



Minutes

Title of meeting	Police Covenant Oversight Board
Date	18 January 2023
Time	10.00 - 11.00
Venue	Virtual Meeting
Attendees	Chris Philp – Chair – Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire Andy Rhodes – College of Policing/National Police Chiefs' Council John Robins – Chief Police Officers' Staff Association Nicky Ryan – Police Federation of England and Wales Paul Fotheringham – Police Superintendents' Association Andy Tremayne – Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Ben Priestley – Unison John Harrison – Interim Chief Medical Officer, College of Policing Karin Phillips – Welsh Government Rachel Watson – Director, Home Office Harriet Mackinlay – Policy Team Lead, Home Office Iain Barton – PCOB Secretariat, Home Office Emma Marriott – Wellbeing lead, Home Office
Apologies	Matt Parr – HMICFRS Steve Hartshorn – Chair of Police Federation of England and Wales 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. He explained that progress had been made on actions from the previous Board meeting which included amending and finalising the Front Line Review report.

2) Police Covenant Annual Report

IAIN BARTON summarised progress on the annual Police Covenant report and thanked organisations for their support and input. He also explained that the report would go through a write round process to seek agreement from other Government departments ahead of the Home Secretary signing off the report. It would then be published in Parliament. He invited the Board's views on the report.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND FIRE asked that the report includes timeframes and deadlines for delivering against each section of the report that addressed future planned work. He also noted the ongoing work on honours and memorials and the importance of highlighting this work within the report. This included making progress on recognition for those who have lost their lives and on ensuring the contribution of long serving staff is recognised. He asked for further explanation in the report of the NHS engagement work in Wales and what was being done in England.

ANDY RHODES explained that a working group had been established in Wales to explore what policing may need from the NHS and this would act as a pathfinder for England. He noted that work in Wales had progressed faster than in England because the relationships with NHS Wales were already established.

KARIN PHILLIPS confirmed there were no timescales for delivery of the work yet and discussions were still at an early stage. She referred to the Emergency Services Group in Wales which all Chief Constables attended, and the Group had also established a sub-group to take forward the specific work with the NHS.

ANDY RHODES summarised the initial plans in England which would involve gaining an understanding of the relevant NHS commissioning systems. He explained two areas of interest: seeking specialist psychological services, as most forces were overwhelmed with the demand for such services; and understanding what could be done to share workforce capabilities around occupational health.

JOHN HARRISON agreed with the assessment of what needed to be done and reassured the Board that proposals would be developed in the near future.

PAUL FOTHERINGHAM welcomed the annual report. He noted that his members and colleagues would look at the report to see what progress had been made. He suggested the work by Sir Stephen House should be mentioned in the report and that it would be beneficial to invite Sir Stephen House to attend the Board to understand the synergies with the Covenant. He also referred to the occupational health section in the report and welcomed the work to include occupational health in the HMICFRS PEEL inspection programme. He asked the Minister whether he had written to Chief Constables to intervene on this in advance of the PEEL inspections. He also suggested the report should reflect how staff association and front line views would be considered throughout the development of the Covenant, noting the previous Board discussion around how staff association surveys and reports would be factored in. He also asked if the report could be altered to reflect the staff association's position as providing insight and commentary on Covenant workstreams rather than participating in the delivery of the Covenant. He noted the positive summary on honours and memorials. He also suggested the agreed changes to the long service medal for 30 years, which was signed off last year, should be reflected in the report. He also suggested the references to the National Police Memorial were amended to reflect that it was service led and funded by charities.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND FIRE thanked Paul for the useful comments and confirmed that a letter to Chief Constables about occupational health had been sent. He confirmed that the letter would be shared with Board members for their information. He also agreed that it would be beneficial for Sir Stephen House to attend the Board. He confirmed that he was working with DHSC Ministers to discuss the impact of mental health demand on policing and rolling out the Humberside 'Right Care, Right Person' model. He also confirmed that he was looking at counting rules and national incident recording rules with a view to reducing the burden and had been discussing case file preparation rules with CPS.

ACTION - Home Office to invite Sir Stephen House to the PCOB.

ACTION - Home Office to share the letter to Chief Constables on occupational health with Board members.

BEN PRIESTLEY welcomed the progress made on police staff honours and explained that he would like this to be extended to all staff within the police workforce and not just PCSOs. He also suggested the Covenant should seek to deliver parity on the ONS reporting for police and staff assaults.

NICKY RYAN clarified that PFEW and other staff associations did not feel that tangible benefits had yet been delivered for officers and staff under the Covenant.

