

Contents

Foreword	01
Introduction	03
Theme 1: Who are the current PCCs and does this matter?	04
Theme 2: How has the understanding of the PCC role changed?	06
Theme 3: How does national governance fit with delivery of the PCC role?	08
Theme 4: How does local accountability and variability impact the PCC role?	10
Theme 5: How has the PCC role expanded, and is it likely to expand further?	12
Conclusion	13
Contacts	14
Endnotes	14

Foreword

Deloitte is proud to offer its thoughts on policing and has published several reports on the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) over the last eight years. In 2012, in support of the very first PCCs, we identified their emerging critical success factors, including the importance of developing a work plan to clarify actions on Day One. Four years later, we explored lessons for the second generation of PCCs, arguing that national and local politicians needed to support and promote the PCC role. We also observed the importance of thinking beyond policing, considering the interconnectivity of demand across local public services, and PCCs using their role as citizen representative to help influence change across organisational boundaries.

More recently, the 2018 edition of our 'Policing 4.0' report highlighted the importance of the PCC in clarifying the policing mission and engaging the public more deliberately to set local policing priorities – which is more relevant than ever as forces seek to manage public expectations.

This latest report was originally scheduled for publication ahead of the 2020 PCC elections to offer new and returning PCCs advice on maximising the value of their role – particularly in light of the evolution of national governance with the establishment of the National Policing Board.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has, understandably, driven a need to postpone the elections for 12 months until 2021. This has led to a slight change of direction in our thinking, with a focus now on what can be achieved in the year ahead of the election, and also beyond. We hope it will support current PCCs to continue to make a real impact, and help candidates in preparing for their potential new roles.

This report explores a number of themes, from how expectations of the PCC role have changed, to how it fits within a broader political and service delivery landscape, and how this might be taken further and the role expanded.

In developing this report, we have been impressed at the influence PCCs exert and the difference they make to their communities, such as their demonstrable success in improving the experience of victims. The importance placed on the health of the relationship between the PCC and Chief Constable, with a need to maintain a degree of constructive tension and emphasise trust, confidence and transparency, was also very apparent in our research. On reflection, we are optimistic that the role will continue to be a success, and hope that our findings and recommendations can contribute to the role's renewal at this critical time for policing.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Hobbs'.

Richard Hobbs
Partner and UK Policing Lead

In developing this report, we have been impressed at the influence PCCs exert and the difference they make to their communities.

Introduction

Since the announcement of the introduction of directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 2011 in England and Wales, Deloitte has been extremely interested in understanding how this role would work in practice, the challenges associated with it, and what could help make it a success.

This has been reflected in the number of insight pieces we have developed in relation to this important topic, including 'Negotiating the Bill' – a 2012 research paper assessing how police forces were preparing for the introduction of PCCs – and later publications on how PCCs could commission effective public services.

We have also continued to consider the role of the PCC through our Policing 4.0 publication, where in 2018 we highlighted the importance of the PCC in clarifying the policing mission and engaging the public more deliberately when setting local policing priorities.

With the next round of PCC elections scheduled for May 2020, we decided earlier this year that the time was appropriate for another insight piece on PCCs, particularly considering recent changes in the policing sector. After successive governments have deliberately focused on local accountability, the launch of the nationally-led campaign to recruit an additional 20,000 officers and the formation of the National Policing Board (NPB) represents a significant pivot – with one PCC commenting that he is pleased that the Home Office is now 'leaning in'. However, this raises fundamental questions around the role of the PCC and makes it a critical time to consider how to maximise the value of the role and gain clarity on what it can realistically be expected – and supported – to achieve.

With that in mind, we began work to develop our next PCC report, with the aim of providing insights that will help PCCs navigate this new environment and enable efficient and effective service delivery within their individual force areas.

However, as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the decision has been taken to postpone the PCC elections for 12 months. Despite this, we have decided to go ahead with this work, using the findings gathered but reframing them slightly to focus on what can be achieved in the next 12 months ahead of the election, and beyond, to help both new and returning PCCs make a real impact, and also support candidates in preparing for their potential new roles.

