

***For a strong, just
and safe Wales***



**Plaid Cymru Manifesto
Police and Crime
Commissioners
Election 2016**





Leanne Wood,
The Party of Wales Leader

It remains an unacceptable anomaly that Wales is the only nation in these islands without powers over its policing and justice policies.

Plaid Cymru is committed to the devolution of policing and justice to Wales and the creation of a distinct legal jurisdiction here. Our country should be empowered to pursue policies that serve citizens and communities here.

In that context, The Party of Wales would seek the abolition of the role of Police and Crime Commissioner. It is our view that policing priorities are best set locally and in partnership, rather than being placed in the hands of individuals.

Plaid Cymru however always fights for Welsh communities regardless of the political context, and Plaid Cymru PCCs would champion the needs of local communities.

Their focus will be on replenishing depleted frontline policing so that officers can best serve communities in preventing and detecting crime.

Building safer communities requires well-resourced police forces and The Party of Wales continues to campaign against further cuts.

It is crucial we use the limited powers to end the cycle of crime that often spirals to include challenges for other public services such as health, education and social services.

The legacy of over-crowded prisons and a penal system that is not sufficiently focused on rehabilitation is one that has a knock on effect on devolved matters, but more importantly it impacts on communities. A Plaid Cymru government will, in partnership with our PCCs will make the case for an empowered Wales so we can deliver safer communities.

We ask people across the nation to provide us with the mandate we need to deliver the change Wales needs.

Leanne Wood

For a strong, just and safe Wales

This May is the first opportunity for the people of Wales to elect Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners in all four of Wales' police force areas.

This will be the first time that a Welsh way of policing can be formed, as our aim would be to see Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners able to work closely with the new Plaid Cymru Welsh Government, elected on the same day, to deliver a joined-up policing programme for all parts of Wales. This is the change that Wales needs.

We know that there is only one Wales – north, south, east and west; urban and rural – and our programme reflects both the need for Wales-wide solutions as well as reflecting local needs and priorities, which are set out by our candidates for each police force.

Plaid Cymru values and respects the work carried out by our Police Officers, Police and Community Support Officers and the civilian support that ensure that law and order is kept on our streets in Wales, and our PCCs will promote engagement with the police workforce to ensure that high quality service is maintained.

Our priority areas, here in this manifesto, will ensure a balance between the prevention and detection of crime in order to reduce crime, and the number of victims of crime across Wales. We will work with partners in Welsh Government, local government and the third sector to deliver on these priorities.

Our candidates have developed a joint programme so that voters across Wales know what to expect from a Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioner in their new role.

Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners will have the same three election priorities:

1. Strong neighbourhood policing teams that will cut crime in our communities
2. Protect vulnerable groups and supporting victims so that they aren't just a statistic
3. Break the cycle of crime to reduce future crime

Plaid Cymru PCCs will use these priorities to prevent and detect crimes that happen in our communities, to protect vulnerable groups and support people who are the victims of crime, and to work with offenders to break their cycle of offending, punishment and re-offending and thereby reduce the overall amount of crime.

However, until Wales has complete powers over policing and criminal justice, we will never be able to fully achieve this aim. That is why Plaid Cymru wants full control of policing and criminal justice in Wales in the hands of a dedicated Welsh Government Justice Minister.

This manifesto sets out how Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioners will achieve the best results for Wales within the constraints that Westminster forces upon us.

Plaid Cymru believes that everybody has the right to feel safe in their home and in their community, free from the fear of crime.

We will develop and maintain strong neighbourhood policing teams with a clear vision and focus on the community's key issues.

To achieve this, we will work closely with local authorities and other partners on crime reduction to share information that can lead to the prevention and detection of crime.

We will also work with local authorities to ensure, as far as practical, a no tolerance situation, reducing unwanted graffiti, litter and other 'signal crimes' that suggest a lack of interest in the well-being of the local community.

Our Police Officers, and also our Police Community Support Officers, will be visible and work closely with the public to reduce fear of crime and improve detection. Although we would prefer to increase the number of warranted Police Officers, we also recognise the importance and work of PCSOs in our communities.

