

Police Accountability and Legitimacy Group (PALG)

Police Headquarters

12 June 2019

MINUTES

Attendees

Police and Crime Commissioner's Team

Lee Jones - Chair (LJ)

Chief Executive (Interim)

Sarah Mahon (SM)

Engagement and Assurance Officer

Jackie Trow (JT)

Strategic Lead (Quality, Standards & Compliance)

South Wales Police

Chief Superintendent Phillip Ashby (PA)

Chief Inspector John Wainwright (JW)

PALG Members

Alex Drummond (AD)

Independent Advisor

Rebecca Frohwein (RF)

Hafal

Tony Hendrickson (TH)

EYST

Jasmine Jones (JJ)

Gypsy Traveller Wales

Klarina Klepere

Race Equality First

Steve Warner (SW)

Gofal

Melissa Wood (MW)

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Apologies

Hannah Jenkins-Jones

1. Minutes and Actions

LJ asked the members to review the minutes and raise any inaccuracies. TH advised that the school input being delivered by EYST was not being supported by PREVENT and asked for this to be amended.

The actions from the previous meeting were discussed and the following updates were provided:

No.	Action	Lead	Update
1	Circulate Sex Work guidance document links	Sarah Mahon	To be circulated following the meeting.
2	Explore possibility of setting up future sub groups where relevant	Hannah Jenkins-Jones	LJ advised that separate sub group sessions would be organised as appropriate and members advised.
3	Source available data on sex workers across South Wales.	Mark Vaughan	LJ advised that once the research had been received by the Commissioner's team, this would be shared with PALG. Once the data has been received and

			reviewed, this could also be a topic that PALG revisits in the future.
4	Circulate final Joint Equality Plan	Hannah Jenkins-Jones	Final amendments to the Joint Equality Plan were being applied. The intention was for the plan to be launched in the summer. Further information about this would be shared with PALG in due course.

2. Scrutiny and Accountability Board - Hate Crime Update

LJ informed members that a ‘Scrutiny and Accountability’ meeting, chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, had taken place in May. The focus of scrutiny at the meeting had primarily been on the subject of hate crime. LJ referred to the importance of PALG’s role in the Commissioner’s scrutiny model and advised that scrutiny findings and recommendations from the board meetings would be reported back to PALG.

LJ thanked PALG members for taking part in the Commissioner’s preparatory work for this scrutiny exercise survey and for their open and honest survey feedback. Views gathered from PALG, in addition to the voices and experiences from victims, had added real value to the research gathered. Following the scrutiny meeting, recommendations had been agreed, which aimed to drive forward positive change for South Wales Police in identified areas.

SM provided an overview of the research process used for the hate crime scrutiny process, which had included views from individuals who had experienced a hate crime/hate related incident and reported it to South Wales Police, as well as views from partner agencies and hate crime officers. It was evident that there were a number of re-occurring issues.

It was noted that a number of victims felt that the effects of their experiences were not always fully understood and appreciated by officers and that specialist training to improve officer understanding of the hate-related circumstances experienced by people with protected characteristics was vital. JW provided a brief update in relation to the developments of the training package being developed by the College of Policing, which was due to be shared with forces imminently. LJ informed the group that the training package would be shared with PALG members for their views and input.

SM noted the concerns of victims in relation to reporting to the police. The majority of victims said their main fears around reporting were not be taken seriously, or that reporting could escalate the issues they were experiencing. Most of the victims spoken to had experienced a number of incidents and an escalation of issues before they had finally decided to report to the police.

A number of communication barriers had also been identified by victims. This included not feeling comfortable reporting an incident to the police because of an inability to read or write, with fears about disclosing this fact to the police when giving a statement. Other victims also expressed concerns about reporting to the police due to their learning disability or speech impairment.

SM informed the group that the information and views gathered by the Commissioner’s team had been positively received by the force and that it had enabled discussions about the importance of incorporating lived experiences and the ‘victim voice’ throughout training,

service provision and communication. A set of recommendations had now been agreed, which had been broadly categorised into three distinct areas: internal communication and training, external communication and publicity, and service provision. Over the coming months, the Commissioner's team would be working with the force to take forward the recommendations.

SM concluded by asking PALG members for their views in relation to the information. RF referred to an example in the report, where a victim expressed concern in relation to their personal belongings being taken for evidence, without prior warning. RF shared her concerns in relation to the evidence gathering process and referred to a personal experience of trying to reclaim personal belongings taken as evidence. RF noted the difficulties of navigating around police systems which didn't appear to 'talk to one another' and inaccuracies in information provided by the force, which related to reclaiming her belongings. It was also noted that further awareness-raising in the Public Service Centre would be welcomed to assist with signposting victims to the right individual/department. The group discussed the importance of quality standards in overseeing information sent to victims and responsibility of overseeing police systems to ensure data was linked.

