

Foreword

Plaid Cymru leader, Rhun ap Iorwerth

What does a vote for Plaid Cymru in the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections on 2nd of May mean?

It means fairness.

For years, Welsh police forces have been starved of resources by the Home Office, meaning that taxpayers in Wales have had to foot the extra bill through their council tax to keep our streets safe. Now the Labour Government in Wales is also making short-sighted cuts to their support for policing and justice programmes.

It means a positive and preventative approach to policing.

We celebrate the excellent work done by Plaid Cymru's Police and Crime Commissioner in Dyfed-Powys, Dafydd Llywelyn.

Since taking office in 2016, Dafydd has increased the number of police officers by 150, created a series of CCTV networks which are used to investigate more than 350 crimes a year, and has committed to protect Dyfed-Powys from Labour's cuts to PCSO numbers and the Schools Programme which cuts out crime from the very beginning.

And it means police officers that accountable to the local community.

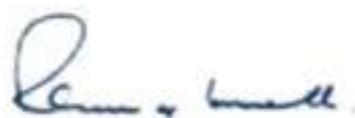
The Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May are a reminder of how Wales is too often ignored in Westminster politics.

Three independent commissions in the past decade have all come to the right and obvious conclusion that all criminal justice powers should be transferred under the control of the Senedd.

Only Plaid Cymru stands up for Wales in demanding that these powers are held in Wales, so that we can create a Welsh way of policing that fits our needs as a country.

But only with your votes can Dafydd, and our other Police and Crime Commissioner candidates – Ann Griffith in North Wales, Dennis Clarke in South Wales and Donna Cushing in Gwent - be elected to develop a Welsh Way of policing and bring those powers home to Wales.

Vote Plaid Cymru on 2nd of May.



Rhun ap Iorwerth MS
Leader, Plaid Cymru



Devolution of Full Criminal Justice Powers to Wales

Plaid Cymru support the transfer of full criminal justice powers to Wales, so that we can develop a 'Welsh way' of policing and criminal justice, rather than the complicated mess that currently plagues our justice system.

It makes no sense that some of the policy levers for reducing crime are with us here in Wales, in our Senedd, whilst others are still held by Westminster.

This means that our justice system faces in two different directions.

In the past decade, three independent commissions have all fully supported recommendations to simplify the criminal justice system by transferring all powers to Wales, including most recently the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future for Wales.

The full transfer of powers over criminal justice to Wales would mean the creation of a Minister of Justice in the Welsh Government who would have overall responsibility.

As part of this transfer of powers, a Plaid Cymru government would hold a review of criminal justice governance, and remove the role of elected Police and Crime Commissioners, in line with our belief that policing should not be politically motivated, but in the best interests of the whole community.

Reducing Crime

Plaid Cymru believes that the best way of reducing crime is through a well-functioning society which eradicates many forms of crime, particularly theft or acquisitive crime which is often committed to fund substance misuse.

However, we also recognise that policing is an important and integral part of that society, as recognised in the Peel principles of policing that have underpinned the relationship between police and community for nearly two hundred years.

We believe that intelligence-led policing and focusing on preventative measures which stop people from entering the criminal justice system will reduce the threat of people becoming victims of crime.

Fair Funding for Wales's Police Forces

By stealth, the Westminster Government has transferred the burden of paying for the Police from a central responsibility to local people. This is clearly unfair.

There has been a decade of Tory cuts in which Wales's police forces have been increasingly under-funded by the Police Funding Formula at Westminster.

Wales gets less than its fair share of police funding, per head of population.

The impact of this is that we in Wales have had to increase the policing element of council tax by greater than inflation, just to maintain the same services.

While policing remains in the control of the Westminster Government, Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners and Members of Parliament will make the case that policing must be properly funded in order to do its job properly of preventing crime as well as catching and convicting criminals.

Given Cardiff's status as a capital city, Plaid Cymru believes that there should be additional funding to recognise the higher profile events which take place there, and the security arrangements required to police these.

Labour's Policing Cuts

As part of their Budget settlement, the Labour Government in Cardiff has reduced the amount of funding available for policing from April 2024.

These cuts threaten the Wales Police Schools Programme in which the police engage with young people and seek to divert them away from becoming involved in crime at a young age, something which affects their future life prospects and becomes more expensive to society.

This is a form of crime prevention for which investment now has a big impact on future costs, and we are disappointed that Labour are cutting this budget.

