



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg yn ogystal â Saesneg.

This document is available in Welsh as well as English.

11th November 2024

Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys response to:

Overview Report: Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA)

I welcome and acknowledge the findings of the Overview Report and the 2023 Report of JICPA in Powys: One of the four counties making up the Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) area.

DPP's response to the Overview Report was presented at my Policing Board meeting of October 22nd 2024, at which I hold the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of policing services. The Chief Constable reported on plans the Force and partners have in place, and the steps they have already taken towards improvement, linked to the key themes arising from both reports.

Partnership working is key, and indeed, the Overview Report sets out: "*We expect regional safeguarding boards to take the important learning from this report and lead on the dissemination of learning across Wales.*" Reassuringly, I have been advised that both reports were discussed at the Regional Safeguarding Board of October 2024.

DPP accepts both reports' learning/recommendations, which they will continue to utilise to shape operational and strategic improvement under the following key themes.

1. Information sharing and shared safety and care plans

- DPP recognises the challenges of information sharing between partners in Mid and West Wales, but advises that over the last year, strategic partners have been working to bridge the gaps through the development of software, enabling a flagging system for children on the Child Protection Register.
- Through this system, agencies would automatically be notified of contact with services, rather than relying solely on human judgement to 'flag' new access to support services.
- Following a joint bid by partners including DPP, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has recently awarded £100k to the Regional Safeguarding Board for this work to be continued.
- The development of the system is monitored through weekly partnership meetings, with Carmarthenshire County Council as the lead agency.

2. Integration and co-location

- DPP can demonstrate strong integration with partners across the Force area, for example, at the Vulnerability Hub at Police Headquarters.

- The Vulnerability Hub has brought together the centralised safeguarding teams, resulting in improved processing of real time information sharing and problem solving. Most of the work undertaken within the Hub is in collaboration with other key partners who have safeguarding responsibilities. It is a co-ordination centre for agencies, and using video technology allows the Hub's work to reach across the vastly rural Force area.
- Longer term, DPP will ensure that multi-agency shared processes and integration remain fundamental to their approach.

3. Reflective practice and CPD

- To help ensure effective reflective practice, learning, and continual professional development, DPP has invested in a dedicated Vulnerability Trainer.
- The Vulnerability Trainer co-ordinates shared learning for the police and partners, as well as ensuring the delivery of all new College of Policing training inputs.
- DPP is also incorporating bespoke inputs and familiarisation programmes into its training schedule, to improve awareness and understanding in this area. One example of this approach is the co-ordination of uniformed staff shadowing the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) teams.

Voice of the Child

Though not referred to by the Chief Constable within his response to this Report, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the voice of the child within investigations.

The Overview Report states that "*the voice of children and families should be prioritised but is often poorly represented*". The Powys JICPA report recognised police leaders' understanding of the importance of their personnel speaking to children and recording their voices, but also found that improvements were needed in the understanding the voice of the child and children's lived experience needs across the organisation. Both reports found inconsistency in how personnel recorded the voice of the child.

I am aware that DPP is currently conducting an internal review in relation to the police response to crimes involving children. The Force understands that ensuring the voice of the child is considered at each key stage of an investigation is vital to ensuring a child-centred approach.

Members of my Quality of Service team have worked with DPP to develop a scrutiny process to assess the voice of the child in criminal investigations. On November 20th 2024, my Quality Assurance Panel will independently



review recorded crimes, assessing, amongst other things, whether the voice of the child has been considered during the police response, and if there is a record of the child's wishes within the police records. Further details on the work of my Quality Assurance Panel can be found on my website.

As stated within my response to the Powys JICPA, I am encouraged that there is evidently work underway to improve child protection arrangements across the Force area. I will continue to monitor DPP's progress against the recommendations within this report.