



National Policing Board

Minutes 8 March 2023

Title of meeting	National Policing Board
Date	08 March 2023
Time	10:00 – 11:30
Venue	2 Marsham Street and virtual via video conference
Chair	The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP: Home Secretary

Attendees

- The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP: Home Secretary (Chair)
- The Rt Hon Chris Philp MP: Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire
- Martin Hewitt QPM: Assistant Commissioner and Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- Sir Mark Rowley QPM: Commissioner, Metropolitan Police
- Marc Jones: Chair, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)
- Andy Marsh QPM: Chief Executive Officer, College of Policing
- Andy Cooke QPM DL: HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary & HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
- Graeme Biggar: Director General, National Crime Agency (NCA)
- Tom Whiting: Interim Director General, Independent Office for Police Conduct
- Sir Matthew Rycroft KCMG CBE: Permanent Secretary
- Rachel Watson: Policing Director, Public Safety Group

Special invitees

- Richard Pengelly CB: Permanent Secretary of the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland
- John Somers: Deputy Director for the Police Division within the Scottish Government
- Simon Byrne QPM: Chief Constable, Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Dr Richard Lewis: Chief Constable, Dyfed-Powys Police
- Andy Freeburn: Assistant Chief Constable, Police Scotland
- Martyn Evans: Chair, Scottish Police Authority
- Paul Fotheringham: Chief Superintendent, President of the Police Superintendents' Association
- Steve Hartshorn: National Chair, Police Federation of England and Wales
- Pete O'Doherty: Assistant Commissioner, City of London Police
- Mark Shelford: Police and Crime Commissioner, Avon and Somerset
- Duncan Tessier: Economic Crime Director, HSG
- Carla Giudice: Deputy Director, Organised Immigration Crime Unit

Welcome, introduction and crime and policing priorities

1. **THE RT HON SUELLA BRAVERMAN KC MP: HOME SECRETARY** opened by thanking everyone for attending this cross-union meeting of the National Policing Board (NPB), which provided an opportunity to discuss some of the key policing challenges spanning our borders. She took the opportunity to thank **MARTIN HEWITT QPM: CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL POLICE CHIEFS' COUNCIL** who would be stepping down from his role, for his contributions to policing and to the Board since its inception.
2. The **HOME SECRETARY** expressed how deeply saddened she was to hear about the shooting of Detective Chief Inspector John Caldwell and how her thoughts and sympathies were with him and his family. This was another reminder of the risk the police are exposed to.
3. The **HOME SECRETARY** thanked police forces for stepping in to support HM Prison Service to respond to pressures. She acknowledged the work of DCC Nev Kemp at the NPCC for coordinating Operation Safeguard, which had been activated and was now live across all regions in England and Wales.
4. The **HOME SECRETARY** reminded colleagues that it was International Women's Day, which provided an opportunity to celebrate women's achievements and raise awareness about discrimination in policing. She said she wanted policing to be reflective of modern Britain and reflective of talent from ethnic minority groups. There are now more women (51,107) and people from ethnic minority backgrounds (11,691) serving as police officers than ever before¹ but forces should not be complacent.
5. The **RT HON CHRIS PHILP MP: MINISTER FOR CRIME, POLICING AND FIRE** updated that the Police Uplift Programme was on track to recruit 20,000 additional officers nationally. By the end of the programme there would be a record number of police officers in England and Wales. The funding settlement for next year would incentivise maintaining police officer numbers with over recruiting maintained into the next financial year. He set out that he is looking at a change in the law (Section 25 Police Act 1996) to allow more recharging by police forces after football games to recoup costs and reviewing firearms licensing fees to enable full cost recovery. A coroner's report was due imminently following the inquests into the Plymouth shooting in 2021, which would impact the way we license firearms and lead to the introduction of improved training for police firearms licensing teams. Lastly, he updated that he is working closely with Professor Paul Taylor, National Policing Chief Scientific Adviser and others to identify and embed emerging technology.

¹ [Police officer uplift, England and Wales, quarterly update to 31 December 2022](#)

Actions from the previous meeting

6. **RACHEL WATSON: POLICING DIRECTOR, PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP** updated on actions from the previous meeting, and confirmed they were being delivered by the Department and members. In relation to the NPCC monitoring implementation of the commitment to attend every home burglary, **THE HOME SECRETARY** requested that the information obtained was made public.
7. **THE MINISTER FOR CRIME, POLICING AND FIRE** updated that he had an agreement with the Department for Health and Social Care to follow the Humberside model where the focus is on ensuring health calls for service are responded to by those with the right skills and expertise to provide the right care by the right agency. Further work continues by the NPCC, College and health partners to deliver national guidance on how to work to implement the Right Care, Right Person model. He referred to ongoing discussions with the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and Attorney General about charging, redaction and disclosure requirements.
8. **THE HOME SECRETARY** concluded by reiterating that policing leaders had a key role to play in ensuring delivery of the public's priorities and treating victims with the respect they deserved. This could be achieved if they stuck to common sense policing and got the basics right. She wanted to work closely with, and receive feedback from, the policing sector on the challenges they faced, assuring that she was there to empower them to be the best and most effective police service in the world.

