



Home Office

National Policing Board Minutes 18 October 2023

Title of meeting	National Policing Board
Date	18th October 2023
Time	10:00 – 11:45
Venue	2 Marsham Street
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
- Jaee Samant CBE: Director General, Public Safety Group
- Shaun Hipgrave: Director, Protect, Prepare, CRBRNE S&T, Homeland Safety Group
- Gavin Stephens: Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- Sir Mark Rowley QPM: Commissioner, Metropolitan Police
- Donna Jones: Chair, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)
- David Sidwick: Police and Crime Commissioner, Dorset
- Andy Marsh QPM: Chief Executive Officer, College of Policing
- Lee Freeman KPM: HM Inspector of Constabulary & HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
- Graeme Biggar: Director General, National Crime Agency (NCA)
- Tom Whiting: Interim Director General, Independent Office for Police Conduct
- Rachel Watson: Policing Director, Public Safety Group
- Caroline Hart: Deputy Director, Drugs Supply and County Lines, Public Safety Group
- Marcus Starling: Deputy Director, Drug Misuse, Public Safety Group

Special invitees

- Harvi Khatkar: Chief Superintendent, Vice President of the Police Superintendents' Association
- Steve Hartshorn: National Chair, Police Federation of England and Wales
- Amanda Blakeman: Chief Constable of North Wales Police and NPCC Lead for Serious Organised and Acquisitive Crime
- Dr Richard Lewis: Chief Constable Dyfed-Powys Police and NPCC Lead for Drugs

Welcome and introduction

1. **THE RT HON SUELLA BRAVERMAN KC MP: HOME SECRETARY** opened by expressing how grateful she was to police officers, particularly firearms officers for the job they do. She explained that the review of the current framework and processes in place regarding law and practice was to provide the police and public with clarity and confidence in the police accountability system relating to police use of force and police driving related incidents. The review is expected to report back by the end of the year. She was grateful to those who had provided valuable input into the dismissals review which had been published in September.
2. **THE HOME SECRETARY** reiterated that she and the Prime Minister wanted everything done to stop small boat crossings. Through an intensified campaign across law enforcement, efforts are focused on achieving maximum disruption for next season. HMICFRS is working closely with the Home Office and policing sector partners on a thematic inspection which should be commissioned this autumn.
3. **THE HOME SECRETARY** thanked members for their hard work making the Board a success which she wanted to build on and would keep members engaged on potential changes to how it operates.

Update on Actions

4. **ANDY MARSH QPM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, COLLEGE OF POLICING**, provided an update on the progress made by forces on implementing the new leadership standards. The leadership plan levels 1-5 had been published. There would soon be over 150 qualified Chief Officers of which over 47% were female and over 10% were from a minority ethnic background. The College had gone live with the fast track Inspector to Superintendent Programme and were on the 9th cohort for the Constable to Inspector Programme. On the 4th entry route, guidance had been issued on delivery of the 16-week training course with a number of forces putting themselves forward to pioneer it. **THE RT HON CHRIS PHILP MP, MINISTER FOR CRIME, POLICING AND FIRE** agreed to have a further conversation with **ANDY MARSH** to discuss concerns raised about the impact of the apprenticeship levy. **GAVIN STEPHENS: CHAIR, NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF'S COUNCIL** updated that Chief Constables were happy with progress made and that a new working group was in place which had met to agree the terms of reference for the leadership thematic inspection, which was likely to commence in Spring 2024.
5. **GAVIN STEPHENS** said that work continued to progress on the Code of Ethics covering staff networks.
6. **THE HOME SECRETARY** updated that the Online Safety Bill had completed all stages of the Parliamentary process and would be a real tool for the police in tackling fraud and sexual abuse. Supporting guidance was expected to be drafted in 2024. **MINISTER**

PHILP added that OFCOM were currently drafting the Codes of Practice and it was key that everybody with an interest engaged. **GRAEME BIGGAR: DIRECTOR GENERAL, NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY** agreed the importance of this and offered to feed in on behalf of everyone.

7. **THE HOME SECRETARY** felt that whilst good progress had been made on the hotspot policing pilots, more focus was needed on Immediate Justice. She understood the challenges the policing sector faced working with some partners and was keen to explore what more the Home Office could do to support and maximize the extra funding and resource in place. **GAVIN STEPHENS** said it was key to get buy-in from health and other local partners. **DAVID SIDWICK: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER, DORSET** said he found that Immediate Justice was seen as only a criminal sanction therefore there was no local partner support using it for young people and it would be good to have some flexibility on the interventions. **DONNA JONES: CHAIR, ASSOCIATION OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS** informed the Board that the APCC were writing a best practice paper for the **HOME SECRETARY** to help speed up progress on Immediate Justice.
8. **ACTION: Minister Philp to discuss the apprenticeship levy with the APCC and the College of Policing.**
9. **ACTION: Members to coordinate efforts to make representations to OFCOM on the content of the Codes of Practice following the Online Safety Bill.**
10. **ACTION: All members to consider actions to strengthen partnership working on ASB.**

Crime and Policing Priorities

Protest and disorder related to the Israel-Hamas conflict

11. **THE HOME SECRETARY** thanked policing partners for their handling of protests related to the Israel-Hamas conflict which had seen 30,000 people take to the streets in London with many more protests around the country. She had written to Chief Constables and encouraged a robust, zero-tolerance approach on this matter. She said that communities needed to feel safe and in anticipation of the Israel-Hamas conflict developing, there was a need to look at policing resource and approach with communities. Community outreach was good, with the Jewish community expressing their gratitude to the police for their proactive engagement. **GAVIN STEPHENS** reported that Operation TARLAC was doing great work and there was an additional international component covering plans for repatriation. **SIR MARK ROWLEY** reported that anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim crime had increased and was likely to become more challenging particularly as they considered the boundaries between public order, hate crime and terrorist offences.

