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| Force Engagement Report  (Report on the effectiveness and efficiency  of the Chief Constable’s arrangements for engagement with local people)   |  | | --- | |  | |
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| Annual Report  2023/2024 |
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## RECOMMENDATION

This report is submitted as part of regular reporting to the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) at the Strategy and Performance Board. The report provides information against the following two performance measures in the Police and Crime Plan:

***3.2*** *Our communities agree that they are being consulted and their voices are being heard.*

***3.3*** *Evidence that we are accessible to all and that we have listened to and responses to the views of our communities.*

This document reports on the principal engagement activities of Gwent Police in terms of how we make ourselves accessible and responsive to our communities.

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Engagement in this context can be seen as a two-way interaction or process or, at the very least, one where such two-way communication is possible. As such, it does not concern itself with activities which could be described as simply the broadcasting or provision of information.

This report provides an overview of the current Community engagement structure and updates from key departments.

At the heart of our strategy, we have a:

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| * Plan for obtaining the views of people within each neighbourhood about crime and disorder in that neighbourhood |
| * Plan for providing people within each neighbourhood: |
| * information about policing there |
| * information about how policing is aimed at reducing crime and disorder |
| * regular meetings   We acknowledge as a force that this is an area that needs improving for us to ensure that every member of the community feels able to contribute to our priorities, set their own priorities for the areas in which they live, and ensure that we consistently provide the two-way communication that communities want to see. |

Those department/considerations in engagement include:

➢ Chief Officer Team

➢ Neighbourhood Teams

➢ Positive Action Team

➢ Problem-Solving Teams

➢ Citizens in Policing

➢ We Don’t Buy Crime (WDBC)

➢ Rural Crime Team

➢ Cyber Police Community Support Officer

➢ Safer Streets

➢ Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team

➢ The Force Contact and Control Suite

➢ Welsh Language

➢ Ride Along Scheme

## CHIEF OFFICER TEAM

## Chief Officer Community Engagement Report

The Chief Officer Team has continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to engaging with local communities, which is a key priority for the team.

This report provides a snapshot of the recent engagements undertaken by the Chief Officers[[1]](#footnote-2).

### Chief Constable Pam Kelly's Engagements

• Regular interactions with local Members of Parliament and Senedd Members.

• Participation in a community event at a community house in Brynmawr, organised by a local police community support officer.

• Attendance at the Anti-Violence collaborative meeting in June to sign a pledge supporting NHS staff against assaults.

• Conducted a meeting at Gwent Headquarters to address community concerns in Newport.

• Attended a national children's day service at St Woolos Cathedral to support children's rights and happiness.

### Deputy Chief Constable Hobrough's Engagements

• Attended Gwent Youth Question Time at the council chambers in Caerphilly.

• Engaged directly with local communities by joining local response shifts.

• Participated in a treadmill challenge in Cwmbran to raise money for Cancer awareness.

Former DCC Rachel Williams also attended the quarterly Mosque Meeting to speak with Imans from across Gwent.

### Assistant Chief Constable McLain's Engagement

• Attended the Cardiff PRIDE event in June 2024.

### Chief Officers' Collective Engagements

• Attended the 999 open days held at Bryn Bach Park and Cwmbran, which were successful events with great community engagement.

• Hosted a summer 2024 recruitment event at HQ, where Deputy Chief Constable Mark Hobrough shared his policing journey and discussed the current challenges and opportunities in the police service.

• Submission of the force public confidence survey.

• Participation in various remembrance services throughout Gwent.

This report underscores the Chief Officer Team's dedication to fostering a positive relationship with the communities they serve and their proactive approach to community engagement with particular emphasis on harder to reach communities. The list is not exhaustive but includes some of the principal engagements undertaken throughout the year.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS

Neighbourhood Teams engage with members of the public and key partners through a variety of methods. This includes:

* + community meetings with members of the public/KINS and councillors
  + providing key updates through writing blogs/vlogs that are shared on social media channels and the local authority engagement channels
  + utilising Microsoft Teams to host meetings internally and externally, and
  + driving key messages through our Social Media platforms.

The blogs detail key activity that has taken place within each section in relation to arrest/crime trends and good work by local officers/partner agencies. These blogs are also shared with local councillors and placed within key places in the community such as libraries and community centres. This ensures key updates reach other community members who may not have access to social media.

Neighbourhood Inspectors prepare a bespoke Communications and Engagement Strategy for their respective section that details how, when and with whom they will engage. See Annex B for an example of this.