Plaid Cymru PCCs will develop Policing Crime Plans that will set out local priorities, within the context of the national policies outlined in this manifesto, and the future strategy in each police force area that will be followed to tackle crime.

These Policing Crime Plans will be developed according to local priorities across Wales, reflecting the concerns and the realities of crime in local communities, and regularly updated following consultation with those communities, and those affected.

Plaid Cymru PCCs will be transparent in their decision-making process, publishing decision notices on websites and circulating to local newspapers, local authorities and town and community councils.

Our PCC's public engagement will also include regular meetings with local organisations and representative bodies, as well as public meetings where policing matters can be discussed.

Protecting vulnerable groups and support victims

Plaid Cymru believes that no violence of any nature should be tolerated, whether that is within a public or domestic setting.

This means that we will work to prevent all domestic violence, building on the work of the Violence Against Women Act 2014, but also focusing on violence against children, LGBT community members, those from ethnic minorities and men.

Plaid Cymru PCCs will work with both the public and third sector to ensure victims have the confidence to report incidents at the earliest stage, to reduce the escalation of incidents and the increased risk of harm.

We recognise that there are particular groups within society who are most vulnerable, and we will particularly support key partner organisations who work closely with these groups.

In particular, we will focus on:

- those suffering from Mental Health issues
- Elderly abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Honour Based Violence
- Those at risk of cyber-crime

We will work with LGBT communities to reduce hate crime, ensure there is trust in the police force amongst the LGBT community and treat all allegations seriously.

We will work with local authorities and third sector groups to tackle exploitative scams in the community, particularly upon old people from either strangers or even their own family members.

We will work closely with BAME groups to protect them from being victims of racial hate-crime and with faith organisations to prevent faith-based hate-crime.

We will learn lessons from the recent thematic review of police forces and child sexual exploitation cases to ensure best practice throughout Wales.

We will ensure that recent legislation and guidance on stalking is implemented properly across Wales so that those who suffer from stalking can feel comfortable in reporting their concerns, that these will be recorded and action taken.

Supporting victims of crime is of great importance as nobody should be forgotten or ignored. We will work with victims' support groups to ensure that victims can be best supported and that their experiences can be used to provide a better service in future. Crime victims should never be just a statistic.

Tackling crime in our communities

We are aware that a large number of crimes in the community are committed by a small number of individuals.

For example, alcohol and drug misuse impacts disproportionately on crime and antisocial behaviour therefore a joined up approach with all Community Safety partners will be delivered, in particular targeting those involved in the supply and distribution of illegal substances.

Reducing substance misuse in general has a substantial impact not just on the individuals concerned, but leads to a wider reduction in crime across the community.

Previous pilot studies in Cardiff have shown the link between alcohol misuse, the need for policing involvement and health service interventions. Reducing this therefore leads to a positive cycle that cuts crime and costs for the taxpayer. Plaid Cymru also supports a minimum price per unit of alcohol that will promote these aims, and Plaid Cymru PCCs will call for powers on this to be devolved to Wales and implemented.

Plaid Cymru will prioritise education programmes, alongside dedicated health resources, to support those with addictions and reduce the harm and demand placed across all public services.

Preventing re-offending through breaking the cycle of crime is a key aim for Plaid Cymru PCCs.

We will work closely with offenders and support organisations to turn people's lives around so that they no longer commit crimes. This will help our communities through reducing crime, reducing the number of victims of crime, the fear of crime and the cost of crime in our communities.

Community engagement to prevent crime is therefore important to stop young people entering the criminal justice system. We will work with youth offending teams and youth engagement programmes to identify those most at risk of becoming criminals and preventing this becoming a reality, instead re-focusing their lives towards positive outcomes. We will use latest research and best practice to target young men and young women with appropriate support.



Road safety

Road safety affects everybody in Wales, so Plaid Cymru PCCs will ensure that road safety is a high priority across Wales.