Trust and Confidence in Policing

9. **THE HOME SECRETARY** opened the item saying she backs the police, however confidence has been shaken following recent high-profile cases. Corrupt police officers need to be rooted out, and the wrong people must be stopped from joining the police in the first place. In the face of tough reports and headlines, she was grateful to policing leaders for not being defensive, instead being honest when things were not working and leaning into solutions rather than backing off from problems. Whilst she was encouraged by actions such as those being taken by the Metropolitan Police in response to broader issues of standards and vetting, there was still some way to go. She highlighted that this was not a reflection on the vast majority of brave and courageous police officers. However, there are a number who fall short and taint the policing family.
10. The **HOME SECRETARY** set out three key issues. First, that it is a basic requisite to get vetting, HR and discipline right and it was in the policing sector's interest to work with the College of Policing and HMICFRS to address this.
11. The second issue, the **HOME SECRETARY** said is the perception the police are getting things wrong by using resources on politically correct narratives that do not amount to common sense policing and pandering to identity politics, social media and posing for

photos. She reflected that whilst it was important to engage with all communities, there was a fine line to be balanced to avoid the public feeling that policing priorities are wrong or misjudged.

12. The third issue surrounds violence against women and girls. **THE HOME SECRETARY** set out that she hoped Operation Soteria and the planned rollout of the National Operating Model would bring a culture change and support for victims by shortening investigation times and change the balance so that victims do not feel they are on trial. Engagement with the CPS on redaction was essential to streamlining the process. She thanked the policing sector for doing well with the rape review targets but still felt referral from the police to the CPS was low and was keen to hear what more could be done.
13. **THE MINISTER FOR POLICING, CRIME AND FIRE** explained he had chaired a vetting roundtable which had a workstream to address conduct issues. Good progress was being made implementing the HMICFRS recommendations across forces but there was more work to be done. A data wash of 326,000 police officer records against the Police National Computer (PNC) was underway taking until September to complete. The Home Office review into police dismissal rules commenced in January and is expected to take approximately four months to conclude. Its aim is to ensure that the system is effective at removing officers not fit to serve. He also updated that the Vetting Code of Practice had been published for consultation by the College of Policing.
14. **ANDY MARSH QPM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, COLLEGE OF POLICING** highlighted that the Code of Practice now states that if a police officer failed vetting, they would have to leave the service. There is a need to issue standards on vetting, deliver training and certify units to give assurance that standards are being met, otherwise there is a risk standards could slip. He said there would be tighter regulations on recruitment and that proposed discussion on leadership at the NPB in June would help to underpin cultural change. The consultation on the Code of Ethics will cover the duty of candour and helpful principles. He said work had been done to understand why staff found it difficult to call out bad behaviour. Whilst further analysis of the findings was underway, responses revealed that solidarity and fear of repercussions was an impediment to reporting. **SIR MARK ROWLEY QPM: COMMISSIONER, METROPOLITAN POLICE** added that the right culture needed to be engrained from day one through leadership and management training.
15. **SIR MARK ROWLEY QPM: COMMISSIONER, METROPOLITAN POLICE** expressed his concern that no police officer in the country had been dismissed for failing vetting as there was nothing explicitly stated in the regulations or any guidance to do so. Having identified 30 people, for which the dismissal process had been started the Metropolitan police are breaking new ground, which could be tested in the High Court. He highlighted that every police force had someone on stringent conditions which was concerning. In response, the **MINISTER FOR POLICING, CRIME AND FIRE** said that the regulations for dismissal were being looked at as part of the dismissal review.