We wanted to ensure as wide a spread of PCCs as possible and as such we deliberately sought to speak to PCCs across different geographical areas and with a range of political allegiances. We also looked at tenure, whether or not they have taken on responsibility for their local fire and rescue service, and any informal positions around standing again for election.

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This report is based on the following research methods:



Interviews

Interviews with ten PCCs and others who work closely with PCCs.



Survey

An accompanying survey completed at the end of each PCC interview.



Focus Groups

Focus groups with the Home Office and participants from the 2020 Strategic Command Course.



Analysis

Analysis of a range of statistics related to the current PCC cohort.

The findings from this research have been structured into five key themes:



Theme 1

In exploring whom the PCCs are and the relevance of this to their delivery of the PCC role, it is helpful to consider diversity, political allegiance and tenure.

Who are the current PCCs and does this matter?

Diversity

Exploring the backgrounds of the current cohort of PCCs indicates a range of professional experiences – from small business owners, to financial advisors, to miners and farmers. While this indicates that the role is attracting some diversity of experience, 75 per cent of current PCCs are drawn from two main pools: politicians, and former police officers/ex-military. This is a limiting factor, as it makes it difficult for PCCs to be seen as truly representative of the public they serve. It also possibly limits the range of ideas and potential for innovation that can be facilitated by learning from other sectors and industries. As one PCC commented, ‘Diversity of thought makes PCCs stronger’.

In terms of more typical diversity measures, the role is also falling somewhat short. Only one of the current 40 PCCs identifies as BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) (three per cent) and only seven are female (18 per cent). This is in stark contrast to diversity across the police service and government more widely. The latest reported statistics (March 2019)¹ indicate that seven per cent of the police workforce is BAME and 30 per cent female. While more progress needs to be made here, and the service is taking active measures to address this, it is significantly more representative than the PCC cohort. In the House of Commons, the figures are ten per cent and 34 per cent respectively².

Political allegiance

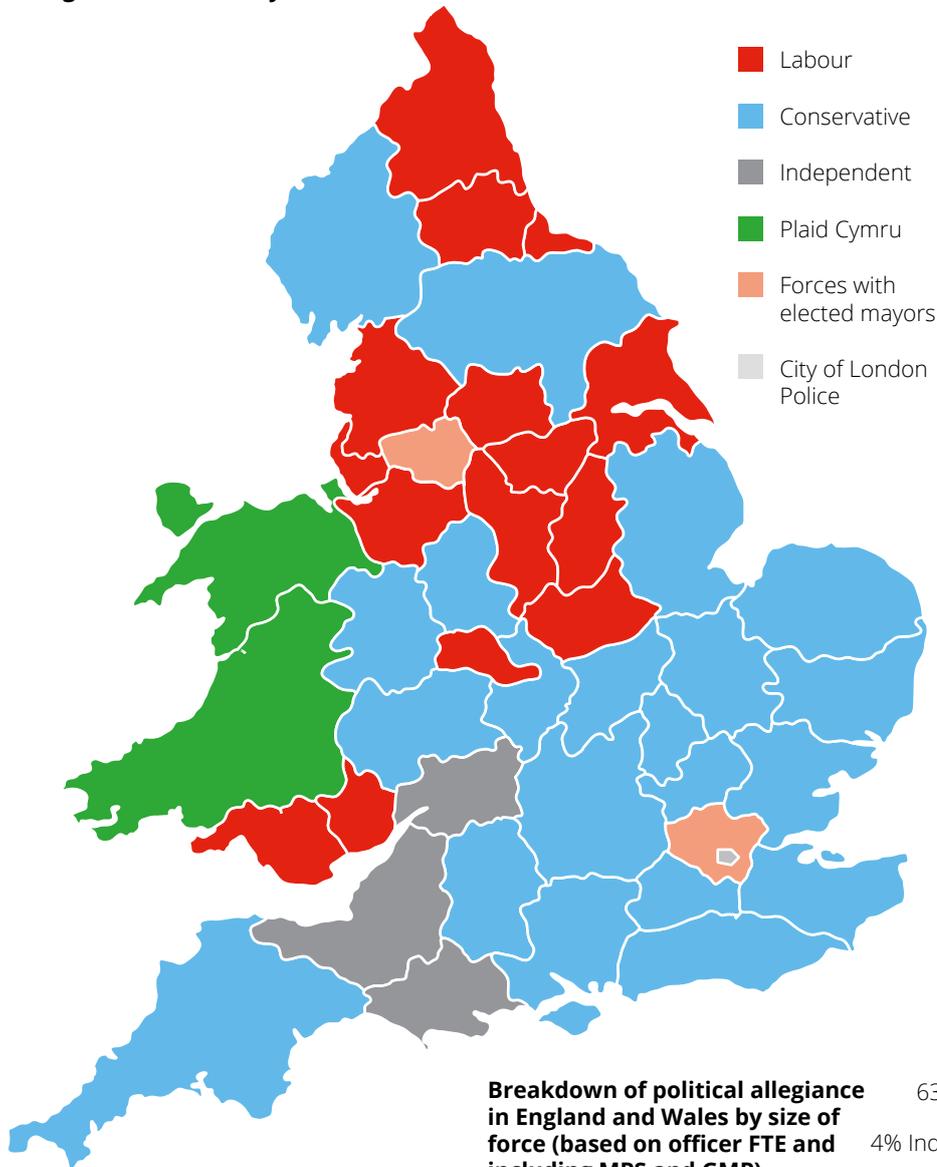
On the face of it, the Conservative Party seems to dominate the PCC landscape, holding 20 of the 40 PCC positions, with Labour next highest at 15. However, this fails to consider the size of each force, with a number of the Labour PCCs being responsible for large urban forces such as the West Midlands and West Yorkshire. When the size of each force’s officer

