



## **Policing Partnership Board for Wales**

### **Microsoft Teams**

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 10:30 – 12:30**

### **Minutes**

#### **Attendees**

Jane Hutt MS	Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip (Chair)
Dame Nia Griffith	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales
Dr. Richard Lewis	Chief Constable, Dyfed Powys Police
Mark Hobrough	Chief Constable, Gwent Police
Amanda Blakeman	Chief Constable, North Wales Police
Mark Travis	T/Deputy Chief Constable, South Wales Police
Dafydd Llywelyn	Police and Crime Commissioner, Dyfed Powys
Jane Mudd	Police and Crime Commissioner, Gwent
Andy Dunbobbin	Police and Crime Commissioner, North Wales
Emma Wools	Police and Crime Commissioner, South Wales
Eleri Thomas	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Gwent
Dave Guiney	T/Assistant Chief Constable, Police Collaboration Wales
Mike Connolly	Deputy Director, Community Safety Division, Welsh Government
Matt Downton	Deputy Director, Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Vulnerable Groups, Welsh Government
Laura Fox	Head of VAWDASV, Welsh Government
Alison Thomas	Head of Transport Behaviour Change, Welsh Government
Sasha Yilmaz	Head of Crime and Justice, Welsh Government
Leanne Lewis	Manager, Crime and Justice Team, Welsh Government
Jenna Harris	Crime and Justice Officer, Welsh Government
Joanne Hopkins	Public Health Wales
Chris Llewelyn	Chief Executive, WLGA
Grant Oliver	Wales & England Team, UK Domestic and Overseas Territories, Home Office
Gregg Dyer	Head of Domestic Affairs, Office of the Secretary of State for Wales
Helen Hill	Business and Network Development Manager, Safer Communities Network, WLGA
Carys Morgans	Chief Executive, Dyfed Powys PCC
Sian Curley	Chief Executive, Gwent PCC
Lee Jones	Chief Executive, South Wales PCC
David Holloway-Young	Chief Finance Officer, South Wales OPCC
Harri Evans-Mason	Programme Manager, Police Collaboration Wales
Paul Morris	Head of Police Liaison Unit
Sarah Keefe	APCC Wales Policy Manager, Policing in Wales
Joanna Huddleston	Administrator, Police Liaison Unit

#### **Apologies**

Jeremy Vaughan	Chief Constable, South Wales Police
Judith Paget	Director General HSSG/Chief Executive NHS Wales, Welsh Government
Amy Rees	Chief Executive, HMPPS
Wayne Jones	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, North Wales
Stephen Hughes	Chief Executive, North Wales PCC
Ian Barrow	Executive Director Wales, HM Prison and Probation Service
Naomi Alleyne	Director of Social Services and Housing, WLGA
Paul Biggs	Chief Inspector, Police Liaison Unit
Mark Brace	Head of the Safer Communities Network, WLGA
Tracy Cooper	Public Health Wales

Actions arising from the meeting	
Matt Downton to meet with PCC Wools, DPCC Thomas and T/ACC Guiney within next week to discuss the WSAS Programme.	Matt Downton
Welsh Government Officials to escalate the issue of assessments within recruitment processes run by the College of Policing to be available through the medium of the Welsh Language.	Mike Connolly/ Sasha Yilmaz
Paper to be developed regarding the issues surrounding Community Tensions and circulated to PPBFW members	Paul Morris

## 1. Welcome and Chair's Address

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip opened the meeting and thanked Dame Nia Griffith for joining to represent the Secretary of State for Wales. She extended a welcome to Home Office Officials and noted she was pleased to have met with the Policing Minister, Dame Diana Johnson in February 2025.

The Chair thanked the board for their contributions towards the revised Terms of Reference for the Policing Partnership Board for Wales which was signed off on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024. She advised that all relevant Cabinet Secretaries in Welsh Government have agreed to the Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh Government and Policing in Wales and that work is progressing towards final sign off.

