

Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys response to: HMICFRS Rapid review into the policing of public disorder

I acknowledge the recommendations outlined in this report and will monitor the Force's progress in implementing them. The Force response to this inspection was discussed at Policing Board on 23rd January 2025. This is the forum at which I hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of policing services across the Dyfed-Powys area.

I have set out my thoughts and reassurances I have received from the Chief Constable in relation to the recommendations for forces within the report below. I await the outcomes of the national recommendations alongside the Force.

Recommendation 1:

1.1 With immediate effect, the National Police Chiefs' Council, and chief constables, working with the College of Policing and the Home Office, should create a plan and begin work to improve the police service's capacity and capability to respond to widespread violent disorder. They should in consultation with the Home Office, review the public order public safety (POPS)-related elements of the Strategic Policing Requirement and add relevant specialist capabilities, beginning with investigators and intelligence resources.

I eagerly await the action plan from the National Police Chiefs' Council to work towards properly understanding and improving the police service's capacity and capability to respond to violent disorder. In addition, the Welsh Regional Information and Coordination Centre (WRICC) are seeking to establish a regional intelligence desk for South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed-Powys Police. Due to the volume of disorders in the South Wales Police force area, they have already developed a bespoke intel desk looking at this issue. Collaboration with Gwent and Dyfed-Powys Police will be had in due course.

1.2 Complete a full assessment of the suitability and availability of personal protective equipment for all POPS trained officers, including mounted branches and dog units.

I have been assured that the Force have recently conducted a review of PPE and equipment. It was identified that new and additional PPE for POPs trained officers, including dog handlers is required.

Dyfed-Powys Police has seen a significant increase in the use of Public Order assets and equipment over the last 2-years due to incidents such as Op Cambrian (Stradey Park Hotel protests) and mutual aid deployments (Op Brocks, Israel/Palestine Conflict). This has caused a significant amount of wear and tear to officer uniform and equipment.

I have been assured that the force is replenishing flame-proof overalls and helmets, along with shields and other key items of equipment.

1.3 Make sure that every police force or region can rapidly deploy drones during POPS incidents.

Dyfed-Powys Police have made a significant investment in drones, and have recently purchased a dedicated drone vehicle, which will enable the rapid deployment of drones of various sizes and capability to all incidents of disorder involving Dyfed-Powys Police Public Order assets. I have been assured that Dyfed Powys POPS commanders are fully trained in the use of Drones at POPS events. Drones are also used at Royal Visits and include the deployment of a counter drone team.

1.4 Develop and provide guidance on the use of drones within the College of Policing's POPS authorised professional practice.

I await the national guidance alongside the Force which is being developed by the College of Policing.

1.5 Review the range of available tactical options, equipment, and technology to make sure officers can quickly and safely disperse people who take part in disorder; and

The national guidance developed by the College of Policing will give a further steer on this. I have been assured that all officers deployed as part of any PSU deployment are fully trained and are in ticket.

Dyfed-Powys Police have invested in training for Medics and additional specialist POPS skills. This training is due to take place at the end of February 2025.

1.6 Review POPS training at all levels, including an assessment of the adequacy of the current fitness test for level 2 officers.

Dyfed Powys Police is awaiting further guidance and strategic direction in response to the review of the adequacy of the national fitness test. All PSU staff have passed the current national fitness test.

Recommendation 3:

3.1 With immediate effect, the National Police Chiefs' Council, and chief constables, working with the College of Policing and the Home Office should create a plan and begin work to improve the well-being support the police service gives to its officers and staff. They should create formal protocols with ambulance services and hospital trusts for the treatment of police officers who are injured on duty.

This recommendation will initially sit with the responsibility of the NPCC and NPoCC. I have been assured that once strategic direction has been agreed, the WRICC will formulate a plan for the Gwent, South Wales and Dyfed-Powys Police, to ensure and embed consistency. A memorandum of understanding will need to be developed with health care partners. This work is currently pending further guidance.

3.2 Assess how public order public safety planning and mobilisation, at force, regional and national levels, considers and prioritises the well-being of officers and staff, such as making sure they have access to food and drink, rest and rotation, personal protective equipment and toilet facilities.

I have been informed that when deploying POPs resources, Dyfed-Powys Police ensure the welfare provisions of officers is catered for. A dedicated welfare officer is appointed to undertake regular engagement with the officers and commanders and address all needs.

3.3 Consider whether public order public safety roles should be defined as 'high risk', particularly in police forces that face frequent, extensive, and severe disorder.

In discussion with the Force, I have been informed that Dyfed-Powys Police would support the designation of PSU roles as 'high risk'. Officers put themselves at considerable risk when deployed in public order situations, particularly when offering mutual aid.

3.4 Review whether officers deployed in hostile incidents need additional support on a case-by-case basis.

The Force informed me that the workforce is changing in terms of the support needed to carry out their roles. It was noted that the resilience and tolerance of younger officers has changed significantly.

3.5 Examine the level of contribution that each police force, and the Home Office, makes to police treatment and well-being centres, so that all officers and staff who need treatment can access it.

This action will be addressed by the WRICC, and guidance given to each force once a national directive has been set.

In conclusion, Dyfed-Powys Police is awaiting further guidance and strategic direction in response to the above HMICFRS recommendations. Notably, I am reassured that the Force successfully fulfilled its strategic reserve obligations under the SRP framework and deployed public order resources to various parts of the UK under Op Navette.

I am grateful for the publication of these recommendations. My team and I will continue to work closely with Dyfed-Powys Police representatives to ensure all relevant learning from insights generated through HMICFRS activity is acted upon to improve the policing service for the residents of the Dyfed-Powys area.