



Minutes

Title of meeting	Police Covenant Oversight Board
Date	12 January 2022
Time	13.00 - 14.00
Venue	2 Marsham Street / Virtual Meeting
Attendees	Kit Malthouse – Minister of State for Crime and Policing – Chair Matt Parr - HMICFRS Andy Marsh – CEO, College of Policing Andy Rhodes – College of Policing/National Police Chiefs' Council Neil Stewart – College of Policing John Robbins – Chief Police Officers' Staff Association John Partington – Police Federation of England and Wales Paul Griffiths – President of the Police Superintendents' Association Ben Priestley – Unison Andy Tremayne – Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Karin Phillips – Welsh Government Peter Spreadbury – Deputy Director, Home Office Iain Barton – PCOB Secretariat, Home Office Zahra Torabi – Wellbeing lead, Home Office
Apologies	Martin Hewitt – Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council

1) Welcome and introductory remarks

RT HON KIT MALTHOUSE MP, THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING, welcomed attendees and updated the Board on the continued progress of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill which includes the Police Covenant legislative clauses. He also reminded the Board of the plans to introduce an independent member and invited Board members to submit any further suggestions for candidates.

2) Actions from the previous board

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER (CMO)

ANDY RHODES set out the updated proposals for the CMO function, including the potential for a Police Medical Group (PMG). He explained that a number of experts already

exist to form part of a PMG, chaired by a CMO. He also set out the indicative costs and role description for a CMO based on an existing job description recently advertised elsewhere in the public sector. He emphasised the importance of the PMG not acting as a committee but as a delivery group. Andy also extended his thanks to the Armed Forces Covenant team in the NHS who have shared their experiences and learning from implementing the Armed Forces Covenant.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING agreed the PMG must focus on delivery. He noted the need to ensure all members of the PMG, and the organisations they represent, were fully supportive of delivery.

PAUL GRIFFITHS supported the approach, seeing this as key to the second phase of the Covenant work. He reiterated the need for a cross-Government approach to the Covenant with cross-departmental working.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING agreed that the Home Office would continue to ensure that other departments are clear on what the Covenant means for them.

KARIN PHILLIPS noted there are a number of areas to explore to better understand the implications for the Welsh Government and requested a separate discussion about governance structures.

ANDY RHODES agreed and explained an initial meeting had taken place with Welsh Government representatives following the previous Board. He confirmed that he was also discussing the devolution implications with the Armed Forces Covenant team who had faced similar issues.

MATT PARR stated the importance of ensuring that challenges are worked through as far as possible before the launch of the Covenant and reflected on the launch of the Armed Forces Covenant, which had been met with some cynicism because the benefits were not necessarily clear at the point of launch.

ANDY MARSH supported the proposals for governance and medical expertise and flagged the need to consider the sustainability of the funding.

ANDY RHODES explained that work was taking place with the Home Office team through the usual channels for the Spending Review to determine funding. This is reflected in the proposals set out in the two Board papers.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING agreed this is part of the ongoing allocation process which should be clearer ahead of the next Board.

The Board agreed to the proposals for a PMG, chaired by a CMO to be taken forward by the College of Policing.

FAMILY SUPPORT MODEL

ANDY RHODES set out progress in taking forward work on family support and recent activity, including research that was being conducted by King's College London. He explained that the current proposal was to commission further research to understand the provisions that already exist across approximately 150 police charities and to speak to several charities about the Covenant in March. He summarised the first action, which

would map out existing provision, complemented by the work already funded and underway by King's College London. He also proposed further work to commission resources, such as those being explored by Police Care UK, to provide online resources for families. He then set out the final proposal to provide a family bereavement counselling service to combat the frequent delays experienced by bereaved families when accessing support through the NHS. He suggested the counselling service could also be extended to bereavement linked to suicide. He set out the intention for a family coordinator post to act as a point of contact for charities. Andy noted the timescales set out in the paper for the activities, with procurement taking place and a coordinator in post by April.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING reflected on the recent roundtables he chaired with families of officers and staff. He noted the key issue was identifying the type of support needed to meet the range of family needs. This included circumstances involving severe injury as well as the day to day impact of shift work.