## 2. Police Landscape Reform and Crime and Policing Bill: Progress and Reflections

PCC Llywelyn explained that a member of staff from Dyfed Powys OPCC has been seconded to work with the APCC, linking into the Home Office with the Police Landscape Reform Team which he feels has resulted in a well-embedded Welsh voice in the work.

He noted that the work is still in progress and has moved on from the engagement stage which Welsh PCCs were highly involved in. He explained there has been significant discussion regarding central entities such as the College of Policing and Blue Light Commercial and how these may work alongside the National Centre for Policing. However, PCC Llywelyn feels that much of the discussion is being influenced by the separate work around Mayoral Structures in England and English Devolution which may impact on the organisational structures of police forces. The White Paper is expected in June 2025.

**2.1.** CC Blakeman advised that Chief Constables have also seconded employees into the police team that are working with officials within the Home Office. She acknowledged it is positive that policing has had the opportunity to contribute. This has allowed policing to be able to understand the aim of the work including national targets such as halving Violence against Women and Girls and Knife Crime and how these will be achieved within the financial settlement that policing receives. She noted that there is also work taking place in relation to efficiency such as national procurement which involves Blue Light Commercial as well as how forces' performance is measured. Chief Constables have been contributing to this work, ensuring that the differences in Wales are highlighted as Policing and Criminal Justice are not devolved in Wales as well as the differences in Legislation in Wales, for example the Abolition of the Defence of Reasonable Punishment which doesn't apply to England. This makes comparisons on matters such as Violent Crime Levels difficult in Wales in comparison with England, a fact that has been stressed to officials.

**2.2.** The Chair noted that it is positive that Policing in Wales have seconded staff, as there is a need to ensure that the Welsh landscape is accurately reflected. She feels it is an opportunity to ensure the system supports effective police activity and oversight so the activity needs to be developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders as other devolved services such as housing, mental health and social services are also vital.

She briefly referenced the Crime and Policing Bill that was introduced on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025, explaining that provisions in the Bill cover a wide range of reserved matters such as anti-social behaviour, sentencing and other themes that span across the work with Welsh Government in terms of devolved services. The legal team within Welsh Government have undertaken a full analysis of the Bill, the majority of it being reserved

with the exception of some clauses relating to the areas mentioned, so Welsh Government have engaged in a Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) process. She explained there may be a slight delay in relation to laying the LCM as it is a complex, lengthy Bill so she extended her thanks to Welsh Government Officials, the Police Liaison Unit and trusted stakeholders in assisting to inform their understanding of the policy positions and no red lines were identified. The LCM has been approved by relevant Ministers and will be laid in The Senedd shortly.

**2.3.** PCC Llywelyn stated that Police Landscape Reform may provide an opportunity to consider what is wanted in Wales and whether it would be an opportune time to devolve policing to Wales, if devolution in England is shifted toward Mayoral Structures.

**2.4.** The Chair stated that Welsh Government have supported a move towards the devolution of policing in Wales and that the work is ongoing but acknowledged the very different structures that have emerged; the UK Government has inherited many of those so Welsh Government are working on these issues. She added that both she and PCC Llywelyn hosted the Minister for Youth Justice in Wales recently as the devolution of Youth Justice is a matter that Welsh Government hopes they are making progress with as it joins up services that are so important for the Youth Justice System.

### **3. Proposed Forward Work Programme for the Policing Partnership Board for Wales 2025/26**

The Chair introduced the item and acknowledged the fact that police are trusted partners of Welsh Government which led to the development of Memorandum of Understanding and revised Terms of Reference. These demonstrate Welsh Government's commitment to joint working on shared priorities, stating that Ministers have been involved in the development of the Forward Work Programme which focusses on ongoing and emerging issues.

**3.1.** PCC Llywelyn stressed the value of the partnership and how much policing values it; he gave the example of Liz Lalley and Mike Connolly attending the Welsh PCCs' monthly meetings as well as Paul Morris within the Police Liaison Unit.

