



**Report from the  
Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys  
To the  
Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Panel**

**Response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)  
Pandemic**

**May 2020**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The unforeseen outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent postponement of the 2020 PCC elections has significantly altered the OPCC's work programme for this year. It has also impacted significantly on the way we undertake our work.
- 1.2. Section 17a of the Policing Protocol Order 2011 sets out the PCC's duty to set the strategic direction and objectives of the Force through the Police and Crime Plan. Part of this requires the PCC to review the Plan to ensure it remains fit for purpose.
- 1.3. This report reflects on the changes made to the day-to-day operation of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Dyfed-Powys since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. It also sets out how the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) intends on discharging his statutory functions over the coming 12 months, in the lead up to the PCC elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- 1.4. As set out in his 2017-21 Police and Crime Plan, the PCC's priorities will continue to be:
  - Keeping our communities safe
  - Safeguarding the vulnerable
  - Protecting our communities from serious threats
  - Connecting with communities
- 1.5. However, the emergency situation created by COVID-19 means that business cannot be as usual. Therefore, in order to respond to the emergency and fulfil his statutory responsibilities, the PCC's focus will be on:
  - Ensuring the Chief Constable has sufficient resources to respond to and recover from the emergency (**securing resources**)<sup>1</sup>
  - Ensuring, on behalf of the public, that the police respond in ways that are necessary, sufficient, proportionate and ethical (**holding to account**)<sup>2</sup>
  - Facilitating effective partnership working among agencies and groups working in community safety and criminal justice (**enhancing delivery**)<sup>3</sup>
  - Commissioning services, particularly for victims of crime, and providing grants for policing and crime reduction purposes (**community safety and crime reduction**)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 17d and 17g of the Policing Protocol

<sup>2</sup> 17b, 17c and 17j of the Policing Protocol

<sup>3</sup> 20e of the Policing Protocol

<sup>4</sup> 20a of the Policing Protocol

- Ensuring residents served by Dyfed-Powys Police have the information they need to understand how their service is performing (**local link**)<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Background – the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

- 2.1. The World Health Organisation declared the coronavirus outbreak a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' on 31 January 2020. The four UK Chief Medical Officers advised for planning and preparation to escalate in case of a more widespread outbreak. They advised an increase of the UK risk level from low to moderate as the UK confirmed its first cases. The Welsh Government and NHS Wales advised they had robust case management and infection control measures in place.
- 2.2. On 11th February 2020, prior to any reported cases in Wales, the Welsh Minister for Health and Social Services was considering whether Welsh Government needed to introduce legislation with the primary purpose of enforcing supported isolation. The Chief Medical Officer wrote to health boards advising on the importance of immediate implementation of community assessment and testing services and the establishment of coronavirus testing units separate from emergency departments.
- 2.3. The first case of COVID-19 in Wales was confirmed on 28th February 2020.
- 2.4. On 3rd March 2020, the Prime Minister (PM) introduced the UK Government's coronavirus action plan of measures for the whole of the UK, following a declaration of 'threat to public health', under regulation 3 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. The PM has since held a series of Cabinet Office Briefing Room A (COBRA) meetings to develop the UK Government's strategy for responding to the virus. These meetings are attended by a cross-departmental range of senior ministers, the Chief Medical Officer, security officials, military chiefs, emergency services leaders and civil servants.
- 2.5. On 23rd March 2020, the UK Government announced restrictions aimed at reducing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). These restrictions asked people not to leave their homes except for:
  - shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible;
  - one form of exercise a day – for example a run, walk or cycle – alone or with members of your household;
  - any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and
  - travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.

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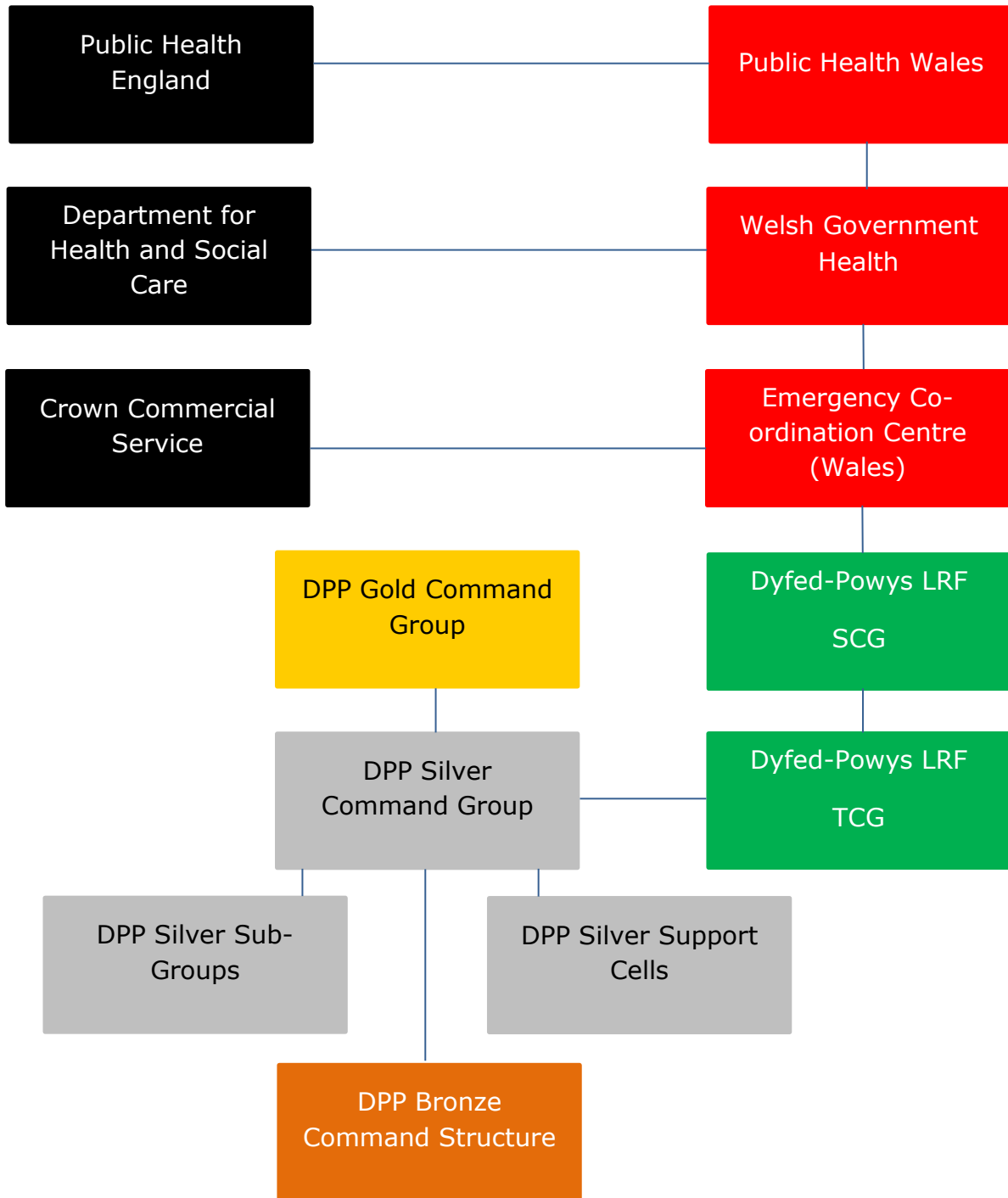
<sup>5</sup> 17i of the Policing Protocol

- 2.6. The Coronavirus Act 2020 (the Act) received Royal assent on 25 March 2020. The Act broadly continues and supplements measures within the Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020, and aims to support the Government's strategy by:
- increasing the available health and social care workforce;
  - easing the burden on frontline staff;
  - containing and slowing the virus;
  - managing the deceased with respect and dignity; and
  - supporting people.
- 2.7. The Act introduced powers for the police (see Appendix A) to enforce the Government's restrictions, so as to help prevent significant further transmission of the virus. The Act also delayed local and PCC election that were due to take place on 7 May 2020, until 6 May 2021, and amended existing legislation enabling courts and tribunals to make use of live video or audio links.

