



# Minutes

<b>Title of meeting</b>	Police Covenant Oversight Board
<b>Date</b>	23 November 2022
<b>Time</b>	09.30 - 10.30
<b>Venue</b>	Virtual Meeting
<b>Attendees</b>	Chris Philp – Chair – Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire Andy Rhodes – College of Policing/National Police Chiefs’ Council Anil Mander – Staff Officer to Chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council Chris Rowley – National Police Chiefs’ Council Lisa Winward – Chief Police Officers’ Staff Association Steve Hartshorn – Chair of Police Federation of England and Wales Paul Fotheringham – President of the Police Superintendents’ Association Andy Tremayne – Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Karin Phillips – Welsh government Matt Parr – HMICFRS Peter Spreadbury – Deputy Director, Home Office Harriet Mackinlay – Policy Team Lead, Home Office Iain Barton – PCOB Secretariat, Home Office Emma Marriott – Wellbeing lead, Home Office
<b>Apologies</b>	Ben Priestley – Unison Andy Marsh – CEO, College of Policing Martin Hewitt - Chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council

1) Welcome and introductory remarks

**Rt Hon Chris Philp MP, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing, and Fire** welcomed attendees and noted the previous board minutes were available on the Covenant GOV.UK webpage. He explained that the webpage would continue to develop with the Covenant branding in place and draw together all the Covenant work.

2) Update from the Chair of the Delivery Group

**Andy Rhodes** reminded the board of the origins of the Covenant, including previous research and staff association surveys. He listed the priorities under the Covenant, highlighting key issues such as resourcing in forces. He welcomed the addition of CC Chris Rowley to the board as the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for wellbeing. He also summarised the governance structure of the Covenant, which includes a regional Covenant briefing group led by the NPCC. He explained that workstream priority one was now closed and the issues raised during the Officer Staff and Safety report continued to be explored through the Covenant Delivery Group. He provided an overview of priority 2 relating to Operation Hampshire and explained that forces were now making good progress on ensuring data collection solutions were in place. He informed the board of a 12-month programme which had been set up to share innovative solutions to reduce organisational stressors, linked to workstream 3. On priority 7 he explained that a roundtable had taken place with staff associations and unions, hosted by the Police Federation and a summary report of issues raised at the roundtable would be shared at the next Oversight Board. He provided an update on the work of the interim Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for policing and how the supporting Clinical Governance Group will report into the NPCC workforce group and the College of Policing. He explained that work was underway with the Welsh government, Welsh policing and NHS Wales to understand how the needs of those in policing can be met through the NHS.

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** referred to priority 3 and noted that work by Steven House and the NPCC addressed similar issues. The minister emphasised the importance of 3 issues; counting and recording rules which can be onerous, burdens imposed by case file preparation for the CPS and significant time spent by police dealing with mental health issues in the community. He asked whether the 12-month organisational stressors programme was linked into the work by Steven House and whether the Police Federation is contributing to Steven House's work.

**Andy Rhodes** explained that the first 2 points were being considered under priority 7. He agreed to explore linking into Steven House's work and to make contact.

**Steve Hartshorn** noted that he was due to speak to Steven House and Alan Pughsley to discuss the input of the Police Federation. He emphasised the importance of the points raised by the minister and that work was already underway by the Police Federation looking at CPS requirements for case file preparation. He also noted that often cases take too long to reach court and this is compounded by a shortage of barristers to take it forward. He noted that he was pleased to hear the minister mention concerns around police dealing with individuals with mental health issues as this was something the Police Federation had spoken about many times.

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** explained that the Home Office was doing work to consider how to reduce the burden on police dealing with individuals with mental health issues. He recently raised this point with the Chief Executive of the NHS. He also asked what plans there were to continue the roundtable engagement with the staff associations and unions and how this would be made routine under the Covenant workstreams.

**Andy Rhodes** noted there was appetite from the staff associations and unions to feed into the work under priority 7 and their survey data would be more formally brought into the research process. He agreed a regular roundtable would be beneficial.

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** asked why the CMO was interim rather than permanent.

**Andy Rhodes** explained that the HR processes were in train and the job advert for the permanent post would be published soon.

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** asked for an update on the honours and memorials progress under the Covenant.

**Iain Barton** updated the board on an initial meeting with staff associations and unions and a piece of research to understand how forces were using the existing honours and rewards system. He explained that research found some variation between forces on how the system was used and the Home Office are now looking at ways to address this. He also noted that specific issues had been identified such as the forfeiture of medals and ability to reward people employed as police staff. He explained that any discussions around new medals would need to be taken forward by the Cabinet Office, however those conversations were continuing while the other work is taken forward.

