

**Meeting: Police Accountability Board**

**Venue: Skype Virtual Meeting**

**Date: 16th of February 2021**

**Time: 10:00 – 13:00**

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| **Members:** | Mr Dafydd Llywelyn, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)  Chief Constable Mark Collins (CC)  Deputy Chief Constable Claire Parmenter (DCC)  Assistant Chief Constable Emma Ackland (ACC)  Mr Edwin Harries, Director of Finance (DoF)  Mrs Carys Morgans, Chief of Staff, OPCC (CoS)  Mrs Beverley Peatling, Chief Finance Officer (CFO) |
| **Also Present:** | Emma Northcote, Senior Manager Corporate Communications (EN)  Gruff Ifan, Policy and Engagement Advisor, OPCC (GI)  Bethan James, Schools Programme Manager (BJ)  Harri Evans-Mason, Serious Violence and Organised Crime co-ordinator (HE-M)  Chief Inspector Richard Yelland (RY)  Chief Inspector Chris Neve (CN)  Sergeant Tanya Grey (TG)  Mair Harries, Executive Support Officer, OPCC (MH) |
| **Observers** | *Members of the Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Panel:*  Cllr Keith Evans (KE), Ceredigion  Cllr Rob Summons (BS), Pembrokeshire  Cllr William Powell (WP), Powys  *Members of the OPCC Youth Forum* |
| **Apologies:** | None |

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| ACTION SUMMARY FROM MEETING ON 16/11/2021 | | |
| Action No | Action Summary | To be progressed by: |
| **PAB 144** | **Hannah Hyde to engage with the members of the Victim Engagement Forum who attended the PAB on November the 16th to receive feedback from the meeting.** | **Complete** |
| **PAB 145** | **Hannah Hyde to arrange for members of the Victim Engagement Forum to attend Police HQ to engage with the Chief Constable and the Commissioner and have an opportunity to see the implementation of victim support services including the Vulnerability Desk.** | **Complete** |
| **PB 146** | **The PCC to visit the Force Contact Centre’s digital desk once it has been implemented over the next few weeks.** | **Complete** |

**1 - Apologies and Introductions**

No attendees were missing from the meeting. The PCC provided introductions from his office, the Force and the Police and Crime Panel to external observers.

**2 – Review of the minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 16th of November were accepted as a true and accurate reflection of the discussion.

**3 – Matters arising from Policing Board scrutiny focus themes**

The PCC accepted a report documenting the matters arising from key themes discussed at Policing Board meetings during the previous quarter. These were Organisational Health and Wellbeing, and Cyber and Fraud.

It was noted that the Force has seen an increase in reports of fraud since the beginning of the lockdown period. The Force had developed a Force Management Statement for Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) and fraud was an area of business which HMICFRS had recommended the Force invest in. The Force therefor has built up a good knowledge base of the issues and risks relating to fraud within the Dyfed-Powys force area.

The Force’s response to fraud will feature in the Force’s local performance boards which are co-ordinated by the Force’s Economic Crime Manager who provides updates to the PCC.

**Action: Force to provide the PCC with a Fraud Force Performance Pack 6 months into the next financial year.**

**4 – Focus: Youth**

CN provided an overview of his role which includes the portfolio for delivering and implementing the Child Centred Policing Strategy within the Force area. The Strategy is based on the statement that all children in the county have specific rights, although some young people are unaware they have those rights. Prioritising children’s rights means that children in the Dyfed-Powys force area have access to resources relating to those rights. Children are therefor provided with meaningful opportunities to progress in life.

Young people have 42 rights under the United Nations (UN) Conventions Rights of a Child (CRC). In 2011, Wales became the first country to make the UN CRC part of its national law. To put this into practice, Dyfed-Powys Police are endeavouring to reference this while establishing its framework for service delivery.

With regard to the child centred portfolio, Dyfed-Powys Police take direction from a national child centred policing strategy. The governance of this is part of the Force’s Strategic Vulnerability Board which is chaired by T/DCS Ifan Charles.

CN stated that a key focus of the Force’s action plan is to ensure that Dyfed-Powys Police reviews all opportunities to avoid criminalising children unnecessarily. As an example, it was noted that the PCC attended a workshop in Police HQ in March 2020 with the 4 youth offending teams in the force area. As a result, inconsistencies were identified as to how the Force deals with young people’s involvement in knife crime across the 4 counties. A new policy was devised for the youth offending teams which including resolving issues by means of community resolutions.

