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Policing Partnership Board for Wales

Hybrid meeting - via Microsoft Teams / Caerdydd 1 and 2, Cathays Park 2, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ
Thursday 23rd March 2023

Minutes

Attendees

Jane Hutt MS	Minister for Social Justice (Chair)
Mick Antoniw MS	Counsel General for Wales, Welsh Government
Chris Philp MP	Minister for Crime and Policing
Dr James Davies MP	Parliamentary Under 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
Jeff Cuthbert	Police and Crime Commissioner, Gwent
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
Liz Lalley	Director, Risk, Resilience and Community Safety, Welsh Government
Gary Haggaty	Deputy Director, Community Safety Division, Welsh Government
Judith Cole	Deputy Director, LG Finance Policy and Sustainability, Welsh Government
Lucy Akhtar	Senior Manager, Crime & Justice Team, Welsh Government
Leanne Lewis	Crime & Justice Team, Welsh Government
Jayne Phillips	Crime & Justice Team, Welsh Government
Jenny Hopkins	Chief Crown Prosecutor, Crown Prosecution Service
Joanne Hopkins	Public Health Wales
Chris Batchelor	Deputy Director International & Domestic Engagement & Strategy Directorate, Home Office
Louise Foreman	Head of Operations, HM Prison and Probation Service
Naomi Alleyne	Director of Social Services and Housing, WLGA
Mark Brace	Interim Head of the Safer Communities Network, WLGA
Sian Curley	Chief Executive, Gwent PCC
Stephen Hughes	Chief Executive, North Wales PCC
Lee Jones	Chief Executive, South Wales PCC
Peter Curran	Chief Finance Officer, South Wales PCC
Ian Roberts	Chief Superintendent, Gwent Police
Paul Morris	Head of Police Liaison Unit
Christina Fraser	Chief Inspector, Police Liaison Unit
Asif Afsar	All-Wales Business Co-Ordinator
Sahil Afware	Senior Private Secretary, Office of the Secretary of State for Wales
Joanna Huddleston	Administrator, Police Liaison Unit
<u>Apologies</u>	
Dafydd Llywelyn	Police and Crime Commissioner, Dyfed Powys
Andy Dunbobbin	Police and Crime Commissioner, North Wales
Chris Jennings	Executive Director Wales, HM Prison and Probation Service
Sarah Capstick	Safer Communities Network WLGA
Reg Kilpatrick	Director General Covid Recovery, Welsh Government
Tracy Cooper	Public Health Wales

Actions arising from the meeting.

Community Safety Division Officials to liaise with Health Officials in Welsh Government and also DCC Rachel Bacon on how Right Care, Right Person can be applied in Wales with Welsh health services.



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Chris Batchelor, Home Office to report back Policing in Wales' concerns about funding highlighted at the meeting to the Policing Minister and specifically that consequential funding should come to Wales as a result of funding announcements made in England
To ensure police funding is on the agenda at the start of the PPBfW, where the Policing Minister is next in attendance, so that the Policing Minister is present to hear Policing in Wales concerns.
Jane Hutt MS to pass on Policing in Wales' concerns to Deputy Minister for Climate Change about a) sufficiency of GoSafe funding and b) whether appropriate practical steps (such as educating the public) had been taken to prepare for implementation of the default 20mph speed limit on restricted roads across Wales from September 2023
The Minister for Social Justice and PCC Cuthbert to discuss the difficulty of tracking consequential funding for Wales at their next bilateral meeting.
Joint letter from the Minister for Social Justice and the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing to be sent to the Policing Minister regarding the difficulty of tracking consequential funding for Wales further to funding announced for substance misuse support services in England. The letter will also highlight ongoing concerns around the Apprenticeship Levy and the related funding shortfall experienced by forces in Wales

1. Welcome and Chair's Address

The Minister for Social Justice welcomed members to the Policing Partnership Board for Wales. She noted that the First Minister was unable to chair this meeting as planned due to other commitments in North Wales. The Minister welcomed the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire, Chris Philp MP and Dr James Davies MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales, representing David TC Davies MP and apologies were noted as above.

