



Policing and Partnerships in Wales

1. Purpose

A number of reviews into partnership working in Wales are currently underway. This paper provides a high-level overview of some of the key issues from the perspective of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales

2. Context

The South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner has made co-operation a key theme of his approach to his role. With the Chief Constable (and other non-devolved Criminal Justice Agencies) he invests significantly in attending and supporting the Public Services Boards established by the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Police and Crime Commissioner has voluntarily committed to the principles of the Act as these closely align with his personal values of co-operation and early intervention. Tackling problems today whilst taking a longer-term, sustainable approach is something he has always championed.

Police and Crime Commissioners have a statutory duty to act as the voice of local people for the delivery of their police and criminal justice services. They must provide resources to the Chief Constable, including determining the amount people pay through their local council tax, and ensure the local police service is efficient and effective. They must produce a Police and Crime Plan setting the priorities for the police area and must bring together community safety partners (mainly devolved agencies) and wider criminal justice partners (mainly non-devolved agencies) to achieve a coherent and effective local criminal justice system.

The South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner views the Public Services Boards, along with Community Safety Partnerships, as the key mechanisms for working in partnership with others – supporting the work of other public bodies, engaging them in meeting his statutory duties, working together to reduce demand on public services and setting priorities in a co-operative way that aligns with the duties and priorities of Welsh Government and with both devolved and non-devolved agencies working in Wales

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires Public Services Boards (PSBs) to carry out an assessment of well-being within a local area and to use that assessment to set priorities and a plan for improving economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being. PSBs bring together at a local level, the leadership of the 44 devolved public bodies covered by the Act (many of whom are direct partners of policing), and “invited” partners who Welsh Government has no direct remit over but, through the Act, recognises their crucial role - i.e. third sector, local business. Each PSB is required by the Act to invite the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to become a member and once they accept they are full members of the PSB as “statutory invitees”. This is important because the intent of the legislation is to enhance partnership working and maximise everyone’s contribution to achieving the well-being goals, but is not always fully understood within

local government. Therefore it is crucial that those responsible “walk the talk” of the Act in terms of their approach to ensuring visibility and involvement of ALL partners.

In addition to contributing to the PSB priorities, the 44 devolved Public Bodies must set objectives for maximising their own contribution to the well-being goals, and take steps to meet these objectives. Achieving alignment between individual and collaborative duties is intended to ensure the impact and effectiveness of each strategic partnership and every single agency operating in Wales – recognising that each is dependent on the other – and that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.

The contribution of the Policing and Criminal Justice System to strategic partnership working includes a wealth of data, frontline knowledge including professional and service-user experience, significant resources and funding for innovative collaborative approaches to improving people’s lives and reducing need. As we know, 90% of calls for South Wales Police are not crime-related and are often due to a lack of well-being resulting from poor mental health, poverty, substance misuse etc. On a typical day South Wales Police alone deals with thousands of calls including, on average, 443 public safety welfare calls, 29 missing people and 97 domestic related incidents.

Historically, policing also provides strong, effective leadership of place in partnership with others. South Wales Police currently operates four Basic Command Units each led by a Chief Superintendent who works at a strategic level across a geographical area, building relationships, understanding issues and impact and making the connections across the area. They and their teams play a key role as social navigators putting to use the problem-solving skills taught and developed as operational officers. There are sometimes concerns that the police are left to respond when other agencies are not available and that this adds to pressure on the police who are stretched by high demand and the loss of Central Government money. The Police Grant has been cut by a third in recent years but in South Wales, rather than narrowing the approach, this has led to a greater emphasis on preventative action, early intervention and joint working towards shared aims.

This briefing is intended to recognise the challenge of implementing and maintaining the spirit and intent of new pieces of legislation in an already complex landscape. Police and Crime Commissioners share a similar challenge – six years on from the introduction of the Police Reform Act, which created the role, some partners still do not fully understand the statutory duties of the Police and Crime Commissioner or the opportunities that have been developed since the creation of the role. The aim is to facilitate the best possible working relationships across all partners to achieve the well-being goals and build safer, more confident communities.

3. Key issues

3.1 Building a shared understanding and consensus:

Our experience is that the requirements and implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act have not fully aligned in terms of their impact on policing and criminal justice: some partners appear under confident and uncertain as to whether or how the assessments and plans required by each Act should integrate and support each other, and there is an impression that those managing the two processes do not talk to each other or see the

immense opportunities for making the most of two far-sighted pieces of legislation that should be complementary in serving the public.

