

**Police and Crime**

**Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys**

**Quality Assurance Panel (QAP)**

**Dip Sampling Exercise**

**Review of the Crime and Incident Hub**

**Panel Members’ Findings & Feedback**

**July 2023**

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# **1.0 Overview**

At the meetings of the Commissioner’s Quality Assurance Panel held on the 3rd July 2023 and 19th of July 2023, a random selection of 17 cases that were dealt with by the Force’s Crime and Incident Hub were reviewed. These cases were considered across two meetings instead of one, due to the availability of Panel members, combined with the introduction of two new Panel members during the first meeting.

Both meetings were held in person at Dyfed-Powys Police headquarters. Six Panel members were in attendance during the first meeting, and six were in attendance during the second meeting.

During the first meeting, the Panel received an input from the Detective Chief Inspector of the Crime and Incident Hub (CIH). A summary of this input was relayed by staff from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) at the beginning of the second meeting. The input provided from the Detective Chief Inspector outlined that the department is responsible for the recording of all reports of crime that do not require initial police attendance. The department are responsible for assessing and responding to these reports as soon as reasonably practicable and in-line with the caller’s availability. The department is responsible for recording, assessing and investigating crimes, liaising with the victim and keeping them updated.

The Panel were asked to consider if the Crime and Incident Hub had dealt with and triaged each of the cases appropriately.

When carrying out their reviews, the Panel were asked to consider the following aspects:

* When was the initial report made?
* When was the crime allocated to the CIH?
* When was the victim contacted?
* What evidence is there of the victim’s vulnerability being assessed?
* Was there evidence of the victim’s/community’s/offender’s safeguarding being considered? Is there a risk management plan?
* Was the victim offered the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement? Did they take it? Were they given opportunities to refresh/amend this?
* Was there documented evidence that special measures had been explained fully? *(i.e. that it is an application to the court, not a guarantee?)*
* Was a victim contract/contact agreement set?
* Was the victim updated in line with the contract/contact agreement?
* Has the appropriate support been offered to the victim throughout the process? *(e.g. referral to Goleudy/Victim Support etc.)*
* When was the outcome applied?
* What was the rationale? *(e.g. victim withdrew)*
* What evidence is there? (*e.g. victim signed Pocket NoteBook entry confirming their withdrawal).* If they withdrew, did the victim confirm they had not been pressured by third parties into withdrawing?
* If the victim withdrew their support, is there evidence that a victimless prosecution had been considered?
* Has a supervisor regularly endorsed the crime log?
* Positives - *Use this section to describe positive points that you feel should be highlighted*
* Negatives - *Use this section to describe negative points that you feel should be highlighted*
* Queries raised - *Use this section to note down questions you have from reviewing this file*
* Actions - *Use this section to note down actions you think should be taken following your review of this file*

# **2.0 Background, Purpose, and Methodology**

The Quality Assurance handbook, available on the [Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Commissioner website](https://www.dyfedpowys-pcc.org.uk/media/11621/qap-handbook-march-2023-final.docx), states the background and purpose of the Panel, along with how the dip sampling is carried out and what the Panel is asked to consider.

# **3.0 Review of Cases**

**Case 1**

* Members identified regular communication with the victim and exploration of relevant police agency referrals.
* It was identified that there were frequent updates with a good level of information.
* Members identified interaction with various officers throughout, which was deemed to be positive.
* Suspect identified and accepted remedial treatment, which was considered by members to be a reasonable outcome.

**Case 2**

* It was identified that there was timely communication and outcome.
* The members identified that there needs to be clarity in relation to who the ‘victim’ is when involving a business, as any threat/risk to individuals involved in the incident should be considered and the appropriate support offered to those individuals.
* It was suggested that the Force could have considered any relevant initiatives in relation to this case.
* There was reference to certain checks undertaken, but the outcome wasn’t recorded, which does not provide an accurate picture.

**Case 3**

* Members identified appropriate contact with Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT), including a visit from a PCSO; however, queried if PCSO reassured or investigated, as it was unclear.
* Prompt action was identified by the Panel members in relation to this case.
* The record contained no information as to why it was closed, especially when considering history and general feeling of unease of individuals involved. Also, no updates regarding opportunities to consider the evidence obtained.
* The members identified that there needs to be clarity in relation to who the ‘victim’ is when involving a business, as any threat/risk to individuals involved in the incident should be considered and the appropriate support offered to those individuals.

**Case 4**

* Members identified that the victim was offered the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement, a victim contract/contact agreement was agreed/set, the victim was updated in-line with the contract/contact agreement and the appropriate support was offered to the victim throughout the process.
* Members identified a lack of police time/resources due to annual leave; however, noted that this was addressed accordingly/dealt with appropriately.

