



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg yn ogystal â Saesneg.

This document is available in Welsh as well as English.



21st December 2022

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys response to
An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service**

The detail contained in this report highlights the breadth and depth of the current issues relating to police conduct. Whilst not part of this thematic inspection, Dyfed-Powys Police's vetting and anti-corruption units were inspected as part of the PEEL 2021/22 activity. The Force received a 'good' grading in this area but have accepted each of the recommendations and areas for improvement set out in this latest report.

Vetting

As Commissioner, I am confident that vetting standards are high in Dyfed-Powys Police, with thorough reviews being undertaken for all potential new personnel, be they staff, officers, volunteers or transferees. I have been advised that the service awaits national guidance regarding the vetting of transferees but have been assured that all are fully re-vetted by Dyfed-Powys Police prior to acceptance. This thoroughness and the increased volume presented by Operation Uplift does mean that vetting unit staff are dealing with extremely demanding workloads. As such, Dyfed-Powys Police does have a cohort of personnel whose vetting clearance requires review. I have however been assured that plans are in place to tackle this now that the unit is more appropriately resourced.

Misconduct

There is undoubtedly confusion and a lack of consistency of decision making between forces regarding misconduct cases. The changes in regulations to place a greater emphasis on reflective practice and encouraging learning could be perceived as down-playing inappropriate behaviour, during a time where a zero-tolerance approach is taken to many other transgressions in society (such as abuse towards emergency workers). However, the significant impact on police personnel accused of misconduct must not be ignored either. Reflective practice may be a proportionate, reasonable and relatively swift outcome for minor wrongdoings, giving the individual the opportunity to learn from mistakes, modify their behaviour and limit the impact on their duties.

Officers or staff suspected of more serious misconduct can face as long as two years' suspension from duties whilst the investigation and decision-making processes play out. Two years of uncertainty for the individual, two years of apprehension for any victims and two years of un-realised expense to the taxpayer. This cannot continue – policing needs to carefully consider a robust, consistent and swift alternative to the existing or previous model to ensure those who present a risk to the public are dismissed efficiently and those who are suitable to remain in the service are returned to duty as quickly as possible.



Misogyny

Within the report, the Inspectorate stated that they had found "*an improving police culture, but with persistent problems*". This is extremely disappointing, but not surprising. Re-defining the culture of any organisation takes a number of years to achieve, arguably more so within a hierarchical rank and file structure. Dyfed-Powys Police has recognised the importance of seeking to address the concerns and perceptions of the workforce, having recently established a culture working group to progress actions highlighted within this report as well as themes emerging from recent webinars hosted by the Force for staff and officers to discuss the internal culture they experience.

It is vitally important that officers and staff call out inappropriate behaviours and am encouraged that the Force provides a confidential reporting mechanism through 'Bad Apple' as well as through Crimestoppers. However, more must be done to respond to and protect those who stand up against inappropriate behaviour if we are to truly have an open and equal workforce.

My office will be taking an active role in monitoring progress against this work, and I will seek to receive quarterly updates directly from the Chief Constable through my accountability meetings. Opportunities for joint scrutiny of police culture issues are also being explored at an all-Wales level through the Policing in Wales governance structure.