### 3. The response in Wales

- 3.1. It is important to highlight that effective co-ordination and communication arrangements were established between the Police and Welsh Government at an early stage of the pandemic through the Emergency Co-ordination Centre (Wales) ECC(W). Wales has the advantage of well-established and embedded partnership working arrangements between the Police, Welsh Government and the Criminal Justice System.
- 3.2. Policing in Wales is represented at the Welsh Government Emergency Command and Co-ordination Centre Bird Table which meets three times daily, seven days a week. This ensures policing in Wales is an integral part of the response arrangements to the pandemic and is able to highlight issues such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing and effective and safe implementation of policies and regulations from the UK and Welsh Governments.

### 3.3. National and Local Structures



## 4. The Dyfed-Powys response

- 4.1. Organisational level and individual business area Business Continuity (BC) plans are used to assist in the recovery of services provided by DPP and the Commissioner's office in the event of a major disruption to policing services.
- 4.2. The plans set out the roles, responsibilities and actions to be taken to deliver and maintain the service following a major disruption to a minimum acceptable level until there is a return to normal. The Policing Commanders / Business Area leads are responsible for managing any disruption to their area of business, as well as keeping plans updated. They are supported by their nominated BC contacts and Senior Leadership Teams, plus the relevant shared service teams required.
- 4.3. The Force Risk and Business Continuity Management Advisor co-ordinates the Force BC capability and reinforces the importance of awareness training for staff, to ensure they all know what to do and who will be involved. Exercises are carried out periodically, and at least annually when the plan is reviewed, to ensure key staff who would be involved when a plan is invoked have confidence that the plan will work.
- 4.4. In a major or critical incident, or when significant disruption has been identified, the on-duty Gold Commander has the responsibility to activate the BC plan (Force or local level), based upon the nature of the disruption. During the Coronavirus outbreak, DPP has activated its BC plans at a strategic level, as well as in some business areas, such as business support functions and the Force Communication Centre. These areas have needed to activate due to loss of office space via social distancing or repurposing, and IT equipment availability for those needing to isolate. Operational policing continues to function as usual at the current time as their staffing levels remain adequate to deal with the incoming demand for deployment.
- 4.5. The critical service deliverables identified by the Business Impact Analysis are summarised as: being able to answer emergency calls for service; dispatch resources to deal with the situation; and having effective technical and specialist support for such deployment.
- 4.6. In order to introduce social distancing and increase the resilience of the call handling and dispatch capability, the Force Communication Centre has been divided across three separate locations in Police Headquarters. Call handling training has been expedited and any current personnel in the organisation with call handling experience have been redeployed into the Communication Centre. Where possible, support staff are working from home or within offices with strict social distancing. Some staff have been redeployed to alternative roles or cancelled annual leave to facilitate this and ensure the most critical functions are appropriately covered.
- 4.7. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has and continues to be provided to frontline personnel who are unable to undertake social distancing or are at

risk of coming into contact with individuals with the virus. Processes have also been put in place in custody suites to ensure symptomatic detainees are appropriately cared for and the risk of spreading the virus is minimised. These include enhanced and more frequent cleaning, contingency locations and additional risk assessments prior to admitting a detainee into the suite. In order to reduce the number of people entering custody, face-to-face Independent Custody Visiting has been suspended (replaced by remote record reviewing undertaken by OPCC officers) and solicitors are using tele-conferencing. When Appropriate Adults are required to attend, they are provided with PPE.

## 5. Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys' response

### 5.1. *Securing Resources*

Ensuring the Chief Constable has sufficient resources to respond to and recover from the emergency

- 5.1.1. The UK Government expects PCCs to play an important role in supporting Chief Constables (CCs) in helping keep the public safe during the coronavirus outbreak. The Welsh Government also recognise the vital role of policing in collaboration with devolved services in Wales.
- 5.1.2. In terms of initial financial implications, the Force needed to commit to significant additional costs in sourcing PPE for front line Officers and staff, issuing additional uniform, additional overtime, ICT equipment, cleaning and testing. As the organisational position continues to evolve, alongside these additional costs there are a number of areas where some savings are being both realised and anticipated but also some losses in income receipts for a number of activities and services. All aspects of costs and savings are being logged and indeed reported nationally to inform discussions and negotiations in relation to future funding.
- 5.1.3. A number of avenues are being pursued at a local and national level, but there have yet to be any firm indications from Government in relation to additional funding towards for policing, albeit that some flexibilities have been afforded in relation to the specific grant for Operation Uplift. Given these uncertainties and the outturn position, the Commissioner has sought to establish an earmarked reserve at year end to assist with the partial mitigation of the financial implications.
- 5.1.4. Work will continue to assess the financial implications for both 2020/21 and beyond, but this will take some time to crystallise both in terms of the local issues but also within the wider economic landscape. The scale of Governments economic interventions has been vast and this will

- undoubtedly have significant implications for public services and funding.
- 5.1.5. The Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 and its associated plans and strategies, which were approved in February 2020 will be reconsidered in light of these wider implications with a particular focus on financial resilience and sustainability. The creation of the specific earmarked COVID-19 reserve and the reduction in the planned utilisation of revenue reserves to support the 2019/20 budget undoubtedly assist in mitigating some of the financial implications. However, there are clearly now a range of uncertainties and complexities regarding future government funding, comprehensive spending review, funding formula review, impacts for tax base, market conditions for the supply of goods and services, ability to meet planned efficiencies, impact on national projects and initiatives along with potential changes to policing services generally which will all need careful consideration.
- 5.1.6. The Dyfed-Powys Local Resilience Forum (LRF) brings together frontline responders<sup>6</sup> and other agencies with a significant role to play in managing and recovering from the effect of emergencies in the region. The Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) is leading the multi-agency response to the COVID-19 pandemic on behalf of the LRF. This is the senior, strategic decision making forum for our response. Members sit at senior executive and chief executive level. The group wields significant influence locally and nationally and has the authority to make wide ranging decisions in the best interests of the public of Dyfed-Powys. The SCG is chaired by a police Gold Commander – the Assistant Chief Constable. All local authorities are represented (by their Chief Executives) along with key colleagues from Public Health, Local Health Boards, emergency services and category 1 and 2 responders. The primary focus of the group has been to ensure that the correct structures are in place across the region in order to respond to the pandemic.
- 5.1.7. A Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) reports to the SCG. The group is chaired by a police Silver Commander. The purpose of the group is to coordinate and facilitate partnership working across the key areas as identified and mandated by the SCG.
- 5.1.8. Dyfed-Powys Police has put in place a Gold, Silver and Bronze command structure to provide strategic, operational and tactical leadership and coordination of the Force's response to COVID-19, with OPCC representation at every level, enabling appropriate oversight and input where necessary. The Gold Command Group initially met twice weekly, until it was deemed the initial response to the pandemic was

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<sup>6</sup> Hywel Dda University Health Board, Powys Teaching Health Board, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, Dyfed-Powys Police, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the County Councils of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys.



appropriately coordinated. The Group continues to meet on a weekly basis and is informed by a number of specialist “Cells” feeding information in, such as demand, organisational learning and intelligence.

