

**Written evidence submitted jointly by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Dyfed-Powys and the Chief Constable (CC) of Dyfed-Powys Police (COR0090)**

***Background***

1. The area served by Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) is geographically the largest police force area in England and Wales, covering 52% of the landmass of Wales. According to the last Census data (2011), the resident population of the four counties served by DPP was 515,114. Almost half of these are aged 45 and over and 22% are over 65. The area is predominately rural, with a few localised areas of dense urban population. There is a vibrant tourist industry, with summer drawing large numbers of tourists to the area.
2. This response, prepared jointly as the PCC and CC are working closely together in their organisations' response to COVID-19, has been submitted to provide the Committee with a view from our unique perspective – as a non-devolved service operating within a devolved landscape, and with the challenge of policing a popular destination for those flouting the movement restrictions in search of picturesque seclusion.

***How police and fire and rescue service business continuity plans are being designed to best safeguard the public and emergency service workers.***

3. The Force level and individual business area BC plans are used to assist in the recovery of services provided by DPP and the Commissioner's office in the event of a major disruption to policing services.
4. The plans set out the roles, responsibilities and actions to be taken to deliver and maintain the service following a major disruption to a minimum acceptable level until there is a return to normal. The Policing Commanders / Business Area leads are responsible for managing any disruption to their area of business, as well as keeping plans updated. They are supported by their nominated BC contacts and Senior Leadership Teams, plus the relevant shared service teams required.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg yn golygu oediad.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh or English will not lead to a delay.

5. The Force Risk and Business Continuity Management Advisor co-ordinates the Force BC capability and reinforces the importance of awareness training for staff, to ensure they all know what to do and who will be involved. Exercises are carried out periodically, and at least annually when the plan is reviewed, to ensure key staff who would be involved when a plan is invoked have confidence that the plan will work.
6. In a major or critical incident, or when significant disruption has been identified, the on-duty Gold Commander has the responsibility to activate the BC plan (Force or local level), based upon the nature of the disruption. During the Coronavirus outbreak, DPP has activated its BC plans at a strategic level, as well as in some business areas, such as business support functions and the Force Communication Centre. These areas have needed to activate due to loss of office space via social distancing or repurposing, and IT equipment availability for those needing to isolate. Operational policing continues to function as usual at the current time as their staffing levels remain adequate to deal with the incoming demand for deployment.
7. The critical service deliverables identified by the Business Impact Analysis are summarised as: being able to answer emergency calls for service; dispatch resources to deal with the situation; and having effective technical and specialist support for such deployment.
8. In order to introduce social distancing and increase the resilience of the call handling and dispatch capability, the Force Communication Centre has been divided across 3 separate locations in Police Headquarters. Call handling training has been expedited and any current personnel in the organisation with call handling experience have been redeployed into the Communication Centre. Where possible, support staff are working from home or within offices with strict social distancing. Some staff have been redeployed to alternative roles or cancelled annual leave to facilitate this and ensure the most critical functions are appropriately covered.
9. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has and continues to be provided to frontline personnel who are unable to undertake social distancing or are at risk of coming into contact with individuals with the virus. Processes have also been put in place in custody suites to ensure symptomatic detainees are appropriately cared for and the risk of spreading the virus is minimised. These include enhanced and more frequent cleaning, contingency locations and additional risk assessments prior to admitting a detainee into the suite. In order to reduce the number of people entering custody, face-to-face Independent Custody Visiting has been suspended (replaced by remote record reviewing undertaken by the OPCC) and solicitors are using tele-

conferencing. When Appropriate Adults are required to attend, they are provided with PPE.

***What trade-offs will have to be made by police if a significant number of officers are unable to work at any given time, and the potential impact of those decisions.***

10. In line with the Force mission statement under the BC Plan, should officers numbers be adversely be affected by the pandemic crisis, the following key operational functions would be maintained:

- providing effective communications with the public;
- answering all 999 calls and providing an appropriate response to immediate and priority incidents; and
- the ability to deal with:
  - major, critical and emergency incidents, including firearms incidents, serious crime or public order;
  - protecting vulnerable people; and
  - fatal and serious road traffic collisions; and
  - matters which impact upon community cohesion or the credibility and reputation of the Force.