**Case 5**

* Members identified safeguarding advice provided to victim and victim advised to record any further incidents – victim seemed happy with outcome.
* It was identified that there were no updates and no Supervisor review for over one month – including no updates to the victim.
* It was identified that there was a lack of contact with another Force area and queried whether further enquiries should have been made in relation to suspect, to assess future risk.

**Case 6**

* Members noted that police identified a vulnerable individual and reported to relevant agencies.
* No negatives were identified, members report that this was recorded very well and dealt with extremely well.

**Case 7**

* The panel members commented that this was likely a civil matter and so the advice provided by police was appropriate.
* Members noted that there was no evidence of the Force looking into similar previous incidents or complaints involving the suspect.
* Members commented that there was no evidence of the Force checking if there were any victim vulnerabilities.
* Members questioned if there was reassurance in the contact between the officers and the victim.

**Case 8**

* Members queried that some of the responses were recorded as ‘not answered’ and they would have liked clarity on why they were not answered (for example, they may not have been applicable and marking as ‘not applicable’ would have been more accurate).
* Members commented that while the record included previous incidents of a similar nature, there was no record of what the Force had done with this information.
* Within the record, it noted that Dyfed-Powys Police told the victim that they would contact another agency about the incident, but there was no record of if/when this contact took place.

**Case 9**

* Members noted that the supervisor’s input could have been clearer and concise when rationalising why they could not proceed further, in relation to witnesses.
* Panel members felt that the record could have included more detail about the incident and details of the visits to witnesses.

**Case 10**

* Panel members felt that police had been timely in their response.
* Members noted that the caller was recording an incident in anticipation of a crime taking place.

**Case 11**

* It was noted that a portion of this file had been redacted and so it was difficult to give a full assessment.
* Members were unsure of the level of support that victims received due to the redacted portion, but were able to see that a victim pack had been sent by email.
* Members noted that the date of birth seemed inaccurate and may have been due to the call handler not having requested/received this information.

**Case 12**

* Panel members commented that the victim received support from a crisis team and mental health support.
* The members remarked that there was a comprehensive update on the case from the officer.
* The panel reported that there was comprehensive information and commented positively on the frequency of attempted calls to the victim recorded in an entry. However, the panel felt that it would have been helpful to record the time/location of communications with the victim to provide a better timeline of events and may have helped others within the team to determine when to call next. The time on the record indicated the time the update was entered onto the system, rather than the time the call was made.

**Case 13**

* Panel members noted that the Force attempted to contact the victim to arrange a visit and commented that the Force had made reasonable attempts to contact the victim, despite the victim deciding not to proceed.
* Members commented that the officer could have included the detail of times and locations of interactions and included information on times that call attempts were made.
* A letter was sent to the victim, but the contents were not available on the record provided. The members discussed that a copy of the letter could be attached to the record.

**Case 14**

* Members commented that the officer had recorded a lot of information, despite the victim not wanting to proceed with police action.
* Panel members noticed some discrepancy regarding the name of the suspect on the record, as there was a different name included within the record.

**Case 15**

* Panel members noted that the caller was reporting an incident in anticipation of a crime taking place.
* Members commented that the victim was satisfied that the incident was documented and did not want to pursue further action.

**Case 16**

* Panel members commented positively on this case, commenting that the police were in regular contact, and that the supervisor had regularly been checking the case.

**Case 17**

* It was noted that a portion of this file had been redacted; however, it was recorded that the information redacted had no detrimental impact on the case.
* It was noted that it was triaged appropriately to the Investigating Unit, and that there was a record of a request for CCTV and attempts to identify the suspect.
* Members commented that the investigating unit had not recorded any visits; however, a victim information pack and generic email was sent regarding support for victims and witnesses of crime.
* The victim was informed of the outcome and the crime reference provided should the victim encounter any further problems.