establishment is taken into consideration, Conservative Party PCCs cover 45 per cent of the service in England and Wales, whereas Labour cover 46 per cent. The rest is covered by independents or Plaid Cymru. It should be noted that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have slightly different governance arrangements and so therefore have not been included in the above figures. However, if they are included, the numbers change to give the Conservative Party 31 per cent, Labour 63 per cent, independents four per cent and Plaid Cymru two per cent.

This political split indicates quite different political views across the PCC landscape. As the PCC role is not intended to be overtly political, with PCCs required to swear an oath of impartiality and represent all sections of the public, this may not make a significant difference in practice, but the strong Labour presence should be born in mind considering the Conservative majority in central government – this is interesting in terms of the relationship between PCCs and the centre, which we explore in more detail later in this report.

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Breakdown of political allegiance in England and Wales by force area

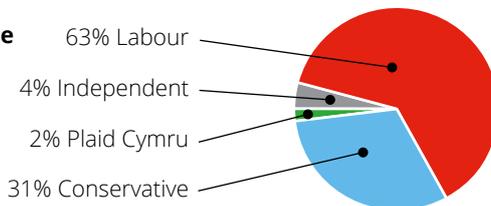


Tenure

The last area to consider is tenure. Of the 40 PCCs elected in 2012 (not including the Greater Manchester PCC, as this position was abolished following the introduction of a Mayor for Greater Manchester in 2015), 24 stood again, and 18 were re-elected. This means that 45 per cent of the original cohort elected in 2012 remained in place in 2016, although there have been some small changes since to this group with the death of Ron Hogg and Vera Baird stepping down to become Victims Commissioner. This high churn and therefore change can cause instability for the service and reduce what impact each post holder can have if they are only able to deliver a single four-year term. It should also be noted that the postponement of the PCC elections from 2020 to 2021 means that the next term of office will only in fact be three years.

While these dimensions can influence how PCCs deliver their role and what they are able to achieve, some are harder to address than others, considering links to wider political arrangements, for instance. It therefore seems appropriate to focus on the most addressable of the three dimensions: diversity.

Breakdown of political allegiance in England and Wales by size of force (based on officer FTE and including MPS and GMP)



Recommendations



1. Increased awareness of role

That the Home Office actively increases awareness and promotes the role over the next 12 months, and encourages individuals from a broader range of professional backgrounds to seek election. In doing so, the Home Office should focus on the impact that the role has had, and the skills and attributes that the role requires.



2. Inclusion and diversity

That political parties put a greater emphasis on inclusion and diversity in the selection of candidates when developing approved party lists for the 2021 PCC election.

Theme 2

How has the understanding of the PCC role changed?