Plaid Cymru will refresh and enhance the Wales Police Schools Programme, looking to expand on its impact with Further Education Colleges and Universities.

Labour have also reduced funding for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Plaid Cymru values PCSOs as a vital asset in neighbourhood policing teams.

Recognising this, Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner, Dafydd Llywelyn, has maintained the number of PCSOs within his force's area, despite Labour's cuts.

Victims of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Plaid Cymru believes that victims of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) should be at the centre of justice and police services.

By listening to those with lived experiences of being a victim of crime, we can provide better services that are more responsive to people's needs, both in the immediate aftermath of crime taking place, and in the longer term.

We support the creation of a Victims Commissioner for Wales who would be able to represent victims of crime and stand up for their rights so that they are not ignored or forgotten by decision makers.

Victim Engagement Forum

The Dyfed-Powys Victim Engagement Forum works with victims of crime to understand their experiences and improve service delivery.

For example, in a recent Domestic Abuse Conference, members of the Engagement Forum spoke with the Force's Domestic Abuse and Stalking Perpetrator Schemes Co-ordinator to explain how they navigated the criminal justice system, as a victim of a domestic related crime, and what they thought could be improved.

This has allowed the Force to map out the journey from the perspective of the victim and make changes to the service that can better meet their expectations.

Through better understanding expectations and the reality faced by victims when reporting crimes, this allows the Force to consider the services being delivered and change the specifications when next procuring services, so that they can better align in future.

This is part of a process of continued improvement, based on real life experiences of victims in engaging with the Criminal Justice System.



Facial Recognition and Artificial Intelligence

Recent years have seen an increase in police forces using facial recognition technology as part of mass surveillance techniques.

In coming years, Artificial Intelligence will also be used more frequently as part of police crime solving.

Plaid Cymru believes that policing should be intelligence-led, and that there is a balance which must be struck about crime resolution and the rights of citizens to go about their daily business unmonitored by policing institutions.

We want to see appropriate governance on the use of facial recognition technology, and are concerned that the use of AI techniques may exacerbate existing inequalities in policing by targeting particular groups who may become suspects without any additional intelligence identifying their involvement in crime.

As we have seen in recent scandals regarding computer intelligence, such as the Post Office sub-masters case and the Horizon computer system, there must be accountability for any system in operation, and any inherent bias in how the system operates must be recognised before coming into use and potentially ruining people's lives if data is misused or misunderstood.

Restorative Justice

Plaid Cymru supports the principles of restorative justice, which means repairing the harm done to the community by crime.

Underpinning this is the need to understand the victim's perspective and how to repair the damage caused by the original crime.

Through this, we will support both the victim and also the offender, in order to prevent a repeat of their offence and hopefully reduce their responsibility for any future crimes.

Plaid Cymru is looking to increase restorative justice programmes to include adults as well as youth justice, using the Problem Solving Courts Model as proposed by the Thomas Commission on Justice in Wales.

We will learn from best practice and experience to continually improve the processes around restorative justice and the outcomes thereof.

Safer Streets

We want to see safer streets across Wales, where people are not at risk of being victims of crime and feel safe within their communities.

This includes a continuously improved network of enabled CCTV cameras which can be used to identify criminals involved in organising retail crime or physical violence, especially in prime locations such as our high streets and town centres.

Modern CCTV infrastructure introduced by Plaid Cymru's Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Commissioner includes 155 cameras in 24 different towns across the area. The system is used as part of investigations into more than 3,000 incidents each year.

We also strongly believe that police services should be visible and accessible.

In Dyfed-Powys, Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioner Dafydd Llywelyn has increased the number of police officers to 1,300 officers – 150 more than when he took over the role in 2016, an increase of more than 15%.

This allows for a strong local policing Team which can respond to crime reports and deal with the community.

Policing should be available as a service within communities. Plaid Cymru will retain community police stations where there is an operational and community reason for doing so.

Road Safety

Road safety is a crucial part of daily life across Wales, whether as a driver or passenger, in a private vehicle or on public transport.

Unfortunately, many accidents on the road are due to careless driving.

We will focus on promotion and education around the so-called 'Fatal Five' behaviours which are recognised to be the most likely causes of accidents. These are taking care, wearing a seatbelt, not being affected by alcohol drinks or drugs, not speeding and not being distracted.

