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**National Assembly for Wales - Cross Party Group on Policing, Committee Room B,
Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff,**

Tuesday 8th June 2019 @ 12:30

(Draft v0.2)

1. Present

National Assembly for Wales

John Griffiths AM (Labour, Newport East) – Chairman

Llyr Gruffydd – (Plaid Cymru, North Wales)

Sian Gwenllian – (Plaid Cymru, Arfon)

Rhun ap Iorwerth – (Plaid Cymru, Ynys Mon)

Leanne Wood – (Plaid Cymru, Rhondda)

Mark Isherwood (Conservative)

Becs Parker – Senior Communications Officer, Office of John Griffiths AM

Police and Crime Commissioners

Dafydd Llywelyn – Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys and Chair of the All Wales Policing Group.

Jeff Cuthbert – Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

Alun Michael – Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales

Ann Griffith – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales

Cerith Thomas – Police and Crime Commissioners Advisor to the All Wales Policing Team, Group Secretary

Chief Constables

Matt Jukes – Chief Constable, South Wales Police

Pam Kelly – Chief Constable, Gwent Police

Richard Debicki – Deputy Chief Constable, North Wales Police

Claire Parmenter - Deputy Chief Constable Dyfed-Powys Police

Paul Morris - Assistant Director – Collaboration and Efficiency, Dyfed-Powys Police

Invited attendees

Richard Williams - Detective Superintendent, Head of TARIAN ROCU (Regional Organised Crime Unit)

Karin Phillips – Deputy Director – Community Safety Division, Welsh Government

Steve Chapman – Welsh Government Community Safety Division, Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator

Steve Carr – Safer Communities Programme Manager, Welsh Local Government Association

2. Apologies for Absence

Arfon Jones – Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales

Mark Collins – Chief Constable, Dyfed-Powys Police and Chair of the Welsh Chief Officer Group

Carl Foulkes – Chief Constable, North Wales Police

3. John Griffiths AM, Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the presentation on the theme had previously been given to Deputy Minister Jane Hutt and former Minister Alun Davies. In doing so the links with devolved services such as health, education and youth services were emphasised. The impact of organised crime in the context of county lines and substance misuse was a matter for all partners to address and not only the police service.

4. Dafydd Llywelyn – Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys and Chair of the All Wales Policing Group

Commissioner Llywelyn emphasised the link between county lines and wider society and it was important to highlight the connections between the police service and other agencies around early intervention and youth work. He referenced the recent meeting of the Policing Board for Wales whereby the successful intervention of TARIAN, TITAN in targeting organised crime was highlighted.

He referred to the importance of working together and made an offer for the group members to visit the ROCUs in South and North Wales.

ACTION: The Secretary to liaise with the regional heads of ROCUs and the Chair to facilitate a visit to the local offices to receive a presentation on local arrangements.

5. Presentation by Detective Superintendent Richard Williams, Head of TARIAN ROCU (Regional Organised Crime Unit) on the impact of Serious and Organised Crime including the link with “county lines” and the supply of controlled drugs.

5.1 Detective Superintendent Richard Williams delivered a presentation on organised crime groups and the links to controlled drugs and county lines. He set out the history of TARIAN/ROCU; the regional priority areas; a strategic overview of organised crime groups; operational activity and county lines.

5.2 The purpose of TARIAN was to protect the communities of Southern Wales from serious & organised crime by focusing on:

- The Supply of Illegal Drugs
- Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking
- Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation
- Economic Crime (including Fraud & Money Laundering)
- Cyber-dependant Criminality

5.3 The ROCUs lead the operational response to Serious and Organised Crime on behalf of forces within their region. Their aim is to reduce the level of serious and organised crime and the Group was provided with an overall threat picture for Wales along with examples on how they operated. Examples of organised crime gangs and their activity were provided to the group.

5.4 The definition of county lines was explained as follows “- County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons”

5.5 County lines groups imposed high levels of violence, including the use of weapons and firearms to intimidate and control members of the group and associated victims (several examples were provided to the Group). They continued to pose a significant threat to vulnerable people and explored a range of opportunities to identify potential new victims. The use of anonymised mobile phones remained an essential feature of county lines, as well as other forms of drug supply.

