

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE  
(WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY AND WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE)  
HELD ON 01 OCTOBER 2021**

**ETHICS SESSION  
Video Conference**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Trevor Lake (Chair)  
Julie Talbot  
Julie Winham

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Caroline Allen, Head of Legal and Governance, WYCA  
Paula Bickerdyke, D/Supt, WYP  
Sue Crawford, WYP  
Wayne Horner, D/CI, WYP  
Mark Long, D/Supt, WYP  
Alison Lowe, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime  
Martin Mozier, C/Insp, WYP  
Julie Reid, Governance Manager, WYCA (Notes)  
Neil Rickwood, Head of Audit & Risk, WYP  
Kate Riley, ACC, WYP  
David Smith, Victims Adviser, WYCA (for item 13)

**1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Trevor Lake welcomed all to the meeting including Alison Lowe to her first meeting as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC). Apologies were received from Janine Nelson, Simon Bottomley and Russ Foster.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None declared.

**3. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**

Details of member and officer attendance at previous meetings of the Committee were circulated for information and Trevor Lake noted 100% attendance by members.

#### **4. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

##### **Item 22.1 Draft Assurance Framework**

Julie Reid presented a draft assurance framework for ethics which had been requested by members in March 2021. Members were informed that the framework is based on the existing assurance framework but maps assurance against the standards proposed for providers of public services by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Members noted that the assessment of evidence had been done as a desk-top exercise with colleagues in West Yorkshire Police but much more work and resources would need to be committed to properly assess the evidence available.

Members welcomed the ethics assurance framework and sought assurance that terms of reference are in place for each group and meeting, recommending that it is reviewed with the DMPC and in conjunction with the wider governance review in the Combined Authority.

Julie Winham cautioned against the ethics assurance framework detracting from the corporate assurance framework which is in place.

**ACTION: Julie Reid to review the ethics Assurance Framework in conjunction with the wider governance review in the Combined Authority.**

##### **Item 22.2 Review of Protective Services Crime**

Kate Riley reported that the full report of a review of demand and resourcing in Protective Services Crime is due in January 2022, noting that different teams within the Department record different results in terms of breaches of the Working Time Directive. The follow up internal audit report was published in September 2021 and makes recommendations to reduce unplanned overtime. The recommendations are supported and communicated by the Senior Leadership Team who are also reviewing the skill set in the team to ensure that the right volume of skills is available in specific areas to reduce short notice demands.

##### **Item 22.3 Independent Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel**

Paula Bickerdyke updated members on progress in re-establishing the Independent Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel in which the Force are liaising with colleagues in the Policing and Crime Team.

**ACTION: David Smith to confirm the arrangements for establishing the Independent Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panel.**

##### **Item 22.4 Internal Ethics Committee Policy Reviews**

Julie Reid presented a report on future planned policy reviews to be undertaken by the Internal Ethics Committee in West Yorkshire Police which members noted.

## 6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

Trevor Lake noted that C/Supt Simon Bottomley will be leaving on 8 October and thanked him for his service and work with the Ethics Committee.

## 7. DEPUTY MAYOR FOR POLICING AND CRIME (DMPC)

Alison Lowe introduced herself to the meeting and outlined the Mayor's priorities and the work that she had been involved in since her appointment as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, including taking the position of Deputy Chair of the APCC Transparency and Ethics Group, meeting with the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner and meeting with the Regional Director of the IOPC.

Members were informed of discussions with the Deputy Chief Constable and Head of Professional Standards Department regarding the staff survey and possible options for a female staff survey and separate female induction briefings on misogyny and the whistleblowing reporting policy and system. The DMPC has also raised the risk of WhatsApp being a vehicle for unprofessional conduct.

Members were advised that the Mayor is very keen to have a Force with legitimacy and the Ethics Committee is an integral part in demonstrating this trust.

Trevor Lake noted that the use of WhatsApp has previously been raised by the Committee along with the use of personal devices to access and utilise social media by officers and requested that this is considered again in the January 2022 meeting.

**ACTION: Julie Reid to include oversight of the use of personal devices to access and utilise social media to the agenda for the January 2022 meeting.**

## 8. COVID-19 UPDATE

### (a) West Yorkshire Police

Kate Riley provided an update to Committee reporting a low level of public order incidents connected to COVID-19 and no unlicensed music events. Sickness absence rate is 2.6% with only a small number related to COVID-19 with some affected staff working from home. If an officer or member of staff is off for more than ten days then attempts are made to provide agile working kit subject to the role and shift patterns. Members were informed that the UK infection rate averages 332/100K which is an increase of 5.4%. The infection rate in Yorkshire and the Humber is 372/100k with the number of deaths also being higher than the national average and the number of double vaccinations being lower.