11. This would be achieved through the following:

- support and governance to deal with operational challenges to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff;
- the provision of custody facilities and associated criminal justice functions;
- effective command and control of incidents;
- maintaining a cadre of officers with specialist knowledge e.g. Firearms and Critical Incident Commanders. An emergency rota, which could be introduced within 48 hours, with officers working 12 hour shifts on a four-on four-off pattern, would provide resilience in both officer numbers and specialist capability.
- time off restrictions including cancelling rest days and annual leave;
- redeploying staff to support critical roles;
- consideration of prioritising key functions. This could include limiting investigations of low-level crimes;
- short-term redeployment of identified HQ police officers to support response officers; and
- utilisation of volunteers within the community, including members of the special constabulary.

12. Where the level of service is reduced, the public's expectations would be managed through:

- effective communication through a corporate media strategy;
- providing advice to victims of crime at the point of contact; and
- continually reviewing and monitoring the progress against the mission objectives.

***How the Home Office and its major contractors are working together to ensure the safe and effective operation of contracted services is maintained, particularly where these services affect vulnerable people.***

13. The majority of services for victims in Dyfed-Powys are locally commissioned. The PCC's contact with Home Office / Ministry of Justice (MoJ) nationally contracted services has been minimal and generally provided through updates from the Association of PCCs (APCC) or MoJ regional contacts. The PCC's office has not received any feedback from Goleudy, our main service provider, with regard to any difficulty in referring victims onto Homicide or other services for example. The local arrangement between Goleudy and the national Witness Service is still working well. We continue to receive good support from Brake, who are also planning for the recovery phase in terms of bereavement support to those who have experienced grief as a result of COVID-19.

***How Police forces will support each other if mobilisation tactics, or other forms of mutual support, are compromised by the imperative to limit the possible spread of the virus.***

14. As part of the southern Wales region, Dyfed-Powys, South Wales and Gwent Police are jointly part of the Regional Mobilisation Plan dealing with mutual aid policing matters. All report into the Regional Information Coordination Centre (RICC) led by South Wales Police. The RICC in turn reports into and receives requests from the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC). NPoCC coordinate national policing mutual aid requests, whilst the RICC coordinates regional policing mutual aid requests and responds to NPoCC regarding nationally based events.
15. There is a dedicated resourcing system, Mercury, which all forces feed into giving the RICC and NPoCC immediate access to view all forces' capacity of specialist resources.
16. Mobilisation is dealt with by capacity, the initial mobilisation response is dealt with by the host force through exhausting all options including cancelling of rest days, potentially cancelling annual leave and adoption of 12 hour shifts. If, following the implementation of these measures further assistance is required, the request is escalated to the RICC and they in turn assess whether the mobilisation request can be met within the region. If

not then the request for assistance is further escalated to NPoCC for a national UK-wide (all areas from UK and PSNI) response.

***The preparedness of forces to support Local Resilience Forums during a possible civil contingencies emergency.***

17. DPP are actively involved and engaged with the Dyfed-Powys Local Resilience Forum (DPLRF). Three LRF coordinators, two civilian and one paramedic, seconded, are based at the Strategic Coordination Centre (SCC) in Police headquarters, working alongside Police civil contingency / operational planners and security coordinators. DPP has developed very good working relationships with DPLRF category 1 partners due to active engagement and participation over the last couple of years. A functional call out system has been developed by DPP, primarily to facilitate calling out of relevant LRF partners in the event of a major incident requiring the formation of a tactical coordinating or strategic coordinating group. This has now been tested and used operationally on numerous occasions, particularly in the current pandemic situation, to very good effect. DPP officers / planners sit on numerous working groups and exercises during the year developing their joint LRF working skills and making those contacts required to enable a strong relationship.