In March 2019, Welsh Government hosted an event to take stock of how PSBs and RPBs worked together in practice. The Ministers wrote to partners in July, confirming Welsh Government's commitment to:

- supporting the work already underway to improve communication and alignment internally and with the Boards;
- scheduling regular meetings between the chairs of the PSBs and RPBs, and expand these discussions to the wider bodies which support the delivery of the Boards across Wales in order to share further learning and raise the awareness of different successful approaches;
- establishing a joint development programme for members of both Boards focusing on the demands of operating as part of multi- agency partnerships.

We welcome this approach but have seen little progress to date and we believe it should go further. Some RPBs are open to inviting PSB members to the table whereas others are not. We would welcome a clear statement from Welsh Government encouraging RPBs to include chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners (or their representatives) as this would enable us to understand the priorities that are being set and to support delivery. There have been occasions when the RPB is working on projects or programmes with direct relevance to criminal justice but we have no knowledge that the work is taking place. This is not about upsetting accountability – indeed there is no need for us to have a vote in the decision-making – but it would help us to help others and to further enhance alignment and prevent duplication.

In 2020, Public Services Boards will begin to plan for the next phase of well-being assessment, planning and priority setting. Clarity of messages and on-going listening is vital. It is important to note that PSBs are only two thirds of the way through their first cycle and while it is right to be taking stock and scrutinising progress to date it is too soon to say what the cumulative impact will be and many, including local authority leaders, are impatient to achieve more and to do so more quickly.

An improved understanding of the term “statutory invitees” and others co-opted to PSBs: Police, other non-devolved criminal justice agencies, third sector and private sector representatives are sometimes listed as “invitee” as they cannot be mandated to attend but that can lead to misinterpretation by some participants who may think this indicates a ‘second class status’. Often, these are amongst the most committed and invested members, bringing significant resource, leadership and innovation to the table. Some PSBs have “invitees” as chairs and those who “walk the talk” of the Act by viewing all partners as equal are where we see best innovation and outcomes. Clear, on-going communication and leadership should be provided by Welsh Government and those with a statutory duty towards implementation of the Act's intent to ensure

- Everyone at the PSB table, including “invitees” who make the commitment to participate fully, is treated equally and viewed as a full partner
- Insight, information and input from “invitees” is proactively sought from all those with a duty to review, monitor, scrutinise or assess

3.2 Making sense of the structural architecture

Footprints: Community Safety Partnerships, Area Planning Boards, Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Boards were established for different purposes in response to different policy imperatives or circumstances, at different points under different legislation across different geographical areas. Although this has contributed to the complexity of the landscape in Wales, there is no reason why they cannot work together – particularly given the introduction of PSBs as an over-arching focal point of place-based leadership and given the fact that many of the same partners are round each of the tables.

This in turn leads us to argue for “more partnership for fewer meetings” and for more of the meetings that cover the same territory of policy or delivery to be merged or to meet back to back in order to reduce travel time and avoid the discontinuity of different representatives of an agency attending meetings that touch on the same topic.

Despite complexities, there are natural synergies to the planning processes but this requires real effort and a specific focus to ensure proper integration and join up from assessment through to planning and ultimately commissioning of services that work.


Issues around local and regional footprints can result in complexity, particularly in terms of governance and accountability or grappling with a variety of funding streams and mechanisms. Taking a regional strategic overview and approach to commissioning of some services can be beneficial but neither a regional approach, nor local is “always best”. Regional footprints can provide economies of scale and consistency of approach but can also present a significant challenge around democratic accountability, represent a move away from “local” and “community” and the need to develop effective tactical and operational approaches that often need to be local and specific in nature.

Making sense of it all means local agreement as to what is best done at a regional and what’s best at local level and a spirit of mutual respect and “give and take”.

Responsibility and remit:

The complexities and confusion created by different structural footprints is exacerbated by the different but often over-lapping remits and responsibilities for each of these strategic partnerships (“everything is connected to everything else” is the strapline of the Police & Crime Plan, and with good reason). The Early Action Together: Police and Partners programme provides a good illustration of the complexities.

Early Action Together is a policing and partnership programme set up to support frontline officers and others to work in a trauma-informed way, recognising and responding to vulnerability. It takes a public health approach which, if properly embedded, supports delivery of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Prosperity for All (the programme for Welsh Government) in that it pursues the specific purposes of breaking intergenerational cycles of harm over the longer-term, preventing



problems from occurring or getting worse, taking an integrated approach to policy, is collaborative and involves those affected.

