



Agenda Item 3

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| Meeting | Authority Meeting |
| Date | 26 September 2024 |
| Location | COSLA, Edinburgh |
| Title of Paper | Chair's Report |
| Presented By | Martyn Evans |
| Recommendation to Members | For Discussion |
| Appendix Attached | No |

PURPOSE

To update Authority Members on activities carried out by the Chair since the last Authority meeting held on 22 August 2024.

1. Criminal Justice Committee

- 1.1 On 11 September 2024, the Authority was invited to attend the Criminal Justice Committee to provide an update on policing and mental health and efforts to strengthen the wellbeing and support available to officers and staff working within policing. This has been an ongoing and important area of focus for our People Committee and the Criminal Justice Committee in recent years.
- 1.2 Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the evidence session on 11 September but I [submitted a written update ahead of the session](#). I am very grateful to our Vice Chair and Chair of the People Committee, Fiona McQueen and Alasdair Hay, Chair of Policing Performance Committee for attending along with the Chief Executive to represent the Authority.
- 1.3 In my written submission I highlighted that the Authority's oversight of workforce wellbeing has focused on
- **Leadership:** Ensuring there is a clear, public commitment from the Leadership Team and senior staff that the wellbeing of the people working within policing is a priority.
 - **Strategy:** Assessing whether clear organisational plans are in place to address wellbeing.
 - **Delivery:** Measuring progress, overseeing and reviewing how officer and staff wellbeing is measured, reported, and acted on.
- 1.4 The Authority is in no doubt of the leadership commitment to prioritise the wellbeing of the policing workforce. The Chief Constable has made an unequivocal commitment to workforce wellbeing which is shared by her Deputy Chief Constables, Assistant Chief Constables, and Divisional Commanders. I was reassured to hear our workforce representatives in attendance at the session confirm that they shared this view.
- 1.5 The Authority is confident that there is a range of wellbeing activities and initiatives currently available to support such a large and diverse workforce. National initiatives such as Lifelines Scotland or Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), are balanced alongside local initiatives such Trauma Impact Preventative Initiatives or Paddlewell which is used in the Highlands and Islands to support officers and staff to decompress and process traumatic incidents.
- 1.6 The development of a Wellbeing Action Plan will set out how the leadership commitment will be realised with specific, actionable and measurable steps. The Authority expects Police Scotland's reporting to our People Committee to evidence progress in delivering planned actions and demonstrating resulting impact. This will take further

sustained effort over time, however the Authority has assessed that Police Scotland now has the foundations and commitment to improve wellbeing across the service. Again, I am reassured that our workforce representatives at the session shared this view.

- 1.7 Our People Committee will continue to closely monitor and seek evidence of improvement in this important area.

2. Scottish Police Federation

- 2.1 On 16 September 2024, the Authority met the Scottish Police Federation. A range of issues were discussed, including the importance of Staff Association engagement in the development of a revised model for policing. We also discussed mental health demand and the need for investment in the police estate. I am grateful for the Federation's ongoing and constructive dialogue.

3. Self-identification and recording of sex and gender

- 3.1 Police recording of sex and gender for statistical and service delivery purposes is a critical issue for both safeguarding individuals and promoting the public interest.
- 3.2 For the vast majority of people (99.56% according to the 2021 census), their sex and gender identity are aligned. However, any police recording policy or self-identification approach must address the rare situation where an individual's sex differs from their gender identity.
- 3.3 The current guidance of the Chief Statistician in Scotland states "... that for the vast majority of people sex and gender identity questions will provide the same result, for most issues one may want to measure, whether there is a question about sex or about gender identity, it will not skew the statistics when disaggregated by either concept."
- 3.4 The Authority's approach to Police Scotland recording of sex and gender has sought 3 main areas of assurance:
 - Police Scotland should support public confidence and the interests of justice by having a record of both sex and gender where relevant, necessary, and proportionate to do so.
 - Police Scotland should support and maintain the formal accredited 'official statistics' status of Scotland's recorded crime statistics by complying in full with the UK Statistic Authority's [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).
 - Police Scotland should also comply with all relevant UK and Scottish law, policy or guidance.

- 3.5 [Police Scotland’s submission to the Parliament’s Citizens Participation and Public Petitions Committee from March 2024](#) has again raised this issue, attracted criticism and questioned the appropriateness of the recording policy. The written evidence appeared to give sole primacy to self-identified gender and therefore contradicts our first area of assurance.
- 3.6 Raising this issue at our September Board meeting will provide an opportunity to seek public assurance and clarification that the approach and recording policy is both reasonable and lawful.
- 3.7 The Authority recognises that there are conflicting views regarding the relevance of the policy or approach. Given the recent discussion and debate, the Authority would welcome clarification from the Chief Constable that this approach and recording policy considers the impact and safeguards victims.
- 3.8 In February 2024, the [UK Government commissioned an independent review](#) which aims to identify obstacles to accurate data collection, research on sex and gender identity in public bodies and to set out best practice guidance on how to collect data. We welcome this piece of work and expect the Scottish Government to respond to this with its own views once it is published.
- 3.9 I am also aware that the Scottish Parliament’s Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee has been considering a [public petition](#) calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to require Police Scotland, the Crown Office and the Scottish Court Service to record the biological sex of people charged or convicted of rape or attempted rape. We await the outcome of this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.