

Meeting 18th May 2020 14:00 – 16:00

Members attending:

John Scott QC, Solicitor Advocate (Chair)
Aamer Anwar, Solicitor and Human Rights campaigner
Bruce Adamson, CYPCS
Ephraim Borowski, Chair of the National Independent Strategic Advisory Group
Tressa Burke, Chief Executive Glasgow Disability Alliance
Chief Superintendent Davie Duncan Police Scotland (on behalf of ACC Ritchie)
Martyn Evans, Scottish Police Authority (attended until 2.30 pm)
Gill Imery, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS)
Dr Elizabeth Kelly, NHS Scotland and Associate Carnegie UK Trust
DCC Will Kerr, Police Scotland
John Logue, Deputy Crown Agent Operational Support, COPFS
Naomi McAuliffe, Programme Director Scotland, Amnesty International
Professor Susan McVie, University of Edinburgh
Diego Quiroz, Scottish Human Rights Commission
Dr Catriona Stewart, Scottish Women's Autism Network

Apologies:

Martin Hayward, Equality and Human Rights Commission
Susan Kemp, Scottish Human Rights Commission
ACC Gary Ritchie, Police Scotland

In attendance:

DCC Malcolm Graham, Police Scotland (agenda item 7)
Dr Megan O'Neill, University of Dundee

Secretariat support:

Jennifer Blackwood, SPA Communications
Eleanor Gaw, SPA Community Accountability
John McCroskie, SPA Director of Communications and Relationships

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1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The Chair highlighted letters sent from members to their own networks to promote and facilitate input into the work of the group, referencing in particular a range of letters sent by Dr Kelly across health networks. It was noted that a paper relating to Human Rights implications from Susan Kemp and Diego Quiroz would be tabled for discussion with members 25th May 2020.

3. Chair's report to the Scottish Police Authority Board 20th May 2020

The Chair thanked members for their input and helpful comments on content and tone which had enhanced the report. He also indicated that in response to feedback some additional reference to the contribution of visiting experts would be included, and he would strengthen how the report reflects the breadth of diversity.

The report would be finalised that day for publication, and following this afternoon's meeting members would have a short window for any further feedback.

4. Citizen Space Portal

Draft text for the portal and landing page was discussed, based on work by Professor McVie with input from the Chair, and formatted for publication by Jennifer Blackwood. The intention is that this should go live 25th May 2020.

Susan McVie introduced the draft text. The need to balance sufficient information without having too much text for people to read before getting to questions was highlighted, and the need to make the questions as inclusive as possible.

While actively seeking the views of those with experience of interacting with policing during the lock down, the portal will also ensure there is an opportunity for anyone to respond, including those who may represent other groups.

Initial feedback from IAG members included a request to refer back to some of the language included in the legislation, and offer further break down of groups with protected characteristics.

The need to promote participation via local networks, and make preparations to highlight in local media, was noted.

Action: All Members to provide any additional comments on the content and text this week via Eleanor, for finalisation Friday 22nd.

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5. Data update.

Professor McVie briefed members ahead of discussions at Tuesday's OpTICAL group. She highlighted the offer from Police Scotland to undertake data collection work with police officers and staff, and to facilitate officers engaging directly with the Advisory Group.

Members were appreciative of this offer, and it was noted that no other resource has been identified at this point. However, the group's preference is for an independent process, and the Chair is keen for the group to commission an independent piece of work to capture police officer views. He also highlighted the need to engage the Police Federation.

DCC Kerr indicated that Police Scotland appreciated the group's preference for some independence around this process, and will take forward whatever works best.

6. AOCB – discussion of this item was brought forward to allow DCC Graham to complete another meeting.

DCC Kerr briefed members that there is an expectation of a route map out of lockdown being shared by the First Minister on the 21st May. This may see Police Scotland focus shifting primarily to enforcement of the more serious breaches of regulations, as constraints on behaviours are relaxed. As regulations and guidance change, he emphasised that it is increasingly helpful to get real time dynamic advice and support from the group

The Chair noted that contact details for the Divisional Commanders engaged in the work of the group have now been shared to allow for feedback and information sharing on a live basis, as any issues from their networks and communities come to their attention.

Action: IAG members

Fran Warren, one of the authors of a draft report on the international context to policing the pandemic has offered to speak to the group, and will be invited to the meeting on the 29th May.

Action: S McVie/ Eleanor Gaw

Bruce Adamson highlighted an amendment proposed to the Coronavirus Scotland no 2 Bill, to ensure that 16 and 17 year olds are treated as children in the legislation, in line with UN guidance. CYPCS is engaging with Committee tomorrow in support of this, and Police Scotland support this amendment.

7. Input from and discussion with DCC Malcolm Graham, Police Scotland Deputy Chief Constable Crime and Operations, and Operation Talla Gold Command.

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DCC Graham outlined his role as Gold Commander for Operation Talla, leading Police Scotland's response. He emphasised that while command and control structures allow for a fast paced and dynamic set of responses, there is still scope for a reflective approach and to adapt and respond to feedback.

He placed policing's response from 3rd week in March in context. From the outset, Police Scotland had to make decisions, communicate with partners and officers, and get things operational on the ground at huge scale and with unprecedented speed. The service was clear that this also presented an opportunity to adopt an approach defined by engagement and consent and which enhanced the service's legitimacy.

The decision to rely on the common sense of people and officers and not "fill in any gaps" in guidance or legislation has worked well. The formation of the Independent Advisory Group has been welcomed by officers and its work has a critical role to play in supporting public confidence in policing's response to the crisis.

He asked that as much as possible, feedback from the group to policing be moved into real time, to influence policing's approach as the situation develops.

The Chair welcomed DCC Graham's input. He highlighted the connections made between policing at divisional level, as well as through DCC Kerr, ACC Ritchie and ACC Higgins, with the IAG members and on to their wider networks and contacts, to support real time feedback. He also referenced the IAG's support and ability to help shape policing's messaging, and ahead of communications being shared with officers and the wider public.

The need to look ahead at emerging challenges and change was noted. The Chair highlighted the group's forward focus, anticipating the additional data becoming available via the OptICAL Group and from other sources, drawing in public perspectives via the portal, but contextualised by the expertise, networks and connectedness of individual members.

DCC Graham highlighted the extraordinary levels of co-operation and co-ordination across public services and with government and politicians, but even so the short window between decisions being made and announced and having to be implemented is extremely challenging. The service and other partners have worked hard through collaboration to stretch that window.

The context is one of changing demands on policing, and clear public messaging around change is viewed as critical. DCC Graham also briefed members that some of the "business as usual" service demand has crept up in recent weeks.

He also outlined Police Scotland's internal assurance processes for Operation Talla, including weekly review of progress against each of eight strategic objectives and ongoing review, supported by evidence from the OptICAL group and the work of the IAG and wider range of assurance and reporting, to build the fuller public reporting framework.

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The Chair thanked DCC Graham for his input. He noted that the 20th May report to the SPA Board strongly reflects many of the themes DCC Graham had referenced.

8. AOCB continued

Dr. Megan O'Neill was introduced to the group as a guest contributor. She will offer a fuller briefing and discussion with members 22nd May.

CS Duncan offered to share some digital coverage of what were fairly sparsely attended lockdown protests at the weekend, and which seemed to draw support from very disparate sources. Group members considered that some of the digital coverage was unhelpful, and had overemphasised these events, which had failed to draw any significant levels of attendance.

Date of next meeting: Friday 22nd May 12:00 – 14:00

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