**3.2.** CC Blakeman feels the Forward Work Programme demonstrates how Welsh Government and Policing in Wales work together and link on matters such as Police Landscape Reform and Police and Crime Plans etc. so there is a good connection on understanding the whole strategic vision. She added that whilst the board objectives are good, they are ambitious so she feels it is policing's responsibility to agree what they can feasibly achieve within 25/26 and how that links with other bodies and wider policy development to ensure they are impactful and delivering for communities.

**3.3.** Paul Morris noted that at the last Policing Partnership Board for Wales (PPBfW) in December 2024, four high-level themes were agreed and he was tasked with putting more detail against these, adding in objectives, linking it to wider policy legislation and development. He also looked to cross-reference the Programme with the Police and Crime Plan of each PCC in Wales. He stated that it has been through consultation at the Welsh Chief Officers Group and Policing in Wales and there was one addition to note from this, which was an inclusion under the Policing and Health Collaboration on improving the response to major and critical incidents in both response and recovery phases. He added whilst Police Landscape Reform didn't fit within any of the thematic areas, Policing would like to recommend that it becomes a standing agenda item for the PPBfW going forward as it is a significant area of work. He reiterated the point made in the December PPBfW that the forward work programme doesn't preclude raising any other issues that are of emerging critical importance to any of the partners.

**3.4.** The chair acknowledged that there is a need to be flexible and feels it is important to be open about the Forward Work Programme, to demonstrate the work that is taking place in partnership, in terms of accountability in The Senedd and so she would like to share this more widely.

**3.5.** Joanne Hopkins feels the commitment to taking a Public Health Approach is implicit in this plan and continued to say that in terms of the Children and Young People component, it is really important to consider the Wales Without Violence Framework as it allows primary prevention.

#### **4. Policing and Health Collaboration: Leadership and Governance of the Wales Sexual Assault Services Programme**

The Chair introduced the item, recognising the partnership working that is required to provide these important and sensitive services but identified that the SARC Programme had originally been seen as Task and Finish and that there was clearly a need for arrangements to support longer-term partnership working. She advised that she is due to meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care imminently, where this will be on the agenda. The Chair noted that Matt Downton, Deputy Director of Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Vulnerable Groups within Welsh Government is in attendance.

**4.1.** PCC Wools welcomed the Chair's introductory remarks in relation to Welsh Government's ongoing commitment to the Wales Sexual Assault Services (WSAS) Programme and noted that this was brought to the PPBfW as an escalation from Policing in Wales due to concerns regarding risk to frontline services and the impact on victims of rape and sexual assault due to the current position of the programme. PCC Wools described the background of the programme, stating that it is a Health led collaboration with the three Southern Wales Forces with the aim of delivering an effective and sustainable health model for the delivery of SARCs and associated specialist community-based provision such as crisis work and counselling. She highlighted that whilst significant progress has been made, since late 2023 governance has deteriorated and she believes this is due to changes in leadership and structural arrangements within the NHS Collaborative. There is a need to understand outstanding actions and objectives and to be clear about what the transition looks like and to which structure. She advised that she has had a number of discussions, most recently with Judith Paget about the issues arising from the programme. PCC Wools advised that Judith Paget supports policing seeking to address matters and take immediate action on a few critical outstanding issues such as finances for the current financial year and the need to re-establish programme governance.

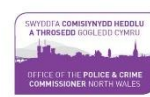
**4.2.** DPCC Thomas reiterated PCC Wools' points, stating that the importance of finding a resolution cannot be stressed enough. Whilst a lot has been achieved in terms of the first phase, significant areas of challenge remain. She feels it provides an opportunity to strengthen the leadership and delivery of the programme in its widest sense. She recognised the contribution of policing, particularly in the Police Collaboration Wales team and South Wales OPCC in supporting the delivery of the programme in 24/25.

**4.3.** Matt Downton explained his team have a policy link with SARCs so he is happy to be a contact point for policing. He also wanted to note that whilst the programme was going through the transitional arrangements, there also been a change in organisations with the establishment of the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) and NHS Executive so wanted to reassure the board that as soon as they received letters from policing, Welsh Government have been in regular contact with both the NHS Executive and the JCC in relation to those issues. They are in the process of setting up a Programme Board to review the actions and the transitional arrangements to provide clarity. In terms of counselling, the JCC covered the cost for the last financial year and have met with New Pathways recently and have confirmed the level of funding.