### (b) Policing and Crime Team

Julie Reid provided a COVID-19 update for the Policing and Crime Team and reported that staff remain working agile which has continued to receive support from the majority of staff in a recent staff survey. The COVID-19 risk assessment has been reviewed in line with Combined Authority practices and online Fire Marshal and First Aid Appointed Person training has been rolled out to all staff. Ethical issues were identified as the balance between increased productivity which most people can benefit from when working agile to

the impact on wellbeing of reduced social contact and support and the potential difficulties of managing meetings with a mix of attendees who are office-based and home-based in terms of distractions in the office environment and a lack of private meeting areas.

## **9. WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE STAFF SURVEYS**

Sue Crawford presented a report on the actions arising from the staff survey. Members were advised that the Force is looking at how demand may be reduced to address the reports of stress and fatigue from excessive workloads. In terms of the reported lack of specialist trained officers in the Safeguarding Units the number of trained officers will be increased from 79 to 138 with a target of 113 by March 2022.

In terms of the reports of fatigue the National Police Wellbeing Service are undertaking a project in the next 12 months in relation to fatigue, driving and shift work. Within West Yorkshire employees have participated in two sleep studies and a training webinar has been commissioned for use across the Force to help to raise awareness of good sleep and healthy sleep habits.

Durham University's leadership and inclusion workshops will be incorporated into mandatory training to support the development of a positive and inclusive culture and a range of campaigns, promotions, pop-up events, intranet messages and DEI SPOCs are being used to improve awareness of the wellbeing and DEI services which are available to officers and staff.

The staff survey identified a lack of understanding of sexual harassment issues and a lack of trust in the reporting mechanisms relating to sexual harassment and incivility. The 'knowing the line' campaign was relaunched in July with intranet messaging, a video briefing, posters and a flow chart of routes for reporting. Particular attention was given to 'banter' which was highlighted by respondents in the survey. Sexual harassment awareness training is given to all new recruits.

Members were advised that publication of the 2019 National DEI survey was delayed because of COVID-19 and the actions reported to Committee included the matters arising from this survey and the Force 2020 survey combined.

Julie Winham queried whether Internal Audit resources had been identified for reviewing the survey actions and was advised that this will be looked at once Districts and Departments have put into place local action plans.

Julie Talbot asked who had overall responsibility for monitoring the action plan and was advised that every District/Department has its own action plan and separate audit process via the Local Accountability Meetings (LAMs). A lead Directorate has been identified for the Force action plan which is also subject to quarterly review by ACC Kate Riley.

Julie Talbot asked if actions are prioritised and was advised that timeframes are set locally.

Trevor Lake noted that some actions do not have a response, and some have a short timeframe but no apparent progress and was advised that the action plan has been updated recently. Trevor Lake observed that there doesn't appear to be a sense of

urgency and queried the effectiveness of DEI training. Kate Riley advised that the updated action plan includes only one action which hasn't been progressed.

**ACTION: Sue Crawford to report to Committee in January 2022 with an updated action plan from the staff survey.**

## **10. PUBLIC COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES, DISCIPLINARY, WHISTLEBLOWING, FRAUD AND MISCONDUCT MATTERS**

Mark Long presented a report to members outlining the highest strategic threats being abuse of authority, inappropriate associations, disclosure of information and theft and fraud.

Members were informed that complaint numbers reduced in August 2021 although yearly totals have increased after the introduction of new regulations. 50% of complaints are resolved outside of Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act which allows a quicker resolution to the complainant's satisfaction. 7.5% of complaints are finalised as 'service unacceptable'. Of the complaint reviews undertaken by staff in the Policing and Crime Team 16.4% are upheld. The IOPC complaints statistics for 2020-21 show West Yorkshire performing well compared with other most similar forces in terms of timeliness and legitimacy.

The Professional Standards Department (PSD) experienced resource challenges over the summer but new processes and templates have been introduced to improve communication and quality control.

Julie Talbot sought clarification on the difference between complaint allegations and complaint cases and was advised that one complaint case may have a number of allegations within it.

Julie Talbot sought further information about the trend in complaint reviews carried out by the Policing and Crime Team.

