

Meeting 31st July 2020 13:00 – 15:00

Members attending:

John Scott QC, Solicitor Advocate (Chair)

Bruce Adamson, CYPCS

Ephraim Borowski, Chair of the National Independent Strategic Advisory Group

Chief Superintendent David Duncan, Police Scotland

Martyn Evans, SPA

Gill Imery, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS)

Dr Elizabeth Kelly, NHS Scotland and Associate Carnegie UK Trust

John Logue, Deputy Crown Agent Operational Support, COPFS

Professor Susan McVie, University of Edinburgh

Diego Quiroz, Scottish Human Rights Commission

Apologies:

Aamer Anwar, Solicitor and Human Rights campaigner

Tressa Burke, CEO Glasgow Disability Alliance

DCC Will Kerr, Police Scotland

Professor ACC Gary Ritchie, Police Scotland

Brian Scott, Glasgow Disability Alliance

Dr Catriona Stewart, Scottish Women's Autism Network

Secretariat support:

Eleanor Gaw, SPA Community Accountability

Fiona Miller, SPA Community Accountability

In attendance:

Martin Smith, SPA Strategy Programme Lead (for agenda item 2)

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. He introduced Martin Smith, SPA Strategy Programme Lead, joining the meeting for agenda item 2.

2. Overview of SPA Public Opinion Survey results during COVID-19

Martin Smith, SPA Strategy Programme Lead

Martin provided an overview of the SPA public opinion survey paper which had been circulated to members, and outlined the background to the survey, main findings and plans for the future. The survey was commissioned by the SPA to be undertaken by an external provider in three separate waves, the first commencing in April 2020.

The survey focused on levels of public confidence in policing, and levels of support for the Police Scotland approach.

Approximately fifteen hundred individuals were contacted in each of the two waves that have taken place; a third may take place, possibly in mid - September. The survey is nationally representative with 52% female and 48% male respondents, with a balance of age groups and status, for example, shielding, working from home, and attending the workplace.

Overall, the 4E's strategy implemented by Police Scotland has been well received and there is a high level of support for the public health benefits of lockdown. Overall public confidence in policing has improved slightly, with some exceptions among young people and in some communities in the north. Whilst some recipients would like tougher enforcement action, overall there is little evidence of support for online "name and shame" or roadblocks as a style of policing, rather a preference for a more traditional community policing presence.

Martin Smith indicated that the SPA was considering an increase in sample size for a third wave of the survey. This approach would have cost implications and no decision has yet been made on this. A larger sample size would allow cross referencing findings across a range of categories, for example, a particular demographic group within a particular geographic area.

Work is underway to formulate questions for a further wave of the survey, and IAG members were invited to offer potential questions or ideas for inclusion.

Points raised included -

- Evidence on the extent to which COVID – related FPNs are issued to those who have already had dealings with the police.
- How to gather data and understand the impact on those who have been dispersed rather than issued with an FPN.
- How to understand more about those groups for whom complying with the regulations has been difficult, or who have not managed to comply, and why that is the case.

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- How to gather evidence on the impact of local lockdowns, and how these may impact on survey results.
- The need for further work to understand the wider impact on children and young people. The SPA survey, with relatively small numbers, clusters all respondent age 35 and under in one age category.
- Weighing potential reputational risk from investing in data gathering, as public services move into a period of greater austerity, with the potential benefits of a greater understanding of public impact.

The Chair thanked Martin for attending the meeting and for his input.

3. Note of previous meeting

Future attendance planned for IAG Meetings -

Friday 7th August: Kirsty-Louise Campbell, Police Scotland, "Your Police" survey

Friday 21st August: Dr Michael Rosie, Policing of protests and assemblies.

The Chair reported that he had spoken with Stuart Bateson, a senior police officer in Victoria, Australia. They had discussed the recent policing approach during a new outbreak of coronavirus centred in Melbourne. The methods appear quite extreme in comparison to the UK, and include setting up roadblocks to prevent nonessential movement in and out of the state, which has caused huge traffic disruption; and specific housing areas being secured at short notice, resulting in some residents being stuck inside, with no access to essential supplies. The army are now also involved in ensuring people comply with regulations, for example, quarantine requirements, and police have been issuing significant numbers of tickets to people for not wearing masks or breaching travel regulations.

As result of this and other measures, public confidence in policing has dipped. Members discussed some of the challenges for policing in supporting adherence with regulations over time, and the need for all parties to maintain effective communication with communities.

4. Reflections on the IAG/SPA Webinar

Initial feedback from a small number of SPA Board members has been very positive, and Martyn Evans proposed that all board members be contacted and asked to share their views of the event. It was agreed that it may be beneficial to offer another event of this type in future, and this may be the right type of forum for a more detailed look at the available data.

IAG members were positive about the event, referencing the opportunity to share the wide range of perspectives across the group membership, the opportunity to make the data and evidence more widely available, and make real some of the challenges around mainstreaming the human rights approach to oversight of policing.

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The Chair recorded his thanks to Dr Liz Aston who had been an excellent chair, and to the secretariat for support in organising the event.

IAG members had a wide-ranging discussion on support for policing's open dialogue and engagement with government, particularly around the enforceability of future legislation and to avoid any risk of, for example, a reduction in issuing penalty notices being perceived as decision making about what is or is not enforced. The Chair proposed that he write personally to the Scottish Government outlining his position in relation to this matter, and will share this correspondence with IAG members.

Action: Chair will write to Scottish Government

Action: Eleanor will liaise with Martyn Evans to gather further feedback from SPA members and Scottish Government partners, to share with the group.

5. Data and Evidence

The OpTICAL group will meet on Tuesday 4th August and consider any outstanding IAG data requests.

Professor McVie has recently received additional data from Chief Inspector Jon Harris for review, which will inform the refreshed IAG data ask.

The ongoing challenge for the OpTICAL team in manually collating data was noted.

Professor McVie will check that the data used in the NPCC report on FPNs is comparable.

A relatively short IAG report on data is anticipated for the August 19 SPA Board, with a fuller report available for the September Board meeting.

6. SPA Board Meeting 19th August 2020

After discussion members agreed the following papers will be included in the group's report -

- Chair's introduction/ overview
- SWAN Network survey report
- GDA survey report
- General Work Plan update
- Data Update

A final decision on the content of the report will be agreed Friday 7th August.

7. Date of next meeting

Friday 7th August 13:00

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