5.6 There were over 2,000 lines nationally of which 130 had been identified across Wales with 311 nominals (average age 31) linked to County Lines mainly supplying crack/cocaine. Children as young as 14 years old were involved with county lines. Sadly whenever they were being arrested they were immediately replaced and the solution to the problem had to be more holistic. Pam Kelly highlighted the importance of working with partners including the National Crime Agency (NCA) especially as the gangs were moving in to more rural areas as well as operating in the larger cities.

5.7 It was explained that the differences in regional activity was not due to different recording methods, it was instead due to differences such as transport infrastructure which made dealing easier and that impacted on local markets. Swansea and Neath Port Talbot had the highest level of opiate deaths in the UK per capita.

5.8 Richard Debicki highlighted that in North Wales the single biggest threat was from crime gangs from Merseyside and Manchester. However it was noted by Ann Griffith that gangs were also using local people as opposed to bringing them into the area from elsewhere.

5.9 Links with the schools programme and the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) work was essential given the exploitation of children and especially those from deprived communities.

5.10 It was also pointed out that more instances of knife crime occurred within the home as opposed to attacks within the community.

5.11 In South Wales an initiative had been launched to tackle violence against children and girls.

5.12 With reference to the decriminalisation of controlled drugs reference was made to the model used in Portugal. Alun Michael pointed out that controlled drugs had not been decriminalised in Portugal however they had adopted a public health approach as a means of diverting lower level

offenders out of the Criminal Justice system. Matt Jukes referenced the approach of targeting and arresting suppliers would only result in the problem repeating itself and there was a need to do things differently and that was a possible option to follow in Wales. However for it to be effective there was a need to put resources into treatment as part of a more progressive approach.

5.13 Sian Gwenllian AM agreed that a partnership, preventative approach was required and queried if the police attended local/regional meetings. In response Matt Jukes referred to the need to better align partnership structures. AM confirmed that the police (Commissioners and Chief Constables) were statutory invitees to PSBs and they were attending those meetings. However they were not statutory invitees to Area Planning Boards and had not been invited to attend.

5.14 Ann Griffiths referred to the prohibition article by Commissioner Arfon Jones **recently** published in a national newspaper which set out an innovative approach to combating substance misuse.

5.15 Mark Isherwood AM referenced the publicity surrounding the use of “spice” in Wrexham and the need for a different approach than the vagrancy act to address the problem. The approach adopted in Wrexham had attracted interest from elsewhere.

5.16 Leanne Wood AM questioned why South Wales Police were arresting more people under the vagrancy act. Matt Jukes clarified that previously the use of the act in South Wales was lower than other areas and the increase had brought it into line with other forces. In reality the act was used in a very small number of instances. Alun Michael and Dafydd Llywelyn both referred to innovative work within their respective areas.

ACTION: Compile a list of practical initiatives in relation to collaborative or diversionary activities used across Wales to deal with substance misuse for highlighting to AMs.

5.17 Reference was made to the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse for Wales and questioned whether it had met recently?

5.18 Matt Jukes advised that it had not met recently and many of the issues discussed at the Group could be raised there.

ACTION: Chair to draft letter to the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse on the matter of using devolved powers to deal with substance misuse as opposed to seeking new legislation.

6. Topic for discussion at the next meeting of the Cross Party Group on Policing

The Chair asked all members for their views on the theme for the next meeting of the Group. Previous potential topics highlighted have included Domestic Abuse and Commissioned Services

ACTION: All Members of the Group

7. Actions

- 1. The Secretary to liaise with the regional heads of ROCUs and the Chair to facilitate a visit to the local offices to receive a presentation on local arrangements.**
- 2. The Secretary to compile a list of practical initiatives used across Wales to deal with substance misuse.**
- 3. Chair to draft letter to the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse on the matter of using devolved powers to deal with substance misuse as opposed to seeking new legislation.**
- 4. The Chair asked all members for their views on the theme for the next meeting of the Group**

The meeting ended at 13:25