It was noted that in the last 12 months the Force devised a 10-point check list. Whenever an officer comes into contact with a resident of one of the 39 care homes in the force area, the officer should consult the check list prior to engaging with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). This ensures that a full picture of the young person is obtained. The Force have also developed an interim guidance for Youth Offending Teams to support with young people during the Covid-19 period.

CN stated that the Force has been engaging with over 200 young people during the lockdown period by using outreach vans in the community and encouraging children to sign up to youth clubs in their local areas. The Force has also purchased foam footballs for children in custody to encourage them to exercise and to avoid boredom.

It was noted that in the last 3 weeks the Force has signed up to the alternative accommodation policy following discussion with the PCC at Policing Board regarding the matter on the 26th of January. The policy will allow the Force to carefully scrutinise occasions when young people are brought into custody and ensure they receive the service and support they need.

The Board learned that the Force have been recognised by the Howard League Penal Reform, a 3rd sector who are dedicated to reviewing forces in this field. Their December newsletter dedicated its front page to the work Dyfed-Powys Police were doing to support young people and youth service.

CN stated that it was critical that the Force worked with the OPCC to align their activity and vision for child centred policing. In the last 6-8 weeks the Force has also been liaising with the Children’s Commissioner for Wales Sally Holland to develop a gap analysis matrix to identify gaps in the Force’s youth services.

CN stated that the next step for the Force is to devise a children’s charter in the force area to outline its commitment for youth services moving forward. It was noted that youth service partners view this idea positively. The Force hope to launch the charter in the Spring, after Hywel Dda has completed its youth engagement work in March which will inform the charter. The Force will devise its future governance structure using the charter, and will ensure a joined up approach which will allow the Force to peer review with other organisations and deliver best practice. The Force are currently developing a communications strategy which will outline to staff how the charter is being created. The Children’s Commissioner has offered to provide enhanced youth engagement training to 80 frontline staff which will support the aims of the charter.

BJ attended the meeting to provide an overview of the Force’s schools programme. The Force delivers the All-Wales schools’ police programme for 5-16 year olds in collaboration with Welsh Government and other forces in Wales. The programme was established in 2004 however in the past 5 years it has been professionalised in Dyfed-Powys Police with focus on early intervention and prevention. The programme’s main aim is to promote positive citizenship and achieve a reduction in crime and disorder. It was noted that the Force’s engagement with the programme supports the aims outlined in the PCC’s Police and Crime Plan 2017-21 and the Force’s Equality Plan.

In Dyfed-Powys Police there are 14 School Community Police Officers who are warranted officers. They deliver various topics and information directly into the classroom including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse. The delivery is targeted and has local flexibility to emphasise areas of importance which specifically affect the four counties in the Force area.

The Force works with a number of specialist sectors including Hafan Cymru, Women’s Aid, Welsh Counter Terrorism Unit and other to develop their school engagement package and ensure the information contained in them is up to date. The sessions are trialled with children and young people for the Force to receive feedback before they are launched in schools.

The programme allows children to build trust with a particular officer. If there is an incident in the school which requires police presence the children feel more comfortable with an officer they’ve already engaged with through the schools’ programme.

The programme runs throughout the school academic year. Over 3000 sessions were hosted in the Dyfed-Powys force area last year, and over 88000 positive Force contact with children have been made through the programme throughout its existence. Many of the sessions have moved online due to the lockdown however over 1500 sessions have been hosted by officers since September 2020.

The Force has collaborated with Hwb which is a Welsh Government platform for schools. Hwb have provided technical assistance for the Force to host online webinars which have been attended by 600 participants. A new lesson plan has been developed for the next year with a focus on preventing extremism among secondary school pupils.

GI attended the meeting to provide an overview of his work with youth ambassadors working with the OPCC. It was noted that a youth forum was created a few years ago which provides engagement opportunities for young people, and ensures that young people can influence decisions. Hafan Cymru has collaborated with the forum to develop it further; they conducted research to capture young people’s opinions on policing. Hundreds of responses were received, and in March 2020 a youth conference was hosted to share findings which were mostly positive.

In October 2020 a recruitment campaign was launched by the OPCC to encourage a new group of young people to become members of the forum. A future working group has also been established to provide the OPCC with an opportunity to reach a wider audience, share ideas and receive feedback on its work. The OPCC is also prioritising young targeted events and are planning to host another youth conference in the summer. The OPCC is working on developing a short video featuring young people sharing their experience with the police. The video will be a part of the Force’s training programme, and will be produced by a company based in the Egin, Carmarthen.