PA referred to the victim feedback relating to lack of confidence to report a hate crime, informing the group that South Wales Police had tried different portals to encourage reporting. This had included the involvement of third parties. However, instilling confidence in the public to report to the police remained an issue. PA advised that as part of an internal review, the force had now invested in an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, which would drive forward this agenda going forward.

PA informed the group of the internal scrutiny exercises conducted by the force. These were used to closely review hate crime data, in particular, identifying disproportionalities. PA also welcomed the opportunity for PALG members to bring a critical perspective.

AD referred to positive experiences and views gathered from transgender victims, which were sought via an online forum ahead of attending the meeting. AD noted that a number of individuals expressed that they had received a positive service from the police. TH expressed that he also felt the recent incident in Cathays had been well managed by the police, in particular, the honesty in communication. The group noted good practice recently demonstrated by the force. The group discussed the importance of highlighting and sharing such positive examples with the public, to assist with increasing confidence to report.

The group discussed the role of Hate Crime Officers and the longevity of the role. PALG members noted concern in relation to the quick turnover of officers and the impact this had on building trust with communities. JJ noted the perceptions held by the gypsy and travelling community, who believed that officers were 'moved on' once a rapport had been established with them. There was a strong feeling amongst the community that this decision 'was being done to them' to prevent community relationships from developing.

PA noted that the force tried to maintain stability and consistency in these roles where possible but the unpredictable nature of the organisation made this difficult at times. JJ informed the board that the force strived to strike a balance between developing and maintaining strong community relations, whilst also ensuring individuals in the role brought refreshed approaches and ideas to make the role as effective as possible. The importance was ensuring that handovers with the community were clearly explained to try and maintain consistency and trust.

AD noted the importance of evidence based policing and noted that it would be worthwhile investing in research that explored connections and relationships with the community and

the quality of information that supported enforcement decisions. LJ noted that there were currently ongoing pieces of research with universities, however, this would be an interesting piece of work to consider for the future.

The group would be kept informed of any developments relating to the hate crime scrutiny recommendations.

3. Public Complaints

JT provided the group with an overview of South Wales Polices' Professional Standards Department (PSD) and its role in investigating complaints against police officers and staff. JT drew the distinction between the role of PSD and the Commissioner's role in handling complaints and gave an overview of South Wales Police's complaints process and the various ways complaints could be made. JT advised that once complaints were received by the force, they were submitted to the 'hub' in PSD via a triage system. Complaints were then investigated in proportion to their seriousness.

JT advised that data showed that young males from all ethnicities were more likely to be arrested, but less likely to make a complaint to South Wales Police. JT also noted that the force did not have any stop and search related complaints. JT advised that as there was limited evidence to support whether no complaints reflected a positive service, the force was keen to engage with communities to understand potential barriers for making a complaint, whilst also raising awareness of their rights to make a complaint.

To assist with identifying potential barriers and suggestions for overcoming issues, JT asked PALG members to take part in an interactive session in small groups, using their community knowledge and experience to answer a series of questions. Members were asked to write down their feedback in groups and then report back to the wider group.

The group discussed the importance of individuals understanding their rights of arrest in order to clearly understand whether or not they had been disproportionately treated. Other issues included the complaints system being over complicated and the need for a simple concise process. The group referred to the 'Ombudsman' complaints process, which clearly set out expected outcomes at the beginning stages of a complaint to assist with managing expectations. JJ advised that the gypsy and travelling community would be unlikely to complain if their case was still active, as they would be worried about retaliation and the impact this would have on their case.

The group discussed various communication methods which would assist with informing the public about the complaints system. JJ advised that the gypsy and traveller community in particular, regularly used YouTube and Facebook.

JW informed the group that there was currently no specific training for officers in the handling of complaints. JW suggested that in order to empower and improve the skillset in this area, the force could consider incorporating complaints handling into Sergeant training.

JT thanked PALG members for sharing their views and noted that all written feedback would be collated into a report and shared with PALG at the next meeting, and with PSD.

4. Any Other Business

SW advised that Gofal were still in the process of rebranding and this had been delayed until June. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

JJ noted that there would be an open day at the Shirenewton Site on 28th June.

LJ advised the group that the Commissioner's team was currently exploring expanding the membership of the group. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

Action Table

Action	Description	Person Responsible
1	Collate and share complaints feedback with PALG and PSD	Jackie Trow