- 5.1.9. In addition to sitting on the Gold meetings, the PCC receives regular briefings from the CC. These briefings cover the daily demands on the Force, staffing abstraction levels and other matters of concern. The briefings also provide an opportunity to input issues from the OPCC which require consideration from the Force, for example, information from the public, partners, PCC-commissioned service provision.
- 5.1.10. As well as the briefings from the Chief Officer Team, the PCC meets with the Deputy First Minister and Chief Whip on a weekly basis and receives regular updates from the Head of the Police Liaison Unit at Welsh Government, covering the collaborative response across Wales and the work of the Welsh Government in responding to the crisis. Furthermore the PCC attends weekly meetings with the UK Government Policing Minister.
- 5.1.11. The Police Federation are also in regular contact with the PCC, on a local, regional (Wales) and National (England and Wales) level. These updates have been invaluable in keeping the PCC abreast of the issues directly impacting upon the officers on the frontline. Likewise, Unison update the PCC on the issues impacting upon police staff and offer support to their members.
- 5.1.12. The OPCC’s Business Continuity Plan aims to provide resilience around the PCC and OPCC staff who have key decision-making roles and responsibilities within the schemes of consent and delegations, financial regulations and standing orders as to contracts. The majority of staff within the OPCC are working from home and adhering to the Government advice. It remains business as usual as much as possible; statutory information continues to be published as required by legislation and decisions continue to be made and recorded in the correct way.
- 5.1.13. It should be noted that Dyfed-Powys Police plans to increase police officer numbers over the medium term as part of Operation Uplift<sup>7</sup>. The PCC has been briefed by senior officers in relation to the steps being taken to ensure appropriate resources are available to meet organisational needs in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The recruitment pipeline has been prioritised and protected to ensure DPP are able to safely deliver their Operation Uplift plans, whilst observing the principles of social distancing. The Force has already successfully conducted interviews for new recruits and held promotion boards using Skype. Plans to deliver growth in key areas as agreed via the priority resource planning process are being prioritised.

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<sup>7</sup> The UK Government’s announced national uplift of police officers beginning in 2019/20.

- 5.1.14. All training apart from mandatory courses have been cancelled in recognition of the need to prevent significant abstractions from critical functions. For the same reason officers are not attending courses or conferences during the period of this emergency. A leave embargo has also been observed from the initial stages of the DPP response.
- 5.1.15. A new adapted recruitment process has been ratified to ensure the necessary control of movement within the organisation is in place. The Resource Management Group (RMG) charged with governing the movement of resources is currently sitting weekly. This forum ensures that any staff movement is controlled in accordance with the recruitment process with the aim of protecting critical functions.
- 5.1.16. The IT department has worked hard to increase organisational capacity by maximising the contribution of those having to self-isolate. They have rapidly sourced over 100 additional laptops to enable staff to work in an agile manner whilst safeguarding critical functions.
- 5.1.17. The Estates department has been very busy providing an effective maintenance service to Dyfed-Powys Police to ensure the Force can continue to function effectively in these difficult times. They have had to make sure that police buildings remain operational and that the environments are safe and hygienic, whilst operating in a different way to ensure social distancing measures are observed. This has included:
- statutory servicing and testing of systems and equipment;
  - ensuring cleaning standards are at an enhanced level to combat the COVID-19 virus;
  - keeping stock control of cleaning products including hand sanitiser gel;
  - conducting deep cleans of environments where required;
  - ensuring fuel supplies are monitored on a weekly basis;
  - continuing with catering function at HQ to ensure those attending are well fed, with social distancing observed;
  - facilitating organisational distancing for departments, with moves and changes, so they can ensure resilience in their business areas;
  - continuing with our Courier Service, transporting essential exhibits between our stations and Forensic Examiners; and
  - collecting from suppliers and delivering to Divisions essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Frontline Officers and Staff.
- 5.1.18. A Chief Inspector is leading the coordination of efforts to identify and maximise the use of staff, and aligning any capacity to critical functions. There has been much focus on increasing the resilience within the Force Communication Centre (FCC), including re-deploying those with previous FCC experience from other functions back into the FCC.

- 5.1.19. The OPCC staff have supported the Force in a number of areas to boost their resilience, including within the Freedom of Information, Corporate Communications and Occupational Health departments.
- 5.1.20. The Force has established a COVID-19 internal web page to keep officers and staff abreast of developments and guidance, with the Chief Officer Team providing regular podcasts to share the current organisational situation.
- 5.1.21. The Special Constabulary has played a key role in ensuring sufficient capacity in the critical functions. The support provided by the Special Constabulary to date has been exceptional.
- 5.1.22. The Force's Recovery Cell has been established to plan for what the "new normal" for Dyfed-Powys Police will be and how it is reached as the lockdown eases. This work will involve representation from the OPCC to ensure the PCC has the opportunity to influence future plans

## 5.2. Holding to account

Ensuring, on behalf of the public, that the police respond in ways that are necessary, sufficient, proportionate and ethical

- 5.2.1. The impact of the coronavirus is yet to be fully understood, but the risks to keeping the people of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys safe are significant.
- 5.2.2. There is a government and public expectation that arrangements to hold each police force to account on behalf of its communities will continue. The OPCC has ensured that such arrangements are in place, in a way that does not result in unrealistic demands on the Force that could distract them from their COVID-19 response.
- 5.2.3. The PCC's arrangements will therefore include providing checks and balances around the implementation of the new police powers introduced through the emergency provisions within the Act.
- 5.2.4. The Chief Constable is operationally independent but he and his senior officer team speak with the PCC on a regular basis, keeping him abreast of operational decisions, particularly where a major shift in policy is contemplated. In the present context, the CC has already discussed the approach the Force will take to the emergency, assuring the PCC that the police will seek as far as possible to persuade people to observe social distancing and not to undertake unnecessary journeys. The approach of Dyfed-Powys Police can be summarised as:

- **Engage** with the public
- **Explain** why dispersal is vital to reduce the spread of the virus
- **Encourage** people to disperse and go home
- **Enforce** where necessary

- 5.2.5. Enforcement may, and has, become necessary, but only if the other steps fail. The PCC is fully supportive of this approach and has been active in appealing to the public not to make unnecessary journeys.
- 5.2.6. The PCC receives weekly performance data on key elements of the Force's current position. This enables proportionate and effective holding to account that does not put additional unnecessary pressure on the Force at this challenging time.
- 5.2.7. The PCC has been encouraged to learn that officer and staff absence levels have remained extremely low, with very few of the workforce needing to isolate due to COVID-19. The Force Communication Centre did move into the amber category for the levels of absence for a short period, but all areas have now returned to green.
- 5.2.8. Following the national trend, recorded crimes have been lower than usual. The Force has received an exceptionally high volume of reports of anti-social behaviour, the majority of which has related to COVID-19.
- 5.2.9. The PCC has a number of formal governance / assurance meetings to assist in fulfilling his statutory responsibilities, including the:

**Policing Board (PB)** – a closed meeting taking place every three weeks where the PCC holds the CC to account and receives formal updates on key Force developments. A public summary of meeting minutes are published on the OPCC's website.