In interviewing PCCs with different tenures, it became apparent that the understanding of the PCC role and what it actually involves by those in post has developed significantly over time.

In the lead up to the first PCC elections in 2012 and in the immediate aftermath there was a misconception by many that it was something of a ceremonial role, similar to a civil mayor position – a figurehead who attends functions and acts as patron of particular organisations or charities. Others expected it to be a continuation of the old police authority role, focused only on ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the force. Some even expected it to involve operational input.

In practice, the role is none of these things. Over time those in post since 2012, and those who joined later, have come to understand that it is a significant 'doing' role with a lot of responsibility and a wide remit in helping ensure community safety and commissioning services. Current incumbents commented on the substantial workload and range of pressures associated with the role, with one remarking 'Store up sleep before you take office – you will be sleep deprived for four years.' One PCC also commented that his predecessor had told him he would not have done the role if he had known what it really involved. PCCs also understand now that there is a much greater level of scrutiny involved than under the previous police authority approach, with PCCs setting strategic aims for forces and holding them to account against these, and also holding responsibility for budgets

– including in times of austerity – in contrast to police authorities who only had to hold forces to account against objectives set by the Chief Constable.

Despite it being a significant undertaking, the PCCs were universal in their praise for the role. Comments such as 'this is the best job I have ever had' and 'it's more of a lifestyle than a job' were typical, and there was real pride shown in the impact the PCCs feel able to have in their communities: 'One of the best political roles there is, because of the size of the budget and the ability to make change.' These positive aspects to the role are also evidenced by the fact that so many have chosen to remain in role since 2012.

While over time knowledge around the nature of the role has grown, and it is now understood that it should not be seen as political, as a step to becoming an MP, awareness of the details of what is needed to deliver the job has also increased. It is a significant public service job and requires those who want to contribute – and this necessitates some specific knowledge and expertise. Several PCCs commented on their difficult first few months in role, as they had to get to grips with exactly what was required of them, including running the PCC office. One PCC, as a former councillor, was experienced in having responsibilities in finance, estates and governance, but felt

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a number of his counterparts lacked this and struggled as a result. In addition, there is only now beginning to be acknowledgment of the role that PCCs should and must play in relation to technology. PCCs set the thresholds for delegated spend by Chief Constables and Chief Finance Officers, and often set these quite low, meaning they must approve business cases for any spend relating to technology. However, they may lack the necessary knowledge and experience to be able to do so confidently. This will be crucial going forward in supporting the effective implementation of the National Policing Digital Strategy 2020-2030. As one PCC commented, 'We need to be the champions of technology'.

'Store up sleep before you take office – you will be sleep deprived for four years.'

'This is the best job I have ever had.'

'We need to be the champions of technology.'

Recommendation



3. Support programme

That the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) creates an accelerated development programme for new and returning PCCs, to commence shortly after the 2021 PCC election. Capabilities would be specific to the PCC role and could include police ICT, finance and commercial, governance, risk management, innovation and change leadership. The APCC has already begun considering this as a form of continuous professional development, harnessing and building on existing skills and attributes, and should consider curating existing functional skills development (e.g. from the Association of Policing & Crime Chief Executives (APACE), or the Cabinet Office) rather than creating a programme from scratch. This would also help enable Recommendation 1 – the drive to increase the range of professional backgrounds that PCCs come from.

Theme 3

As part of the interview process we asked PCCs about their priorities. Their responses showed significantly divergent opinions, with addressing harm and vulnerability, tackling violence and increasing visibility being the most common, but with no clear consensus.

How does national governance fit with delivery of the PCC role?

With such different local interests, and the emphasis over the last eight years on local accountability, we expected the changes in national governance through the introduction of the new National Policing Board (NPB) to be a significant source of tension for the PCCs, but they in fact showed little concern about this. On further exploration this appeared to be for two reasons.

Firstly, the PCCs seem to be relatively comfortable with the new governance arrangements as long as they do not become partisan. This is understandable considering the different political views across the PCC landscape explored earlier under Theme 1. The PCCs also recognised that there has been an absence of central direction for some time and a number therefore welcome the NPB's establishment, although some were concerned that it may start focusing on 'how' policing is delivered, or outputs rather than outcomes, and questions were raised around the relevance of the board to them. One PCC commented that central discussions around murder and stop and search were not a priority considering the nature of crime in rural force areas and pressures on resources – with, for example, death or serious injury by unlawful driving being more prevalent than homicide in a

number of rural forces, including Cumbria (five homicides in the year ending December 2019, compared to 17 death or serious injury by unlawful driving), Devon & Cornwall (13 and 35 respectively), and North Yorkshire (six and 17 respectively)³.

