



4th September 2023

Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys response to:

An inspection of how effective police forces are in the deployment of firearms.

The fieldwork inspection took place between November 2022 and January 2023 and Dyfed-Powys Police was one of the nine inspected, which included looking at its joint arrangements with Gwent Police and South Wales Police to provide armed policing as part of the Joint Firearms Unit (JFU).

The Joint Firearms Unit (JFU) was established in 2012, with firearms officers based at several locations ready for deployment to incidents across the three force areas involved. The collaboration improves service delivery by sharing resources to enhance capability and capacity. A consistent and extensive training programme is delivered to firearms officers and Commanders throughout Dyfed-Powys, Gwent, and South Wales Police. The JFU provides increased access to resources whilst creating savings through training delivery and shared equipment costs.

The recommendations put forward by HMICFRS will hopefully make headway in the effective deployment of firearms. Where there is a role for PCCs to have influence and positive action, I welcome these recommendations and will continue to monitor the Force's progress.

Eight recommendations within the report were specific to Police Forces.

Recommendation 2

By 31 July 2024, chief constables should make sure there is access to both specialist strategic firearms commanders and specialist tactical firearms commanders, through a 24-hour rota covering their region.

I have been reassured that the JFU has a specialist tactical firearms commander rota ensuring 24/7 coverage. This is also supplemented by a Specialist Strategic Firearms Commander call-out feature.

Recommendation 3

By 31 October 2023, all chief constables should make sure the armed response vehicle asset tracking equipment, as provided by Counter Terrorism Policing, is available and used in their forces. They should train relevant staff in its use.

The OPCC has been informed that the JFU is reviewing the matter and I will work with PCC counterparts to seek an update through our collaboration oversight arrangements.



Recommendation 5

By 31 December 2023, all chief constables should make sure that all strategic and tactical firearms commanders have observed the firearms tactics and the use of specialist munitions they can authorise, before being operationally deployed.

I will monitor that this work is undertaken by this deadline. The JFU has staff who are available to provide training as outlined in the recommendation.

At present, the JFU film the tactics which are delivered on command courses, and the tactical firearms commander course has a structured video describing the tactics.

Recommendation 6

By 31 December 2023, chief constables should make sure that the annual accreditation process for strategic and tactical firearms commanders includes familiarisation with any new weapons systems and observation of any new tactics or specialist munitions the force has introduced or is planning to introduce.

My office has been assured that this is already in place within the JFU.

Recommendation 7

By 31 October 2023, the regional armed policing lead should share armed policing exercises with the National Armed Policing Portfolio. This would allow opportunities for learning to be identified and shared.

The JFU is a regional entity where they exercise with a licenced training provider and work with Operation Protect, Senedd and British Transport Police as required or as directed nationally.

The OPCC understands that the JFU is making arrangements to ensure that the Armed Policing Strategic Lead is made aware of any regional exercises taking place so that they can inform the National Armed Policing Meeting.

Recommendation 8

With immediate effect, each assistant chief constable regional firearms lead should attend all National Armed Policing Portfolio meetings. If they are unable to attend, they should make sure another assistant chief constable armed policing lead from a force in their region attends on their behalf.



The OPCC is aware that through the JFU there is an agreement with National Armed Policing that if the Assistant Chief Constable portfolio holder cannot attend, the JFU lead will attend in their absence. As an exception, another Assistant Chief Constable from the region will be made available to attend.

Recommendation 10

With immediate effect, chief constables should improve senior officer oversight of their armouries, including an independent annual audit.

My office has been informed that the JFU undertake regular audits within all armouries owned by the JFU. My office will seek assurance from the Chief Constable on escalation processes for audit recommendations.

Recommendation 12

With immediate effect, chief constables, through their armed policing governance structure, should make sure that all armed deployment records are stored and auditable.

The JFU uses a system to maintain all records, training, armoury and operations. This includes in-depth operational data regarding deployments undertaken by the JFU. Each deployment (dated back to 2012) is recorded on the system and kept for easy retrieval and audit.

Auditing of records takes place as part of the firearms licensing process.

The JFU has a permanent Business Support Unit which inputs all deployment data. My office is also aware that the JFU Business Support team has responsibility for data quality (with a specifically appointed role of an assurance officer for this purpose).

Whilst I am satisfied with Dyfed-Powys Police's deployment of firearms, I will follow up the recommendations from this report with the Chief Constable and colleagues in Gwent and South Wales in due course, to seek assurance that progress continues to be made.