



Minutes

Title of meeting	Police Covenant Oversight Board
Date	21 April 2022
Time	13.00 - 14.00
Venue	Virtual Meeting
Attendees	Kit Malthouse – Chair - Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Probation Andy Marsh – CEO, College of Policing Andy Rhodes – College of Policing/National Police Chiefs' Council Martin Hewitt – Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council Chris Curtis – National Police Chiefs' Council Ian Cosh – Chief Police Officers' Staff Association Steve Hartshorn – Chair of Police Federation of England and Wales Paul Fotheringham – President of the Police Superintendents' Association James Searle – Welsh Government Iain Barton – PCOB Secretariat, Home Office Zahra Torabi – Wellbeing lead, Home Office Phoebe Gardner – Communications, Home Office Rachel Brown – Communications, Home Office
Apologies	Andy Tremayne – Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Ben Priestley – Unison Karin Phillips – Welsh Government Wendy Williams – HMICFRS

1) Welcome and introductory remarks

RT HON KIT MALTHOUSE MP, THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION welcomed attendees and updated the Board on a recent meeting regarding the Front Line Review (FLR). He summarised the FLR and the key recommendations it produced and explained that a recent meeting with key FLR leads agreed that work from two main recommendations should continue through the Covenant; management of internal demand and wellbeing oversight and monitoring.

2) Actions from the previous board

COVENANT CONSULTATION GROUP – TERMS OF REFERENCE

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION reminded the group of the agreed intention to establish a consultation group which directly engages the wider policing family and networks on work under the Covenant. He asked the Board to consider the proposed terms of reference for the group.

MARTIN HEWITT queried the membership of the group and noted the NPCC were not listed as proposed members and would be open to joining. He also commented on whether such a large membership in the consultation group could be challenging and recommended that the remit and purpose of the group is made very clear.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION agreed and suggested the NPCC could join the consultation group, though noted that the NPCC was represented on the PCOB and the Delivery Group.

ANDY RHODES suggested the consultation group could include individuals from outside of larger organisations with specific interest and expertise in policing, for example, bereaved family members. He also proposed that the Police Firearms Officers Association (PFOA) was included.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION agreed that the consultation group should have the flexibility to allow for individuals who may have an interest in or experience with specific areas of work under the Covenant to join the group on an ad hoc basis.

The Board agreed the consultation group terms of reference.

ACTION – Home Office to add NPCC and PFOA to the consultation group membership and to consider how best to ensure wider groups and individuals are considered for attendance on an ad hoc basis.

REVISED COVENANT PRIORITY LIST

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING AND PROBATION reminded the Board of the action to update the list of Covenant priorities following agreement at the previous Board to close the workstream on pre-deployment mental health training. He noted the good progress made across all the workstreams. The Minister asked the Board for views on the proposal to close the first workstream which was about understanding charging decisions relating to assaults against officers using a vehicle. He noted that substantial work had taken place to conclude that a change in legislation was not required and therefore this work could continue but under a new workstream which would consider the wider circumstances involving charging of such assaults. The Minister presented an additional two workstreams, the first was to understand the needs of those leaving the police and this related to his recent meeting with the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO). The second priority was about NHS engagement which the National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS) would lead with support from the Home Office and the Clinical Governance Group (CGG). The Minister noted the importance of NHS in the Covenant work given how many police officers and staff are reliant on NHS services. He explained that the Police Federation are working with the Defence Medical Welfare Service charity in his constituency who provide support to service personnel who are injured. He also suggested work commenced on workstream seven which included issues

that have an impact on the workforce but were outside the immediate remit of the Covenant.

The Board agreed to the revised priority list.

ACTION – Delivery Group to progress work and identify relevant leads under new workstreams and progress workstream seven.