Secondly and more significantly, the PCCs very much see their role as a local one, and therefore national developments are perceived to be less important. This was reflected in their limited engagement with programmes such as the Emergency Services Network Programme, for instance. PCCs spoke strongly of acting as 'the voice of the people' and talked in depth about the success they have had locally. Examples include the additional service provision made available for victims, greater emphasis on prevention (for example, in relation to domestic violence), protecting neighbourhood policing resources, and transforming firearms licensing to reduce backlogs, to name a few. While some of these shifts may be seen as small, they are strong evidence of the ability of PCCs to influence force activity and make changes that are important to local citizens. As one PCC commented, 'What most people care about is what concerns them about the street or small local area they live in'. This supports the Policing Minister's request that the police service listens to the public

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more – meaning PCCs feel that they are on common ground with those operating nationally in many ways. As another PCC remarked, ‘The electorate remain my boss’.

Linked to this, PCCs talked at length about the need for policing to be delivered by consent, which to them means that they hold the power along with Chief Constables. Central government can, of course, set out what it would like to be achieved, but PCCs and Chiefs are needed to deliver this, particularly considering how much funding is provided locally. One PCC commented that, because only 50 per cent of his budget

is centrally funded, with the rest coming from the precept, he sees central government as only having 50 per cent influence.

While PCCs are therefore not overly concerned at the changes in national governance, the NPB does exist and will drive change – at the very minimum in terms of its focus on delivering the 20,000 officer uplift. This means that PCCs cannot afford to ignore or disregard it, and thus there is a real need to consider how national and local governance can fit together more effectively going forward. One approach is to build better connectivity, or a common language, between national and local priorities. The Cambridge Crime Harm Index measures crime based on the damage caused to victims and society, rather than focusing simply on crime volumes. It would be helpful for PCCs to consider this as they develop community priorities, linking findings from their engagement with the public with an evidence-based framework that sets out what the system as a whole considers to be high harm crimes.

Recommendations



4. Defined set of required national outcomes

That, as intended, central government provides a clear set of national outcomes that they would like all PCCs to achieve, setting the central direction that some feel has been missing, while also exploring ways for the NPB and local PCCs to work together effectively in delivery. Specifically, this should include formal, evidence-based mechanisms for PCCs to share the ‘voice of the citizen’ with the NPB, potentially via the APCC.



5. Cambridge Crime Harm Index development

That PCCs support the further development of the Cambridge Crime Harm Index, using their knowledge of individual communities and specific circumstances to help evolve this approach, thereby enabling a more precise or nuanced quantification of harm. Engaging in evidence-based policing in this way should further join up national and local agendas, and enhance the aggregated impact of PCCs.

Theme 4

How does local accountability and variability impact the PCC role?

While a focus on local accountability gives PCCs the ability to prioritise local needs, it has also led to a lack of standardisation, with a number of different ways of doing things.

Since 2012 PCCs have taken different approaches to delivery of the role, including in how they administer governance and provide transparency. As one interviewee commented, 'There are 43 different versions of how to carry out the legislative requirements of the role, i.e. hold the Chief Constable to account, approve spending and publish decisions.'

There are numerous examples of good practice, however. For example, in Sussex, the performance and accountability meeting is made available by webcast 'as part of the Sussex PCC's commitment to demonstrating transparency in office⁵.' In Avon & Somerset, a number of scrutiny panels have been set up involving members of the public, such as the Scrutiny of Police Powers panel which focuses on the use of Taser, stop and search, body worn video and force by the police. The Staffordshire PCC has established an Ethics Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP). This has been commented on positively by HMIC⁶ and acts like an internal audit function, undertaking a number of reviews of the force each year, with topics agreed by both the force and the PCC's office.

