



Agenda item no. 3

Report title: Chairman’s annual report	
Report to: National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels – AGM	
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NAPFCP Annual Report - November 2022

Welcome to the fourth Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels which again Frontline Consulting is kindly hosting as a lead into this year’s Annual Conference for Chairs, Members and Officers of Police (Fire) and Crime Panels.

In this report when using the term PCC or Commissioner, this can be interchanged with PFCC and likewise, use of the term PCP or panel can be interchanged with PFCP where appropriate.

In my 2021 report I remarked on the significant change of panel member makeup due to the delayed PCC elections that year. This was again repeated following this year’s May local elections in England and Wales. Unfortunately for some panels the degree of change and, in Wales, subsequent appointment of members requiring Home Office approval meant that some panels were unable to hold formal meetings until last month. This is an alarming position as formal Commissioner challenge and scrutiny could not take place for several months.

On a positive note, and benefitting from the experience panels gained through remote working during the pandemic, panel workshops held by remote means have become the norm. Workshops help maximise the time taken to understand the background and thinking behind commissioners’ decisions, reports and mandated requirements that lie at the core of formal panel meetings.

One of the main NAPFCP aims is to explore how best practice operates within the sector. This definition of good practice within the sector is not easily defined, however it can be helpful to examine perceived or actual bad practice experienced by panels when interacting with commissioners or their officers. Meetings between the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the NAPFCP are now held monthly to promote good practice and these help in recognising key sector drivers and how these are being addressed. During the year the APCC saw the departure of Susannah Hancock who has been its CEO for a number of years.



Susannah has transferred to the National Fire Chiefs Council as its CEO and I wish her every success in this new role and a thank you for the many times she has supported panel and Commissioner good practice working. I look forward to forging a good relationship with Phil Golding who has been appointed as the new APCC CEO and is expected to take up this position shortly.

Currently there are 38 (of 41) Panels in membership including all four Welsh Panels. NAPFCP influence with the Home Office and others will always be judged by the strength of its membership, therefore the target to aim for is 100% membership.

Executive Committee

There are 10 members of the Executive Committee appointed in 2020, each having valuable skills and capabilities and many having served on panels since 2012. During the past 12 months the Executive Committee focus has been to add value through direct contact with panels to provide advice, completing sector specific consultation responses, liaising with key partners or producing supportive materials and sector related press articles. NAPFCP workload is spread amongst executive committee members according to time availability, knowledge and skills. The executive continues to meet monthly to discuss and review any sector specific material developments and whether further exploratory work is needed or that information should be sent to the panel membership.

Following the May elections one executive member Cllr Mohammed Iqbal, who was Chair of West Yorkshire, was assigned other responsibilities within his authority therefore making him ineligible as an executive committee member. I would like to thank him for his work on the NAPFCP during his tenure. Cllr Susan Waring from the Lincolnshire panel joined the executive meetings as an observer in February 2022 and Susan kindly agreed to fill the vacancy, via a co-option, until the AGM as a full member.

All panels were invited to nominate any of their members to stand for election to the executive committee. No additional names were received and therefore the ten existing executive committee members will remain in office for a further term subject to their reappointment at the AGM.

Consultations Addressed During the Year

Outcomes from the PCC Review Part 2

During the last two years the Home Office has issued a number of consultation documents including the PCC Reviews Part 1 and 2. The NAPFCP as well as a number of panels submitted responses to these reviews and the NAPFCP response was based upon actual panel experiences. One key subject raised is the need for quality training being available to all panel members. In addressing this identified need the Home Office commissioned Dods Consultancy to run a series of workshops



for Chairs, Support Officers and panel members last winter. The outcome from these workshops was the creation of training documents and materials including videos that would sit alongside and add further value to the LGA's Policing and Fire Governance guidance documents produced in 2019. I highly recommend these to new panel members and support officers as they provide excellent background and guidance to carry out appropriate and relevant commissioner challenge and support.

Reforming our Fire and Rescue Consultation

This consultation was issued last May which seemed to be an interesting time to release such a consultation just as local elections were taking place and panels were preparing for their annual meetings. Fortunately, local elections have little detrimental impact on the NAPFCP workload, as the ten executive members were able to pool local knowledge and experiences to help create a balanced consultation response. Two PFCP panel members from Essex and Northampton were able to provide input from their experiences and the draft response was shared with North Yorkshire and Staffordshire PFCP's seeking comment. Evan Morris MBE, NAPFCP vice chair, used his experience and knowledge as a former fire and rescue service senior manager, to provide balance and alternate perspectives within the association's response.