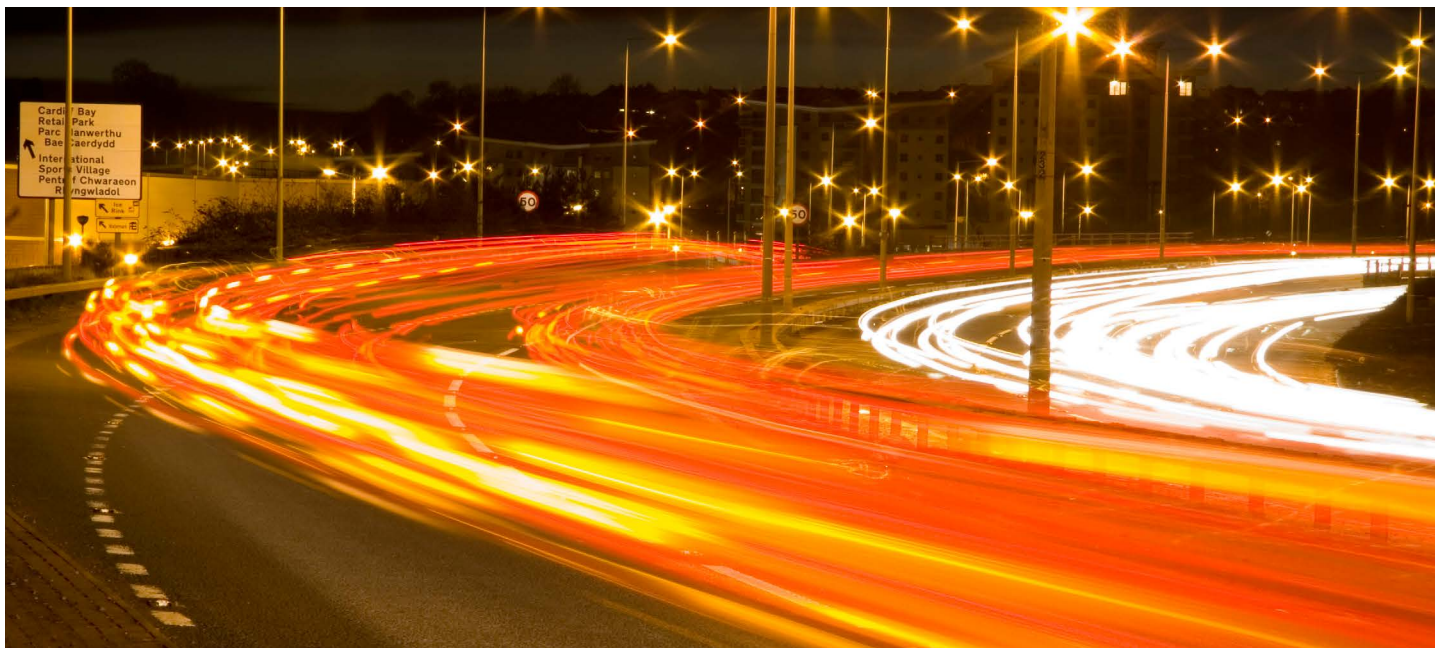
We will work with local authority highways departments to improve safety on the roads in order to reduce fatalities and serious injury collisions.

This also means ensuring that drivers themselves take responsibility for their actions and drive appropriately.

Welsh Government will shortly have powers over speed limits in Wales and we will welcome general consultation on how these powers can be best used to reduce fatalities and promote safer driving, including reducing speeds near schools and other locations where accidents are more likely to happen or where the consequences could be worse.

Recognising that around one-quarter of road traffic deaths in Wales are connected to drink-driving, and that attendance on drink-driving rehabilitation schemes reduces re-offending, we will promote the existence of these schemes to any drivers found under the influence.

We are disappointed that the Welsh Government has not been given powers over drink-driving limits in the Wales Bill, and we call for these powers to be transferred and a serious discussion to be held about reducing the alcohol limits for driving, as they have already done in Scotland.



Tackling serious & organised crime

Plaid Cymru recognises that intelligence is critical to the fight against serious & organised crime at all levels, from terrorism to financial scams. Plaid Cymru will ensure improvements are made to the management and availability of information between Police forces and agencies across Wales.

We will ensure that there is improved co-operation between organisations, supported by local investigative teams who are tasked to identify individuals and groups responsible for serious and organised crime.