However, there is no consistency across this good practice. In particular, the Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) in each area differ in terms of how they are used and their ability to hold the PCCs to account. While some PCCs have felt the need to increase the precept in response to pressure from the PCP, and have commented on the PCP's importance as a 'check and balance', others see them as unnecessary duplication that serves no purpose, with one PCC commenting, 'The panel doesn't have the teeth to stop me doing things', or feel that they inappropriately focus on scrutiny of operational matters rather than the PCC role. The lack of standardisation in approach therefore seems to be undermining the ability of PCPs to play their intended role.

It should be noted that efforts are underway to address some of these challenges. The APCC is planning to release accountability guidance in relation to good practice, although it will remain at individual PCCs' discretion how they wish to operate. It feels though that there is the potential to go much further here, particularly considering that some PCCs do not seem to be engaging significantly with the APCC.

Recommendations



6. Sharing best practice

That, in addition to the plans of the APCC, more efforts are made to encourage the sharing of best practice, specifically in relation to accountability, while allowing PCCs to choose how to embed this locally. The Home Office should begin considering and preparing for this now, and then move to support this soon after the election.



7. Effective practice review

That a review of PCPs is undertaken in order to identify examples of effective practice, and consider whether or not these can be replicated within other PCPs.

Theme 5

PCCs are not just police commissioners – the ‘and Crime’ dimension is very important.

How has the PCC role expanded, and is it likely to expand further?

The PCCs spoken to have great respect for this element of the role, with all those surveyed agreeing that they expect PCCs to increase their role in commissioning services and joining up local public services over the next term. One even commented that he has only decided to stand for a third term in order to try to make more progress here, and another emphasised the need to ‘to try to bring together the disparate parts that try to improve community safety’ and the ‘gap’ that would emerge in this area if PCCs ceased to exist.

PCCs have also had some demonstrable success here. Much has been achieved with victims’ services, with PCCs developing a strong understanding of the victims commissioning market and awarding contracts to some very small specialist providers, based on the needs of victims. In Avon & Somerset, Lighthouse Integrated Victim and Witness Care has been established, a new department within Avon & Somerset Constabulary set up by the force and PCC to offer an enhanced service to vulnerable, intimidated or persistently targeted victims of crime and anti-social behaviour and victims of serious crime. In South Wales, the PCC has helped to launch a general practice-based domestic abuse and sexual violence training and referral programme. In Warwickshire the PCC has introduced two multi-agency justice centres. As one interviewee remarked,

‘One of the biggest successes of PCCs has been the support they have provided for victims of crime via the devolution of commissioning for victims of crime. Historically this was a very small part of what the MOJ did, yet it has become a very central part of what PCCs do.’

However, despite this success, delivering the ‘and Crime’ element of the role is not without its challenges. The legislation as it currently stands does not universally give PCCs any direct levers over wider criminal justice services; they are merely able to convene and influence. The different agencies have different priorities; there is also the introduction of the 11 new probation regions which transcend force boundaries; and the judiciary remain nervous of developing closer relationships with PCCs, in case they lose authority and independence. All of this makes interactions difficult and raises questions about how much more PCCs can achieve here. However, the Wellbeing and Future Generation Act in Wales formalised the role of PCCs on locally focused Public Services Boards, potentially providing a model for local adaptation and adoption in England.

Considering these limitations, careful thought needs to be given to where else PCCs might focus. Could the MOJ delegate another area to them, for instance youth services? Could they lead pilots working

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Looking ahead, the PCCs had mixed views regarding the future of fire, with a roughly 50:50 split between those who expect more PCCs to explore opportunities to take on responsibility for fire and rescue governance over the next four years and those who do not.

across the whole Criminal Justice System, similar to the programme being trialled by the Mayor of London to reduce female reoffending by tackling the causes of crime? In addition to these 'downstream' efforts, can PCCs play more of a role upstream in terms of education and prevention? These are all areas that should be explored further, and explored within the context of local variances in governance, including devolved government.