**4.4.** PCC Wools thanked Matt Downton for the clarification and suggested due to the complexities of the programme, that she meet with him alongside DPCC Thomas and T/ACC Guiney to review some of the issues to get the most constructive position for the Programme Board when a date is set. She also asked if the funding discussion could continue as the remaining gap is as a consequence of some of the work that should have been progressed by Health.

**4.5.** DPCC Thomas noted the meeting has taken place with New Pathways but wanted to highlight that the counselling arrangements are not solely in relation to one provider; there are a range of providers and the settlement won't meet the current needs of counselling provision across the three geographical areas of Dyfed Powys, Gwent and South Wales Police, leaving deficits in provision in each area so as PCC Wools mentioned, it would be really helpful to meet to work through a resolution.





**Action: Matt Downton to meet with PCC Woolls, DPCC Thomas and T/ACC Guiney within next week to discuss the WSAS Programme.**

**4.6.** Matt Downton agreed to meet and added that he is happy to keep the funding discussion open as the JCC has commissioned what it is able to at present but they are still working on this. The Counselling Review is underway and he believes it will take approximately three months.

**4.7.** The Chair stated she is keen to receive updates on the progress of this but reiterated her earlier point that she is also due to meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

## **5. Live Fear Free Helpline: 20 Years Supporting Victims**

The Chair wanted to make note and celebrate the long-standing commitment to tackling gender-based violence via the Live Fear Free Helpline which has supported victims for 20 years. She stated that she visited the helpline centre and that Welsh Government was keen to continue to work across the whole system and develop their cross-governmental approach through the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Blueprint.

She wanted to highlight to the board that the Live Fear Free Helpline is available 24/7 and provides information, advice and guidance to those experiencing harm of any gender or age as well as their families, friends or professionals. In 2023/24, the centre handled almost 30,000 inquiries which has been helped by all forces support with promoting and sharing contact information in many public places.

**5.1.** Laura Fox, Head of VAWDASV in Welsh Government reiterated that the helpline is available 24/7 and also accepts online referrals. She stated that it also has onward referral pathways as part of the service, so it provides a central service that understands the landscape offered to victims within Wales. She noted that work is carried out to assess some of the synergies between the helplines.

**5.2.** Dame Nia Griffith extended her thanks for the invitation to the meeting and appreciated hearing the update on tackling VAWG and noted that Richard Clarke from the Home Office is due to visit Cardiff in April 2025, so UK Government Officials are working with Welsh Government and the Police Liaison Unit to get maximum benefit from this visit.

## **6a.) Budgets 2025/26**

The Chair explained that Welsh Government approved their final budget on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025, securing an additional £1.6bn for Public Services and priorities as well as every department within Welsh Government benefiting from an increase in revenue and capital funding. Capital spending plans increased by £575m which is a stark contrast to previous years when Welsh Government were required to make difficult decisions to reshape spending plans and reduce budgets, but she acknowledged there are still organisations that are facing pressures.

**6.a.1.** PCC Mudd wanted to stress that the additional investment from both the UK Government and Welsh Government is welcomed. She advised that PCCs are still working through commissioning with third sector providers to understand the potential impact of National Insurance increases on contracts but she wanted to note how positive it is to receive additional investment and to work with both Governments in such a constructive way.

**6.a.2.** David Holloway-Young provided an update on how forces manage their budgets for 2025/26, describing the Net Revenue Budgets for each force and that the average increase on Band D Precept across Wales was 7.59%. Forecasting for the following financial year, working on a basis of a 7% increase in precept as well as looking at predictions using varying levels of estimated funding from Home Office and Welsh Government, resulted in budget gaps but he highlighted that increasing precept by 7% is not a position that all PCCs would want to be in due to the Cost of Living crisis. However, he highlighted that if PCCs were to reduce precept to 6%, this would result in an additional £5m deficit across Policing in Wales.