**Policing Accountability Board (PAB)** – a quarterly meeting where the PCC publicly holds the CC to account for the performance of the Force. Members of the public and press are invited to attend PAB and are given the opportunity to ask questions. Meeting agendas, reports and minutes are published on the OPCC's website.

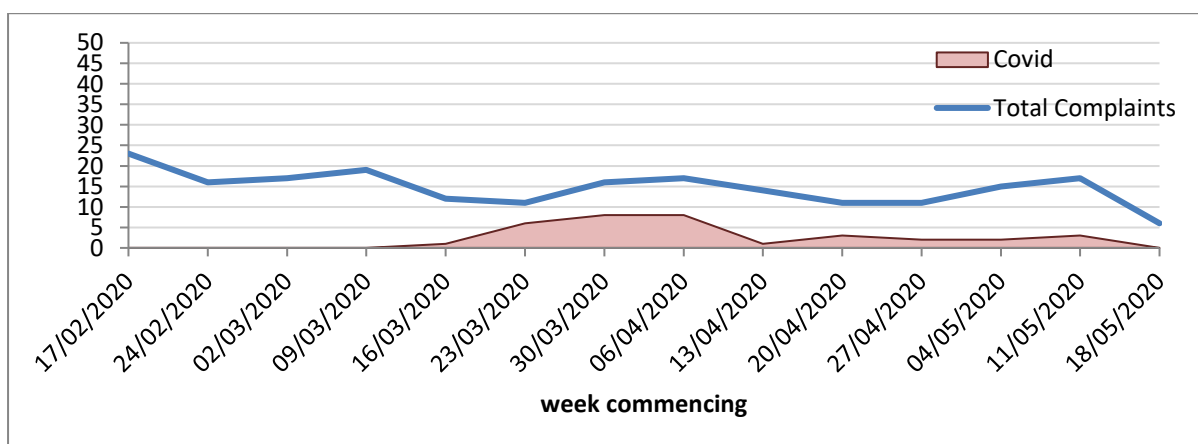
**Joint Audit Committee (JAC)** – a statutory committee that provides assurance around the effectiveness of the PCC's and CC's arrangements for managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment and reporting on financial and other performance. The JAC will be asked to provide assurance on the robustness of Force and OPCC arrangements in mitigating risks presented by the coronavirus, including the impact on Operation Uplift and the medium term financial plan more generally.

- 5.2.10. All of the above have already sat either formally or informally during the COVID-19 period, providing opportunity for the PCC to discharge his statutory responsibilities.
- 5.2.11. The Auditor General for Wales has informed all public services that Audit Wales are in the process of establishing a project to support the rapid collection, analysis and sharing of knowledge and insights during COVID-19. The OPCC will work with Dyfed-Powys Police's Op Talla

- Organisational Learning Cell to ensure this opportunity is maximised, both in terms of sharing and gathering good practice throughout Wales.
- 5.2.12. To ensure transparency and accountability as well as complying with social distancing measures, these meetings continue to take place virtually. Details will be published on the OPCC website, twitter and facebook pages to ensure these public facing meetings are accessible.
- 5.2.13. If the PCC is to hold the police to account on behalf of the public, then it is important the PCC listens to, and understands, the issues communities and individuals are facing in these unprecedented times. As such, the PCC has held a 'Virtual Community Engagement Day' for the Pembrokeshire area. This will be repeated every 3 weeks in different counties to ensure residents have the opportunity to share their views directly with the PCC.
- 5.2.14. The OPCC continues to respond to all correspondence and complaints received. This information is used to shape the PCC's communication with the public and partners and is fed into the Chief Officer Team when appropriate to address any issues as they arise. The OPCC also continues to provide a proactive and reactive service to the national, regional and local media to ensure awareness of the PCC's responsibilities and decisions relating to the COVID-19 situation, in support of openness, transparency and public accountability. The team also continues to work closely with the Force and partner communications colleagues to ensure public messages are co-ordinated and properly contextualised.
- 5.2.15. Whilst the majority of the PCC's staff are now working remotely, the main office answer phone is checked three days a week for messages and responded to promptly. During the pandemic, the OPCC has been monitoring all incoming written correspondence relating to COVID-19. As at 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020, the OPCC had received 160 such types of contact, the majority being to report a breach of the Government restrictions (61), for advice (66) or to report dissatisfaction (26), as shown in the table below. Despite increased correspondence, all communication has continued to be actioned or responded to on a daily basis by the OPCC.

	Advice	Reporting Breach	Dissatisfaction	Total
<b>Travel</b>	34	23	9	<b>66</b>
<b>Social Distancing</b>	11	21	4	<b>36</b>
<b>Business</b>	5	7	1	<b>13</b>
<b>Second Homes / Holiday Rentals</b>	1	7	2	<b>10</b>
<b>Property</b>	4	2		<b>6</b>
<b>Other / Not specified</b>	11	1	10	<b>22</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>153</b>

- 5.2.16. All complaints are being considered and actioned as per business as usual. In addition, from 1st February 2020, if a complaint has been recorded under Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002 and an individual is unhappy with the outcome of that complaint, then they can submit an application for a review to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys. The OPCC received their first request for a review on 27th April 2020.
- 5.2.17. Following the implementation of the Coronavirus Act 2020, Dyfed-Powys Police Professional Standards Department received a significant number of Coronavirus related complaints. However this did not lead to an overall increase in complaints, as a reduction in non-coronavirus complaints offset the total number of complaints received, as seen in the graph below.  
*(Please note: that the data for week commencing 18/5 is not the final total due to technical issues at the time of reporting.)*



- 5.2.18. The OPCC currently have one Police Appeals Tribunal underway and consideration has been given to any future hearings and how they could be accommodated in-line with COVID-19 regulations (both for Police Appeal Tribunals and Police Misconduct Hearings) in consultation with the Force Professional Standards Department and NALQC.
- 5.2.19. An Independent Custody Visiting Scheme forms part of the PCC's assurance arrangements. This is a statutory scheme involving volunteer members of the local community who visit police stations unannounced to check on the treatment and welfare of those held in police custody. On the 18th of March 2020 ICV visits into custody were postponed in order to protect the custody environment and the wellbeing of our Visitors. This decision was made jointly by the Force and OPCC, taking into consideration the operational demands and the demographics of our Visitors as well as their individual requests to withdraw from the Scheme at this time.
- 5.2.20. Dyfed-Powys OPCC are currently part of the National Independent Custody Observers Pilot, which involves dip-sampling records of the

most vulnerable in custody, including children and individuals with mental health concerns. This has been undertaken alongside the existing physical visiting arrangements since September 2019. Being able to review records has proven to enhance the PCC's scrutiny of the care of the most vulnerable detainees. It was therefore deemed that remote record reviewing was an appropriate and proportionate way of maintaining the PCC's statutory oversight duty throughout the pandemic. It is currently being undertaken by members of the OPCC staff on a fortnightly basis, with reports being promptly provided to the Head of Custody and the OPCC Executive Team for consideration and action where necessary. Particular points of focus include the provision of Appropriate Adults<sup>8</sup>, solicitors and secure accommodation for young people. The volume of detainees in custody is being monitored closely and communication with Custody leadership is regular to ensure the approach remains proportionate to the current risks.