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** referred to the update on the priority workstreams and noted that engagement had taken place with the armed forces veterans team. He asked what was in place in the NHS for armed forces veterans.

**Andy Rhodes** explained that the armed forces veterans team identified a specific need for specialist prosthetics and were able to work with existing NHS commissioning structures and engage at a Ministerial level to seek agreement to all veterans having access to the best available prosthetics on the market. He noted that policing needs were more centred around specialist trauma care but the veterans team were explaining how to work through the existing NHS pathways to seek better informed care for policing.

**Chris Rowley** welcomed the minister's interest in the 3 areas he raised. He echoed the comments around policing of mental health issues and referred to a scheme called 'Right Care, Right Person' noting that some forces charge for their time when caring for those who require mental health support.

**Lisa Winward** noted the need to support those going through ill health retirement as the process was not fit for purpose.

**Andy Rhodes** agreed and explained that some good practice was available to learn from.

**Paul Fotheringham** referred to priority 7 and how insight from the Police Superintendents Association (PSA) highlights the impact of demand and of pay and conditions. He welcomed the comments about utilising survey data from staff associations and noted that the previous 3 years of survey data from PSA, Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) and OK had not been utilised. He explained that since the front line review there had been no formal comment from government or chiefs on the results of the annual surveys which had showed a deteriorating position of the welfare and wellbeing of staff. He noted that good work was underway on occupational health standards but that more had to be done as 3 years after self-assessment was put in place, less than half of forces conduct the self-assessment.

**Andy Rhodes** summarised the Blue Light Wellbeing framework self-assessment tool and how important it was for forces to be inspected on this. He had discussed this with HMICFRS and whether it should be part of the inspection.

**Chris Rowley** agreed there should be a clear framework set out with HMICFRS which can be put to chief constables.

**Matt Parr** explained that the PEEL assessment framework was changing. He noted that the occupational health aspect was about forces identifying their own shortcomings and sharing proposals for improvement. He also cautioned that the PEEL inspection only took place every 18 months to 2 years, but it would serve as a good incentive for improvement in forces. He also referred to the NHS work and suggested the Covenant should be careful not to under-promise and over-deliver in order to manage expectations in the service.

**Karin Phillips** welcomed the engagement that had taken place with Welsh government so far and emphasised the importance of continuing this engagement as health matters were devolved in Wales.

**Action – Andy Rhodes to contact Steven House to explore linkages between the Productivity Review and Covenant work.**

**Action – Paul Fotheringham to present a report on workstream seven and engagement with staff associations, including plans to implement ongoing and regular engagement with staff associations and unions.**

**Action – Home Office to consider how survey data from staff associations will be considered through the Covenant.**

3) Front line review stocktake report update

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** summarised the purpose of the front line review (FLR) stocktake report and asked the board if they were content with the report.

**Paul Fotheringham** noted that some of the work referred to in the report was ongoing and the current report could be read to suggest that all outstanding issues had been addressed which could appear misleading to the front line.

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** agreed the report should more clearly state the links between FLR recommendations and ongoing work under the Covenant.

**Peter Spreadbury** agreed this could be made clearer. He explained the purpose of the report was to summarise what had taken place as part of the front line review and how it had been brought into the Covenant.

**ACTION – Home Office to amend the front line review stocktake report to reflect the ongoing nature of the workstreams as part of the Covenant.**

4) The annual report content

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** set out the proposed content and structure of the first Covenant annual report. He noted it would link back to the priority workstreams as discussed by Andy Rhodes.

**Paul Fotheringham** expressed his support for the proposed structure and suggested the tone of the report recognises that the work is ongoing and outcomes are expected in the future.

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire** asked whether there were any plans to measure the outcome of the Covenant priorities.

**Andy Rhodes** explained that as data collection improves it would become possible to assess impact and outcomes across all the priorities.

**Steve Hartshorn** agreed the report should focus on tangible outcomes as this is what front line officers and their families would relate to.

**Karin Phillips** queried whether the contribution of Welsh government had been reflected in the report drafting and whether there would be another opportunity to comment on the draft report.

**Peter Spreadbury** thanked the Welsh government for their contribution and confirmed there would be a further opportunity to review the report before it is presented at the next board for formal agreement.

**Iain Barton** set out the process for clearing the report. He explained that the report would be shared for comment before the board in January.

**Action – Home Office to share the annual report with board members for comment ahead of the January Oversight Board.**

5) AOB

No AOB.