

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

PCC BULLETIN

No 6 – 5 MARCH 2012

This bulletin is one in a series of regular updates keeping you informed about developments for the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners in 2012.

In this edition:

- Partner Engagement events –initial feedback from the events happening across England and Wales;
- An online survey to help shape communications;
- Clarification on the requirement for police and crime panels to be ‘balanced’;
- Consultation on services for victims;
- Victim Service Advocate (VSA) project;
- The Home Office PCC Transition Programme Review; and
- Health and Criminal Justice.

Partner Engagement Events

So far we have held 14 of 17 PCC partner engagement events which are scheduled for completion by 9th March. The events are split into two distinct workshops covering:

- Local authorities’ role in establishing **Police and Crime Panels (PCPs)**, the requirements for setting them up and membership;
- The powers and role of the panels; and
- How complaints will be dealt with.
- **Partnership working** – how local partners are working together to prepare for PCCs and to discuss the PCC’s commissioning role and explore what this might mean at a local level.

Each day has ended with a third session exclusively for local authority and police leaders, considering the critical relationships between a PCC, police and local authority strategic leaders.

The response to the events has been very positive, with the vast majority of delegates rating both the information provided by the Home Office and the opportunity for local discussions, positively. Over 1000 delegates have attended so far.

There have been some detailed discussions on the local approaches to preparing for the introduction of PCCs and establishing PCPs. Some key themes have emerged from these early events:

- Transition programmes in many areas are making progress, but messages need to be

more widely disseminated to the range of local partners;

- A growing awareness of the need for preparatory work by partners for the first Police and Crime Plan given the March 31 2013 deadline for publication;
- Significant challenges may exist around the requirement for police and crime panels to be balanced, and partners have requested greater clarification on what this means.

We have responded to the request for more information about the key issue of balance of panels in this bulletin.

A more detailed readout of themes and common issues that emerged from the events will be provided in subsequent bulletins.

We are using this information to update the FAQs on our website, and inform any future information we produce. PCC website: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/>

Information and communications

The PCC local events have enabled us to gain regional and local media coverage with the Policing and Criminal Justice Minister Nick Herbert often doing two or three radio interviews on each occasion, and coverage in the local press. This is helping to raise awareness and stimulate interest amongst the public in local areas. We've also seen candidates putting themselves forward this month and generate considerable coverage. We are continuing to target regional media as the events tour England & Wales.

If you are thinking of making any announcements or publishing information on your website you might like to consider linking your activity to one of the remaining roadshows. These are:

- Newcastle – 6th March
- Manchester – 7th March
- Llandudno – 8th March

The PCC section of the Home Office website is a useful resource if you are developing messages <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners>

Shaping our communications with you - Online Survey

We have produced a short online survey that will help us to develop our communication with you. This is your opportunity to tell us what your information needs are and how you prefer to receive it. The survey shouldn't take more than 15 minutes to complete.

You can complete the survey here:

<http://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/v.asp?i=46969lyjxy>

Police and Crime Panels

Balanced Appointment Objective - Legal Clarification

The Police and Social Responsibility Act specifies that Police and Crime Panels must be

balanced in terms of geography, politics, and the skills, knowledge and experience of panel members. Clarification on the specific legal position, and what this means for local partners in making their decisions on panel membership is set out below.

Ministers have been clear that the best panel arrangements will be those which are locally determined. In many cases achieving balance will be challenging, especially where perceived inequalities cannot be redressed through additional co-option of elected members. In recognition of this, **the Act specifically states that the balanced appointment objective must be secured “as far as is practicable”**. However, local authorities will need a robust rationale for their final membership and be able to justify their decision to the public and their peers.

- **Geographical balance - “represent all parts of the relevant police area”**
- Councillor membership of the panel should reflect the geography and population size of the force area. In the first instance, the legislation seeks to achieve this by having every local authority in the area represented on the panel.
- **Political balance - “represent the political make-up of the relevant local authorities (when taken together)”**
- Councillor membership of the panel, when taken together, should reflect the political balance of the force area. Local authorities could look to achieve this, in the first instance, by considering the proportion of councillors from each political party across the force area. This approach is the closest to the spirit of the legislation and reflects the approach taken to police authority membership.
- **Skills, knowledge and experience**
- All appointments to the panel, of both councillors and independents, should be made in the context of ensuring that the panel has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to discharge its functions.

The Local Government Association is developing an advice note for local authorities which explores in greater detail the options available in making decisions on panel membership and balance.

Consultation on services for victims of crime

A consultation paper “Getting it right for victims and witnesses” was published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) on 30 January. The paper sets out a series of proposed reforms to help deliver a more coherent service for victims of crime. Amongst the proposals is that from 2014, the bulk of victims services are commissioned by Police and Crime Commissioners. There will still be some specialised services (such as support for the bereaved families of homicide victims and helplines for victims of domestic violence and stalking) which it makes sense to commission nationally, and the document considers the options for doing so. The consultation document is available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/victims-witnesses-cp3-2012.htm> and the closing date for responses is 22 April.

