



National Policing Board Minutes 21 June 2023

Title of meeting	National Policing Board
Date	21 June 2023
Time	13:30 – 15:30
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
- Sarah Dines MP: Minister for Safeguarding
- Sir Matthew Rycroft KCMG CBE: Permanent Secretary
- Jaee Samant CBE: Director General, Public Safety Group
- Richard Alcock: Director Data, Information and Operations, Homeland Safety Group
- Rachel Swann QPM: Vice Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- Sir Mark Rowley QPM: Commissioner, Metropolitan Police
- Alison Hernandez: Vice Chair, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)
- Festus Akinbusoye: Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire
- 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)
- Matt Jukes: Head of UK Counter Terrorism Policing
- Tom Whiting: Interim Director General, Independent Office for Police Conduct
- Rachel Watson: Policing Director, Public Safety Group
- Joanna West: Tackling Exploitation and Abuse Director, Public Safety Group
- Paul Regan: Deputy Director, Neighbourhood Crime Unit

Special invitees

- Harvi Khatkar: Chief Superintendent, Vice President of the Police Superintendents' Association
- Steve Hartshorn: National Chair, Police Federation of England and Wales
- Maggie Blyth: Deputy Chief Constable, NPCC lead for VAWG

Welcome, introduction and crime and policing priorities

- 1. THE RT HON SUELLA BRAVERMAN KC MP: HOME SECRETARY** opened by thanking everyone for attending this meeting of the National Policing Board (NPB). She expressed how shocked and saddened she was about recent events in Nottingham and that her thoughts were with the families impacted.
- 2. The HOME SECRETARY** noted that since the last meeting, Baroness Casey had published her review of the Metropolitan Police. She welcomed the work being done by **SIR MARK ROWLEY QPM: COMMISSIONER, METROPOLITAN POLICE**, and noted that while things were moving in the right direction, there was a need for progress to be faster. Trust and confidence in policing had been discussed at the Board before and she expected that this would continue to be a focus for all policing. The **HOME SECRETARY** reflected on His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary's (HMCIC) State of Policing Report 2022 and agreed with the call for policing and its leadership to deliver on the issues that matter to the public most, be more visible and focus on getting the basics right.
- 3. ANDY COOKE QPM DL: HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY & HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES**, provided a summary of his thoughts about the report, expressing his gratitude to the sector for their support. He accepted that some factors were beyond the control of policing but felt that too frequently in policing, the basics were being missed. He felt that an effective system at national and local level was required to ensure the public were kept safe. He clarified that HMICFRS had no desire to be a regulator, however he felt there was a need for additional legislative powers regarding their inspection functions and role in Chief Officer appointments. He was fully supportive of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), with the report's recommendations intended to be viewed in this light. He said Chief Constables have significant powers and need to be held to account. He hoped that the report would be a catalyst for further discussion about how the sector could work together to ensure the system worked better.
- 4. ALISON HERNANDEZ: VICE CHAIR, ASSOCIATION OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS (APCC)**, confirmed that PCCs were supportive of policing getting back to basics. She welcomed the existing support provided by the College of Policing on Chief Officer appointments but reflected that the number of available candidates was small and a challenge to increase.
- 5. ANDY MARSH QPM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, COLLEGE OF POLICING**, welcomed the report, and agreed that policing could and must do better, with the system needing to make faster and better decisions. He said that the College of Policing's new selection process was encouraging new talent, adding that Police Chiefs should move around forces to enrich leadership and experience. He suggested that an upcoming College of Policing consultation on chief officer appointments could offer a way for people to comment on some of the recommendations.