The programme has delivered £6.8m of police funding to Wales over three years and works alongside Welsh Government's ACEs hub to support its wider remit.

Taking a public health approach and fully embedding it at every level is challenging within a complex partnership landscape. Each strategic partnership board has a role to play in ensuring we maximise the opportunities:

Public Services Boards: assess well-being and sets priorities for improving well-being within a local area. Many have set tackling ACEs as a theme or priority within plans for improving well-being. Therefore the case appears to be made for tackling the impact of ACEs together if we are to improve all elements of well-being. However, raising awareness amongst professionals is not enough on its own. Often a response or service is required and PSBs are not commissioning bodies.

Regional Partnership Boards: driving the long-term reconfiguration of health and social care – leading the strategic delivery of social services in close collaboration with Health. This is crucial to the prevention agenda and providing support for those with ACEs, preventing future ACEs and reducing future need. RPBs are commissioning bodies, looking at individual need and have been used by Welsh Government as the vehicle for distributing money for partnership initiatives. Much closer alignment is needed between the PSB and RPBs. This will support planning and commissioning in a way that addresses immediate issues for those in need, whilst addressing the long-term, root causes of vulnerability, impacting on criminal justice issues. Criminal Justice partners should be proactively engaged in RPBs to support this, to avoid duplication and to maximise resources.

Community Safety Partnerships and Boards: In South Wales it has been agreed that each Partnership or Community Safety Board will report directly into the PSB thus providing accountability and a route for escalation. Many others also sit within or align to the PSB structure and play an important role within a local area in recognising and responding to the links between ACEs and offending behaviour, often arising from vulnerability and criminal exploitation. Their effectiveness was severely impacted by Austerity but Welsh Government's Community Safety Review, in which we have fully participated, has resulted in a set of recommendations which are currently being implemented to strengthen integration and effectiveness. It has also led to a strengthened partnership between Policing in Wales and Local Government (WLGA) reflecting the lead responsibilities of Policing and Local Government under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act,

Area Planning Boards: These are commissioning bodies but with a specific remit around Substance Misuse. Their approach is key to prevention of ACEs, for example through provision of services to support parents and young people. APBs should be feeding information into RPBs in a way that

ensures ACEs and root causes of crime are addressed. Some now also feed into local Community Safety and PSB arrangements despite being on a wider footprint and this is to be welcomed.

Individual public bodies – must set objectives for improving well-being alongside a raft of other duties. They hold the bulk of the budget, are the same leaders and the alignment of their plans and commissioning to that of the strategic partnerships is crucial. Based on the Public Health Wales evidence of the impact of Adverse Childhood experiences organisations should be seeking to be trauma-informed and trauma-responsive and this should be evident in their corporate planning processes and steps to meeting their objectives (which in turn should align with well-being priorities).

Commissioning: Area Planning Boards and Regional Partnership Boards have formal commissioning remits and budgets. PSBs do not - whilst they are not in themselves commissioning bodies, they must have the confidence that the relevant and responsible agencies are responding to the priorities and leadership set. This means better alignment of PSB and RPB plans and ALL agencies aligning their own objectives, planning and commissioner, wrapping around agreed priorities as they work together to commission services. Again, with locally-agreed consensus around what is best done at regional level and local level.

3.3 Resources

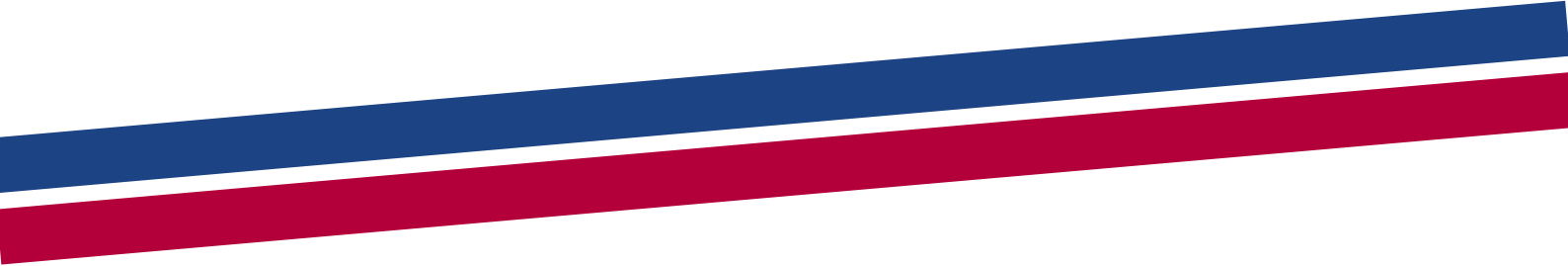
Austerity is still having a significant impact on partnership resources with tensions between UK and Welsh Government over funding arrangements for public service provision. There has been a detrimental impact on capacity for data analysis, funding arrangements, community safety provision and co-ordination activity.