**ACTION: Mark Long to report to Committee in January 2022 with information about trends in complaint review outcomes for those complaints referred to the Policing and Crime Team.**

Julie Talbot asked whether there were any lessons for West Yorkshire from the Sarah Everard case in terms of vetting and was advised that, in West Yorkshire, similar referrals about serving officers would have led to suspension. Members were informed the Force Vetting Officer sits on the NPCC Vetting Working Group and is very experienced

Julie Winham noted three police staff conduct cases with one relating to indecent images, one to integrity and honesty and one to a driving offence. Members were advised that a personal device was involved in the indecent images conduct case and not a Force issued device. Members were also advised that the case was referred to the Force by CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command). All cases referred to PSD are assessed by a senior officer. Training and awareness raising about abuse of position forms part of Force training and is covered in regular news articles and communications which also highlight specific cases and officer and staff dismissals.

Trevor Lake sought assurance regarding staffing levels in PSD and was advised that the HMICFRS recommendations had been implemented and the Department is fully staffed except for a small number of vacancies.

Trevor Lake noted that the NHS 'Freedom to Speak Up' scheme where a guardian assists staff to raise issues directly with senior leaders may be a helpful initiative to introduce into policing.

## **11. POLICY REVIEW – REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS (SAFEGUARDING)**

Wayne Horner presented a report on the Registered Sex Offenders (Safeguarding) Policy advising that the Safeguarding Central Governance Team have responsibility for the policy which was reviewed in June 2021. The last Force Management Statement showed that West Yorkshire Police is in a strong position. The Force adopts national standards and carries out active risk assessments which are approved by supervisors. Members were informed that the Safeguarding Central Governance Team review processes for continuous improvement and, if the case is not a MAPPA (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangement) case, consideration is given to an internal review. For MAPPA cases an initial review is done by the MAPPA Co-ordinator and then further reviewed by two more senior officers to determine whether a full review is required by Serious Case Review Officers in the Team.

Julie Winham requested a copy of the policy itself and queried the timeframe of the risk assessment. Members were advised that the risk assessment relates to the individual concerned and is used to develop a risk management plan centred on integrated offender management which does not have set timeframes but is specific to the case.

**ACTION: Julie Reid to provide members with a copy of the Registered Sex Offenders (Safeguarding) Policy.**

## **12. POLICY REVIEW – USE OF FORCE**

Kate Riley presented a report on the Use of Force Policy advising members that the Policy was in draft at this stage and is managed by the Operational Support Department. Scrutiny of the use of force is through the Use of Force Gold Group and appointed Chief Officer. District Scrutiny Groups are in place and will be utilised to provide external scrutiny focussing on factors such as age, race and gender.

Alison Lowe noted that disproportionality in the use of force was not referenced in the draft policy. Members requested an update on development of the policy at the next meeting, particularly in relation to operation of the scrutiny panels and reporting of disproportionality.

**ACTION: Kate Riley to report to Committee in January 2022 with an update on development of the Use of Force Policy and scrutiny of disproportionality.**

Julie Talbot asked how this policy linked to other related policies and was advised that the Extended Use of Taser Policy is linked to this policy and officer safety training covers all types of force.

### **13. BIOMETRICS AND CAMERA SURVEILLANCE COMMISSIONER INSPECTION**

Martin Mozier presented a report on the recent visit to the Yorkshire and Humber Forces by the Biometrics and Camera Surveillance Commissioner. Members were informed that the recommendations were the same for all four Forces although only one recommendation related to West Yorkshire; that custody images are retained, monitored and used in line with the Home Office's 2017 Custody Images Review and with reference to the MOPI (Management of Police Information) guidelines.

Alison Lowe informed members that she had met with the Biometrics and Camera Surveillance Commissioner. The DMPC outlined her concerns regarding mobile fingerprint data being held and shared with the Home Office and sought assurance that this sharing of data improves identification of human trafficking cases which is the basis of the sharing.

**ACTION: Kate Riley to report to the January 2022 Committee with an analysis of the impact of biometric data sharing in the identification of human trafficking.**

Trevor Lake sought confirmation of the regularity of inspection and was advised that the last review was in 2018 and there is no specific timetable.

### **14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Julie Winham queried whether the process for issuing firearms licences in West Yorkshire has been reviewed following the shootings in Plymouth recently. Kate Riley confirmed that this has been reviewed and reported to the Mayor. Members were advised that an automatic referral is made from custody via the NICHE system to the firearms licencing team for licences to be checked. Neil Rickwood confirmed that this area of work is subject to regular auditing.

**ACTION: Kate Riley to report to the January 2022 Committee with a verbal report on the review of guns licencing in West Yorkshire following the Plymouth shootings.**

**Date of the next meeting: 7 January 2022, by video conference**