6. **CHIEF CONSTABLE RACHEL SWANN: VICE CHAIR NPCC**, welcomed the report and recognised the need to improve the public's sense of police legitimacy and getting the basics right. Gavin Stephens, Chair of the NPCC had requested feedback on the report from Chief Constables which he would present for further discussion at Chief's Council.
7. The **HOME SECRETARY** said that the report was important and would be reflected on, noting that policing was at a crossroads. She highlighted comments from the report that England and Wales had arguably never been safer, and that the vast majority of policing was upholding high standards. However, she said there was a need to go further and democratically elected PCCs had a key role to play in holding policing to account. She reiterated how proud she was of achievements under the Police Uplift Programme resulting in almost 150,000 police officers across England and Wales. However, she was still hearing people query the whereabouts of the police and pressed the need to support new and existing police officers to be more responsive to the public. She said that she wanted to see investigation standards improve and conviction rates go up.
8. The **RT HON CHRIS PHILP MP: MINISTER FOR CRIME, POLICING AND FIRE** emphasised we now had record numbers of police and that a lot of work was being done to remove bureaucratic impediments taking up police time. For example, the Right Care Right Person and the work on redaction will help free up police officer time to be visible and thoroughly investigate crime. Following discussion with the sector, work is underway to agree a national commitment on following all reasonable lines of enquiry, which would provide a real opportunity to improve trust and confidence in policing and keep the public safer. He referred to the work being done on this in Greater Manchester as an example.
9. The **HOME SECRETARY** concluded by highlighting that the public version of the Digital Crime and Performance Pack had been published on the HMICFRS website, and the launch of the Early Warning System, thanking the sector for making these happen. This would provide better understanding of how forces are delivering on reductions in Homicide, Serious Violence, and Neighbourhood Crime. The first Police Covenant Annual Report had been published which set out the progress made on supporting the workforce, making a real difference to the wellbeing of police officers, staff and their families which she assured remained a priority. She was also pleased to see that police forces across England and Wales were fulfilling their commitment to attend all home burglaries.
10. **Action: The Home Office to explore with Andy Marsh whether his upcoming consultation on chief officer appointments provides an avenue to explore some of State of Policing's recommendations around senior leadership appointments.**
11. **Action: As part of existing work to develop the commitment on following all reasonable lines of enquiry, for policing to explore what further action can be taken to strengthen police visibility and response.**

Actions from the previous meeting

12. **THE HOME SECRETARY** was pleased to see the progress made on the actions agreed at the last meeting in March. She noted that a review had been conducted into MP Security and had resulted in a comprehensive set of recommendations which were being implemented. She also noted the work being done by the APCC on PCC security threats and assured that the report they had provided was being reviewed. She added that the Home Office grant to the APCC would help with undertaking further work on PCC security.
13. **RACHEL SWANN** provided an update on work to explore how staff networks are operating, which was in the context of recent work to review the Code of Ethics and social media guidelines. She understood the frustrations with social media and how content could detract from the good work that policing was doing. She explained that there were 12 national staff networks connected to protected characteristics. Within forces, additional groups and networks existed but were not recognised as national networks. On occasion, comments from some local networks had detracted from the national view. A definition of what a national network is had been developed, which would be used to coordinate and reduce duplication of networks and would be subject to consultation. She concluded by saying that the NPCC are discussing application of the social media guidance included within the revised Code of Ethics.
14. **THE HOME SECRETARY** welcomed the work being done by the NPCC but stressed that there is a perception that the police appear distracted by fringe issues, demonstrated allegiance to matters with a political narrative and were diverting resource that did not reflect their policing priorities. **ANDY COOKE** added that perception is sometimes more important than the reality and the next Code of Ethics needed to address that.
15. **Action: NPCC to continue work looking at staff networks, including ensuring that the revised code of ethics addresses concerns in this area, and liaising with HMICFRS on how their inspection process can explore this further.**

Improving leadership and professional development – with a focus on integrity and standards

16. **THE HOME SECRETARY** said that key to improving integrity and standards was strong leadership at every level. She was pleased that the College of Policing had prioritised their leadership reforms to tackle this and asked that all members support its rollout.
17. **ANDY MARSH** said he recognised that good leadership was positive for morale, retention and culture. Leadership development was not just for senior leaders and had been inadequate until now. There would now be a clear set of development and leadership training standards at every rank. He would be looking at reforming the sergeants' and inspectors' exam as he did not think it was the best way of selecting leaders and asked

for all forces to work together to develop a new programme. In response to the **HOME SECRETARY**, he said he was confident that the plan would be delivered in the next three years. However, it would only work if everyone worked towards the same goal and applied a consistent standard across the country. **ANDY COOKE** confirmed that he would be inspecting leadership in the autumn.