Where we identify roads which have a higher than anticipated number of accidents, we will work with local authorities and Welsh Government (depending on the status of the road) to make changes to make them safer for everybody. This can include additional signage, changes to the road layout, as well as investment in average speed cameras.

Plaid Cymru will consider what other powers can be used to improve driver behaviour, particularly of younger drivers who are statistically shown to be involved in greater numbers of road traffic collisions.

Implementation of the 20mph Legislation

In September 2023, Welsh Government introduced a default speed limit of 20mph in urban areas, with local authorities permitted to identify exceptions to this rule. This includes about 37% of roads in Wales.

While supportive of this legislation which is intended to reduce the number of accidents and life-changing injuries on the road, Plaid Cymru supports a review to ensure that it is working successfully appropriately across Wales to reduce dangerous driving in urban areas.

Responding to Mental Health

The police have a significant role in ensuring that people suffering an episode of poor mental health are not a danger to themselves or others.

However, in many situations the police may not be the most appropriate support for a vulnerable individual, and can, in some situations, be stigmatising.

The implementation of the 'Right Care Right Person' programme, currently being rolled out across Wales, is important for the protection of people, and in providing the most appropriate resource to deal with the incident.

Plaid Cymru believes that the resolution of individual mental health issues in public spaces should have a person-centred solution based around individual needs, and that support should be provided by those most able to provide meaningful support.

We need to ensure that vulnerable individuals are able to receive that support when it is needed, and that all relevant support services are properly funded and organised to provide that support.

Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls

Plaid Cymru recognises the scale and challenge of violence against women and girls and the need to prevent and reduce the harm that this causes.

There are great challenges in the criminal justice system to ensure that women and girls are believed, and that they get justice for crimes committed against them.

Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners will support programmes, including the Wales Police Schools Programme, which improve the understanding of violence against women and girls.

We will continue to commission support for victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

There is also a continued need for specialist training and support officers around the issues of coercive control, stalking and an improved understanding of homicide risk.

As co-chair of the Welsh Government Ministerial Board on Violence Against Women, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence, Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioner, Dafydd Llywelyn, has continued to work to regionalise Sexual Assault Referral Centres, and to increase resources in this area, ensuring local delivery models that work for survivors.



Plaid Cymru believes that there should be a seamless forensic and health examination route for victims of sexual assault.

Preventing Domestic Violence

Both men and women can be victims of domestic violence, and we will continue to work with organisations that provide refuge and support to people.

We know that individual circumstances can leave vulnerable people open to abuse, and we are particularly concerned about people with either physical or learning difficulties which make them additionally vulnerable, and statistically more likely to become victims of abuse.

These compounding factors create barriers to accessing support, and in disclosing domestic abuse due to the perceived reliance upon the persons abuser.

Fully recognising the impact of gender based violence upon women and girls, Wales also has one of the higher rates of intimate partner violence against men and limited amount of refuge spaces which can make it difficult for men to leave their partners.

Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners will invest in domestic violence perpetrator programmes to break the cycle of offending and re-offending, and review levels of support provision within the area of the force.

Inclusive Policing

Plaid Cymru believes that the Police are there to protect everybody's rights and ensure everybody's safety.

We find it troubling that there are groups within our society who, due to previous policing actions, are not confident in trusting the Police to look after their best interests.

Where this does not already exist, we will create an independent stop and search scrutiny panel in each police force in Wales, recognising the disparities which exist and working to reduce them.

Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners will work with communities to develop better relationships with the police forces and better understand the tensions and potential for conflict in order to prevent these from increasing.

This also involves working closely with police officers to improve their understanding of communities, and recruitment from those communities where possible. We believe that diversity in the police force is an important tool to show communities that they are represented and understood.

Alongside this, all police officers should be appropriately trained in all matters related to equality, diversity and

respect so that they are properly equipped to deal with the needs of all the communities which they serve.

We would also expect that, to ensure that police forces maintain positive and trust building links with the communities they serve, they will attend local Pride and community events, showing support for these communities.

Young People

Plaid Cymru recognises the vulnerability of young people, as both victims and perpetrators within the criminal justice system.

We will work to keep children out of the criminal justice system by promoting a trauma-informed children-centred policing model.

In particular, we will look to reduce the disproportionate number of care experienced children who enter into the system. This is particularly important with the growth in the numbers of children in care in recent years.

We will invest in bespoke child victim services to provide support to children as victims and reduce or prevent the risk of them being exploited.

We will work with partners to develop a pathway of support for young victims of crime.

Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners will also campaign to end the lifelong stigma of criminal

records obtained in childhood, and seek to bring us in line with other European nations, including Scotland, by raising the age of criminal responsibility from ten to twelve years old.

We will work with partners who provide support to young people in transitioning between youth offending and probation services.

Plaid Cymru recognises the impact of cuts in youth services upon young people's abilities to socialise, and will work to engage young people and prevent them from becoming involved in crime.

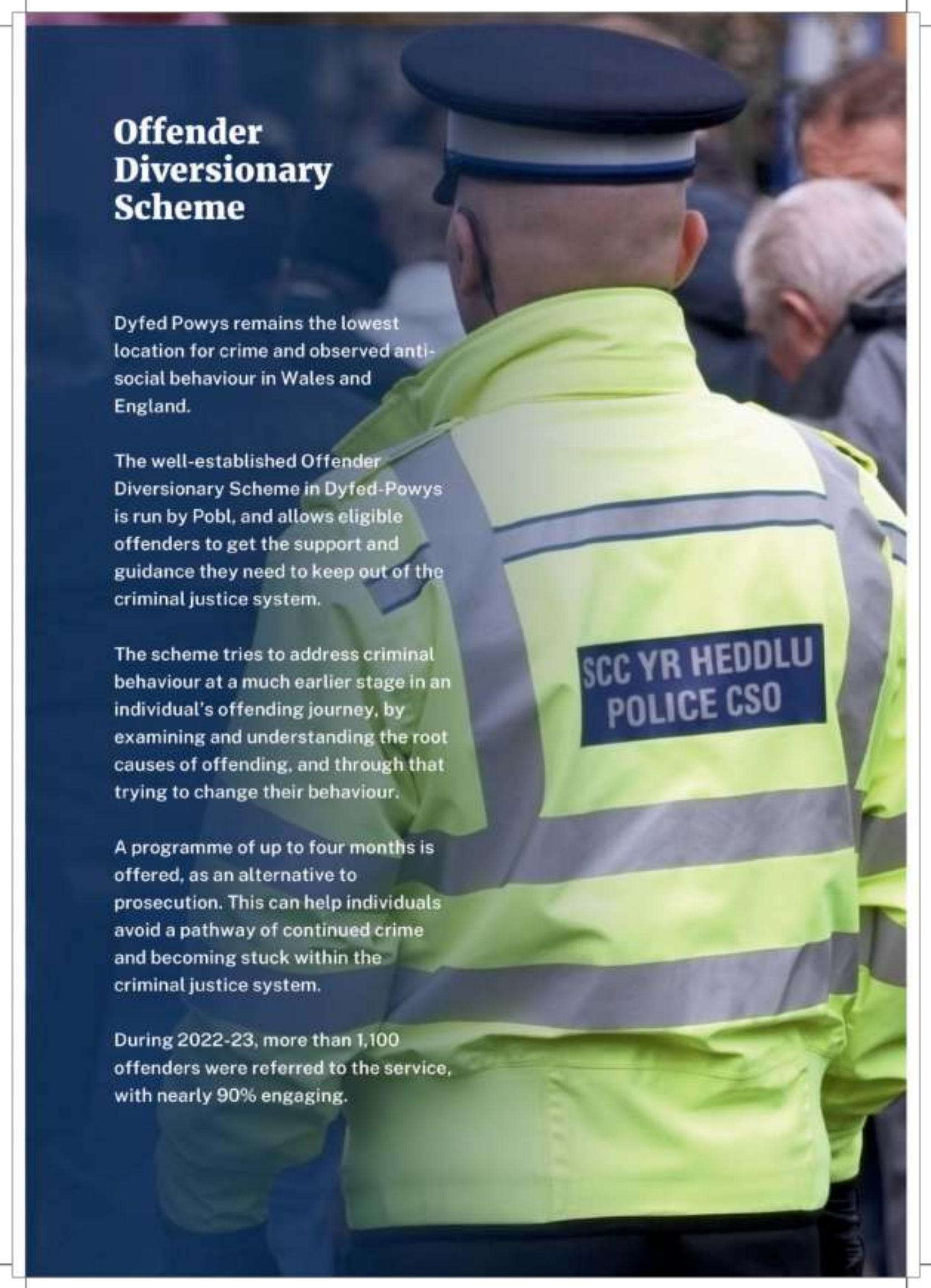
Women in Justice

Plaid Cymru believes that women are not well served by our criminal justice system.