The Chair noted that it is PCC Cuthbert's last Policing Partnership Board for Wales as Chair of Policing in Wales as this will hand over to PCC Dunbobbin and thanked him for his support and work as Lead Police and Crime Commissioner. She also extended a welcome to Louise Foreman who was representing Chris Jennings and thanked Mick Antoniw MS, Counsel General for Wales for his attendance.

2. Welcome and comments from the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire: The Right Hon. Chris Philp MP and Dr. James Davies MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales

2.1. The Minister for Crime and Policing thanked the group for the invitation and stated that he is keen to have a close working relationship between Home Office, Policing in Wales and Welsh Government and Local Authorities as he sees this as a genuine partnership. He reflected on the success of the Uplift programme noting that when complete at the end of March, there will be more police officers in England and Wales than ever before. UK Government are keen to maintain these numbers and as a result, the financial settlement has been designed to include this.

He discussed the National Data Wash of Police Employees, forces implementing the HMICFRS vetting recommendations as well as noting that the College of Policing's new statutory guidance on vetting was published recently being consulted on. He highlighted that the Home Office is close to concluding a review into the dismissal powers that Chief Constables have by explaining the aim is to provide Chief Constables with the appropriate level of authority to dismiss officers where there are misconduct or vetting issues as he feels these powers have become unreasonably circumscribed by regulation.

He added that concerns are frequently highlighted regarding the excessive bureaucracy of crime recording which takes up a significant amount of police time. Therefore, there will shortly be reform in relation to Home Office counting rules to reduce the burdens on policing such as the recording of



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multiple crimes with a single incident and other recordings which don't add value. The Minister stated another area that is being addressed to alleviate burdens on policing is Mental Health, particularly the pilot in Humberside, Right Care, Right Person which will be applied across England over the next few months and queried if this applies to Wales too, as Health is devolved in Wales.

The Chair thanked the Minister for his contribution and stated it was encouraging to hear about the Uplift Programme and noted that the points made in terms of public trust and confidence will be discussed on the agenda. She stated that she feels there is a need to look at the Mental Health issue as Health is devolved, so will ask the Deputy Minister for Mental Health & Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle MS to respond on these points.

2.2. Dr James Davies MP highlighted that the Secretary of State for Wales has previously mentioned that his office is keen to work across Wales through partnership working as this is most likely to result in an improvement in community safety and outcomes as well as a reduction in crime.

3. Key Issues for Discussion

3.a. Public Trust and Confidence in Policing and Wider Public Service

3.a.1 National Data Wash of Police Employees

The Chair introduced the item and remarked that it was agreed in December's meeting that Trust and Confidence would be a standing item. She acknowledged that all Welsh policing leads have previously committed to standing against inappropriate behaviour.

CC Blakeman advised that the Police National Database (PND) emerged as a result of the deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Soham. The public inquiry following their deaths recommended the police should share the intelligence held on their individual systems. The PND is a reflection of every force intelligence database in the country which includes safeguarding data such as that where Social Services are involved in a case.

She explained that over the last four years, policing has strived to ensure the system is maintained and that where parts of system have become out of service or out of support, policing has sought to replace and upgrade elements, such as the search capability.

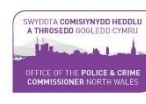
CC Blakeman advised that anyone joining policing has been subject to a PND database check. She described the impact of the Data Wash on force's vetting units by using the example of North Yorkshire's pilot, where they put all employees through the system to see how manageable this was. As a result, forces have been able to ensure that it doesn't disrupt daily business in terms of the PND. Welsh forces are now in a position where all employee information has been inputted into CGI Inc. This was processed through the data wash and has been returned to forces who are already starting to process it.

The intention is to upload all staff data that forces want to check, so that if their details appear at any point across the country, it will trigger a response into forces' vetting units. CC Blakeman explained that policing will be in a better position in terms of reassurance but wanted to stress that PND checks on employment and re-vetting have been taking place for some time.