18. **TOM WHITING: INTERIM DIRECTOR GENERAL, INDEPENDENT OFFICE FOR POLICE CONDUCT**, reflected that all police officers are a product of training and guidance. The IOPC had issued over 500 learning recommendations to date and were working with partners to ensure their recommendations were being considered.
19. **GRAEME BIGGAR: DIRECTOR GENERAL, NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY**, reflected that the Inspectorate's vetting report on the NCA revealed concerns about behaviour and culture which linked to the leadership work underway. There was a need, he said, to build more sophisticated intelligence and investigation skills in Regional Organised Crime Units and Counter Terrorism and was looking at how this could be achieved.
20. **FESTUS AKINBUSOYE: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR BEDFORDSHIRE**, provided positive feedback on a leadership course he had observed.
21. **RACHEL SWANN** recognised the need for consistency and that there was strong support for national leadership standards. For example, in her force Derbyshire, a locally run Sergeants programme was flexible enough to link to the national standards whilst looking at local issues.
22. **ACTION: HMICFRS to send to Home Office officials an agreed plan/timeline for the leadership thematic inspection.**
23. **ACTION: The College of Policing to support forces with implementation of the new national leadership standards and the College of Policing and NPCC to provide an update at the next NPB.**

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

24. The **HOME SECRETARY** said that tackling violence against women and girls remained one of her key priorities. She felt that whilst referrals to the CPS were increasing there was still more to do. VAWG had been included in the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) and it was essential that forces directed resources to tackling it. She was keen to see Operation Soteria operationalised through the National Operating Model as quickly as possible, adding that there would be specialist RASSO teams to complement the model. The Online Safety Bill would also better protect women and girls from unacceptable and disproportionate abuse online.
25. **DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE MAGGIE BLYTH: NPCC LEAD FOR VAWG**, welcomed the inclusion of VAWG in the SPR which she said allowed the NPCC to publish a clear

threat assessment and for forces to proportionately respond. She provided some examples of where there were still issues to overcome, such as victim attrition in domestic violence cases, as a result of time spent waiting for a conclusion and the lack of support for victims. Specialist victim services such as Independent Domestic Violence Advisers were needed which would allow police officers to carry out their roles. She updated on work being done about online harm such as placing more pressure on regulators including OFCOM to do more and the creation of a technology board bringing together industry experts. Going forward, she said there had been significant investment in this area and she would be working closely with the Metropolitan police on developing a template to identify the top 100 perpetrators of VAWG in a given area. **RACHEL SWANN** supported the work done by **MAGGIE BLYTH**, in bringing all forces together to get the same standards across forces. She agreed that a robust response to VAWG was needed and the need to concentrate on improving performance.

26. **SIR MARK ROWLEY** accepted that the Metropolitan police has challenges which they have been criticised for, but rapid progress was now being made on RASSO prosecutions, with 465 additional police officers brought in. He said that teams were working hard on stalking and harassment as it was known to be a precursor to serious domestic violence which was resulting in a decrease in murders. Systematic work on predatory men had been challenging due to the high volume of numbers they were dealing with. He said that the Metropolitan police were going to focus on the top 100 men who had aggregated serious crimes in the last few years. He said there were links to counter terrorism in that counter terrorism offenders often had a domestic violence history and felt there was scope for collaboration with counter terrorism partners. Whilst reactive work was underway, he acknowledged that more proactive work was necessary.
27. **MATT JUKES: HEAD OF UK COUNTER TERRORISM POLICING** said that investment in counter terrorism was helping. He reported that they were reviewing the top 100 list referred to and cross-referencing against intelligence they had on the offenders identified. Intrusive and covert tactics to tackle terrorist activity continue to develop and be strengthened, and further work was underway looking at how these approaches could be applied to VAWG, particularly in the context of the Online Safety Bill. He said there would still be “lawful, awful posts” but they would breach terms of use of social media and welcomed the opportunity to engage on the Bill.
28. **CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT HARVI KHATKAR: VICE PRESIDENT OF THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**, said she was supportive of the work being done but raised the issue of police officer health, wellbeing and burnout. Investigating the top 100 required a look at police forces’ IT capability to ensure information could be shared consistently between forces.
29. **GRAEME BIGGAR** reported that just over one per cent of the UK population posed an online sexual threat to children. There was a huge amount of peer-to-peer offending and he was beginning to see evidence of offending as a teenager leading to violence against women and girls as an adult. He considered that being a female victim as a teenager led to an increased likelihood of being a victim of violence as an adult, a driver for this being

the internet. He advised that work was needed with tech companies as they moved to end to end encryption, which meant that abuse could happen out of sight.