There is no women's prison in Wales, meaning that any custodial sentences are served outside of the country, with an impact upon travel time for the family, the provision of services in Welsh and a disconnect with their community.

Most women who serve custodial sentences are only in prison for a short period, which is less effective in reducing crime but has substantial social impact.

We will focus on reducing crime through identifying the underlying reasons why women are involved in criminal behaviour and working with partners to resolve those issues.



Offender Diversionary Scheme

Dyfed Powys remains the lowest location for crime and observed anti-social behaviour in Wales and England.

The well-established Offender Diversionary Scheme in Dyfed-Powys is run by Pobl, and allows eligible offenders to get the support and guidance they need to keep out of the criminal justice system.

The scheme tries to address criminal behaviour at a much earlier stage in an individual's offending journey, by examining and understanding the root causes of offending, and through that trying to change their behaviour.

A programme of up to four months is offered, as an alternative to prosecution. This can help individuals avoid a pathway of continued crime and becoming stuck within the criminal justice system.

During 2022-23, more than 1,100 offenders were referred to the service, with nearly 90% engaging.

As part of this, Plaid Cymru want to establish community based women's centres to support female offenders, and our Police and Crime Commissioners will look to pilot this.

Rural Crime

Plaid Cymru recognises that there is a difference in policing urban and rural areas in Wales, and that rural policing carries its own challenges.

These include the distance between locations and the sparseness of population, and therefore the visibility of the police force.

Specific threats include agricultural crime which affects working farms through theft of equipment and heavy machinery and to livestock through attacks.

Wildlife crimes can include interfering with protected species while heritage crime includes theft of lead from churches and damage to ancient monuments.

FU Mutual's 2023 Rural Crime Report says that there was an increase of 72% in the cost of rural crime in Wales during 2022, the highest of any nation or region in their area, with global changes such as the war in Ukraine creating alternative markets for goods, and farms targeted for equipment and livestock theft.

Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners established dedicated rural crime teams in both North Wales and in Dyfed-Powys. Plaid Cymru would create a specialist all-Wales rural crime team, seeking to recruit officers from the farming community.

Sadly, the Conservatives have failed on promises to introduce legislation at Westminster around rural crime, particularly around protection of livestock from dog attacks. Plaid Cymru will push for this to finally be made law.

Policing Drugs

Plaid Cymru believes that drugs policing should focus on targeting supply lines and dealers in the organised drug trade, rather than individual users, if those people are causing no wider harm.

We recognise that some drug users are responsible for acquisitive crime in order to fund their habits. They should be supported to stop their addiction. Many users are also dealers and are exploited as part of the crime network. This is then a matter of safeguarding, particularly when it involves children.

In North Wales, Plaid Cymru introduced the Checkpoint Cymru scheme, while a similar offender diversionary scheme exists in Dyfed-Powys. Plaid will further develop these on an all-Wales level.

Through educating young people, we can reduce their likelihood to become involved with organised crime or become addicted to substances which may lead them into a lifestyle of exploitation.

Plaid Cymru believe that drugs policy is a matter of public health, and reducing the number of individuals with addictions has a wider benefit to society.

By introducing a policy of drugs decriminalisation, which would respect individual choices, we could better target police resources towards organised crime groups who profit from misery and exploiting other people's vulnerabilities.

Alongside this, we believe that the UK Home Office should cleanse the criminal records of those cautioned or convicted of drugs possession where there are no further aggravating factors.

It is clear that traditional methods of policing drugs and organised crime has not been successful and has led to a hostile and violent environment. Plaid Cymru would welcome an independent review of drug policy and how it is policed.

Policing Protest

Plaid Cymru believe that non-violent protest is an important mechanism in democracy to show public support or solidarity for a cause. We support the right of an individual to freedom of expression and assembly.

The rights of the individual should be respected, as should the rights of police officers not to be under threat of harm while carrying out their legitimate duties.

We do not support the legislation implemented by the Conservative government at Westminster which unfairly restrict opportunities for non-violent protest. Plaid Cymru would repeal these powers at Westminster, including the relevant parts of Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023.

Sadly, we note that some groups frequently resort to violence in order to make their point, and this needs to be policed in a stronger manner than events which are non-violent in nature.

It is highly disappointing that large costs of more than £1m have been spent by Dyfed-Powys Police to police protests at Llanelli's Stradey Arms for a misguided plan created by the Conservative Government at Westminster, and which were later dropped.