RY attended the meeting to provide an overview of the Force’s vulnerability response. In 2018 the Force reviewed its vulnerability response and identified issues around the geography of the Force in relation to safeguarding. In response a central referral unit was established in Police HQ which oversaw a range of hubs located across the force area. It was noted that capital funding has been sought to create a satellite communication to improve communication between the hubs. Alongside that work a triage and assessment team was created to allow the Force to share information with youth service partners in order to ensure early intervention in incidents involving young people. Operation Encompass has also been established in the Force whereby the Force shares information with schools if children have been involved in domestic incidents before coming to school so the school can provide additional support.

RY moved on to early intervention, stating that there had been a focus on high risk cases where there is an increased risk for young people. The Force has 4 objectives with regard to early intervention which are: ensuring a single pathway for information sharing with local authorities; making decisions based on the objective, scanning, analysis, response and assessment model (OSARA); establish a foundation for sharing information; establish a process for referral at first point of contact for non-complex cases.

The Force has been engaging with local authorities, and a team has been created within Dyfed-Powys Police to map the delivery of the early intervention work through the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT). RY stated that the Force will be able to negate the need to work at a high intensity to make interventions when it’s too late, by utilising early intervention before the situation has become severe.

RY went on to state that a number of disciplines have been brought together to work in the Hub including the missing persons’ co-ordinator, modern day slavery lead and the child criminal exploitation co-ordinator in order to avoid different groups working independently. This group working approach will be monitored to ensure its continued effectiveness.

HM-E attended the meeting to provide a brief overview of the Force’s approach to the high levels of adverse childhood experiences. The Force has identified the importance of early intervention to support its ‘protect prevent prepare’ approach and drive the work forward. The Force have established a team of PCSOs in January 2021 to support the work, and to work with families and young people.

KE queried how much of a problem child sexual exploitation is for the Force, and how the Force are working to reach children who are educated at home. The Board were informed that the Force work with Young Farmers Clubs (YFCs) and other groups to reach children outside of school, and that NPTs are active in those environments. The Force is also active on social media reaching out to youth groups not connected with schools in order to make connections with children outside of the school system.

**Action: BJ to provide an update on the Force’s engagement with children who are home schooled.**

As part of further discussions it was noted that the Force are planning to develop a confidential service for children alongside its Goleudy Victim and Witness Service for adults. Responding to a question as to whether calls for service from young people are given the same level of service as those from adults, the Force responded that it has been working to improve the level of support it provides to matters affecting young people. For example in 2018/19 no reports of child sexual exploitation were made, however after a workstream was established around the matter the Force is currently tracking a 119 individuals. The ACC went on to state that the vulnerability desk has been established, and a social media desk in order to support young people using the methods of communication that young people use regularly.

The discussion moved on to children with special needs in the youth justice system. It was noted that the youth justice system has a youth bureau where children can be referred to engaged in an out of courts disposal. This process will give consideration to the vulnerability of the individual. The Force is also emphasising the importance of providing training for staff in order to deal with people who may have vulnerabilities.

The Force informed the Board that its work and engagement with young people has been beneficial in the Dyfed-Powys community, citing an example of a care home in Powys caring for severely autistic children where regular engagement with an officer has resulted in a positive relationship between the Force and several of the severely autistic children.

The discussion moved on to serious crime and the legacy of the Knife Angel in Powys in January 2020. The Force stated that serious violent crime and pressures from incidents such as the protests in Penally, Pembrokeshire have promoted the Force to establish a multi-agency response to combat radicalisation of children and young people in the Force area. The Force is working with a variety of partners and taking best practice from movements such as the warrior gyms in London which are created using knives collected by the Police.

A brief discussion ensued regarding additional funding announced by Welsh Government for PCSOs. The Force has recorded every interaction its PCSOs have had with the public in order to document the good work and engagement between the PCSOs and the public.

**5 – Force Data Driven Insights Report Quarter 3**

The PCC remarked on the dramatic increase in crime to 3165 incidents in August 2020 when the lockdown was lifted. He queried what preparation activity was taking place ahead of a potentially very similar situation in 2021. The DCC responded saying that there was an increase in low level assaults and public order offences in 2020 after the lockdown was lifted, and that the Force expected the same in 2021. It was noted that following the Force Performance Board in January 2020 all BCU leaders were tasked with liaising with their finance departments to adequately prepare their budgets for the summer of 2021. The Force has also reviewed Operation Lion in Pembrokeshire which provides support in the town during the tourist season in order to prepare for the expected increase in visitors to the area.