**6.a.3.** PCC Llywelyn thanked David for the update; he noted that a piece of work has been carried out regarding the financial resilience of forces in England and Wales, with the projection over the next few years becoming more challenging due to reducing levels of reserves, particularly for capital investment as there is no capital funding for forces. In addition, National Insurance increases and increasing staff costs have had an impact on in-year pressures and he wanted to highlight the knock-on effect this will have on commissioned services. There is an elevated level of precept in Wales in comparison to English forces and as a result local communities in Wales are paying more for policing services through precept. Forces are being driven to do this due to the poorer settlements they've received previously. However, he welcomed the Neighbourhood Policing funding, will allow each force to strengthen their Neighbourhood Policing Teams alongside the PCSO investment that Welsh Government provide. He explained his ambition is to seize these pledges and investments such as the ASB Hotspot Funding to make a difference within communities so would like to provide updates in future meetings on this.

### **6b.) PCSO Funding and Evaluation – Police and Crime Commissioners/Welsh Government**

PCC Mudd opened the item by extending her gratitude on behalf of Welsh PCCs and Chief Constables with regards to the further investment that has been provided. They have had an opportunity to discuss the proposal for the evaluation, and have all agreed that an evaluation of this is crucial in terms of developing the evidence base. PCCs have also agreed to provide a financial contribution to the evaluation.

**6.b.1.** Mike Connolly explained that Welsh Government are in the process of commissioning the evaluation, which they hope will report back either late in 2025 or early 2026.

### **6c.) GoSafe Casualty Reduction Partnership Review**

T/ACC Guiney stated that in the context of GoSafe, policing have taken a number of measures including a recruitment freeze, capital expenditure pause and changes to some operating procedures to reduce the extent of the GoSafe deficit for 24/25. Following discussions between the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales and Chief Constables Jeremy Vaughan and Amanda Blakeman, Welsh Government agreed to provide funding to reduce the deficit. Welsh Government have also funded a review of the current GoSafe Operating Model where Transport for Wales commissioned the services of Mott MacDonald. A draft copy of the review has been received by the Police Collaboration Wales (PCW) team which is currently in the process of being reviewed. Once finalised, the findings within the review will be essential in progressing a range of improvement activity across GoSafe through a PCW programme.

**6.c.1.** Alison Thomas added that a meeting of the GoSafe Steering Group is due to take place to review the recommendations in more detail with the aim of agreeing a collective way forward. The Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales has agreed to fund an additional £3.6m with £600,000 going to Op Ugain and £3m for the Camera Safety Partnership. There is recognition this may need to be reviewed again but stated that is the current situation with regards to funding for the current financial year.

**6.c.2.** CC Blakeman expressed her gratitude for the funding discussion with Ken Skates MS but requested that Policing in Wales are fully engaged in the review as she feels there are some assumptions within the draft report that policing will be unable to act upon.

## **7. Any issues to be escalated from Policing in Wales March 12th 2025 and Welsh Chief Officers Group March 25<sup>th</sup>**

PCC Llywelyn noted three items have been listed within the agenda as escalations.

### **7a.) Welsh Language Assessment Process for Police Officers**

CC Blakeman explained that she has been lobbying the College of Policing (CoP) to ensure that there is a recruitment process that is able to operate within the Welsh Language as well as English which is not currently taking place. Parts of the recruitment process are offered bilingually but importantly, two online tests regarding behaviours and values are only offered in English. She is keen to ensure candidates are not disadvantaged due to the use of Welsh Language, which is incredibly important to Welsh Forces, particularly in North Wales where they rely on being able to recruit from Welsh speaking communities to be



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OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER NORTH WALES



South Wales  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddau  
de Cymru



able to police the community effectively. As a result discussions have taken place with Andy Marsh from the CoP in relation to this.

