



27th July 2022

Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys response to

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the criminal justice system – a progress report

I am confident that Dyfed-Powys Police responded efficiently and robustly to the challenges of the pandemic. Progress is being made to not only return services to 'pre-pandemic' levels, but to innovatively provide options that had not been considered prior to the crisis. It is encouraging that Her Majesty's Inspectorate recognised this:

"While there are still many issues as a result of the impact of the pandemic, we have seen instances where the pandemic has brought about a greater degree of strategic thinking, across agencies, about the challenges that Covid-19 presented."

As Chair of the Dyfed-Powys Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), I was encouraged by the effective partnership working throughout the pandemic that resulted in the Dyfed-Powys area being one of the first in Wales to deal with the Covid backlog in Magistrates courts.

The Dyfed-Powys LCJB works closely with the Criminal Justice in Wales Coordinator to ensure alignment of priorities. A reporting structure has been agreed to ensure that Dyfed-Powys highlights positive progress on national and local activity as well as escalates areas of concern/risk where required.

The report notes:

"We also found that many of the challenges had clearly already been there prior to the pandemic, and that underfunding and previous structural problems had been exacerbated by the pandemic. Working from home had had an impact on wellbeing for some people and service users had had considerably less face-to-face access to criminal justice agencies"

Throughout the pandemic my Director of Commissioning held regular meetings with all commissioned services to monitor the impact of the Covid-19 crisis. Weekly returns to the Ministry of Justice (as funding providers) were submitted to ensure they were kept updated of the status of services in Dyfed-Powys.

All but one of my commissioned services were able to operate remotely via phone and email or by limiting face-to-face support to only the highest risk cases. Service user feedback has been extremely positive regarding the changed landscape of service support and clients are actually talking more freely and disclosing more via virtual methods than previously via face-to-face. Clients appeared to welcome the flexibility that the pandemic brought about.



Having only been awarded approximately 25% of our total requested funding from the Ministry of Justice, it has been necessary to re-prioritise to maximise what we are able to achieve from a reduced funding allocation. Whilst funding in this area remains a concern, it is hugely important to me that those in need can access the services they require, when they require it. To that end, I have recently secured £271,000 of additional Ministry of Justice funding that will go towards increasing and strengthening support services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. In addition I have also secured funding of £30,882 for a Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor.

I will continue to ensure that Dyfed-Powys Police works closely with all partner agencies to deliver services and to ensure that the impacts of the pandemic are not felt in the long term and that the positives are carried forward.