Data analysis:

There are:

- 19 different Public Services Boards approaches to data gathering and analysis for well-being
- 7 Regional Partnership Boards using data to understand need
- 7 Area Planning Boards required to focus on proscribed data sets (mainly focussed on treatment not prevention)
- 19 Community Safety Partnerships which are required to use data to make communities safer
- Individual public bodies with their own statutory and internal requirements for data products to support planning and prioritisation

Data analysis is key to supporting leaders to plan for the long-term, to improve decision-making and to commission services that help people in need today, preventing problems for the future. Continually improving knowledge and understanding through data/gap analysis needs to be an on-going, joined up activity that is informing priority setting and commissioning at every stage.




None of the partnerships or public bodies (devolved or non-devolved) have sufficient numbers of appropriately-skilled analysts to understand the full extent of data and information available or maximise its potential through most effective use of it. Twenty years on from the implementation of the 1998 Police and Crime Act, barriers to information sharing and a lack of capacity for meaningful analysis are still creating significant gaps in knowledge, creating risk for effective priority-setting, compounding duplication of effort, reducing effectiveness and efficiency. Generally Policing has retained the capacity for *tactical* analysis but lost capacity for *strategic* and *long-term* analysis, as has Local Government, and this is a significant constraint on the effectiveness of partnerships.

Policing, criminal justice and community safety agencies are currently working together under the leadership of the All Wales Criminal Justice Board (AWCJB) and joint work between Policing and the WLGA to establish an all Wales Multi Agency Data & Analysis Hub and Team. The proposed approach will initially be focused on providing partners and partnerships with intelligence products to support violence surveillance, offender management and addressing Serious & Organised Crime, gangs and county lines type activity but is also intended to develop into wider community safety, policing and justice areas.

Budgets: as highlighted in the responsibilities and remits section, some strategic partnerships have budgets and are commissioning bodies, some have short-term grant specific funds and others do not have partnership budgets as such through which to commission services or drive changes. Where partnership budgets do exist, these are small in comparison to individual public bodies such as health and social services core budget and so their impact cannot be maximised.

Where we are able to make the economic case for individual agencies to collaborate to recognise signs of domestic violence and abuse, we have seen major shifts in policy and practice – for example, approaches to early intervention, violence prevention or tackling vulnerability within the night-time economy. All the evidence points towards a prevention approach as the best approach, providing concrete evidence of the benefits. Just to quote one example, investment of £43,000 a year each by South Wales Police, the University Health Board and the Ambulance Service in the HelpPoint in Swansea leads to annual saving of £65,000 to policing and £650,000 to the NHS. Training of GPs staff in Cwm Taf and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board areas has already led to over 1,000 women being safeguarded.

Co-ordination: effective co-ordination and communication provides clarity in a complex world but Austerity has impacted on capacity for partners. If properly resourced, thematic leads operating across all partnerships could facilitate navigation and join the dots.



4. Conclusion

Leadership is needed from Welsh Government and from Leaders in both devolved and non-devolved agencies to ensure that we work together to:

- Promote clear messaging, creating a shared understanding and promoting the “intent” of legislation, in the interests of the public and a ‘single public service’.
- Use this to facilitate and support local determination as to how to make the structures and architecture as effective as possible – setting the vision and allowing partners to achieving alignment between the different strategic partnerships, the public bodies, their assessments, priorities and objectives, planning and commissioning to deliver better public services.
- Securing the necessary, proportionate investment in resources to underpin that architecture. This includes ensuring that Welsh Government budgets and resources are rebalanced to support change, build on the successes and a recognition of what works in Wales, develop capacity for co-ordination and make better use of data. Prevention of harm and prevention of demand often flow together and benefit several agencies as well as providing benefits to the public.