30. **ANDY MARSH** updated that the College of Policing's VAWG Code of Practice is being drafted and that he was exploring the accreditation of officers and staff dealing with VAWG cases to raise standards. He felt that training would make a difference to those being supported and was what the public expected.
31. **SARAH DINES MP: THE MINISTER FOR SAFEGUARDING**, expressed concern about getting the training through to police officers. There were too many training packages on offer and they needed to be more uniform on a national level. She said the Police Uplift Programme provided additional officers to policing so there was an opportunity to upskill more officers on VAWG issues. She was concerned that police officers did not understand all forms of VAWG, including stalking and felt clarity was needed on how to move forward.
32. **ACTION: NPCC, NCA and MPS to continue working together to maximise opportunities through top 100 offenders approach and connecting CT offences to RASSO.**
33. **ACTION: NPCC to provide an update on how they are capitalising on the measures from the online safety bill.**

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

34. The **HOME SECRETARY** said that anti-social behaviour is a priority for the Prime Minister. There is a perception that lower harm behaviours that constitute anti-social behaviour are not being taken seriously by the police. She said that the police must address this issue by being in the right place at the right time to visibly respond to these incidents. The Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan was published on 27th March, accompanied by around £110 million over two years in funding to PCCs to increase police and other uniformed presence in key ASB hotspots and to support the provision of Immediate Justice. The **HOME SECRETARY** said she was grateful to the 16 PCCs who would be piloting the two schemes from July ahead of the wider rollout across England and Wales from next year.
35. **RACHEL SWANN** said her force was in receipt of this funding and tackling ASB was a priority for her. She said that as the perception of ASB remained high it was vital to collate metrics so there was a need to look at how incidents were recorded. There were plans across policing to look at how to deliver the ASB Action plan and use evidence obtained on patrol, to best utilise existing resource and inform work with partners to support neighbourhood policing.
36. **ANDY MARSH** outlined the support the College of Policing had provided on ASB. In March the Safer Streets toolkit which included useful information on ASB was launched

and there was guidance available on neighbourhood policing. By July, an interactive guide would be delivered, backed up with videos and how-to guides. There were further plans, he said, to develop a professionalising neighbourhood policing programme which would provide all the practical skills that mattered most to individual communities to solve ASB. He added that the ASB Action Plan had partnership at its heart so other agencies needed to work with the policing sector. **SIR MARK** added that investment in CCTV was needed and that the voice of the Home Secretary and Prime Minister would encourage other partners to act.

- 37. ALISON HERNANDEZ** assured that PCCs had ASB in their Police and Crime Plans but felt that people were used to seeing ASB, tolerated it more and didn't report it. She felt communities needed to be intolerant of ASB and PCCs were assisting through youth work and victim support. In her view, the PCC's community leadership role should work alongside local councillors. **FESTUS AKINBUSOYE** said that in Bedfordshire, they were seeing the highest numbers of officers ever. With this increase in resource, he could ensure there was an increased focus on neighbourhood policing, where officers were placed to respond to ASB incidents.
- 38. ANDY COOKE** felt that more consistency was needed as ASB is poorly recorded. He was clear that tackling ASB was not just about the police being visible, but also being effective. **JAE SAMANT CBE: DIRECTOR GENERAL, PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP** added that a measure of success would be increased reporting of ASB but warned that initially the results would be uncomfortable to see.
- 39. MINISTER PHILP** said it was the PCC's role to involve local partners. Intervention with young people, he said, would be an opportunity to divert individuals before the behaviour became worse. It was important to demonstrate a low level of tolerance to ASB to make the public feel safe.
- 40. The HOME SECRETARY** acknowledged that solving ASB was not exclusively for the police and that other partners had a key role to play. She announced her intention to ban nitrous oxide and felt cannabis, the use of which had become normalised, was connected to ASB. The police have the power to stop and search for cannabis and further reflection was needed on what more could be done. The use of Immediate Justice would demonstrate to the public that ASB was not tolerated. She noted that visibility was part of the ASB Action Plan and it was for police chiefs to decide where extra resource should be deployed to ensure the best possible response to ASB.
- 41. ACTION: NPCC and the Home Office to explore with members what more can be done to tackle cannabis use and develop effective neighbourhood policing.**
- 42. ACTION: All relevant attendees to continue to promote and enact the ASB Action Plan commitments.**

43. ACTION: The NPCC and APCC to encourage the sharing of promising ASB practice across forces and highlight to the College of Policing and the Home Office.

AOB

44. None

Closing

45. THE HOME SECRETARY concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their contributions.