Reasonable lines of enquiry, Combatting shoplifting and Increasing use of facial recognition

- 12. MINISTER PHILP** said that following the reasonable lines of enquiry announcement on 28th August, HMICFRS would incorporate the commitment into their regular round of PEEL inspections and that it would be included within their thematic inspection on Investigations next year to ensure that every force had fully implemented this. He noted that **AMANDA BLAKEMAN: CHIEF CONSTABLE OF NORTH WALES POLICE AND NPCC LEAD FOR SERIOUS ORGANISED AND ACQUISITIVE CRIME**, had almost finished developing a Shoplifting Plan to address the spike in shoplifting offences and this was due to be launched very soon. Facial Recognition technology had developed such that even blurry images could be matched and he urged the processing of images obtained for example from doorbells, dashcams and CCTV through the Police National Database (PND) facial recognition system. He felt that data showing the percentages of victim-based crimes that resulted in a successful outcome by force was overall lower than it should be and there was significant variation between forces which needed addressing.
- 13. LEE FREEMAN: HM INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY & HM INSPECTOR OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE** said that the thematic inspection on investigations would commence from March 2024 and that only 50% of forces had implemented recommendations from the last thematic inspection. Whilst the College's Authorised Professional Practice provided clear guidance and some forces were improving investigative planning, things were still not where they needed to be.
- 14. AMANDA BLAKEMAN** said that Chiefs' Council had discussed the collective response to attendance at shoplifting. They had agreed police officers would prioritise attending in person where there was violence, where an offender had been detained or where attendance as needed to collect evidence. It was known that offenders travelled so it was important to use the national facial recognition system on PND. She said prolific offenders were causing significant harm and many had social, drugs and alcohol issues which needed to be tackled working alongside offender management teams. She said there was a commitment to working with retailers and combining intelligence to tackle Organised Crime Gangs who were damaging the economy and putting people out of business. She said that work was underway to publish shop theft guidelines. **DAVID SIDWICK** highlighted that other retail outlets were reselling stolen goods and that Local Authorities needed to support revoking licences of retailers. **MINISTER PHILP** said a zero-tolerance approach needed to be taken to shoplifting and reiterated that images should be searched on PND not just through local force databases.
- 15. DONNA JONES** raised concern about the Lord Chancellor's announcement of a presumption against sending offenders to prison for 12 months or less. **GAVIN STEPHENS** added that there should be a mechanism to make representations on prosecution files on offenders posing a danger to communities. **MINISTER PHILP** noted

the concerns and said he would engage with the Ministry of Justice regarding prolific offenders from a policing perspective and the implications around the recent announcement.

Rollout of National Partnership Agreement and the Right Care Right Person (RCRP) model

16. THE HOME SECRETARY said that if the RCRP model was implemented correctly, one million hours could be saved, getting police officers out of hospital waiting rooms and responding to crime. She expressed concern about the reluctance of health partners to get onboard and wanted to ensure that the national agreement was not lost on the ground. She said that key to success was demonstrating the hours saved and the example provided by Humberside should be replicated nationwide. **GAVIN STEPHENS** noted that the NHS and Department for Health and Social Care had drafted guidance and were consulting on it, but this meant a number of weeks had passed without any guidance to local partners on RCRP. **MINISTER PHILP** said that he would engage with the Health Minister on this and request an update on their guidance, which was due before the end of the year. **SIR MARK** said that the Metropolitan police would go live in two weeks which had pushed health colleagues into action but noted the lack of response from Local Authorities. They would be clear where an incident is not for the police but accepted there would be cases that they would attend such as where someone was in crisis and threatening another person. **THE HOME SECRETARY** assured attendees that police forces would have Ministerial backing to implement RCRP including if there were ongoing challenges with implementation plans with partners at the local level. **STEVE HARTSHORN** cautioned that police officers would be criticised when they walked away and whilst they had well-being officers in place, it was crucial to get backing through all senior leads and called for understanding by the IOPC about an officer's remit.

Deployability – managing down sickness and limited duties

17. MINISTER PHILP said there was a need to manage people back to work noting there were significant variations by force and that the Home Office would be doing some further work on this. **GAVIN STEPHENS** said there were complex, outdated regulations to navigate also noting the difficulty in police officers working as police staff. He underlined how the service had been struggling with increased demands over the last ten years but there was lots of good work being done to support police officers such as the Police Covenant. **LEE FREEMAN** said that sickness levels were considered as part of PEEL inspections, however they were not taking into account those on restricted duty or recuperating and would look into this.