16. **SIR MARK ROWLEY** raised an issue around police charging standards and the bureaucracy in the system that needed change. **DR RICHARD LEWIS: CHIEF CONSTABLE, DYFED-POWYS POLICE** agreed, raising the issue of the police being trusted to make the right charging decisions. The meeting noted upcoming discussions between the **MINISTER FOR POLICING CRIME AND FIRE** and the DPP.
17. **MARTIN HEWITT** said that all chiefs and policing leaders were working together on vetting and misconduct. Referring to cases such as the disappearance of Nicola Bulley, he reflected that trust and confidence in policing can also be affected by unhelpful comments and language used by some within the policing community, the media and politicians. This gives the impression that the police are not doing what they should. **PAUL FOTHERINGHAM: CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT, PRESIDENT OF THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION** agreed, noting that the social media attacks on the senior investigating officer were appalling. **STEVE HARTSHORN** acknowledged the challenges that policing faces but felt that every Chief Constable should speak out more confidently about police officers, defend policing and promote the actions of colleagues across the country where there is amazing work being done. The **HOME SECRETARY** agreed that the commentary regarding the senior officer in charge was inappropriate, but reflected that there should be lessons learned on how to manage police communications.
18. **ANDY FREEBURN: ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE, POLICE SCOTLAND** stated that there were similar issues with public trust and confidence in policing in Scotland. In response they have set five strategic outcomes (that include VAWG, HR and ethical standards) which they continue to monitor through Martyn Evans, Chair, Scottish Police Authority. He said that legitimacy will be built by doing the job well and reported that confidence and satisfaction rates are generally over 80%. **SIMON BYRNE: CHIEF CONSTABLE, POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND** said that concerning confidence, they had a positive vetting inspection, however there was a need for more evidence to see what works.
19. **ACTION: The Home Secretary has made clear how some recent police actions in the name of community cohesion are impacting on trust and confidence, and all members should consider the impact on local communities. In particular, NPCC to explore how staff network groups are operating in the context of recent work to review the Code of Ethics and social media guidelines and provide an update to the next meeting.**
20. **ACTION: All members to engage with the College of Policing's consultation on the updated Vetting Code of Practice and support continued implementation of the recommendations made by the inspectorate's vetting, misconduct and misogyny inspection.**
21. **ACTION: All members to consider the findings of the College of Policing Review into the Nicola Bulley case, including media engagement and managing interference/involvement from third parties.**

22. **ACTION:** All members to read DCC Maggie Blyth's upcoming performance report and strategic assessment on police action to tackle VAWG and consider what more can be done to improve the response to police perpetrated VAWG.
23. **ACTION:** The College of Policing to work closely with the Home Office and NPCC in improving their VAWG Training products, including exploring the option of a VAWG investigation Code of Practice and the provision of specialist RASSO training, including a new minimum level of training for officers.
24. **ACTION:** The College of Policing to prioritise their leadership plan and provide a substantive update on progress at the next National Policing Board.
25. **ACTION:** National policing bodies including NPCC, APCC and College of Policing to engage with forces to consider comms needs and the trigger points for national support to local comms teams.

Fraud

26. The **HOME SECRETARY** said that the Fraud Strategy would be launched shortly. Whilst crime was falling overall, **THE HOME SECRETARY** recognised that fraud, the largest crime type was costing the economy £4.7 billion a year and had a devastating impact on victims, affected our national economy and undermined national security through links with dangerous criminal networks.
27. **GRAEME BIGGAR: DIRECTOR GENERAL, NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY** observed that the communications agenda was shifting, with scam text messaging reducing substantially. The **HOME SECRETARY** didn't think this was widely known and requested that the data be made public. **GRAEME BIGGAR** also noted that more needed to be done to ensure policing treats fraud as a priority. He went on to say there was a role for the NCA to work with the City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police. Individual forces had more to do and a taskforce would be looking at that with the College of Policing. There had been good successes with the application of covert techniques working. He noted that the NCA had challenges with recruitment. **ANDY MARSH** reported that the College of Policing was working with the City of London Police and the NCA to review their recruitment programme, roll it out and update guidance and practice. **STEVE HARTSHORN** said given that a large proportion of crime is fraud he welcomed more training for colleagues.
28. **PETE O'DOHERTY: ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, CITY OF LONDON POLICE** reported that over 80% of investigations were now being completed within two years where previously investigations had taken seven to ten years to complete which had a massive impact on public confidence. He said there needed to be a proactive response to prevent fraud, enforce early on and that policing leaders needed to do more. He

welcomed the investment the City of London Police, NCA and Regional Organised Crime Units were getting from the Spending Review as it was vital to invest and retain good people in fraud and cybercrime so that the roles were attractive in comparison to the private sector.

