



Plismona
yng Nghymru
Policing in Wales



COMISIYNYDD
HEDDLU A THROSEDDU
DYFED-POWYS
POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER



South Wales
Police and Crime
Commissioner



SWYDDIATA COMISIYNYDD HEDDLU
A THROSEDDU Gogledd Cymru
OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER NORTH WALES



South Wales
Police and Crime Commissioner
Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throsteddu
De Cymru



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Welsh Parliament

Cardiff Bay

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14th December 2021

Dear Jenny

Debt and the Pandemic – Alleged Illegal Evictions

We write on behalf of Policing in Wales in response to your letter to all Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners of November 24th in relation to the above.

Like you, Policing in Wales was concerned to hear about the allegations put forward by Shelter Cymru, but it is important that we provide some context to how this issue has emerged and how Policing in Wales has responded.

Shelter Cymru wrote to Chief Constables and Commissioners in September with some limited information around alleged police involvement in illegal evictions during the course of the pandemic. An urgent request was made to Shelter Cymru to provide some further information on the back of the initial disclosure by their case workers. This was followed up by a further request in early October, but Shelter responded by saying that they were unable to provide additional details at that point due to staffing shortages. Some limited additional information was received on October 19th 2021, but this was not sufficient to enable investigation of specific cases or allegations.

The matter was subsequently raised at the November meeting of your committee and attracted some media interest. Policing in Wales was disappointed that further engagement had not taken place prior to the evidence provided to the Committee. On the back of this, a meeting was arranged between the Chief Executive of Shelter Cymru and Chief Constable Pam Kelly, Chair of the Welsh Chief Officers Group on October 29th.

During that meeting, the previous positive working relationships between Policing in Wales and Shelter Cymru were highlighted, but real disappointment was expressed in the way that the allegations made to your committee had surfaced. Policing in Wales awaited further information

around the allegations made and stood ready to work with Shelter Cymru to respond positively to the concerns outlined.

In the meeting, the Chief Executive of Shelter Cymru stressed that it had never been the intention to take the issue to your committee without proper engagement with policing colleagues, but she accepted that this was how it could be interpreted. Over the past 18 months, officers across Wales have been required to deal with relentless changes to laws and regulations in response to the Covid pandemic and many of the examples highlighted by case workers can be ascribed to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. However, there are other cases where there is a clear opportunity for learning. On this basis, two courses of action were agreed:

- Shelter Cymru would develop a brief aide memoire document setting out the rights of tenants and a basic overview of housing law in this area, ensuring that police officers across Wales do not become involved in illegal evictions. This aide memoire will be made available to front line officers and staff in force control rooms
- Quarterly meetings would take place between the Police Liaison Unit (PLU) and officers from Shelter Cymru to identify and deal with emerging issues. The PLU represents the four Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners in their engagement with Welsh Government and are well placed to work with Shelter Cymru on any concerns they identify. PLU staff have made themselves available in between these quarterly meetings should anything more urgent arise

Please be assured that Policing in Wales takes any allegations of this nature extremely seriously and is committed to working with Government and partners to address them on a partnership basis.

Yours sincerely



Pam Kelly
Chief Constable, Gwent Police
Chair of Welsh Chief Officers Group



Dafydd Llywelyn
Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed Powys
Chair of Policing in Wales