18. ACTION: NPCC to regularly report on implementation of the reasonable lines of enquiry commitment ahead of HMICFRS' thematic including on metric. NPCC to discuss further with APCC and HMICFRS.

- 19.ACTION: NPCC and College of Policing to continue working closely with the Home Office to scale up law enforcement use of facial recognition.**
- 20.ACTION: The APCC to encourage PCCs to establish Business Crime Reduction Partnerships, to enhance the local response to shoplifting.**
- 21.ACTION: NPCC to work with forces to understand local implementation of Right Care Right Person and raise with the Home Office where there is a lack of co-operation with partners.**
- 22.ACTION: Forces to be encouraged to follow the NPCC and College of Policing guidance on baselining data in order to measure the impact of changes following RCRP.**
- 23.ACTION: NPCC and College of Policing to continue to produce national guidance and E-Learning on RCRP. Minister Philp will raise with Minister Caulfield the progress on health and social care guidance.**
- 24.ACTION: APCC to roll out a tool to support PCCs in helping implementation of RCRP at the local level.**
- 25.ACTION: Minister Philp to host a roundtable exploring police deployability and to report findings to the Productivity Review team to inform the implementation phase of the Review.**
- 26.ACTION: HMICFRS to work with officials to explore any additional data available relating to police deployability.**

Ten-year Drugs Strategy

27. THE HOME SECRETARY acknowledged there was lots of good work being done through the ambitious ten-year drugs strategy. She was keen to see a change in approach to cannabis with risk of public perception of its use as socially acceptable allied with a lack of understanding of its harms; last year around 2.5 million people were estimated to have used cannabis. She felt very strongly that it was tackled given links to mental health issues and crime. She noted that around half of all homicides were drug related and heroin and crack cocaine addiction drove nearly half of all acquisitive crimes. She said that plans were in place to manage the risk of synthetic opioids becoming widely prevalent in the UK drugs market. **MINISTER PHILP** outlined how critical it is to get people into drug treatment and although there had been investment in treatment places, more could be done to encourage take up. He thanked **DR RICHARD LEWIS: CHIEF CONSTABLE DYFED-POWYS POLICE AND NPCC LEAD FOR DRUGS** for the work to develop a police-led referrals into drug treatment plan to address this issue, which would include making greater use of drug testing on arrest to refer individuals into support services.

- 28. GRAEME BIGGAR** assured the Board that managing the risk of synthetic opioids is a top priority and outlined the work being done. There is a need to understand and spot the increases in their supply early on and improve testing capacity and capability.
- 29. DR RICHARD LEWIS** noted recent drug related deaths associated with synthetic opioids. Naloxone was being carried by 18 forces and national guidance on this would be provided. Following additional funding to forces to expand their use of drug testing on arrest and to support forces to test for a greater range of offences using 'Inspector's Authority', anecdotal links are emerging between individuals arrested for domestic abuse related offences and cocaine misuse. He reported that over a tonne of cannabis was being seized per week and a Cannabis Plan was being drafted.
- 30. STEVE HARSTHORN** raised concern about his members being asked to administer Naloxone to members of the public and the potential for police officers to be held liable should there be an adverse outcome following use. **MINISTER PHILP** said that officers should be supported to carry and administer Naloxone, and guidance should reflect that and address the issue of individual responsibility and risk.
- 31. ACTION:** The Home Office to develop a Tackling Cannabis plan, to be discussed at the next National Policing Board (January 2024), or sooner, if appropriate.
- 32. ACTION:** NPCC to continue to work to ensure police readiness for synthetic opioids, including working towards a commitment to roll out of Naloxone to all frontline officers by the end of March 2024, whilst maintaining momentum tackling wider drugs supply and county lines.
- 33. ACTION:** Border Force and Home Office Intelligence to continue enhanced synthetic drugs testing at the border.
- 34. ACTION:** The NCA and Home Office Intelligence to consider engagement with source and transit countries on tackling synthetic drugs supply.
- 35. ACTION:** NPCC to ensure all forces apply the commitment to pursue all reasonable lines of enquiry to drug use and possession.
- 36. ACTION:** The NCA and policing to work with the Home Office to develop an outcome-focused performance measure for tackling drugs organised crime groups.
- 37. ACTION:** NPCC to work with police forces to increase their efforts on referrals into drug treatment.
- 38. ACTION:** HMICFRS to consider incorporating drugs into the PEEL inspection framework.

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39. MINISTER PHILP thanked members for the work done on the Police Uplift Programme. He assured them that the intention was to establish funding arrangements for the next financial year to ensure that forces are funded to maintain officer numbers and details would be set out in the Provisional Police Funding Settlement in December.

Closing

40. MINISTER PHILP remarked on how the meeting had focussed on delivering results. He reiterated how powerful the facial recognition tool was and that the use of retrospective facial recognition was underused and needed to be pushed as it could have a transformative effect. **LEE FREEMAN** reminded the Board that custody images needed to be held lawfully which would protect public support. **MINISTER PHILP** said that image retention and policy options in this area were being explored.