BEN PRIESTLEY reported that many difficulties link to work life balance, which is mostly about resourcing. He noted that Unison members would likely say the most pressing concern is that days off are respected. He also reiterated the idea of families feeling an immediate benefit from the Covenant, for example, the Armed Forces provide a family railcard which is a demonstrable benefit for families.

PAUL GRIFFITHS highlighted the need for forces to become more family friendly and expressed support for the bereavement counselling work to include those affected by suicide.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING recognised there is often a long wait for bereavement counselling and thanked Andy and his team for this work. He asked if the work would sit with the College of Policing as part of the Wellbeing Service.

ANDY MARSH agreed that the College of Policing could house much of this work.

The Board agreed to the next phase of research on family support, the proposals for a bereavement service and that activity would continue to sit within the College of Policing.

3) Pre-Deployment Mental Health (PDMH) Training

NEIL STEWART outlined that the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) entry routes to policing had been updated with a wellbeing resilience learning module. He noted that the wellbeing module was also part of the emergency curriculum, which was put together in response to COVID 19 to condense the usual training period of 12-18 weeks. He explained that all deliverers of these products are required to map the full curriculum to guarantee the wellbeing training is delivered and this is checked through an annual monitoring process. He set out the recent activity to emphasise the importance of the wellbeing training including monthly emails and a PEQF event.

ANDY MARSH noted the importance of maintaining central coordination to enable local delivery and that the recent uplift in officers, PEQF and data collection support the work under the Covenant.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING asked what provision is provided for special constables.

NEIL STEWART explained that in 2020 the Special Constable programme was established under the PEQF which correlates to year 1 of the constable degree apprenticeship.

BEN PRIESTLEY raised concern that police staff are not covered by PEQF, including those staff that would benefit from PDMH training.

NEIL STEWART noted the standalone investigative programmes cover some staff but recognises there is a challenge in capturing the full variety of police staff roles.

BEN PRIESTLEY and **NEIL STEWART** agreed to separately discuss how to standardise the PDMH training in inductions for staff.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING referred to the recent findings from the onboarding survey that has taken place with new recruits about how they feel and how they are finding their roles. He noted some positive findings about the number of officers having conversations with their supervisors about mental health but wondered if there could be more. The Minister requested the findings are looked at as part of the next Board.

ACTION – To capture any areas of concern from the onboarding survey for new recruits that could be addressed as part of the Covenant.

ANDY MARSH welcomed a discussion about the findings and noted the misleading views in the media about negative experiences in new recruits. He also set out his idea to commission an officer uplift study to understand the journey and experience of new recruits throughout their career.

The Board agreed that the implementation of pre-deployment mental health training was complete, and the training would continue to be reviewed by the College of Policing.

4) Terms of Reference (ToR) review

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING requested the Board's agreement to the amended ToR, which will be reviewed every two years going forward. He highlighted the main change of the addition of HMICFRS to the Board membership.

PAUL GRIFFITHS noted the need to ensure the right connectivity with other organisations and representative groups e.g. Association of Special Constabulary Officers and National Association of Retired Police Officers, but agreed this did not need express reference in the Board ToR.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING agreed and explained that officials were intending to establish a partner group to consult other organisations.

ACTION – Home Office to establish a Police Covenant stakeholder consultation group.

KARIN PHILLIPS explained that other departments within Welsh Government will have an interest in the Covenant and it would be helpful to receive Board papers earlier to allow time to consult colleagues.

Board members agreed the revised ToR.

5) AOB

JOHN ROBBINS thanked Andy Rhodes and the NPWS for their work. He emphasised the importance of ensuring there is a continued drive for delivery that would have an impact for frontline staff and police officers. He asked the Minister to help ensure enthusiasm and momentum are maintained at all levels.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME AND POLICING recognised the desire for deliverable benefits under the Covenant and requested the Delivery Group evaluate the list of priorities. The Minister also proposed that the Covenant launch reaffirms the existing support available which may not be well known to ensure the Covenant is coordinated with existing organisations and provisions.

ACTION – Delivery Group to review the list of actions and priorities to close completed priorities and identify the next phase of activity.

Next Oversight Board meeting: 14.00-.15.00, 20 April 2022 (subject to parliamentary business).