29. **ANDY FREEBURN** said Scotland was no different from the rest of the UK, in that they had a large spike in fraud and it was underreported. There has been a move from acquisitive crime to cybercrime, however, the prosecution rate is poor. He welcomed the ongoing work to improve Action Fraud and indicated that the plan was for Police Scotland to join subject to final concerns being resolved.
30. **THE MINISTER FOR CRIME, POLICE AND FIRE** said the Online Safety Bill placed a legally binding duty on search engines and social media to actively take steps to prevent fraud. **GRAEME BIGGAR** assured that the NCA were engaging with OFCOM on fraud and CSEA and reflected on the challenge of engagement with individual technology companies. **THE MINISTER FOR CRIME, POLICING AND FIRE** offered to assist where necessary.
31. **MARC JONES: CHAIR, ASSOCIATION OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS** said a fraud prevention plan was needed and communities needed to be educated on fraud prevention to increase resilience. He highlighted that in Lincolnshire, there were 700 no cold call zones run by trading standards.
32. **SIR MARK ROWLEY** expressed his support for the centralised protect message. Fraud has an emotional impact and he felt that where victims commit suicide, a charge of manslaughter should be brought. He also suggested slowing down suspicious payments when it was thought someone had been scammed. The **HOME SECRETARY**, in response said a risk-based approach is important and we are looking at measures to slow down suspicious payments for longer on the Faster Payments System through the forthcoming Fraud Strategy.
33. **ACTION: The NPCC to engage with City of London Police and NCA on how police forces can better exploit their capabilities and expertise.**
34. **ACTION: The Home Office, City of London Police, NCA and College of Policing to continue their collaboration on improving police skills.**
35. **ACTION: The City of London Police to continue engaging with Police Scotland on joining Action Fraud.**
36. **ACTION: The Home Office to arrange working level discussion with the Devolved Governments, Police Scotland and PSNI on aggregating data across the UK.**
37. **ACTION: The Home Office to arrange working level discussions with Devolved Governments on global fraud partnership.**

38. ACTION: NCA to report to the Home Office on its work with Ofcom on codes of practice to implement the Online Safety Bill and to indicate if any ministerial support needed.

Organised Immigration Crime (OIC) threats

39. The **HOME SECRETARY** said that OIC was multifaceted and affected all four countries.

40. GRAEME BIGGAR outlined the NCA's role as threat leaders for OIC and explained that their focus was primarily overseas and in transit countries. He felt there was a key role for territorial policing and highlighted the success of disruption activity in Sussex in the last six months. He outlined the success of Operation Punjum but noted that this only had a short-term effect on the supply of small boats and only disrupted 10% of the business model. The National Strategic Tasking and Co-ordination Group would facilitate further discussion on what more policing and the wider law enforcement system could do tackle OIC as this is an issue across the UK. Both **GRAEME BIGGAR AND MARTIN HEWITT**, observed that police forces could do more on gathering intelligence and disrupting groups within their force areas.

41. SIR MARK ROWLEY updated on Metropolitan Police operations with 160 police officers working on modern slavery/ human trafficking cases with a clear OIC link. This includes organised crime groups from Albania and Jamaica facilitating illegal entry for individuals to work in wider serious organised crime such as the drugs trade, not traditional illegal working occupations such as in restaurants. He reflected on some difficulties the Metropolitan police had encountered handing cases over to immigration enforcement as border force officers did not have the necessary PIP (Professionalising Investigation Programme) qualification to investigate cases to conclusion unlike the police. **ANDY MARSH**, offered to support immigration enforcement officers to upskill as necessary.

42. ANDY COOKE noted that there are options to include elements of OIC within their inspection programme or in partnership with other inspectorates, but any inspection would not be a quick fix and would require time to agree scope, methodology, fieldwork and then report. The **MINISTER FOR CRIME, POLICING AND FIRE** said he would be keen for any inspection to cover the removal of foreign nationals.

43. ANDY MARSH noted that his previous force had undertaken a wash of all offenders on the criminal database against the immigration database and seen a large degree of overlap. This was something that could be pursued further. The **MINISTER FOR CRIME, POLICING AND FIRE** said there was a cohort of 300,000 individuals with no right to be here, and 12,000 foreign national offenders. Where they were sentenced to imprisonment for at least 12 months, they should be removed from the UK, but in the last five years, this had not been happening. He gave an example of an attempt to deport a foreign national offender which failed, then six months later, the offender went on to commit a

murder. Such an example supported the need to focus on identifying the section of people who are removable and pose serious harm.

- 44. ACTION: The Home Office to work with HMICFRS to explore options for inspecting OIC.**
- 45. ACTION: The Home Office to work with the College of Policing on opportunities to upskill immigration enforcement officers.**
- 46. ACTION: NCA to establish a cross law enforcement intensified operation on OIC working with the wider law enforcement system and Home Office.**
- 47. ACTION: NCA and the Home Office to explore a further data-washing exercise between immigration and crime databases.**

AOB

- 48. None**

Closing

- 49. THE HOME SECRETARY** concluded the meeting by commending attendees for all their hard work and momentum on the key priorities discussed.