The PCC queried what plans the Force was making to ensure enough officers were on duty during the summer. It was noted that tourist areas in the Force area were expected to be fully booked for the summer, and although officers were encouraged to use their annual leave allocation, a carry-over of leave has been granted for 2021 and 2022.

A brief discussion took place regarding the shift in crime type during the Covid period. The Force stated that due to lockdown restrictions and additional demands on the Force, some crime types may take longer to investigate.

**Action: The Force to provide additional information explaining the charged/summonsed data to explain why the Dyfed-Powys outcome rate is higher than the national average.**

The discussion moved on to the diversionary scheme; the PCC requested that the Force reinvigorate activity throughout the counties as the Force hasn’t experienced the incremental increase in update the PCC would have liked.

The PCC queried why 37% of cases saw the victim withdrawing support when there is a named suspect. The DCC stated that a large proportion of those cases are violence against the person and low level assaults without injury where the victim is not willing to proceed with a case. Sexual offences only make up 4% of the overall amount of cases where the victim withdraws support. The Force will continue to monitor the situation.

The discussion moved on to the outcome heading ‘investigation complete, no suspect identified’. It was noted that a glitch in the Force’s crime management system has erroneously allowed officers to finalise crimes without giving an outcome. This error is being managed through the Force’s Investigations Group who are seeking a suitable fix. It was noted that the team will be closing cases manually, ensuring that cases which have been closed in error are corrected. There is no timescale for this work.

The discussion moved on to possession of weapons offences which have been recorded in higher numbers in the last quarter. The ACC stated that the rise is linked to the stop checks of cars during the Covid-19 period. It was noted that the Force is working on reviewing this activity so it can better understand whether there are underlying trends relating to organised crime.

The discussion moved on to hidden harm during the lockdown period, where people may be placed in more vulnerable situations, for example being in lockdown with an abusive family member. The Force are carrying out additional work with partners, and recorded figures of hidden crime remain steady in Wales with a healthy picture of recording.

The discussion moved on to dog thefts which has been an issue in the Force area for the past few weeks. It was noted that a number of dogs had been seized, and that the social media desk are working to provide reassurance to the public. A significant number of calls have been received relating to dog thefts and the Force are working to respond to every single call. The Force are aware of the reputational damage to the Force so there is a problem profile being carried out to understand where the hotspots are for the dog thefts. It was noted that many forces across the UK have been affected by dog thefts during the lockdown period.

EN stated that a robust comms policy was in place to respond to the dog thefts. The Force’s comms strategy is to post little and often to ensure that as much information as possible is shared with the public. The PCC stated that it was pleasing to see such high levels of proactivity from the Force on the matter.

The discussion moved on to violence against the person which saw a spike in cases in July and August 2020, followed by increased levels in September and December 2020 compared with 2019 levels. The ACC stated that the Force has been trying to improve its crime recording practices around harassment, stalking and malicious communication which has partially contributed to a rise in recorded cases as incidents are recorded with improved accuracy.

The discussion moved on to domestic abuse overview. It was noted that the Force has worked hard to improve its response to domestic abuse cases over the past few years. The PCC agreed that the Force’s response to domestic abuse cases was a good news story, and its collaboration with partners on the matter would encourage public confidence in reporting cases to the police.

Moving on to mental health reports, it was noted that the call volume for Dyfed-Powys Police was static. Eluned Morgan MS has been appointed mental health minister for Wales, and that the CC has hosted meetings with her. Wales is commencing with a roll out of private conveyancing for individuals detained under the mental health act following a £6m investment by Welsh Government. The CC is working to agree commencement dates for Powys and Hywel Dda Health Board .

The discussion moved on to the Force Contact Centre (FCC) with the Chief Officers stating that the Force’s ambition is to improve the service for everyone who contacts the Force, so that their case is progressed in a single continuous line of investigation. This ambition will be supported by placing digital media communications in the FCC along with a Force Crime Registrar in order to release call handlers after their initial contact with the member of the public. Releasing the call handlers will also improve the Force’s ability to cope with demand.

**6 – Finance**

The DoF provided members with a financial update based upon spending patterns to the end of January 2021. In summary, the Force is projecting a net under-spend of £24,000 against its revised budget. The Force was overspent by £24,000.

The Force revenue budget has been reduced by £750,000 in the current year which was agreed as part of the budget setting process for 2021/2. This funding has been committed to fund one-off pressures in 2021/2 as a result of training backlogs, Operation Asper spending and income losses resulting from the on-going pandemic. This took away the need to fund these pressures through precept or general reserves next year.

