Vaughan stated that Policing in Wales are collectively determined to find the individuals who let the service down and stressed the level of oversight to eliminate this behaviour as it is not an issue that can be dismissed.

3.4.1. CC Kelly expressed her thanks to the First Minister, Minister for Social Justice and the Secretary of State for Wales for the public support they have shown Gwent Police in recent weeks. She emphasised that she has worked relentlessly for the past four years to challenge inappropriate culture where it exists and feels this is a reflection of what is required in Wales. CC Kelly mentioned her plan to work with universities to set the scene for the future of public services, which will provide an opportunity to report on public confidence as she doesn't underestimate the impact this has on communities.

CC Kelly stated the importance of reflecting on recent statements made in the Senedd. These had been made without contacting the organisation to make enquiries as to the issues reported in the media and she suggested there should be a standard set on how business should be conducted as she believes it displays a lack of respect and accuracy if no due diligence is carried out before a statement is made. She requested support in challenging this as she feels what took place was unjust, particularly when forces are doing their best to challenge these issues.

3.4.2. The Minister noted CC Kelly's comments and stated that what had taken place was unacceptable behaviour and reaffirmed Welsh Government's support. She added that she met with Hannah Blythyn MS who confirmed that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service were committed to independent review in relation to allegations raised against them.

3.4.3. DPCC Wools highlighted that there is an opportunity to focus on culture change through Local Government as well as Welsh Government and Policing in Wales.

3.4.4. PCC Michael complemented the points made by saying that all agencies are working together to change the atmosphere in Wales. He addressed the issue of scrutiny by stating that he is becoming increasingly aware of a Police and Crime Commissioner's role in this work. He explained that there is a tendency to feel that more scrutiny is needed when problems arise whereas he feels there is more engagement with forces than there previously was.

The Minister for Social Justice thanked board members for their input and stated that it had been an important substantive discussion.

4. Any issues to be escalated from the Policing in Wales meeting

It was agreed that this item was covered during discussions within the substantive items.

5. Partner updates by exception

The Minister raised the topic of the Homes for Ukraine Super Sponsors Scheme. Mike Connolly, Deputy Director of the Initial Welcome and Accommodation Division has reviewed the way



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guests are arriving; there had been an initial increase and it had been anticipated that there would be additional guests as visas have been approved. Welsh Government have been working with Local Authorities to move people from welcome centres into more settled accommodation. She advised that there had been some anti-migrant activity in Neath Port Talbot last week which has happened previously so questioned how services could support guests to settle into Wales.

CC Vaughan advised that he hopes the activity was reported to police and confirmed that he will look into it.

5.1. PCC Michael addressed the development of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review item raised in the Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner's paper as he feels this is progressing well but stated there is an issue with the governance and oversight element. He mentioned that there is a crisis meeting due to take place in relation to this. PCC Michael hopes it will go out to formal consultation in a few weeks. The Minister responded that she is glad the guidance was being amended and that a meeting is taking place to address issues of concern.

PCC Llywelyn wanted to highlight the Wales Sexual Assault Service programme and the development of Sexual Assault Referral Centres as part of this. He noted concerns regarding the provision in Mid and West Wales. He advised that escalation has been taken through appropriate channels but there is a consequential financial impact with the works required at the facility in Bow Street, Aberystwyth which they are working to try and resolve. PCC Llywelyn thanked the Minister for Social Justice and other officials for seeking a meeting regarding funding for this facility.

5.2. It was agreed that the Minister for Policing would be invited to the next Policing Partnership Board for Wales, the First Minister will be consulted before the invite is extended.

6. Any Other Business

6.1. The Minister for Social Justice stated she would welcome feedback on this hybrid meeting as she is conscious that she doesn't want to disadvantage those who attend online.

6.2. The Minister provided an opportunity for Jaime Kalhan to highlight the survey that she has been working on regarding the safety of young girls to the Board. Jaime explained that the work focusses on public sexual harassment of under 18-year-olds and hopes to create safe spaces. The Minister for Social Justice added that Jaime plans to invite the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Officers from South Wales Police to receive the results of the survey in the Vale of Glamorgan.

6.2.1. DPCC Thomas mentioned that she would be keen to be updated on the service as she is the Co-Chair of a workstream leading on Children and Young People.

DPCC Wools also advised that she would be happy to meet with Jaime; The Minister supported this and she hopes it would happen in other areas of policing as these issues are all connected.

Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 23rd March 2022 at 2-4pm