

17th September 2021

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys response to
State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England
and Wales 2020**

I have read your report with interest and wished to express my support for some of the points you raise.

"While policing the pandemic presented some difficulties for the service, in many respects, its response was exemplary."

As I expressed in my response to both the policing in the pandemic and custody services in a Covid-19 environment, it is encouraging that Her Majesty's Inspectorate recognised the police service's dedication, commitment and adaptability throughout the pandemic.

During April last year, myself and the Chief Constable submitted a joint response to a call for evidence by the Home Affairs Committee regarding the Home Office preparedness for Covid-19. Within it, we highlighted the challenges Dyfed-Powys Police in particular were facing as a result of the confusing and late minute guidance being issued from central Government, which was often at odds with advice and decisions being made by devolved administrations.

"We have each as independent chief inspectors commented in the past on the risks of chronic and systemic under-resourcing across the CJS. As a chief inspectors' group, we now consider that Covid-19 has resulted in these risks becoming critical"

"While the criminal justice system is not a single system, it needs to work like one. Without corresponding capacity increases, the prosecution, prison and probation services may not be able to cope."

I concur with these comments – ones which I have echoed on a number of occasions, one such time included my evidence submitted to the Commission on Justice in Wales in 2018.

As chair of the Dyfed-Powys Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), which is made up of those key partner agencies who work in the criminal justice system, including the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts, prisons,

probation services and youth offending teams, I report to the All-Wales Criminal Justice Board on a regular basis. During the pandemic, a recovery cell was established focusing particularly on victim and witness issues such as the impact of the courts backlog. The Dyfed-Powys area was one of the first in Wales to deal with the Covid backlog in Magistrates Courts. The group continues to meet monthly to discuss progress with Crown Courts.

Maintaining public confidence in the efficiency of the criminal justice system is a key consideration for the LCJB. The Criminal Justice System has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, the Board considered their collective business continuity arrangements and any actions which were required to address emerging risks.

Together with Police and Crime Commissioner colleagues across Wales, I am supporting Welsh Government in the development of a number of justice blueprints in Wales, including for Female offending, Youth offending and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

"Too many children and young people, as well as their parents, families and carers, had found that they had to navigate a complex system that did not place them and their needs at its heart."

This is an area I feel most passionate about, and undertake a number of activities in support of improving services for young people.

In 2018, I established my Youth Forum, designed to create opportunities for young people to get involved in and influence decisions that impact them. Their work so far has been very effective, with their most recent activity resulting in a training video sharing young people's experiences of police contact aimed at breaking barriers and preconceptions between young people and the Police.

During 2019/20 I awarded a total of £52,997 across the Force area to support projects including youth diversion programmes to reduce antisocial behaviour, target hardening in areas hit by rural crime and outreach projects tackling substance misuse related crime in deprived areas.

I have also provided Youth Offending and Prevention managers with approximately £180,000 per annum of funding towards their prevention work over the past 3 years.

My Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel independently assessed, scrutinises and quality controls the use of out of court disposals by Dyfed-Powys Police. Part of their work includes reviewing how child suspects' individual needs are responded to, in order to support the young person from becoming further involved in criminal activity. I am aware that Dyfed-Powys Police are undertaking significant work in relation to a child-centred approach to policing, including working closely with care homes, missing people, night-time economy and other organisations to raise awareness of the signs of exploitation and vulnerability. I look forward to further supporting interventions of this nature through my forthcoming Police and Crime Plan.

"For policing to be effective, the other public services must also be as efficient and effective as possible. If they are not, many more people may be drawn to crime, enter into cycles of offending, become victims, and lose confidence in policing."

I wish to highlight my concern regarding the Government's Beating Crime Plan that was published at the end of July. While I welcome the Government's focus on crime, I am unconvinced whatsoever with the objectives of the plan for several reasons.

It is an ambitious and far reaching plan that does not take cognisance of the current demands on policing and capacity of forces to be able to deliver the objectives. The plan is very broad and moves towards dealing with volume crime as opposed to prioritising threat, risk and harm.

The intention to introduce a performance comparison framework such as league tables, will not reflect or acknowledge the differentiations between police forces in terms of local needs.

Reference to serious violence within this plan for example are linked to the knives, guns and the drugs market, controlled by gangs, while the significant cause of our violent crime in Dyfed-Powys is domestic related. The Beating crime plan does not differentiate between the two types.

I cannot see that the Government's plan will add value to what we already have in place here in Dyfed-Powys under the leadership of myself and the Chief Constable, and I fear that the funding they note will focus



on national priorities, that are generally consistent to urban problems as opposed to rural community needs here in Dyfed-Powys.

My thanks to you and your team for once again articulating the vital matters impacting on policing.