3.a.2. How Trust and Confidence is Affected



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Paul Morris emphasised that this was not his presentation but that the slides were produced by Rachel Tuffin from the College of Policing and have been circulated to provide context and inform discussion. He emphasised the Minister for Social Justice’s point that the issue of trust and confidence has been a concern for Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables for some time.

He mentioned that Rachel Tuffin provided an overview of work being carried out on trust and confidence, as well as some of the key issues that are being reviewed by the College of Policing at the last meeting of Policing in Wales. The presentation looks at what trust and confidence means, articulates studies that explain what influences public views of policing, what factors shake perceptions of policing and what Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners can do to address this.

Paul Morris highlighted a couple of key points to the board;

- In her presentation, Rachel emphasised the key role of neighbourhood policing in maintaining public confidence, therefore Policing in Wales are keen to acknowledge that Welsh Government have an important role in this in funding a significant amount of PCSOs across Wales which provide an essential function in that respect.
- The other aspect in the presentation is the indication of Wales being at the forefront in terms of tackling racism through the Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan.

3.a.2.1 PCC Cuthbert emphasised this point, stating that many issues are already well understood in Wales. He advised that he is now on the board of the College of Policing where the issue of the Baroness Casey Review was discussed at the last meeting. There was a consensus that despite the report being specifically on The Met, all forces need to address the issues the review raises.

3.a.2.2 PCC Michael highlighted that whilst the presentation from the College of Policing contains a number of significant topics, it is important to recognise the difference in Wales and the extent of partnership working taking place in supporting forces in tackling these issues. He gave the Criminal Justice Board for Wales as an example of this.

3.a.3. The Role of Government – National Policing Board Discussion

CC Lewis explained that discussions at the National Policing Board had focussed on improving trust and confidence. He stated that the dismissal process was addressed as well as the situation where an employee is unable to be deployed due to not complying with vetting standards.

He advised there was also a discussion on policing’s ability to charge particular offences without the need to go through CPS, due to the system not allowing the police service to do so. CC Lewis reiterated the point that the Commissioner of The Met made at the National Policing Board regarding the 28-day turn around for a straightforward case, where they are required to send files to the Crown Prosecution Service, however with other issues, forces can make almost immediate decisions.

CC Lewis explained that policing observe the attrition of victims in the Criminal Justice system due to waiting for responses from the Crown Prosecution Service. He felt that there is a cohort of offences that the Crown Prosecution Service and wider systems don’t see, as decisions are made by Custody Sergeants and other Senior Officers across the country but he feels it there is a risk with cases that don’t get prosecuted, therefore it would be a potentially less risky decision to charge the individual but forces are unable to do this due to the current unbalanced system. CC Lewis acknowledged that if the police service were to be provided with the opportunity to charge some offences, rather than having to refer to the CPS, there will be systemic issues as it is not ready for that capacity.



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3.a.3.1. Chris Philp MP advised that during his first discussion with the Met Commissioner, he had commented that Chief Officers didn't have the level of authority to dismiss officers due to misconduct or failing to perform. Therefore, Chris Philp MP initiated work to review this, with the aim of giving Chief Officers significantly enhanced powers. This review is due to conclude at the end of April.

The Policing Minister believes that the person running an organisation should be able to make dismissal decisions as if someone is unfairly dismissed they can appeal the decision through a Police Appeals Tribunal, which is similar to an employment tribunal.

He asked his team to review the regulations regarding re-vetting as he feels failure of re-vetting mid-career can be grounds for dismissal in cases where the individual would have failed pre-employment checks and been unable to join the service.

3.a.3.2. CC Lewis feels being able to more easily dismiss employees will be an important step in gaining public trust and confidence.

3.a.4. Steps Being Taken by Chief Constables and Commissioners

3.a.4.1. The Chair welcomed the assurance provided by CC Blakeman at the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence Implementation Board that she is plans to root out and expose any issues in North Wales Police. She noted that this is also a priority for all Chief Constables in Wales.

3.a.4.2. CC Lewis suggested that communities' confidence would not be maintained based on words of commitment from forces alone, so he feels it is time to progress this action. He stressed that all Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables in Wales want to be the first to root out disproportionality in all aspects.