- 5.2.21. The PCC's wider scrutiny work will continue to be risk-based and focused on those areas of significant public interest / concern, seeking to protect those most vulnerable from crime and ensuring the delivery of appropriate support services to those who become victims of crime. Whilst formal scrutiny panel meetings have been temporarily suspended, the OPCC is working with Members to explore alternative arrangements.

### *5.3. Enhancing delivery*

Facilitating effective partnership working among agencies and groups working in community safety and criminal justice

- 5.3.1. Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, there is a reciprocal duty on partners to cooperate. PCCs also have the power to call the responsible authorities within the Dyfed-Powys area to come together to discuss issues affecting the whole police area and to make sure priorities are joined up. The PCC meets on a quarterly basis with the four Community Safety Managers and Partnership Chief Inspectors. The PCC has worked closely with the CSPs in recent years to identify opportunities where his funding could enhance their work to reduce crime and disorder. During 2019/20 he awarded a total of £52,997 across the Force area to support projects including youth diversion programmes to reduce antisocial behaviour, target hardening in areas hit by rural crime and outreach projects tackling substance misuse related crime in deprived areas.

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<sup>8</sup> A requirement of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Appropriate Adults safeguard the interests, rights, entitlements and welfare of children and vulnerable people who are suspected of a criminal offence.

- 5.3.2. The PCC also provides Youth Offending and Prevention managers and has provided approximately £180,000 per annum of funding towards their prevention work over the past 3 years.
- 5.3.3. The PCC facilitates effective partnership working in this area in support of the LRF's management of the local response to COVID-19, and Dyfed-Powys' recovery to normal life and business.
- 5.3.4. The Dyfed-Powys Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), which is chaired by the PCC is made up of those key partner agencies who work in the criminal justice system, including the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts, prisons, probation services and youth offending teams. The LCJB is chaired by the PCC. The Board's overarching vision is:

*"To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Dyfed Powys, including improving the experience for victims and witnesses and building confidence in the system as a whole."*

- 5.3.5. Maintaining public confidence in the efficiency of the criminal justice system is a key consideration for the LCJB. The Criminal Justice System has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, at their virtual meeting on 30th April Members considered their collective business continuity arrangements and any actions which were required to address emerging risks. The Dyfed-Powys LCJB reports to the All-Wales Criminal Justice Board on a regular basis, the most recent of which was submitted on 27th April explained the detailed alternative arrangements which had been established by each partner to keep the criminal justice service operating within the current Government guidance on social distancing.
- 5.3.6. PCC representatives have been meeting weekly with the Home Office and raising issues such as the challenge of keeping victims and witnesses engaged as court times continue to be extended. PCCs have called for an impact assessment of what that means to victims and witnesses nationally.

#### *5.4. Community safety and crime reduction*

Commissioning services, particularly for victims of crime, and providing grants for policing and crime reduction purposes

- 5.4.1. The PCC commissions services across the Dyfed-Powys area using his policing and crime budget. The PCC's role includes responsibility for commissioning local victims' services<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, 2015; and the EU Victims' Directive (2012/29/EU).



- 5.4.2. The OPCC is working hard to ensure that PCC commissioned services continue to operate and support vulnerable people when they need them. Specific services commissioned by the PCC include:
- Substance Misuse Services (DDAS and Kaleidoscope)
  - Offender Diversion Scheme (Pobl)
  - Sexual Assault Referral Centres (New Pathways)
  - Victim and Witness Support (Goleudy, DPP)
  - Restorative Justice (KSS CRC)
  - Missing Young People (Llamau)
  - Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (Hafan Cymru and Pobl)
  - National Road Traffic Service (Brake)
- 5.4.3. Shortly after the declaration of the threat to public health from COVID-19, all providers of PCC commissioned services were asked to provide their Business Continuity Plans for consideration by the OPCC's Commissioning Advisory Board on 20th May. Regular discussions with service providers and partners are taking place to stay abreast of the situation and its impact on services. Providers are reporting weekly to the OPCC to monitor referral levels, capacity and risks.
- 5.4.4. All bar one of the services in DPP are currently able to operate remotely via phone and email or by limiting face-to-face support to the highest risk cases. Due to its nature the restorative justice service is currently suspended, however contact is being maintained with current cases that are serious and complex. Services have been informed that they will not be in breach of their Ministry of Justice (MoJ) conditions if they are unable to provide face-to-face support. Weekly returns to the MoJ (as funding providers) are submitted from the OPCC to ensure they are kept updated of the status of services in Dyfed-Powys.
- 5.4.5. The policing response to Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) has remained business as usual. If required, additional resources will be considered from other policing business areas to cope with any increase in demand. A Mid and West Wales Group oversees the multi-agency response to VAWDASV, who express concern that incidents are increasing behind closed doors, but reporting is down due to the restrictions isolation creates. For example, children not disclosing in school, victims not speaking to other family members, friends or colleagues or prevented from accessing by perpetrators. At the commencement of the lockdown, reported DA incidents to Police reduced by up to 40%, however, the reports have gradually increased and returned to expected levels in line with the average trend. Service providers are also not experiencing the anticipated increases in referrals and in fact have seen a decrease in

- contact, which is raising significant concerns with service providers of sexual violence in particular.
- 5.4.6. The Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Group's general consensus is that demand will increase as restrictions start to ease as victims will have the confidence to report incidents that they experienced during the lockdown period. This could lead to pressure on resourcing of increased demand, however, any potential increase is difficult to determine. The specialist providers within the Regional VAWDASV group are concerned that there may be a gap in funding to meet the demand. Service user feedback has been extremely positive regarding the changed landscape of service support and clients are actually talking more freely and disclosing more via virtual methods than previously via face-to-face. Clients appear to welcome the flexibility that current climate allows and in many cases have indicated they would prefer this method to continue once lockdown ceases. Service providers may therefore be remodelling some of their support post lockdown restrictions easing. Providers are concerned over the additional funding required during and post-lockdown to meet demands and remodelling requirements. They have asked the PCC to raise these concerns directly with Welsh Government and the MoJ.
- 5.4.7. In addition to commissioned services, the PCC has provided a variety of community grants to groups that aim to help prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Most the funding recipients are working very creatively and innovatively to find ways for support and interventions to continue via virtual contact methods wherever possible. However, some of the projects have inevitably had to be suspended to comply with social distancing restrictions. The PCC has ensured that no organisation is financially impacted by this and has reassured recipients that funding is able to be carried forward alongside contingency plans for future delivery either via alternative means or when lockdown restrictions allow.