CLINICAL GOVERNANCE GROUP AND FAMILY SUPPORT MODEL UPDATE

ANDY RHODES provided an overview of the Clinical Governance Group (CGG) and the interim meeting which took place on 29 March. The interim CGG discussed the role description and job specification for a Chief Medical Officer (CMO). The CGG agreed to prepare a terms of reference, finalise membership, prepare a list of priority work and identify the supporting infrastructure required for the group. Andy explained that further CGG meetings were scheduled, and Zahra Torabi and the Home Office team were supporting the CGG work and aiming for a CMO to be in place by October 2022. Andy also summarised the good progress on developing a family support model as stage one of the Kings College and Open University research had been completed, with stage two due to commence. He also set out the intention to go out to tender research into the existing family support provision and produce a digital suite of support products based on initial insight. Andy hoped to recruit a family support coordinator, working with the Home Office. He was also pleased to say that bereavement support was already in place through Police Care UK and he would be considering whether this would provide a long-term solution rather than identifying a separate provider.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION noted the good progress and stated that seeking further bereavement counselling providers would be challenging given the national shortage of bereavement counsellors. He also asked when the first digital product would be available.

ANDY RHODES explained that the tender process would begin shortly and hoped that it could be online and ready to go in October.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION reminded the Board of the good progress the Covenant legislation was making and hoped the legislation would be in place soon.

3) COVENANT PLEDGE

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION recalled the Board's intention to seek a commitment from Chief Constables to support the Covenant and highlighted that the NPCC were leading this work.

CHRIS CURTIS explained that the NPCC had received broad support for the concept of a written pledge, which Chief Constables could sign up to. He noted the only challenge would be agreeing the detail however he was working with Pam Kelly from the Workforce Coordination Committee to achieve consensus. He then set out plans to present the written pledge to a Chief Constables' Council in the near future and hoped this could be achieved in the summer given the widespread support.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION queried whether the pledge would be a short written statement or large detailed pledge.

CHRIS CURTIS agreed that something succinct with the overarching principle that provides the direction of travel of the Covenant would be most beneficial.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION highlighted the need to consider how the pledge would factor into the communications plans.

MARTIN HEWITT emphasised the importance of ensuring Chief Constables sign up and that he would create a smaller reference group of Chief Constables to provide insight and challenge on the pledge as the work developed. He also noted the July Chief Constables' Council would be in London and an opportune meeting to present the pledge.

ANDY MARSH agreed the importance of timing and referred to the recent police uplift research into what was attracting people into policing. The research had found the challenge for many joining policing was concerns about police standards. He believed the Covenant was key to conveying the professional standards of the police workforce.

The Board agreed to the concept of a written pledge led by the NPCC.

ACTION – NPCC to present a Covenant pledge to Chief Constables' Council in July.

4) COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

PHOEBE GARDNER reminded the Board of the previous communication update in October and the agreement to do further insight gathering.

RACHEL BROWN summarised the key research findings from roundtable discussions with stakeholders and in-depth interviews with officers, staff and volunteers, working closely with the communications teams from PCOB organisations. The findings included: a general feeling that policing is facing significant challenges; the concept of the covenant is well-received; tangibility of the benefits is key to ensuring the Covenant makes a meaningful difference to policing; and stakeholders are key to reaching a variety of audiences. She explained that a range of communications channels would be needed, including making use of local networks and national organisations' newsletters, and that large scale public campaigns would be less likely to succeed. Real life case studies were also deemed important to highlight the impact of the Covenant. She presented the recommended communications approach, with short-term deliverables planned for May such as a Gov.uk landing page and promotional video. The longer-term activities would take place from June onwards when further benefits are in place. Rachel also presented two brand concepts that performed best in research and engagement.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION agreed with the importance of case studies.

MARTIN HEWITT noted the need to keep communications contemporary, accessible and relatable to the variety of police and staff who will be supported by the Covenant, for example through the use of video rather than written communications.

ANDY RHODES agreed that it is vital for the Covenant to have delivered benefits at the point of communications launch and emphasised the importance of clarifying where those benefits link back to the views of policing through projects such as the Front Line Review.

PAUL FOTHERINGHAM highlighted the role of the third sector and using charities to connect to families.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION reflected on the learning gained through the police uplift communications and the need to be more creative when reaching the full range of audiences.

IAIN BARTON asked the Board to provide views on how the branding would be received by non-uniformed staff.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND PROBATION proposed a separate meeting with Unison to discuss the communications and branding.

MARTIN HEWITT explained that staff would often relate to the images of policing and it was most important to be clear in messaging about staff inclusion.

STEVE HARTSHORN asked that Detectives are taken into consideration in branding as they were not currently reflected. He offered assistance in communicating through their national membership database.

ACTION – Home Office to discuss communications and branding with Unison.

5) AOB

No AOB.