She advised there is concern regarding how they are able to offer the online behavioural test in a way that correctly incorporates the Welsh Language. Work is taking place with the psychologists who formulate the tests to translate and analyse that, however there is a cost attached to that work with some assumption that Wales is going to pay for that. However, she feels as it is a College for England and Wales, the cost should be met by them. The reason for escalating to the PPBfW is to seek support from Welsh Government to ensure that Welsh Forces can continue to recruit properly in a way that serves communities in Wales by dealing with individuals who have been through traumatic experiences in their first language to get the best detail from and support for them.

**7.a.1** The Chair agreed on the importance of serving communities through the use of Welsh Language and recognised the challenge of persuading the College of Policing to take responsibility for this. She noted that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language would be interested in this matter, so Welsh Government Officials will ensure his office are aware of this.

**Action: Welsh Government Officials to escalate the matter of assessments within the College of Policing to be available through the medium of the Welsh Language.**

### **7b.) Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation Update**

The Chair introduced the item, noting that it is positive to see the National Crime Agency launched their online campaign on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025; she voiced her concern in terms of sexual extortion with children and young people being targeted which is linked to Welsh Governments response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

**7.b.1.** CC Blakeman reassured that forces have been reviewing cases to ensure they have not missed any details in this particular area and in terms of Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation, the national focus has been on street based exploitation that has taken place across the UK. Forces are going back to look at all incidents of this nature to ensure these underlying issues aren't present in addition to looking at institutional based Child Sexual Exploitation such as schools to ensure work is in the right place with robust governance and safeguarding.

**7.b.2.** CC Lewis stated that whilst forces can't give categorical assurances in terms of Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation, PCC Llywelyn has been holding Dyfed Powys Police to account to ensure those matters aren't happening within the force area. He acknowledged this is an incredibly important area of policing's work but part of the work in Dyfed Powys Police is reminding communities this is a risk that the public that they should be mindful of, as well as the fact that the vast majority of sexual offences take place within family groups.

**7.b.3.** The Chair thanked the board for the updates and noted important points were made so she feels it is important to review the Independent Inquiry which covered all of these issues. She noted a meeting took place between the First Minister of Wales and Welsh PCCs in January 2025 in relation to this issue but it is important that she can report back these updates when questioned on these issues.

### **7c.) Assessment and Management of Community Tensions**

The Chair introduced the item noting that in terms of the Community Cohesion Programme, one of the important features of this is to monitor emerging community tensions, working with key partners including policing in the way that Welsh Government responds to emerging tensions. She extended her thanks to Welsh Forces for engaging with Cohesion Teams very effectively. There was an increase in candidate intimidation at the recent General Election and there are concerns that this may be the same for the 2026 Senedd Elections; there are also other organisations who experienced intimidation and harassment against staff including Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru and community engagement groups across Wales so it is important to engage with the Electoral Commission on preparations as well as the CoP and UK Government.

**7.c.1** Paul Morris noted that this matter was raised at the Welsh Chief Officers' Group by CC Vaughan and that he is carrying out some work within South Wales Police. He felt it merited escalation to the PPBfW as an early alert in terms of some of the measures that may need to be taken but there are also broader issues so he suggested developing a paper that can be circulated to all PPBfW members to provide a greater understanding of the issues.

**Action: Paper to be developed regarding the issues surrounding Community Tensions and circulated to PPBfW members.**

**7.c.2.** PCC Wools explained that she was due to receive an update on this the following day but from what she is aware, she would recommend some collaborative work regarding misinformation and disinformation online and how public services may work together to respond along with clear messaging around this.

## **8. Minutes of the previous meeting (16/12/24)**

The notes were confirmed as accurate and it was noted that action 2 from the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 is ongoing.

## **9. Any Other Business**

The Chair congratulated T/DCC Travis on his forthcoming retirement, acknowledging that he has provided outstanding commitment in Civil Contingencies and has been the driving force behind the signing of Public Bodies in Wales of the Charter for Bereaved Families and extended well wishes for his retirement.

## **Date and time of next meeting**

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 10:00-12:00