Ministry of Justice are also holding a series of consultation events during March:

There will be two comprehensive events in London (Royal Horticultural Halls) 5th March and

Manchester (Midland Hotel) 14th March covering all the proposals in the paper and sessions on:

- Supporting victims and witnesses through the criminal justice system (CJS);
- Commissioning local services;
- Surcharge and other financial impositions;
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS).

The focus of these events will be to gather a wide range of views on all proposals, from those working with and for victims, to victims themselves. The five focussed events will cover specifically:

- Writing the Victims' Code;
- Improving the victims' voice in the CJS;
- Commissioning local services.

The events will take place in:

- Exeter (Rougemont Hotel) 6th March;
- Cardiff (Maldron hotel) 12th March;
- York (Royal York Hotel) 19th March;
- Peterborough (Bull Hotel) 21st March;
- Birmingham (Holiday Inn – City Centre) 26th March.

The focus of these events will be detailed discussions with practitioners and service providers from the voluntary and community sector.

To register, please email partners@justice.gsi.gov.uk - stating which event you wish to attend, plus your first and second group session preferences (listed above). Spaces are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Victim Service Advocate (VSA) project

The Victim Services Advocates (VSA) project, funded by the Home Office and delivered by Victim Support, aims to support the proposed changes, particularly the requirement in the PRSR Act 2011 for the PCC to obtain the views of victims of crime. Twenty-two victim service advocates have been working since last year to ensure that local service providers and criminal justice agencies are more aware of victims' issues. By the end of May 2012, the project will deliver a series of local reports for each police force area outlining the existing service landscape for victims, and highlighting victims' priority service needs. The VSA project is also establishing links to the Safer Future Communities programme (see previous bulletins) which will support frontline VCSE organisations delivering across Home Office priority areas, in preparation for the arrival of PCCs.

For more information contact:

VSA national project manager: Rachel Griffin - Rachel.Griffin@victimsupport.org.uk

Safer Future Communities project manager: Linda Pinzani-Williams - LindaPizani.Williams@clinks.org

HO policy lead: Sara Featherstone, Community Safety Unit – sara.featherstone@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

PCC Transition Programme Review

The PCC Transition Sponsorship Board which oversees the delivery of the Programme, met 28th February 2012. The board is chaired by the Policing and Criminal Justice Minister Nick Herbert and includes representatives from a range of organisations including ACPO, APA, LGA, MoJ, and DCLG. The programme seeks to deliver an effective, coherent and seamless transition to PCCs.

With a significant milestone being met recently, (the establishment of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime), a review of the programme was undertaken and findings discussed at the board. The review showed that the programme was entering a new phase of implementation and a refresh of projects and objectives was timely.

The new programme structure was proposed and agreed by the Sponsorship Board with projects on London and the Protocol closing following the completion of the substantial work in these areas. As communications will continue to be key in the coming months in the run up to the elections, a new working group was created to focus on this and public awareness raising. The new structure and refreshed objectives will ensure the Sponsorship Board delivers successful elections and a smooth transition to PCCs.

Partnership working: health and criminal justice sectors

On 23 February the Home Office held an informative and productive event with the Department of Health and the Ministry of Justice, examining how to encourage partnership working between health and the criminal justice system at a local level. The meeting was about the reforms across government, including PCCs, that will affect local areas. It was attended by a wide range of frontline partners, which included directors of public health, representatives from ACPO, the probation service, strategic health authorities, police authorities and service user groups. The event was a first step in facilitating discussions directly with frontline staff, who have committed to a number of action points which will be supported by MoJ, Department of Health, and the Home Office. This work will also be fed into the shadow Health and Wellbeing Boards National Learning Sets event on 24 April and will contribute to a suite of resources produced by partners to support emerging boards.

It is important that partnership working continues between health and the criminal justice system in the new local landscape. Improving the health of a local population will require work on crime, violence prevention and community safety. Local areas will need to engage with PCCs in order to achieve these outcomes and work effectively. Equally, reducing crime requires a strong health input on issues such as drug and alcohol dependence and mental health. By co-commissioning services effectively, all partners could work with those individuals that cause the most harm, and the most cost, to local communities.

Information and communications

We recognise that establishing a co-ordinated and coherent communication programme

provides important support for partners preparing for the introduction of PCCs. Our communications started back in November with a 'one year to go' announcement. At that time we launched a dedicated section on the Home Office website for members of the public and those interested in finding out more about the role of PCCs. Here you'll find all the documents and other key information that's available so far. This area will build over time.
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners>

An information booklet for potential candidates is also available:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/pcc/have-got-what-takes/got-what-it-takes>

Women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people are under-represented in elected office. This is an opportunity for people from all walks of life to stand and make a difference.

We're sending out regular bulletins throughout the roll-out of Police and Crime Commissioners to keep you informed. We will also field any enquiries or questions you have. Contact us at PCCPartnersEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

We welcome your comments and questions throughout the development and implementation process.