

Portfolio of 3 Elements.

In this portfolio, there will be three main titles that will be delved into in detail. The first subject is about the 1984 miners' strike focusing on Wales and how it affected Wales' citizens and its political state. The next subject will be about local and police relationships during the riots and how it affects the protesters views on the police at the time. Then the topic of different key priorities that the Welsh police services have set and it will be evaluated whether they will be beneficial or are needed and possibly what needs to be focused more for policing services in Wales. The last title will focus around whether the four police forces in Wales should become one service. The positives and the negatives of this will be delved into.

The 1984 miners' strike.

The Miners strike of 1984 happened due to an announcement on the 1st of March that the National Coal board was closing 20 coal mines which would result in a loss of 20,000 jobs in Wales. Naturally this made the people who worked in the mines very angry and it would cause these men to decide to strike in an effort to persuade the Coal Board and Margret Thatcher, the prime minister of the time from closing these coal mines. Of course, these strikes had a huge economic impact on the strikers lives and their families as there was little to no income coming in due to them striking, this would cause the strikers wives to take action through raising money for the affected miners and their families and standing alongside these men on the picket line. Picketers were people who congregate around a specific area where something like an event is going on and protest to try and dissuade people from continuing, in this case it would be the miners on strike going to mines in the area and trying to prevent the miners who decided to still work from entering. There were also rifts happening between miners at the time between the miners who decided to strike and the miners who continued to go to work. The miners who decided to still work were called 'scabs' by the strikers.

It was also stated that the Welsh strikes marked the start of anti-Thatcherism and anti-conservative rhetoric with Wales even today being a mainly labour country.

Police-Public relationship during the 1984 protests.

The relationship between the strikers and police at the time was less than friendly one man even stating that it affected his relationship with the police forever and the interactions 'left him bitter and twisted' *Ron Stoate, 2024*. The same man would mention that police would also deliberately go to the strikers houses to ask whether they were going to go to work, actively trying to break the strike through some sort of intimidation. It also turned quite violent at one point with a lot of the protesters stating that the police were using excessive force. The prime minister of the time, Margret Thatcher, wanted the police to adopt a more militarized approach when it came to the protesters, with police being on horses and handling dogs, wielding batons whilst the strikers were in everyday clothing like jeans and a jacket. Naturally the police force adopting a more militarised approach as advised by the Prime minister of the time would make the locals more intimidated by the police affecting how they were seen by people after on, but it also made them feel as though their own Welsh brothers were standing against them during a time where they were feeling targeted by someone who was supposed to lead them.

The key priorities in Welsh police forces.

One of the priorities set for policing in Wales is to deliver safer streets. In fact, North Wales, South Wales Police, Gwent Police and Dyfed Powys police have been promised better support from the UK Government, over half a million pounds, to deliver these safer streets. This priority is quite a good idea because police always want the public to have at least a trusting relationship with them. As per Statista, in 2023/24 the crime reports in Wales came to

‘263,045’ crimes committed less than the year before but higher than the previous years from 2022 to 2015. Whilst it doesn't specify how much of it is street crime, street crime is generally recognised as any crime that happens in a public place and if it is on the rise, it needs to be dealt with. Delivering safer street will also help the public with developing a stronger trust in the police seeming as of 2024 ‘52% of adults had little to no trust in the police’ (*UK Parliament 2024*).

Another plan is called the Police and Crime Plan 2025-2028. This plan has many priorities set in place the plan also wants to focus on neighbourhood policing but also has other priorities like supporting victims, communities and businesses and a fair and effective criminal justice system. This is a great plan to try and better police- public relations and to try and help to bring crime numbers down through a higher police Presence on streets and by helping supporting victims which can help prevent revictimization. Better supporting victims can help bring crime down as it is unlikely with the right support that they will be manipulated again and add to a statistic.

A fair and effective criminal justice system could bring crime numbers down as it takes criminals off the streets but also shows others that they simply will not get just a slap on the wrist, it has been said for a while that the justice system is a joke with a senior officer stating the system is ‘appalling’ and a Metropolitan Police commissioner Sir John Stevens stated that criminals are basically above the law- so focusing on the betterment of the justice system is always a major plus. It’s always great when a plan covers a multitude of initiatives because it covers most if not all key problem areas in Wales for example, crime being on the rise as shown by the statistics above but also the relationship the public has with the police.

Is there a need for one Welsh police force?

The police service first merged into 43 different services from 200 in 1974 including Wales' police services in an attempt to 'streamline' the service, and it did work to make things simpler and more effective like police funding for example, instead of worrying for 200 different services with different needs, it was now down to 43.

When it comes to the potential of the four Welsh police forces merging into one service, there are potential positives that can come about with the event. One benefit would be that all the officers would receive the same training. This is beneficial because it makes sure that there is no clashing with how situations are dealt with which allows a smoother process. Merging the services into one can also improve resource management because there wouldn't be 4 services to worry about, the service as a whole would need the same resources rather than 4 separate services needing different amounts. This could also link in with cost effectiveness which is another benefit. Instead of the different forces creating plans that need funding, the one force would have the same plan or plans meaning that the funding won't be as costly as trying to support the four services.

Merging all four Welsh police services can also have its negatives- having separate services allows a more personalised policing service as the police officers policing that area will stay in that area, meshing services into one could mean that officers are being sent to different places and do not form a familiarity or bond with the locals, this in turn can affect the trust the public has in the police because in a way there is no 'familiar faces'. The forces becoming one may also result in neglect of some level. For example, the force as a whole will focus on more higher-level crimes rather than lower-level crimes, so there would be a community where a lot of lower level crimes are happening but because the police are focusing on the higher level ones, response times can be slower and as a result would cause the community to rely less on the police and once again bruises the relationship they have with the police as it would seem as though the community is not being heard.

It could also be very similar to what happened when the Welsh ambulance service also became one service; the response times are slower due to the fact that some towns don't have their own dedicated ambulance stations. As stated by NHS Wales there are '90 ambulance stations across Wales' but Wales has over 3,800 towns and villages and seven cities.

Overall, when it comes to merging the forces all the positives and negatives should be looked at and evaluated because deciding to go ahead and merge them can greatly disrupt the force for a bit as there is the process of either evaluating whose training produces the best results or creating a whole new plan which takes testing and if it does not produce favourable results, it can greatly impact in many aspects like trust in the police. A popular saying is 'if it's not broken don't fix it', the forces at the moment are doing well and there may not be a need to mesh the services into one.

Conclusion:

To conclude this portfolio explored what the 1984 miners' strike was and how it affected Wales and it was found that it was a time of massive economical struggle for the families of those who protested. It was also seen how police-public relations weren't the best at that time as the police were described as being heavy handed when it came to the protesters, one striker at the time explaining that it permanently affected how he viewed the police.

Key priorities were also looked at for Welsh police and whether they are needed or not but also the positives and negatives that can come if the four police services in Wales merged into one service and whether it is needed.

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