The Policing Minister communicated that the Force must fund the costs of Operation Asper up until the point that this equates to 1% of the Force net budget i.e. the first £1.12 million of spending. This also however corresponds with a reduction in operational activity over the winter months with spending in the current year projected to be around £494,000 based upon current spending patterns.

The projection has also been updated to reflect expected leavers, pay re-gradings pending and the latest recruitment plans for officers and staff. Force spending continues to be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic with significant additional costs and losses in income being experienced throughout the year to date. There are some savings against headings such as photocopying, conferences, fuel, subsistence etc. linked to lockdown periods.

The Home Office has confirmed that the Department of Health and Social Care will be meeting all costs of Medical Grade PPE purchased by the Force. The Force has also received Surge Funding from the Home Office for additional enforcement activity of £212K which it has been assumed will be fully matched by additional spending. Based on current spending patterns, it is unlikely that the Force will utilise the full allocation and a carry- over of unspent monies may be required. This is obviously subject to change.

The projection also incorporates the grant available in respect of income losses suffered and a sum of £215,000 has been estimated as the amount recoverable under the scheme by year end. For the first 4 months, all elements of the claim submitted were funded, including losses experienced in respect of the Speed Reduction Partnership – Go Safe cost recovery which was at risk. At present it has been assumed that the Partnership can absorb income losses through reserves and cost reductions with no loss in income falling on Forces – which at this stage would appear to be the case.

The report continues to incorporate cost pressures in relation to income losses and increases in insurance premiums referred to previously. The continuation of restrictions linked to the Pandemic means that income projections have needed to be adjusted to reflect current monthly average income levels.

There are a number of potential ill-health retirements being considered from a medical perspective and the projections assume that 8 officers are permanently unable to fulfil the functions needed to act as police officers and are unsuitable for redeployment into other roles. This position continues to be monitored and officers are being retained where suitable work allows this.

The position continues to evolve and further revisions to this projected position will be needed as the year progresses and as the position on costs, income, funding and indeed on restrictions/ lockdown lifting become clearer. The spending on Operational Uplift during the year was projected to be sufficient for a full draw down of this grant however correspondence from the Home Office on the December claim has resulted in a reduction in claimed income of £4,000 based on year to date headcount.

In relation to Capital, a summary of spending against budget for the 2020/21 financial year is included in the Report. In total, spending was £4.315 million against a revised budget of £8.776 million with £1.926 million being committed at this stage.

KE queried whether the Force was experiencing difficulties obtaining equipment for their estates projects due to the impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit. It was noted that costs for the Llanelli and Brecon building projects have increased, however there is an increase in costs generally due to the factors mentioned. It was noted that CN is working on a circular economy project with the Director of Estates (DoE) which will see the Force partaking in £3.7m of Welsh government funding to improve partnership working and increase sustainability.

A brief discussion ensued regarding absorbing the loss of road traffic offences through reserves. It was noted that the Force and the PCC have been lobbying the Home Office and the Treasury for the comprehensive spending review in order to support the Force’s future planning.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Force operation in Penally, Pembrokeshire. It was noted that the PCC had sent letters to the Home Office to clarify the funding situation for supporting the increased demand on the Force due to the re-housing of asylum seekers in the camp in Penally. The PCC suggested that he could send an additional letter to the Home Office, and was informed that there is clear governance in place in-Force around Penally, and local Inspector Reuben Palin is engaging with the local community in Penally.

**7 – Review of all actions and decisions taken**

It was recognised that this meeting is the final Policing Accountability Board the CC will attend prior to his retirement. The PCC thanked the CC for his service to Dyfed-Powys Police, and his service to policing in general. The CC in turn thanked the OPCC for their support during his period as Chief of Dyfed-Powys Police.

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| ACTION SUMMARY FROM MEETING ON 16/02/2021 | | |
| Action No | Action Summary | To be progressed by: |
| **PAB 147** | **Force to provide the PCC with a Fraud Force Performance Pack 6 months into the next financial year.** | **Force** |
| **PAB 148** | **BJ to provide an update on the Force’s engagement with children who are home schooled.** | **Bethan James** |
| **PAB 149** | **The Force to provide additional information explaining the charged/summonsed data to explain why the Dyfed-Powys outcome rate is higher than the national average.** | **Force** |

**Date of next meeting: 10:00 10th of June 2021**