Plaid Cymru believe that Dyfed-Powys Police should be compensated for the cost of Westminster's mistake, rather than have to recoup that from council tax payers in the area.

Community Safety Partnerships

Community Safety Partnerships were first introduced in 1998 to ensure that the police and other agencies, including local authorities, fire services, health boards and others, all work together to tackle crime in the community.

Multi-agency working is increasingly important in crime prevention and working across different areas of expertise allows for a more holistic approach and outcome.

Plaid Cymru will continue to invest and engage with Community Safety Partnerships, working closely with local government and all other relevant groups, to ensure that they are effective in preventing crime and support their communities.

Transparency in Policing

As part of a move towards greater transparency in policing, Plaid Cymru support legislation at Westminster which will require police officers to declare their membership of clubs, societies and organisations to ensure that relationships outside of the workplace are transparent and above board. This will provide increased transparency and confidence in policing.

Reducing Duplication

Some back-room services are provided across all four Welsh police forces when they could be more efficiently provided within one organisation as a centre of excellence.

For example, a large proportion of Welsh Firearms Licenses are provided within the Dyfed-Powys Police Force area, so it would make sense to utilise that experience to create a Welsh Firearms Licensing Bureau, also recognising that firearms licensing provides a crucial safeguarding role and not just a matter of administration.

This could also, for example, impact upon delivery of DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, if they were centrally organised in one force in Wales. In recent years, implementing safeguarding requirements means that the need for DBS checks has increased, and, on occasion, so has the wait-time for their completion with consequential effects upon employment start dates etc.

Supporting Police Officers

Plaid Cymru recognise that police officers work hard for their communities to deliver the best possible services to the people of Wales.

That can mean putting themselves in danger or under threat of personal harm through trying to reduce the threat of injury or harm to others.

We will continue to provide best practice support to serving police officers to deal with the trauma and challenges of dealing with their everyday tasks, as well as unusual or particularly difficult circumstances which may also arise in the course of their duties.

This involves consulting with staff and staff representatives, including trade unions, to make sure that we are providing the best quality support.

Welsh Language Services

Wales has two official languages and residents have the right to expect access to services in both.

Both police services and the offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales are covered by the Welsh Language Standards (No.5) Regulations 2016.

Plaid Cymru recognises that the provision of Welsh language services should have immediate availability in communities with a greater percentage of Welsh speakers, but that language standards should be met across the country.

This means increasing the availability of Welsh speaking officers and support staff across the country, and providing ongoing support to Welsh language learners in the service to increase their capability and confidence in using Welsh with the public.

We will continue to invest in the ability of police staff across the country to communicate effectively in both official languages and ensure that communities are policed in the language of their choice.

Working in Welsh

A task and finish group in Dyfed Powys has led to improvements in the use of the Welsh language in the force area.

Working with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and University of South Wales, a new provision has been developed which allows Welsh speaking recruits to undertake much of their training in Welsh.

At the same time, a new Welsh language tutor post provides extra support to learners to provide extra confidence in speaking in Welsh and working with the public.

In the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner itself, all posts are advertised with an expectation that successful candidates will improve their language skills, if necessary.

Welsh lessons are available and a monthly social 'Clwb Clegs' session has been introduced to use those skills in a friendly environment.

Currently 65% of the team at the Office are comfortable working through Welsh, meaning that a fully bilingual service is available.

Volunteering in Policing

Volunteers are an important part of policing.

Plaid Cymru believes that there should be a national campaign to recruit Special Constables, recognising the important role that they play.

Independent scrutiny and advisory panels provide an external perspective on how policing work is undertaken, ensuring that they operate within the law but also to continually improve services to the public.

Independent Custody Visiting

Management of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme is an important responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Following recommendations of the Lord Scarman report in the 1980s, independent custody visitors are volunteers who make unannounced visits to police stations to assure themselves that those detained in custody are being appropriately looked after in terms of their rights, entitlements and wellbeing.

The Independent Custody Visiting scheme in Dyfed-Powys Police was recently awarded a Gold Award for meeting the Quality Assurance Framework, showing an excellent standard of custody visiting.

We will continue to support volunteers to undertake this work, independent of the police service, so that we can be assured that those in custody are being well looked after.

Get to know your Plaid Cymru candidates





Plaid Cymru
Party of Wales

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