JOHN ROBINS agreed that PCSOs should not be isolated from other police staff when considering whether a new award should be created. He also noted that whilst he welcomed the reference to the National Police Memorial, the report should refer to all police memorial charities. He expressed support for progress on the posthumous awards. He raised concerns about the risk of disparity across the UK in terms of what the Covenant provides due to devolved governance in Wales. He also emphasised the importance of the Covenant in delivering priority NHS provision for officers and staff who are injured in the course of duty. He suggested that the impact of hate crime towards officers and staff should be considered. He also recommended the new priorities should reference financial support for officers and staff to raise awareness of the wider package of support and include greater consideration of mental health and trauma support.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND FIRE agreed on the importance of NHS engagement work and the risks of divergence of provision across the UK.

IAIN BARTON confirmed that all comments on the report would be noted and addressed separately where they were not in the remit of the Covenant report. He also explained that the report would be shared with the Board once more ahead of publication.

ACTION – Home Office to update the report and respond to all comments ahead of next meeting.

- 3) Priority workstream seven (a summary of the key issues raised by staff associations and unions) update

PAUL FOTHERINGHAM updated the Board on a roundtable discussion held with representatives from PFEW, UNISON, CPOSA, NPWS and NARPO. He set out the three key areas raised by attendees at the roundtable: priorities already agreed by the service and not yet delivered; priorities the service sought to deliver which have now progressed; and new priority areas. He raised concerns around the impact of pay and conditions,

noting that although these were not within the scope of the Covenant, it should acknowledge the impact on wellbeing. He emphasised the pressure on health-related provision and how there should be consideration of how policing impacts officer and staff access to health care, for example, attending A and E alongside individuals who had been arrested. He explained the importance of third sector involvement in health provision and suggested the Government should play a role in funding certain provisions such as the Police Treatment Centres.

NICKY RYAN also raised a concern about the funding of the Police Treatment Centres, which she explained would not continue to operate without significant intervention. She suggested some scoping work should take place to consider software which flags where officers and staff were dealing with distressing calls to allow forces to focus trauma management and treatment. She raised a concern relating to the criminal injury compensation process and explained that officers that were injured on duty but did not have a visible scar were often not eligible for criminal injuries compensation. She also emphasised the need to minimise the demand on policing which was not sustainable.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND FIRE agreed with the final point around demand and noted the Humberside model, 'Right Care, Right Person' which was being considered. He agreed to raise the criminal injury compensation concern with MoJ and asked for further advice on the funding of Police Treatment Centres.

ACTION – Home Office to discuss criminal injury compensation with MoJ.

ANDY RHODES explained that he met with Sir Stephen House after the previous Board and would be presenting to his team on the Covenant. He also informed the Board of technology relating to trauma tracking which was being trialled in some forces. He offered to explore options for an independent viability assessment on funding of the Police Treatment Centres.

BEN PRIESTLEY emphasised the continued concern over the lack of tangible benefits and suggested an example would be a bereavement bursary for a dependent of someone killed in the course of their duty.

HARRIET MACKINLAY referred to the concerns around pay support, noting that the NPCC reward team had been working on a reward package to illustrate the support for staff and officers. She emphasised the need to accelerate the work as it was important for the workforce to be able to see what the package of support was.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND FIRE noted the concerns about a perceived lack of tangible benefits and asked officials to consider what specific benefits could be implemented within a specific timeframe. He cautioned that budgets were tight and under pressure but would consider where the Home Office could deliver additional benefits.

ACTION – HO to consider tangible benefits and timeframes to deliver under the Covenant.

ACTION – HO and NPWS to explore options for an independent viability assessment on funding of the Police Treatment Centres.

IAIN BARTON highlighted that an existing charity provides support for dependents of those killed on duty and explained that there may be opportunities to help highlight where benefits already exist.

4) Police Covenant Consultation Group update

HARRIET MACKINLAY summarised the first biannual Covenant Consultation Group which took place in November 2022. She explained that approximately 15 different police associations, networks and charities attended the event to provide honest perspectives on the Covenant and how it was progressing. She also set out the plans for a specific theme to be considered at each Consultation Group with the first covering mental health. She explained the main points from the discussion, including the significant contribution charities have made to support police and their families, the support needs of those who retire or leave policing, offering direct therapy to officers with lifelong physical conditions and support for those with neurodiverse conditions.

IAIN BARTON explained that a brief summary note would be circulated to Board members, to retain anonymity (where appropriate) for those organisations and networks.

5) AOB

JOHN ROBINS raised concern about the decision to award all police officers a consolidated pay increase of £1,900 in 2022/23, which resulted in a lower overall percentage award for those on higher salaries. He welcomed the Minister's support on the Covenant.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CRIME, POLICING, AND FIRE thanked John and urged staff associations to contribute their views on targeted payments to the pay review body so that those views were reflected in their considerations. He confirmed that all points raised during the Board would be followed up and encouraged action to follow from the Board discussions.