Over time, the PCC role has also evolved beyond the 'and Crime' element – in January 2016 the government announced that PCCs would be able to take over responsibility for local fire and rescue services, as part of a drive to integrate blue light emergency services. This has been less successful than the 'and Crime' part of the role, and is seen as an irrelevance in Wales given different governance arrangements for fire and rescue. Only six PCCs in England have taken up the opportunity, although others explored doing so, and all PCCs interviewed

remarked on the challenges associated with this. Comments focused on the lack of central support available, and also the pressure of local politics. Standalone fire authorities with co-terminus boundaries were seen as easier to work with than council-led fire authorities. In the latter scenario, taking responsibility for fire was reported as being extremely difficult, with significant resistance from local councillors.

Looking ahead, the PCCs in England had mixed views regarding the future of fire, with a roughly 50:50 split between those who expect more PCCs to explore opportunities to take on responsibility for fire and rescue governance over the next four years and those who do not.

It should also be noted that there are similarities between the impact achieved by PCCs who have taken on full responsibility for fire and those who have not. Common initiatives include establishing shared police and fire headquarters, or collaborating in other ways such as on vehicle maintenance,

buying fuel, or sharing drones. These changes have clearly been possible in a number of instances without the PCC taking on responsibility for fire. To date, no PCC has achieved anything much more innovative than these examples in relation to fire, although in Northamptonshire joint operational response vehicles have been introduced. One PCC commented that gains were marginal unless a PCC focuses on developing a single employer model – and there seems to be a lack of appetite from central government around this due to the delivery risk involved, which is why PCCs have not pursued it.

This suggests that the potential of fire is currently limited. While more support from the centre might seem helpful, the local challenges described suggest it may not make much difference, unless the government is prepared to go as far as central mandation – i.e. insisting that PCCs take responsibility for fire. Instead, it might be more appropriate to focus on extending the 'and Crime' part of the PCC role.

Recommendations



8. Criminal Justice System

That the Royal Commission into Criminal Justice which aims to review and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice process, expected in 2020, considers further the role PCCs can play in the wider Criminal Justice System and the possibility of extending their powers and mandate in this area.



9. Increase of powers in statute

That PCCs are provided with more opportunity to influence criminal justice services and other parts of the public sector by giving them more powers in statute. Formalising their role within boards such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and local resilience forums would give them the potential to make an immediate impact, while awaiting the longer-term implications of the Royal Commission.

Conclusion

Through a range of research and insight this report has demonstrated the strengths of the PCC role and value it provides. From acting as 'the voice of the people' and ensuring local priorities are met, to commissioning services that have transformed outcomes for victims, PCCs have had a real impact over the last eight years.

However, there is the potential for them to make an even more positive contribution, and this is dependent on four factors:

1. Getting the right people into the role.

While the cohort has changed over time, there is still a lack of diversity, both in terms of traditional diversity metrics and diversity of professional background. As it stands, PCCs are therefore not particularly representative of the communities they serve, which can damage their credibility and lead to accusations of not being 'in touch' with the public. It is also important to attract people to stand for election who understand what the role really involves. As one interviewee commented, 'This isn't a local politician's role. Understand what the job is – it's policing. Victims. Crime.'



2. Giving PCCs the right tools and support to be able to deliver the role successfully.

This includes giving them appropriate developmental support following election to the role, but also potentially increasing their statutory powers in some instances and sharing good practice more widely across the cohort. It also means providing greater clarity on how national outcomes can work coherently with local governance, while retaining the many benefits of local accountability.



3. Continuing to develop the PCC's role in the shift towards evidence-based policing.

As policing moves to become more data and insight-driven, so should PCCs. Opportunities around measuring harm and evidencing the 'voice of the citizen' seem most timely and best aligned to the PCC's and APCC's remits.



4. Expanding the role to allow PCCs more influence within the wider Criminal Justice System.

This means thinking carefully about how and where to expand the PCC role, and also what support to put in place to enable PCCs to take full advantage of this extended remit. Where PCCs have been properly enabled, as they have with victims commissioning, they have been very successful. Yet where less enabled, as they have been with fire, their success has been very limited. This additional support will help PCCs in identifying and delivering opportunity for reform.



Focusing on these factors will really enhance the difference PCCs are able to make, and the necessary delay to the PCC elections, while not desirable, provides the opportunity for this.

The recommendations put forward in this report have been developed with these four factors in mind. While some are slightly longer-term, we are confident that others could be driven forward ahead of the elections, expected to now be held in May 2021.

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Endnotes

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