Key Lines of Enquiries.

In June I wrote to all panels with an update on what was taking place within our sector and to suggest some relevant key lines of enquires for panels to consider taking up with their commissioner. With the appalling news surrounding Wayne Couzens and the abduction and murder of Sarah Everard, plus other disturbing news relating to inappropriate police behaviour, I suggested that panels raise two relevant topics with their commission;

- What police recruitment and vetting processes are in place?
- Are acceptable policing behaviour policies in place and how is this monitored?

In the last few days, HMIFRS has issued a report "An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service" which amongst other things, reports on the findings of these two topics. For some police forces this report makes disturbing reading.

I applaud those panels that had embarked on such enquires, which the public would quite rightly expect a PCP to have enquired of their respective PCC. Going forward panels should consider what action or progress has been made to address these specific areas.

NAPFCP Panel Survey - 2022.

Following the AGM, the NAPFCP will be asking panel support officers to help us update some records which was last formally updated in 2019. The May elections has resulted in significant changes to panel chairmanship, membership and possibly



support officers. Can I ask that panel support officers help the NAPFCP by completing this questionnaire/survey which can be shared with panels for their records.

NAPFCP Workstreams

As a reminder when the Executive Committee was first formed it agreed to primarily focus on a number of work streams including;

- Complaints against the Commissioner, Police and FRS Senior Staff
- Technology Changes – Impact on budgets
- Promotion of best practice for Panel activities and scrutiny of the Commissioner
- Investigate opportunities to further develop Panel / Commissioner relationships
- Commissioner and Chief Constable senior appointments
- Promote the Panels role within policing (and fire and rescue) to the public

These workstreams continue to be the focus of attention with executive committee members taking individual responsibility for dedicated workstreams when appropriate. I am hugely appreciative of the time commitment this involves believing it is important to add value to the sector and the manner in which panels undertake their responsibilities to the public

Training and Advice

The sector continues to benefit from the learning and networking workshops provided by Frontline Consulting on a regional basis. These are open to support officers, chairs and panel members and allow participants to share their experiences of panel working both good and bad. For support officers in particular these workshops can provide an ideal opportunity to appreciate that they are not on their own when it comes to meeting the challenges in providing panel support. I recommend highly these workshops and recommend that panels ensure that they have at least one representative in attendance.

As a result of my monthly meetings with Lucy Ellender, the LGA agreed to restart panel workshop sessions with the first since the start of the pandemic being held last September. This workshop was very well attended and included relevant topics delivered by guest speakers and experienced panel members and support officers. It was good to see the return of these LGA events and hopefully the LGA will be in a position to hold two workshops each year as they have done in the past.

I would encourage support officers to seek advice from the NAPFCP whenever there is a need and particularly for new officers taking up the role for the first time. Executive Committee members are always willing to help and provide advice for panel members. As a highly experience democratic services manager, Emma Tombs provides the NAPFCP with not only excellent support but through her significant experience in all aspects of panel work, is ideally positioned to advise and share her experience with other panel support officers.



Closing Remarks

The relationship between the LGA and APCC continues to strengthen in a spirit of mutual benefit and I would like to thank Lucy Ellender and Carolyn Graham of the APCC for their support.

I would like to thank Dave Burn of Frontline Consulting for the great work he has done within the sector in providing training and practical governance advice.

I would like to thank the Executive Committee for the support they given to the association and to me personally throughout the year.

I wish to thank the various Panel Chairs / Vice Chairs and support officers for sharing their panel experiences whenever we have spoken together. Their support and advice are greatly appreciated and help shape my thinking on the many diverse areas associated with panel activities.

Finally, but most appropriately, panels cannot function efficiently without good support and this being just as important for the NAPFCP. A big thank you to Emma Tombs for her excellent support and hard work given to me and the NAPFCP over the last 12 months.

I hope you enjoy the AGM and most importantly the Frontline 11th Annual Conference.

John Gili-Ross

Chair - National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels
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