***The effectiveness of Home Office communications to its partners, responders and the wider public about its preparations.***

18. The Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office (OPCC) is responsible for being the connection between residents and the police force, as well as dealing with complaints against the Chief Constable. During the pandemic, the OPCC has been monitoring all incoming correspondence relating to COVID-19. As at 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the OPCC had received 66 such types of contact, the majority being to report a breach of the Government restrictions (31) or for advice (19), as shown in the table below.

	<b>Advice</b>	<b>Reporting Breach</b>	<b>Total</b>
Travel	10	8	<b>18</b>
Social Distancing		10	<b>10</b>
Second Homes / Holiday Rentals	1	7	<b>8</b>
Business	2	6	<b>8</b>
Animals	2		<b>2</b>
Property	2		<b>2</b>
Key Workers	1		<b>1</b>
Not Specified	1		<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>50</b>

19. In addition, whilst the volume of crime and incident reports has reduced through the pandemic, the calls received via the 101 non-emergency number has remained consistent. Calls which are not logged as incidents or crimes are likely to be requesting advice or are for other agencies, suggesting that the pandemic has led to the public requiring more advice and guidance. Dyfed-Powys Police activated elements of Single Online Home ahead of schedule in order to reduce the demand on a reduced Call-Handling workforce. This has been relatively successful in shifting the demand, however the Force now receive an average of approximately 100 emails each day. Anecdotal evidence suggests much of the increase is due to COVID-19 queries.
20. The OPCC has included useful information on its [website](#) based on communication / information available on partner websites such as the NHS and gov.uk.
21. The PCC has also made a number of pleas to the public, including:
- a press release drawing attention to the latest Government information on mental health and wellbeing during the outbreak;
  - a podcast urging people to stay home to protect the NHS;
  - a press statement calling for there to be greater sanctions for those breaching the restrictions;
22. The Commissioner has continually lobbied Ministers for access to testing for police officers and staff, including writing to the Welsh Government Deputy First Minister and all Dyfed-Powys Elected Members of UK and Welsh Parliaments at the end of March.
23. In addition to a written briefing highlighting DPP's preparedness, the PCC and CC hosted a Skype briefing for all local Assembly Members and Members of Parliament. During this, many Members raised concerns expressed to them by constituents regarding the issue of community tensions surrounding second homes, and what constituted essential travel. This highlighted that the general public's understanding was variable, however the CC and PCC were able to provide clear guidance on how DPP officers were enforcing the legislation. It is regrettable that the central Government's guidance has been slow and confusing, often at odds with advice and decisions being made by devolved administrations. An example of this has occurred just within the last few days, with the "reasonable excuses" guidance released via the National Police Chief's Council and College of Policing which covered England only and directly contradicted the Welsh Government message that travelling to exercise is not necessary. This conflicting messaging puts tourist hotspots like so many communities

in the Dyfed-Powys area on alert, raises community tensions and puts an unnecessary strain on policing.

***The prevalence of domestic abuse and child abuse these issues since the Government issued 'stay at home' guidance on 23 March.***

***Measures or proposals to help support victims of domestic abuse and child abuse at this time.***

***Measures or proposals to reduce or avert domestic abuse and child abuse at this time.***

24. The Force has continued the 'business as usual' approach in its response to domestic abuse (DA). The Force and OPCC undertake weekly monitoring of crime trends and reduction in DA cases, which shows:
- Calls to 999/101 presenting as domestic-related have remained stable over the last four months, from a high of 737 in Dec-19 and a low of 670 in February 2020. The Mar-20 figure stands at 709, showing no significant reduction.
  - Over the last 12 months, the Force has on average recorded 180 domestic incidents per week. At the start of the "lockdown", there were:
    - 132 incidents for week ending 29/03/2020 (a decrease of 38% from the average); and
    - 152 incidents last week ending 05/04/2020 (a decrease of 16%).
25. As a result of concern around the reduction, communication has been released into communities and shared with the regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) group, Regional Safeguarding Board, and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) contacts, including a podcast to signpost victims to support agencies and a detailed guidance document offering reassurance and a plethora of contact details, including the "Silent Solution (999-55)" and Live Fear Free Helpline and text number. The Chief Constable has also conducted a number of media interviews and social media videos promoting the Silent Solution and encouraging domestic abuse reporting. Specialist Domestic Abuse Officers (DAOs) are having regular liaison with support agencies and the Force is participating in a weekly DA Forum chaired by Rachel Williams, DA Survivor. DAOs also link with local DA services to identify if the current situation is impacting on their ability to provide services and remind them to refer any cases to police as they normally would.
26. Daily discussions continue to be held with key agencies, with attendance consistently high. The Regional VAWDASV multi-agency