3.a.4.3. CC Vaughan reiterated the feeling across Policing in Wales that the Casey report was written for the Metropolitan Police but stressed that there isn't a single Police and Crime Commissioner or Chief Constable in Wales that isn't determined to root out any individual that is going to let the service down such as misogynists, bigots and racists. He acknowledged that these individuals exist in every organisation but he is keen to build the infrastructure to remove them from the service so would welcome the additional powers. He is keen to ensure this is done correctly to avoid spending time in litigation.

CC Vaughan feels a focus on conduct is required as there are often well-intentioned individuals working within organisations that need assistance in understanding what discrimination and bias actually are. CC Vaughan feels that Welsh Forces are still on a journey, with the National Performance Framework about to be launched on Neighbourhood Policing, he commented that Wales are at the forefront in relation to this as the infrastructure is already in place.

3.a.4.4. CC Kelly stated she is hugely proud of the work in Wales and commented that she feels a need for a stronger voice to communicate the work being achieved in Wales, particularly in relation to VAWDASV and Anti-Racism. CC Kelly advised that as a force, Gwent has recently experienced issues around the misconduct of officers, but she feels that this issue also provides an opportunity for Policing in Wales to create something positive, particularly in relation to police reform by ensuring these values are ingrained within the high number of new employees in forces. She said the focus should not only be on the structure of forces but by also on reforming views on policing to ensure the individuals working in policing are valued, whilst also targeting the individuals causing problems.



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3.a.4.5. DPCC Wools, as the lead on race and VAWDASV on behalf of the four PCCs echoed the points made, but agreed with CC Lewis and stressed that she is keen to implement these actions.

She outlined the work being done to implement the Anti-Racism Action Plan which was published in September 2022. This combines commitments from Policing in Wales and wider Criminal Justice partners which were shaped and formulated by communities with lived experience. An Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Panel has been established which will hold policing and partners to account for the delivery of the action plan, as well as a community engagement network to complement the panel and check how actions are being felt by communities.

3.a.4.7. DPCC Thomas discussed how Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables are responding by explaining that a VAWDASV Taskforce has been set up which all forces report into and is jointly chaired by DPCC Thomas and DPCC Wools with CC Blakeman and is focussed on making change, action and impact. The VAWDASV Blueprint has emerged from this taskforce.

Whilst policing must take action, work also needs to be carried out across other public services, recognising that many of these issues will also be affecting public sector colleagues. DPCC Thomas pointed out that there is a work strand in Wales focussing on Children and Young People impacted by Violence Against Women and Girls which looks at prevention, addressing the Ofsted report and Estyn Inspection into Peer on Peer abuse in school, stating that this is important work.

3.b The Changing Face of Police Funding – Constraints and Pressures

3.b.1. Peter Curran highlighted key points from the report, shared with Board members, explaining that the first section addresses 23/24 budgets and wider financial planning. Police and Crime Commissioners took their Precept proposals to their Police and Crime Panels. The figures in section one demonstrate funding being received by Policing in Wales from Police Grants and Precept increases etc. is £39m but budget pressures facing forces next year are approximately £62m resulting in a deficit of £23m, largely caused by inflation. He highlighted that this is in addition to the £188m cuts forces have had to make over the last 10 years.

Of the funding coming into policing in 23/24 more money is coming in from local precepts than it is from the police grant for each force, a worrying development as it is not a sustainable model. This highlights that the money from UK Government has been largely dedicated to the Uplift Programme and the downside of this is that there is a small amount left from the grant to fund core inflation costs.

The other factor highlighted is Precept and council tax, as the council tax base increases are significantly lower in Wales than England which means that the starting point for Police and Crime Commissioners to apply Precept increases in Wales is lower than England; the average in Wales was 0.7% compared to 1.5% in England.