### *5.5. Local link*

Ensuring residents served by Dyfed-Powys Police have the information they need to understand how their service is performing

- 5.5.1. All face-to-face engagement by the PCC and his office has been suspended as a result of the pandemic. The office has however continued to be very active in supporting the police's response and reassuring the public.
- 5.5.2. The OPCC has included useful information on its website based on communication and information available on partner websites such as the NHS and gov.uk, as well as responding to direct requests from the public for advice and guidance.

- 5.5.3. In addition to conducting press interviews over Skype, the PCC has also made a number of pleas to the public, including:
- a press release drawing attention to the latest Government information on mental health and wellbeing during the outbreak;
  - a podcast urging people to stay home to protect the NHS; and
  - a press statement calling for there to be greater sanctions for those breaching the restrictions.
- 5.5.4. The PCC has continually lobbied Ministers over recent weeks for access to testing for police officers and staff, including writing to the Welsh Government Deputy First Minister and all Dyfed-Powys Elected Members of UK and Welsh Parliaments at the end of March.
- 5.5.5. In addition to a written briefing highlighting DPP's preparedness, the PCC and CC hosted a Skype briefing for all local Assembly Members and Members of Parliament. During this, many Members raised concerns expressed to them by constituents regarding the issue of community tensions surrounding second homes, and what constituted essential travel. This highlighted that the general public's understanding was variable and gave the CC and PCC an opportunity to provide clear guidance on how DPP officers were enforcing the legislation.
- 5.5.6. In a response to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry into the Home Office's preparedness for the pandemic (see appendix B), the PCC expressed regret that the central Government's guidance has been slow and confusing, often at odds with advice and decisions being made by devolved administrations. This conflicting messaging has put tourist hotspots in the Dyfed-Powys area on alert, raising community tensions and putting an unnecessary strain on policing.
- 5.5.7. Although the usual face-to-face engagement activities have been cancelled, the OPCC has utilised technology to provide residents with the opportunity to engage directly with the PCC. To date, this has included:
- Policing Accountability Board held over Skype, involving the Commissioner's Youth Ambassadors on 11th May
  - Pembrokeshire virtual public meeting on 13th May
  - Online survey about public engagement preferences, closing 22nd May
  - Developing an online engagement forum in partnership with Hywel Dda University Health Board and others.
- 5.5.8. Engagement with the PCC's Youth Engagement Forum has continued, with a Zoom meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April to discuss their feedback on a recent youth survey conducted by Hafan Cymru. The Forum also supported the

#ImStayingIn campaign, launched with partners across all four local authorities.

- 5.5.9. Prior to the pandemic, the OPCC was exploring online methods to engage with victims of crime, which involved a trial within restorative justice week. The current public consultation survey seeks to gather a cohort of victims who would be interested in participating in future engagement activity around their experiences of the criminal justice system.
- 5.5.10. The latest release of the PCC's bi-monthly newsletter focuses on providing the public with important information about COVID-19, including how it has impacted on the OPCC's work, a message from the CC and contact details for a range of local and national support services available to the public during this time.

## 6. Summary of planned activity for 2020/21

- 6.1. As set out in his 2017-21 Police and Crime Plan, the PCC's priorities will continue to be:
- Keeping our communities safe
  - Safeguarding the vulnerable
  - Protecting our communities from serious threats
  - Connecting with communities
- 6.2. However, the emergency situation created by COVID-19 means that business cannot be as usual. Therefore, in order to respond to the emergency and fulfil his statutory responsibilities, the PCC's focus will be on:
- Ensuring the Chief Constable has sufficient resources to respond to and recover from the emergency (**securing resources**)
  - Ensuring, on behalf of the public, that the police respond in ways that are necessary, sufficient, proportionate and ethical (**holding to account**)
  - Facilitating effective partnership working among agencies and groups working in community safety and criminal justice (**enhancing delivery**)
  - Commissioning services, particularly for victims of crime, and providing grants for policing and crime reduction purposes (**community safety and crime reduction**)
  - Ensuring residents served by Dyfed-Powys Police have the information they need to understand how their service is performing (**local link**)

The following diagram depicts the OPCC's focus for the coming year:



## Appendix A – New Police Powers

Officers will continue to police by consent, explaining the circumstances for the intervention and encouraging individuals to comply with the Government request. If considered necessary, officers may take enforcement action if people are not listening and putting others at risk. They should broadly follow the following four steps:

- **Engage** – officers will initially encourage voluntary compliance
- **Explain** – officers will stress the risks to public health and to the NHS. Educate people about the risks and the wider social factors.
- **Encourage** – officers will seek compliance and emphasise the benefits to the NHS by staying at home, how this can save lives and reduce risk for more vulnerable people in society.
- **Enforce** – if the public do not comply the police may:
  - instruct them to go home, leave an area or disperse
  - ensure parents are taking necessary steps to stop their children breaking these rules
  - issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of £60, which will be lowered to £30 if paid within 14 days
  - issue a FPN of £120 for second time offenders, doubling on each further repeat offence
  - arrest, where deemed proportionate and necessary, individuals who continue to refuse to comply and are therefore acting unlawfully.

Officers will need to be alert to potential child safeguarding, homelessness, mental health or domestic abuse issues which may provide a viable reason as to why an individual is outdoors. For instance, they may be unable to return home due to safety concerns. In these situations, the police will need to identify appropriate support and utilise multi-agency resources to sufficiently safeguard.

## Appendix B – PCC and CC’s joint response to the Home Affairs Committee Inquiry into Home Office preparedness for COVID-19

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP  
Chair, Home Affairs Committee  
via online submission

21 April 2020

Dear Yvette Cooper

### **Call for evidence: Home Office preparedness for COVID-19**

#### **Joint response from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Dyfed-Powys and the Chief Constable (CC) of Dyfed-Powys Police**

##### ***Background***

The area served by Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) is geographically the largest police force area in England and Wales, covering 52% of the landmass of Wales. According to the last Census data (2011), the resident population of the four counties served by DPP was 515,114. Almost half of these are aged 45 and over and 22% are over 65. The area is predominately rural, with a few localised areas of dense urban population. There is a vibrant tourist industry, with summer drawing large numbers of tourists to the area.

This response, prepared jointly as the PCC and CC are working closely together in their organisations’ response to COVID-19, has been submitted to provide the Committee with a view from our unique perspective – as a non-devolved service operating within a devolved landscape, and with the challenge of policing a popular destination for those flouting the movement restrictions in search of picturesque seclusion.

##### ***1. How police and fire and rescue service business continuity plans are being designed to best safeguard the public and emergency service workers.***

The Force level and individual business area BC plans are used to assist in the recovery of services provided by DPP and the Commissioner’s office in the event of a major disruption to policing services.

The plans set out the roles, responsibilities and actions to be taken to deliver and maintain the service following a major disruption to a minimum acceptable level until there is a return to normal. The Policing Commanders / Business Area leads are responsible for managing any disruption to their area of business, as well as keeping plans updated. They are supported by their nominated BC contacts and Senior Leadership Teams, plus the relevant shared service teams required.

