

Meeting 09 October 2020 13:00 – 15:00

Members attending:

John Scott QC, Solicitor Advocate (Chair)

Ephraim Borowski, Chair of the National Independent Strategic Advisory Group

Martyn Evans, SPA Board Member

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

John Logue, Deputy Crown Agent Operational Support, COPFS

Professor Susan McVie, University of Edinburgh

Naomi McAuliffe, Programme Director Scotland, Amnesty International

Diego Quiroz, Scottish Human Rights Commission

ACC Gary Ritchie, Police Scotland

Attending for item 2, Professor Ben Bradford

Apologies:

Bruce Adamson, CYPCS

Aamer Anwar, Solicitor and Human Rights campaigner

Tressa Burke, CEO Glasgow Disability Alliance

Maria Galli, CYPCS

Dr Elizabeth Kelly, NHS Scotland and Associate Carnegie UK Trust

Susan Kemp, Scottish Human Rights Commission

DCC Will Kerr, Police Scotland

Brian Scott, Glasgow Disability Alliance

Dr Catriona Stewart, SWAN Scotland

John McCroskie, SPA Director of Communications and Relationships

Secretariat:

Eleanor Gaw, SPA

Fiona Miller, SPA

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Professor Ben Bradford, Professor of Global City Policing at the Department of Security and Crime Science, UCL

The Chair welcomed Professor Bradford to the meeting, and gave an overview of the work of the group since he had last attended. He highlighted the work undertaken by the group in the last five months, including the extensive analysis of data relating to Covid and Non-Covid Fixed Penalty Notices by Professor McVie and papers on a variety of issues including the impact on disabled people, those with autism, and children and young people.

Despite evidence that an increasing number of people support more stringent enforcement action, the IAG considered that Police Scotland's 4E's approach had been extremely successful. The group had also recently considered related media coverage which appeared to focus to a disproportionate extent on breaches of regulations rather than high rates of adherence (with adherence obviously harder to portray in pictures).

Professor Bradford highlighted three specific areas of interest.

- Compliance. Panel work had indicated that high levels of compliance were supported by social and moral norms. This consensus is starting to break down to some extent, potentially creating pressures for the police. But generally there are high levels of compliance and support for the restrictions remains strong.
- Non Compliance. It was noted that specific sections of the community have been highlighted in the media for not complying with regulations, often to a disproportionate extent. There is also evidence of increasing confusion about changing or complex sets of regulations, and legitimacy is a more important issue if the number of people disagreeing with the rules increase. If people are unclear on the rules, that is potentially a big problem for compliance.
- Thirdly what is referred to as the "Dominic Cummings effect". A study of adherence before and after this incident indicates that it appeared to have little effect on individuals' behaviour, and to some extent provoked a reaction which may actually have increased compliance.

Professor Bradford highlighted that in the UK, the police connect and mediate between communities and the state, separate from government. Overall, people feel connected to policing at community level, which supports the legitimacy of the service. In times of crisis in the UK, public confidence in policing tends to rise. Professor Bradford contrasted this with the approach of policing in some other countries where the police are strongly associated with government, and which have seen much higher levels of enforcement and much greater protest about the restrictions.

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For the small number of people in the UK who do have regular contact with the police, 4 E's approach is particularly important in supporting their relationship with the police.

Wider discussion points included –

- Some evidence of weariness and increasing intolerance of restrictions, as the regulations change in response to increasing infection rates.
- Some growing intolerance of those who appear to be breaching regulations.
- The role of consistent messaging and the 4E's approach, in helping individuals to understand the regulations and view the approach of policing as fair.
- The potential damage to respect for the rule of law, if laws are made which are not enforced.
- The extent to which core powers may be interpreted or applied differently across the UK and any associated risks.
- The level of public confidence in Police Scotland remains steady, and is slightly higher than before the pandemic began.

Members noted the differential policing practice in some parts of the UK, where politicians were calling for a tougher approach, whereas in Scotland the need to support people to comply is more prominent.

On behalf of the group the Chair thanked Professor Bradford for his input.

3. Note of the previous meeting and matters arising

The Chair advised that he had forwarded a copy of the most recent IAG report to Professor Reicher.

All other matters were covered in the agenda.

4. Data

OpTICAL Group

Professor McVie introduced her paper on data analysis of FPNs following discussion at OpTICAL, and informed by an initial analysis of SCTS data. The supporting information will be publicly available in November, and inform the next IAG report to the SPA Board.

The paper generated substantial discussion from members, who welcomed the analysis.

Professor McVie will undertake further analysis of the SCTS and nominal data, and a further paper will be provided to members.

Actions: Members are asked to offer feedback or questions on any data related issues to Professor McVie

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Action: Information on quarantine referrals will be shared with members by email or via egress (secretariat).

Citizenspace

No further responses had been received.

5. IAG /SPA Webinar 5th October

Members considered that the event had been successful, and that the revised timings had worked well with a greater opportunity to discuss data and consider other sources of evidence, particularly on lived experience.

The Chair indicated that there may well be an opportunity for a further webinar, to allow for more detailed consideration of the group's work outwith the time constraints of a formal board meeting.

6. AOCB

Police Scotland will circulate the findings of the Aberdeen survey to IAG members.

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