meetings, chaired by a DCI, are now being held on a monthly basis to provide increased oversight of domestic abuse.

27. Operation Encompass (to safeguard and support those children and young people who have witnessed and/or been present at the time of a domestic abuse incident) continues during COVID-19 with maintained links with education representatives.
28. A joint approach between the four Welsh Forces has been made to the Welsh Government for a provision to house Domestic Abuse perpetrators who are bailed or served with Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as looking to improve provision of accommodation for victims or suspects displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
29. The Force has also continued the 'business as usual' approach in its response to safeguarding children and adults at risk through increased dialogue with partners. A weekly skype meeting of the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board, chaired by a D/Supt, is being held with child and adult social services senior leaders within the four Local Authorities, Health Boards, Education, Probation and Youth Justice. Meetings provide opportunities to discuss collaborative working practices and the multi-agency response to safeguarding during COVID-19. This has included:
  - Discussions around challenges and sharing of best practice that has influenced a regional approach to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable people.
  - Continued engagement with vulnerable persons within the community, albeit through alternative measures i.e. utilising digital software / implementing social distancing. Existing thresholds remain in place with additional risk assessments being conducted and PPE consideration.
  - Formation of joint working groups to develop operational guidance which has been agreed and disseminated in respect of initial child protection conferences, joint investigations and the response to Looked After Children in light of Government restrictions.
  - Multi-agency child exploitation meetings to review vulnerable children and identification of emerging trends/hotspots.
  - DPP supporting the Stop it Now campaign against Child Sexual Abuse.
  - Dialogue with the Older People's Commissioner's office to contribute to discussion to continue to safeguard older people throughout Wales. The Force has issued communication to the public around the increased risks to the elderly in particular relating to online fraud.



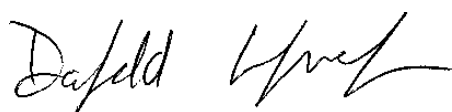
- The Force participating in a weekly Skype meeting of the Wales Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) project group so as to monitor the multi-agency response to Rape and Sexual offences.

***Preparedness of responders and service providers to address the needs of victims during the pandemic.***

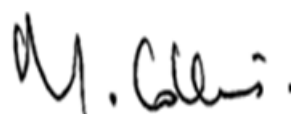
30. DPP began preparations in advance of the lockdown, establishing its Gold group early to instigate necessary changes to maintain services. Chief Officers began to socially distance from each other early in order to safeguard the command structure and minimise the likelihood of all three being incapacitated at the same time. As highlighted under question 1, Business Continuity Plans have been activated where required, however operational policing continues to function as usual and has not to this date encountered any significant staffing shortages.

31. The OPCC has been in regular contact with all its service providers since prior to the lockdown. They have provided contingency plans and have responded extremely positively and flexibly to the changing needs of victims and service delivery. All providers are offering services via telephone and other virtual methods, with clients assessed individually on a risk and vulnerability basis so that in cases where it is absolutely necessary, face to face service can still be delivered. All services have plans in place should staff numbers decrease and make existing provision levels challenging. The OPCC has also been in regular contact with the MoJ and APCC and have provided updates on service provision, along with highlighting risks where appropriate and responding to requests regarding funding and other requirements. So far none of our services are reporting red status in their service delivery or planning. Overall, demand for services has either remained stable or decreased, however this may change when we hit the peak of the impact or more so when current restrictions begin to be lifted.

Yours sincerely



**Dafydd Llywelyn**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner**



**Mark Collins QPM**  
**Chief Constable**

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