# **4.0 Key Themes Identified**

* It was identified by Panel members across a number of cases that there needs to be clarity in relation to who the ‘victim’ is when involving a business, as any threat/risk to individuals involved in the incident should be considered and the appropriate support offered to those individuals.
* Panel members observed regular attempts made by police to communicate with the victim, which was identified as positive. However, in a number of the cases Panel members reported that the actual dates/times of the attempted communication was not recorded and therefore an accurate timeline of events was not held, which may have helped others within the team to determine when to call next.
* The Panel members collectively agreed that the final interaction between the force and the victim, with the outcome of the investigation is an important entry for the record. This is the final communication that the victim receives from the Force, and it is imperative that it is accurately recorded in terms of when the communication took place, how the communication took place (e.g. over the phone, email, in-person) and the rationale provided for the decision. If the final communication took place over email/letter, a copy of that document should be attached to the record for completeness.
* It was observed by Panel members that the Force systems may request information that might not be relevant to the investigation and that the Force should consider amending the system, so that the request for information is dependent on the answers to the system questions; or that the Force are clear that particular sections of information are not relevant to the investigation – this ensures clarity that information is not simply ‘missing’ from a record.
* Accuracy of the records was also a key theme identified by Panel members – it was positively identified that records included officers’ identification of work that would/should be undertaken, however, the records required accurate updates of when/how that work was completed e.g. contact made with another agency should have been recorded, to provide a concise overview of that communication.
* The Panel observed a trend in calls where people are recording incidents in anticipation of a future crime taking place.
* The members observed that the incident and crime logs are the complete record, which is essential for a future investigation. Log of all calls is of value, of use as a method to learn lessons and make change to improve operations.

# **5.0 Observations for Force Response**

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| **Panel Observations** | **Force Response** |
| The Panel asked if the Force is tracking/noticing any trend of calls where people are recording incidents in anticipation of a crime taking place? If so, the Panel wanted to know how much time was spent on these calls? | These types of reports are not routinely handled by CIH so it would be difficult to comment on a trend. This information is more likely to be known by the Force Communication Centre (FCC) Call Handlers. It is unlikely to be recorded unless the information is tangible enough to be handled as intelligence. |
| Some cases noted that calls to the victim were made, but it was not recorded when i.e. the dates/times. | The current Victim Contact template within NICHE does not prompt to record this information. The previous Crime Management System did. Direction to record the time and date of contact attempts will be addressed in upcoming training as it provides an auditable time log. |
| One of the cases mentioned that a letter had been sent to a victim, but the contents of the letter were not included on the records, which would be helpful for the completeness of the record. | The previous Crime Management System allowed for uploads to be saved as attachments. NICHE has a different way of saving documents and we will develop an appropriate method to store such document for completeness of accurate records. We will address this in the previously mentioned autumn training. |
| The Panel noted that updates on the system are concise, but can sometimes lack detail regarding how the ‘boxes have been ticked’ e.g. how was a victim updated. | Consideration may be given to changes of templates to prompt officers to qualify answers based on what they have selected. Training is scheduled in autumn where advice will be given to document/qualify some answers where it is required. |
| The Panel members suggested that it would be good to see that victims are given a point of contact/number when they make an initial report. | Victim Standard Emails and signatures have been set up to standardise communication with victims. This will allow direct contact with OIC and explains how to get further information or updates. The current recording model only allows for direct contact details to be given after allocation to an Officer in Case (OIC) instead of at the initial call. |
| It was queried what is ‘regular communication’ with a victim. | Regular communication is at a significant stage of an investigation. A victim contact agreement is made with victims during the initial engagement between OIC and Victim. Contact will usually be agreed based on their needs, the type of incident and is usually between 14-28days. In all cases 28 days or once a month should be the minimum contact |
| The Panel identified that overall, the Force need to consider how investigations are closed in terms of the final update to the victim – please refer to Section 4 of this report. | There is a section within the closure template to record the victim has been updated. Officers can also use the Victim Contact (Occurance Entry Log) OEL template to record a closure on the crime record. Most contact would be over the telephone but where appropriate or as a backup Standard Emails have been shared with officers to ensure they explain the outcome, rationale, and methods of contact if further information becomes known after the case has been closed. |
| The Panel queried who decides on the application of Adult Community Resolutions (ACR). | Sergeants authorise ACR. These are carried out in person and therefore would not be issued by CIH. |
| When a business/premises is recorded as the victim, but an individual was involved, how is the victim care/process managed/recorded for that individual. | If the business is a victim, the SPOC or reporting person will be added to the Occurrence as either a witness or involved person depending upon the circumstances. Victim care by the way of updates or witnesses support would be facilitated through the SPOC. |
| Force systems may request information that might not be relevant to the investigation - the Force should consider amending the system, so that the request for information is dependent on the answers to the system questions. Alternatively, the Force need to be clear on the record that particular sections of information are not relevant to the investigation – this ensures clarity that information is not simply ‘missing’ from a record. | If our understanding of the query is correct: We are confident Information recorded on OEL is relevant to the investigation. All information linked to the offence must be retained for disclosure or information/intelligence gathering. We note there are occasions where other system data, such as PNC, (Police National Computer) is copy & pasted into an OEL log where only a summary of that data is required. This information would be disclosed as part of a file build for Crown Prosecution Sevice(CPS)/Court. Summarising data will be addressed in autumn training. |