Concern around the 2023 pay award was noted as forces have budgeted 3% but this figure is yet to be determined and due to inflation increasing further, forces are concerned if 3% will be sufficient. Forces are finding it difficult to recruit and retain people as a 3.5% increase when inflation is at 10% means it is difficult to keep staff. As regards non-pay inflation, pressures are largely relating to vehicle replacement, uniforms and technology as there is no allowance in the police grant to fund non-pay inflation which has to be found within force budgets.

3.b.2. PCC Cuthbert raised the issue of funding in Wales such as the Apprenticeship Levy and additional money provided for Mental Health services in England to the Policing Minister as PCC Cuthbert is keen to ensure Wales receives its rightful share of funding.



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3.b.3. CC Kelly reinforced Peter’s point around the lack of funding for capital budgets such as vehicles and estates, particularly the Joint Firearms Unit as it is a crucial part of policing to keep people safe and is a huge investment for the three Southern Forces in Wales. She noted that for Gwent Police, a new custody unit is required within the next five years but forces haven’t got enough capital money. This creates a risk, for the force being able to ensure officers and staff have the appropriate tools to undertake their roles.

3.b.4. The Chair suggested ensuring police funding is on the agenda at the start of the meeting where the Policing Minister is next in attendance, so that he is present to hear Policing in Wales concerns. She asked Chris Batchelor to report back Policing in Wales’ concerns about funding as mentioned above.

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 Chair updated partners on the VAWDASV Blueprint progress and noted DPCCs Wools and Thomas’s previous comments. She noted work on the toolkit on tackling sexual harassment in the workplace which was chaired by Shavanah Taj and ACC Mark Travis and highlighted this is as another example of partnership working.

5.1. DPCC Wools provided an update from the Criminal Justice Board for Wales, specifically Criminal Justice Bodies involvement in the VAWDASV Blueprint explaining that a paper was taken to ensure the programme of work and activity is fully integrated and aligned with the blueprint work. Criminal Justice Bodies will help to build the evidence base as to how actions are set as well as Criminal Justice Partners agreeing to take a more specific view on abuse of powers in their organisations to feed into the workplace harassment strand of the Blueprint.

5.2. Chief Superintendent Ian Roberts highlighted the investment that Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables have made in his role as an All Wales Police Co-ordinator to act on their behalf across VAWDASV and Anti-racism. He is working to identify areas where policing can improve the way they work together and share learning as well as working across the VAWDASV Blueprint and Criminal Justice Board partnership arrangements.

5.3. Joanne Hopkins provided an update on two areas of work, the Violence Prevention Unit finalising their Youth Violence Prevention Strategy which will be launched in April as well as thanking HMCTS, HMPPS, North Wales Police and South Wales Police for participating in a review of the Early Action Together Programme and also signed up to taking the work forward to develop a pilot regarding the new Trauma Framework in Wales.

6. Any Other Business

6.1. PCC Michael had recently attended meetings with Local Authorities where the question of the implementation of the 20mph speed limit has been raised. During meetings with Local Authorities in Cardiff, they had been advised that Welsh Government wanted to handle enforcement through GoSafe. PCC Michael feels that enforcement is a local issue rather than for GoSafe which is a partnership arrangement. He also mentioned that he hasn’t received an update regarding the implementation of the 20mph speed limit for some time and queried if the implementation will be managed jointly by Police and Local Authorities or if Welsh Government will manage this through GoSafe. The Chair responded to say she will pass this back to the office of the Deputy Minister for Climate Change in relation to the policing interface.



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6.2. The Chair was keen to gain an understanding of the Mental Health funding for England and the programme that has been developed by the UK Government which could potentially apply to Wales as Mental Health is devolved. She asked Chris Batchelor to convey the thoughts from Policing and Welsh Government in relation to consequential funding that should come to Wales as a result of announcements made in England.

6.2.1. CC Lewis asked for an additional point to be fed back, noting that as the National Lead for Drugs, he found it difficult to track funding opportunities from the UK Government into Wales.

6.2.2. Chris Batchelor suggested a joint letter from the Minister for Social Justice and the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing be sent to the Policing Minister regarding the difficulty of tracking consequential funding for Wales further to funding announced for substance misuse support services in England.

Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 22nd June 2023 at 2-4pm