The Force Risk and Business Continuity Management Advisor co-ordinates the Force BC capability and reinforces the importance of awareness training for staff, to ensure they all know what to do and who will be involved. Exercises are carried out periodically, and at least annually when the plan is reviewed, to ensure key staff who would be involved when a plan is invoked have confidence that the plan will work.

In a major or critical incident, or when significant disruption has been identified, the on-duty Gold Commander has the responsibility to activate the BC plan (Force or local level), based upon the nature of the disruption. During the Coronavirus outbreak, DPP has activated its BC plans at a strategic level, as well as in some business areas, such as business support functions and the Force Communication Centre. These areas have needed to activate due to loss of office space via social distancing or repurposing, and IT equipment availability for those needing to isolate. Operational policing continues to function as usual at the current time as their staffing levels remain adequate to deal with the incoming demand for deployment.

The critical service deliverables identified by the Business Impact Analysis are summarised as: being able to answer emergency calls for service; dispatch resources to deal with the situation; and having effective technical and specialist support for such deployment.

In order to introduce social distancing and increase the resilience of the call handling and dispatch capability, the Force Communication Centre has been divided across 3 separate locations in Police Headquarters. Call handling training has been expedited and any current personnel in the organisation with call handling experience have been redeployed into the Communication Centre. Where possible, support staff are working from home or within offices with strict social distancing. Some staff have been redeployed to alternative roles or cancelled annual leave to facilitate this and ensure the most critical functions are appropriately covered.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has and continues to be provided to frontline personnel who are unable to undertake social distancing or are at risk of coming into contact with individuals with the virus. Processes have also been put in place in custody suites to ensure symptomatic detainees are appropriately cared for and the risk of spreading the virus is minimised. These include enhanced and more frequent cleaning, contingency locations and additional risk assessments prior to admitting a detainee into the suite. In order to reduce the number of people entering custody, face-to-face Independent Custody Visiting has been suspended (replaced by remote record reviewing undertaken by the OPCC) and solicitors are using tele-conferencing. When Appropriate Adults are required to attend, they are provided with PPE.



**2. What trade-offs will have to be made by police if a significant number of officers are unable to work at any given time, and the potential impact of those decisions.**

In line with the Force mission statement under the BC Plan, should officers numbers be adversely be affected by the pandemic crisis, the following key operational functions would be maintained:

- providing effective communications with the public;
- answering all 999 calls and providing an appropriate response to immediate and priority incidents; and
- the ability to deal with:
  - major, critical and emergency incidents, including firearms incidents, serious crime or public order;
  - protecting vulnerable people; and
  - fatal and serious road traffic collisions; and
  - matters which impact upon community cohesion or the credibility and reputation of the Force.

This would be achieved through the following:

- support and governance to deal with operational challenges to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff;
- the provision of custody facilities and associated criminal justice functions;
- effective command and control of incidents;
- maintaining a cadre of officers with specialist knowledge e.g. Firearms and Critical Incident Commanders. An emergency rota, which could be introduced within 48 hours, with officers working 12 hour shifts on a four-on four-off pattern, would provide resilience in both officer numbers and specialist capability.
- time off restrictions including cancelling rest days and annual leave;
- redeploying staff to support critical roles;
- consideration of prioritising key functions. This could include limiting investigations of low-level crimes;
- short-term redeployment of identified HQ police officers to support response officers; and
- utilisation of volunteers within the community, including members of the special constabulary.

Where the level of service is reduced, the public's expectations would be managed through:

- effective communication through a corporate media strategy;
- providing advice to victims of crime at the point of contact; and
- continually reviewing and monitoring the progress against the mission objectives.

**3. *How the Home Office and its major contractors are working together to ensure the safe and effective operation of contracted services is maintained, particularly where these services affect vulnerable people.***

The majority of services for victims in Dyfed-Powys are locally commissioned. The PCC's contact with Home Office / Ministry of Justice (MoJ) nationally contracted services has been minimal and generally provided through updates from the Association of PCCs (APCC) or MoJ regional contacts. The PCC's office has not received any feedback from Goleudy, our main service provider, with regard to any difficulty in referring victims onto Homicide or other services for example. The local arrangement between Goleudy and the national Witness Service is still working well. We continue to receive good support from Brake, who are also planning for the recovery phase in terms of bereavement support to those who have experienced grief as a result of COVID-19.

**5. *How Police forces will support each other if mobilisation tactics, or other forms of mutual support, are compromised by the imperative to limit the possible spread of the virus.***

As part of the southern Wales region, Dyfed-Powys, South Wales and Gwent Police are jointly part of the Regional Mobilisation Plan dealing with mutual aid policing matters. All report into the Regional Information Coordination Centre (RICC) led by South Wales Police. The RICC in turn reports into and receives requests from the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC). NPoCC coordinate national policing mutual aid requests, whilst the RICC coordinates regional policing mutual aid requests and responds to NPoCC regarding nationally based events.

There is a dedicated resourcing system, Mercury, which all forces feed into giving the RICC and NPoCC immediate access to view all forces' capacity of specialist resources.

Mobilisation is dealt with by capacity, the initial mobilisation response is dealt with by the host force through exhausting all options including cancelling of rest days, potentially cancelling annual leave and adoption of 12 hour shifts. If, following the implementation of these measures further assistance is required, the request is escalated to the RICC and they in turn assess whether the mobilisation request can be met within the region. If not then the request for assistance is further escalated to NPoCC for a national UK-wide (all areas from UK and PSNI) response.

**6. *The preparedness of forces to support Local Resilience Forums during a possible civil contingencies emergency.***

DPP are actively involved and engaged with the Dyfed-Powys Local Resilience Forum (DPLRF). Three LRF coordinators, two civilian and one paramedic,

seconded, are based at the Strategic Coordination Centre (SCC) in Police headquarters, working alongside Police civil contingency / operational planners and security coordinators. DPP has developed very good working relationships with DPLRF category 1 partners due to active engagement and participation over the last couple of years. A functional call out system has been developed by DPP, primarily to facilitate calling out of relevant LRF partners in the event of a major incident requiring the formation of a tactical coordinating or strategic coordinating group. This has now been tested and used operationally on numerous occasions, particularly in the current pandemic situation, to very good effect. DPP officers / planners sit on numerous working groups and exercises during the year developing their joint LRF working skills and making those contacts required to enable a strong relationship.

***7. The effectiveness of Home Office communications to its partners, responders and the wider public about its preparations.***

The Police and Crime Commissioner's Office (OPCC) is responsible for being the connection between residents and the police force, as well as dealing with complaints against the Chief Constable. During the pandemic, the OPCC has been monitoring all incoming correspondence relating to COVID-19. As at 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the OPCC had received 66 such types of contact, the majority being to report a breach of the Government restrictions (31) or for advice (19), as shown in the table below.

