

## Appendix 2

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANELS



Agenda item no.3.

<b>Report title:</b> Chairman's annual report	
<b>Report to:</b> National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels – AGM	
<b>Report author:</b> John Gili-Ross, Chairman	
<b>Date:</b> 19 November 2024	<b>For:</b> Information
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### **NAPFCP Annual Report - November 2024**

Welcome to the sixth Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels. In previous years the AGM has taken place on the same day of the Frontline annual conference. Frontline Consulting decided to postpone their annual conference until 2025, hence the AGM being held remotely this year.

Whilst the results of the general, local and PCC elections took place some months ago many panels have undergone significant change, both to their memberships and, in some cases, to the PCC or Mayor. Change can be positive and can provide an opportunity to “reset” relationships between the panel and the PCC where previously the relationship may not have been optimal.

The headline changes that occurred this year following the PCC elections are 16 new PCC/PFCCs out of a total of 41. The association congratulates all newly appointed Commissioners and all newly appointed panel Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Interestingly there are now more Deputy PCCs than ever before; at the last count this number was 38 and perhaps reflects the increased duties and responsibility expected of a PCC.

The change in the nation's political landscape has in some cases significantly changed the makeup of a panel. Change may have resulted in panels losing expertise and knowledge and it is important that both new and established members have access to appropriate and relevant training to undertake PCC challenge in an effective and appropriate way. I would urge panels to consider training as essential and to use the Home Office grant wisely to maintain or raise standards of practice.

Membership of the association has taken another step towards 100% and stands at 40 of 41 panels, which includes all four Welsh panels. I remain hopeful that in the year ahead 100% membership can be realised.

### **Executive Committee**

During the year we have had two vacancies arise on the association's Executive Committee which has resulted in a loss of the experience, knowledge and passion

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associated with quality police and fire governance. The first of these vacancies occurred when Ged Potter took up the role of Mayor of Derby and had to relinquish his role on the Derbyshire panel for at least a year. This made him ineligible to remain as an Executive Committee member, however I am hopeful that when his Mayoral year ends that he can re-join his panel and again contribute his skills and knowledge to the association.

Regrettably we also had to bid farewell to Evan Morris MBE who was the Chair of Cheshire PCP and Vice Chair of the NAPFCP. He is greatly missed and has done great work in liaising with the College of Policing and various media outlets to promote the work of panels and the association. I am sure you will join me in wishing him every success and happiness for the future.

There are 10 Executive Committee positions and meetings are held remotely most months. In my last newsletter I announced that the AGM would be held this month and a call went out to fill vacancies on the executive committee. Alongside the existing Executive Committee members, we were pleased to receive a nomination from Cllr Jasbir Jaspal, a member of the West Midlands PCP. I look forward to welcoming Jasbir as an Executive Committee member.

Observers are always welcome to attend Executive Committee meetings and in the past observers have added valuable skills and experience. If you wish to attend as an observer, please contact Emma Tombs on [emma.tombs@essex.gov.uk](mailto:emma.tombs@essex.gov.uk).

During the past 12 months the Executive Committee's focus has been to add value by providing advice directly to panels, completing sector specific consultation responses, liaising with key partners or producing supportive materials and sector related press articles. The NAPFCP workload is spread amongst Executive Committee members according to time availability and knowledge and skills. The Committee continues to meet to discuss and review any sector specific developments and when appropriate forwarding details to member panels.

The relationship established with the College of Policing (CoP) continues and Paul Downing has agreed to continue developing the relationship between the college and the association. The association understands the CoP has produced a report and recommendation on the deployment of Live Facial Recognition (LFR) surveillance equipment. Whilst the report is likely to major on the operational use it is understood that governance principles are recommended for PCC's. As such panels should on behalf of the public, understand any constraints on use.

### **Changes and Consultations During the Year**

In the period leading up to an election it was expected that the number of consultation documents issued by the government would be few if any and this has been the case. There were however amendments to the Criminal Justice Bill with respect to the handling of non-serious complaints about PCC's which in summary means these categories of complaints are removed from panel remit and are to be

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dealt with by an independent person, such as a local authority monitoring officer. Panels will however still be required to maintain a record of these complaints.

This amendment was driven by outcomes of the PCC Reviews Part 1 and 2 which took place in 2022/23 and demonstrates how important it is that panels provide input to government consultations applicable to the sector.

### Remote Meeting Consultation

This consultation has been issued recently and is due to close on the 19<sup>th</sup> December. The consultation seeks input from individuals, Councils and Police, Fire and Crime Panels. The sector is accustomed to workshops and training being held remotely and many find this can be both time and cost effective. I would suggest that there would always be a place for meetings held in the traditional manner, and face to face sessions can help members feel part of a collective team as well as providing more effective networking opportunities.

The NAPCP will submit a response and I would hope that individual panels will discuss and agree their own consultation response.

### Panel Support Hub

Resulting from the PCC Reviews, the Home Office had proposed setting up a support hub to help panels. Following the general election and the new government this initiative has been placed on hold until further notice.

### Training and Advice

Frontline Consulting continues to provide learning and networking through regional workshops. These structured sessions provide an excellent opportunity for support officers, chairs and panel members to share panel experiences both good and bad.

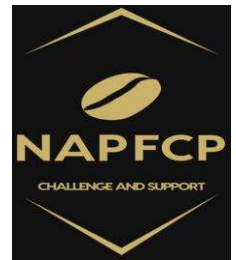
As the future of the panel support hub is in doubt, the association will investigate the feasibility of holding panel “catch up” sessions with the objective to promote panel networking, learning and good practice.

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. As a highly experienced 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 placed to advise and share her experience with other panel support officers.

### Police and Fire and Rescue Budget Setting

As PCC work towards producing budgets for 2025/26 it is clear there are some significant unknowns including how the increase in NI contributions will impact expenditure. More panels are being invited by their PCC to budget and precept workshops ahead of precept meeting in February, which is most encouraging. It is now commonplace for PCCs to hold online surveys to gauge the public’s appetite to pay more for these vital services.

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### Key Lines of Enquiry

The need for appropriate and comprehensive vetting of police officers continues to be raised with further examples being reported of failures within recruiting, vetting and behaviours. Public trust and confidence in the police are adversely impacted by those few officers, across the ranks, whose actions undermine the incredible work undertaken by the majority to keep the public safe. Panels should expect to be briefed on the effectiveness of the vetting procedure in place within their policing area and the manner in which the PCC keeps this crucial area under review.

### In Closing

The relationships between the NAPFCP, the Home Office and the APCC continues to strengthen in a spirit of mutual benefit and I would like to thank each for both their time and support. Good professional relationships take time to establish and to develop trust. Meetings takes place at least quarterly to discuss key items of interest within the sector or issues that evolve from time to time.

My thanks to Dave Burn of Frontline Consulting for the great work he provides in training and practical governance within the sector

Thanks goes to the members of the Executive Committee for the support they provide to the association and to me personally throughout the year.

Thanks also to the various Panel Chairs / Vice Chairs and support officers for sharing their panel experiences. Their support and advice is greatly appreciated and helps shape my thinking on the diverse areas of panel working.

Lastly but most importantly my heartfelt thanks go to Emma Tombs for her professionalism, knowledge and the sound advice provided to the NAPFCP and to me in particular.

Hopefully the next AGM can be held as an in-person meeting, at least in part, to meet new colleagues as well as renew relationships.

John Gili-Ross  
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