We will work across police forces in Wales, and with forces in England and internationally to share information regarding terrorism, modern slavery and other crimes that are not geographically restricted to one location.

Prevention of terrorism is of major international significance and we will work with communities and organisations to educate and engage with individuals and groups at risk of radicalisation in order to prevent violence in our communities.

Recognising that some high-profile events may be targeted, particularly those of political or sporting importance, we will consult with international experts to achieve the highest appropriate level of cover and support to prevent incidents.

We will work closely with the new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to ensure that Wales is not a haven for modern slavery.

We will ensure that Welsh police forces have the technology and are sufficiently resourced to deal with new types of crime, such as the rise in cyber-crime and cyber-stalking.

Carrying out this work in conjunction with national and international crime agencies will reduce the harm caused, and bring offenders to justice.



Treating suspects appropriately

Suspects are innocent until proven guilty, and should be treated appropriately at all times.

Plaid Cymru PCCs will ensure that the strict regulations on suspects' well-being are met through promotion and support of the independent custody visitors' scheme.

We will ensure that suspects are held in appropriate locations following arrest. We will work with local authorities to ensure that anybody with suspected mental health problems or young people are treated appropriately, rather than being held in police custody.

We will support independent custody visitors in their scrutiny of police officers' actions to ensure that there are no abuses of power and that all suspects are treated fairly and equally throughout the process of arrest and release.

We will promote best practice and help share information with independent custody visitors and welcome their contribution to the process, valuing their feedback and comments.



Efficient policing creates value for money

Plaid Cymru believes it is important that our police forces operate efficiently so that they can deliver better front line services.

We will ensure value for money for taxpayers, who contribute towards the cost of policing, by providing an efficient and responsive service.

We do not believe that out-sourcing policing services to the private sector will provide a better service or value for money and Plaid Cymru PCCs will limit privatisation wherever possible.

Plaid Cymru PCCs will improve procurement practices in line with Plaid Cymru policy to support the Welsh economy. This will ensure that, wherever possible, Welsh companies will be in a position to bid for contracts.

Where Welsh firms are successful, this will mean additional investment to companies in the supply chain within Wales, creating more jobs, and getting value for money for the taxpayer.

Plaid Cymru PCCs will examine existing contracts to ensure that they represent value for money.

We will identify where bureaucracy and red-tape can be reduced within the system to make it more efficient, without cutting corners.

The Welsh language

Plaid Cymru PCCs will ensure that Welsh police forces meet their requirements under Welsh language legislation, so that Welsh speakers know that there will be a consistent quality of service that they can expect.

We will also promote the Welsh language as one of our national languages throughout the police force, with language learning and improvement opportunities, as part of a truly bilingual Wales.

Working with Welsh Government and other partners

Plaid Cymru are fighting to become the Government of Wales in National Assembly elections that also take place on 5th May, 2016.

The Welsh Government has responsibility for health, education, social care and a number of other fields which are directly related to crime pathways.

Plaid Cymru PCCs will work closely with Welsh Government Ministers to secure a better understanding of those pathways, and our joint responsibilities for preventing crime.

In doing so, we will aim to reach common goals of crime reduction and safer communities.

We will work with all relevant partner organisations in local authorities, the third sector and across Wales to reduce crime.

However, we also recognise that not all powers or influences over crime are in the hands of the Welsh Government.

We believe that all powers relating to policing and criminal justice should be transferred to Wales. It makes no sense that so many of these pathways that can prevent crime are now in the hands of Welsh Ministers, but that policing and criminal justice are held far away in London.

There is widespread support from professionals, including Chief Constables and policing experts, that it would make more sense for these powers to be transferred to the Welsh Government – as well as being recommended by the Commission on Devolution to Wales, usually known as the Silk Commission.

Plaid Cymru PCCs will therefore work towards the transfer of powers for policing and criminal justice to Wales. Doing so will make the policing and criminal justice system more efficient and responsive to the needs of the people of Wales.

Under a fully devolved policing and criminal justice system, Plaid Cymru would transfer responsibility for Welsh policing to a fully accountable Justice Minister in the Welsh Government and there would be no further need for Police and Crime Commissioners.