	Advice	Reporting Breach	Total
Travel	10	8	<b>18</b>
Social Distancing		10	<b>10</b>
Second Homes / Holiday Rentals	1	7	<b>8</b>
Business	2	6	<b>8</b>
Animals	2		<b>2</b>
Property	2		<b>2</b>
Key Workers	1		<b>1</b>
Not Specified	1		<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>50</b>

In addition, whilst the volume of crime and incident reports has reduced through the pandemic, the calls received via the 101 non-emergency number has remained consistent. Calls which are not logged as incidents or crimes are likely

to be requesting advice or are for other agencies, suggesting that the pandemic has led to the public requiring more advice and guidance. Dyfed-Powys Police activated elements of Single Online Home ahead of schedule in order to reduce the demand on a reduced Call-Handling workforce. This has been relatively successful in shifting the demand, however the Force now receive an average of approximately 100 emails each day. Anecdotal evidence suggests much of the increase is due to COVID-19 queries.

The OPCC has included useful information on its [website](#) based on communication / information available on partner websites such as the NHS and gov.uk.

The PCC has also made a number of pleas to the public, including:

- a press release drawing attention to the latest Government information on mental health and wellbeing during the outbreak;
- a podcast urging people to stay home to protect the NHS;
- a press statement calling for there to be greater sanctions for those breaching the restrictions;

The Commissioner has continually lobbied Ministers for access to testing for police officers and staff, including writing to the Welsh Government Deputy First Minister and all Dyfed-Powys Elected Members of UK and Welsh Parliaments at the end of March.

In addition to a written briefing highlighting DPP's preparedness, the PCC and CC hosted a Skype briefing for all local Assembly Members and Members of Parliament. During this, many Members raised concerns expressed to them by constituents regarding the issue of community tensions surrounding second homes, and what constituted essential travel. This highlighted that the general public's understanding was variable, however the CC and PCC were able to provide clear guidance on how DPP officers were enforcing the legislation. It is regrettable that the central Government's guidance has been slow and confusing, often at odds with advice and decisions being made by devolved administrations. An example of this has occurred just within the last few days, with the "reasonable excuses" guidance released via the National Police Chief's Council and College of Policing which covered England only and directly contradicted the Welsh Government message that travelling to exercise is not necessary. This conflicting messaging puts tourist hotspots like so many communities in the Dyfed-Powys area on alert, raises community tensions and puts an unnecessary strain on policing.

**8. *The prevalence of domestic abuse and child abuse these issues since the Government issued 'stay at home' guidance on 23 March.***

**9. *Measures or proposals to help support victims of domestic abuse and child abuse at this time.***

**10. *Measures or proposals to reduce or avert domestic abuse and child abuse at this time.***

The Force has continued the 'business as usual' approach in its response to domestic abuse (DA). The Force and OPCC undertake weekly monitoring of crime trends and reduction in DA cases, which shows:

- Calls to 999/101 presenting as domestic-related have remained stable over the last four months, from a high of 737 in Dec-19 and a low of 670 in February 2020. The Mar-20 figure stands at 709, showing no significant reduction.
- Over the last 12 months, the Force has on average recorded 180 domestic incidents per week. At the start of the "lockdown", there were:
  - 132 incidents for week ending 29/03/2020 (a decrease of 38% from the average); and
  - 152 incidents last week ending 05/04/2020 (a decrease of 16%).

As a result of concern around the reduction, communication has been released into communities and shared with the regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) group, Regional Safeguarding Board, and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) contacts, including a podcast to signpost victims to support agencies and a detailed guidance document offering reassurance and a plethora of contact details, including the "Silent Solution (999-55)" and Live Fear Free Helpline and text number. The Chief Constable has also conducted a number of media interviews and social media videos promoting the Silent Solution and encouraging domestic abuse reporting. Specialist Domestic Abuse Officers (DAOs) are having regular liaison with support agencies and the Force is participating in a weekly DA Forum chaired by Rachel Williams, DA Survivor. DAOs also link with local DA services to identify if the current situation is impacting on their ability to provide services and remind them to refer any cases to police as they normally would.

Daily discussions continue to be held with key agencies, with attendance consistently high. The Regional VAWDASV multi-agency meetings, chaired by a DCI, are now being held on a monthly basis to provide increased oversight of domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass (to safeguard and support those children and young people who have witnessed and/or been present at the time of a domestic abuse incident) continues during COVID-19 with maintained links with education representatives.

A joint approach between the four Welsh Forces has been made to the Welsh Government for a provision to house Domestic Abuse perpetrators who are bailed or served with Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as looking to improve provision of accommodation for victims or suspects displaying COVID-19 symptoms.

The Force has also continued the 'business as usual' approach in its response to safeguarding children and adults at risk through increased dialogue with

partners. A weekly skype meeting of the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board, chaired by a D/Supt, is being held with child and adult social services senior leaders within the four Local Authorities, Health Boards, Education, Probation and Youth Justice. Meetings provide opportunities to discuss collaborative working practices and the multi-agency response to safeguarding during COVID-19. This has included:

- Discussions around challenges and sharing of best practice that has influenced a regional approach to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable people.
- Continued engagement with vulnerable persons within the community, albeit through alternative measures i.e. utilising digital software / implementing social distancing. Existing thresholds remain in place with additional risk assessments being conducted and PPE consideration.
- Formation of joint working groups to develop operational guidance which has been agreed and disseminated in respect of initial child protection conferences, joint investigations and the response to Looked After Children in light of Government restrictions.
- Multi-agency child exploitation meetings to review vulnerable children and identification of emerging trends/hotspots.
- DPP supporting the Stop it Now campaign against Child Sexual Abuse.
- Dialogue with the Older People's Commissioner's office to contribute to discussion to continue to safeguard older people throughout Wales. The Force has issued communication to the public around the increased risks to the elderly in particular relating to online fraud.
- The Force participating in a weekly Skype meeting of the Wales Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) project group so as to monitor the multi-agency response to Rape and Sexual offences.

#### ***11. Preparedness of responders and service providers to address the needs of victims during the pandemic.***

DPP began preparations in advance of the lockdown, establishing its Gold group early to instigate necessary changes to maintain services. Chief Officers began to socially distance from each other early in order to safeguard the command structure and minimise the likelihood of all three being incapacitated at the same time. As highlighted under question 1, Business Continuity Plans have been activated where required, however operational policing continues to function as usual and has not to this date encountered any significant staffing shortages.

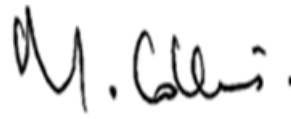
The OPCC has been in regular contact with all its service providers since prior to the lockdown. They have provided contingency plans and have responded extremely positively and flexibly to the changing needs of victims and service delivery. All providers are offering services via telephone and other virtual methods, with clients assessed individually on a risk and vulnerability basis so that in cases where it is absolutely necessary, face to face service can still be delivered. All services have plans in place should staff numbers decrease and

make existing provision levels challenging. The OPCC has also been in regular contact with the MoJ and APCC and have provided updates on service provision, along with highlighting risks where appropriate and responding to requests regarding funding and other requirements. So far none of our services are reporting red status in their service delivery or planning. Overall, demand for services has either remained stable or decreased, however this may change when we hit the peak of the impact or more so when current restrictions begin to be lifted.

Yours sincerely



**Dafydd Llywelyn**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner**



**Mark Collins QPM**  
**Chief Constable**