### Engagement Returns

Neighbourhood teams continue to engage and consult with their communities in line with the existing Communication & Engagement strategies and using the plethora of tools available in the ASB toolkit working closely with Partners to target ASB, Crime & Disorder.

Activities and analysis of this area of work is captured within the Neighbourhood Engagement Portal which is accessed by all teams via The Beat (forcewide intranet).

During the 2023/2024 reporting period Neighbourhood Teams have conducted a total of **1,813** engagement activities.

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| **East LPA** | **867** |
| **West LPA** | **946** |

Recorded *Engagement* activities have included.

* Council Meetings
* Police Surgeries
* COT Walk & Talk’s
* Cuppa with a Copper
* Crime Prevention surgeries and events
* Cllr Open Evenings
* Cllr and KIN Walk & Talks
* Community Projects

Teams continue to support this with their bespoke visibility plans to increase visibility and community links (see Annex B & Annex C) and facilitate face-to-face engagement and increased visibility.

Teams also continue to maximise the use of social media accounts and force accounts on social media to engage with wider communities sharing examples of positive enforcement and education activities.

Over the 12 months there has also been significant positive public engagement in relation to ASB operations including the development and launch of *The Lead* initiative. This initiative centres around dangerous dogs in our communities and was initially launched in the Caerphilly Borough, with a launch across the wider force area rolled out on 22 July 2024.

In addition, there has been a drive via social media and external media channels to promote work of the Neighbourhood teams as they continue to target activity against Serious Organised Crime groups, developing and tackling intelligence in relation to drug possession and supply offences, management of prison recalls and targeting crime clear up operations to drive positive outcomes and improve victim satisfaction.

Neighbourhood teams have continued to conduct ‘crime actions days’ across the force area including,

* Operation Stafford across the Upper Rhymney Valley
* Operation Greyhawk across Blaenau Gwent.

Enforcement days such as these continue to increase engagement and build on local community relations with the neighbourhood teams.

The Neighbourhood Teams work closely with our Problem-Solving Teams, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team and the We Don’t Buy Crime Department to problem-solve and to provide key crime prevention advice supporting victims of crime and local businesses that have been affected by crime.

Local Policing teams arrange police surgeries within their community and attend at town council meetings. The surgeries are advertised in prominent areas within their communities and online. Surgeries are held in areas such as libraries, city centre hubs and hospital settings. Pop-up surgeries are also utilised where there has been identified community tension or emerging crime/ASB. These are portable and can be placed in supermarket car parks and community halls.

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Neighbourhood Ward Officers meet with their local councillors in the community and conduct walkabouts to engage with members of the public. Neighbourhood Inspectors arrange regular meetings with councillors and invite them into the police station and also engage with their Senedd Member and Member of Parliament.

Neighbourhood officers and police community support officers conduct high visibility foot patrols in areas that have experienced increased in crime, ASB and disorder. They also engage in foot patrol activities in delivering crime prevention/key updates through leaflet dropping.

Both East & West Superintendents also regularly meet with senior officials from the Local Authorities, local councillors, Senedd Members and Members of Parliament for their respective areas.

### Police Community Support Engagement Officers

During the last financial year, there was a dedicated officer to each of the five local authority areas. These officers worked within the community and provided the link for our diversity and inclusion team and neighbourhood teams. Their role was to enhance engagement opportunities with all members of the community to include our faith establishments and community groups. They have also assisted in identifying growth in relation to our WATCH schemes. Over the coming year, these roles will be undertaken within the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) team – more information about that team is included below.

### Partnership Engagement

Regular engagement takes place with our Community Safety Partnership Board members and Local Delivery Groups to ensure that key action plans are monitored, and activity is taking place to ensure our communities are kept safe. Plans in relation to key thematic areas such as Crime, ASB, Serious & Organised Crime, Vulnerability and Road Safety are discussed and actioned. There is a CSP for each local authority area.

We have several Watch Schemes that include Pub Watch/Allotment Watch/Farm Watch and Shop Watch. Officers and staff engage with community members, businesses, and licensees to provide reassurance and provide crime prevention advice and guidance.

## POSITIVE ACTION TEAM

### Positive Action & Recruitment

The Recruitment & Positive Action Team make a significant contribution to ensuring that Gwent Police becomes a truly representative and diverse organisation.

In recruitment, we aim to recruit the very best talent to meet our challenging operational and business support targets.

Supporting this, our Positive Action team are an integral part of Gwent Police’s plan to increase workforce representation, their work having recently contributed to Gwent Police being second in all forces across England & Wales for the largest growth in workforce representation, across all UK forces.

We engage with the community in several different ways, to aid cohesion and increase attraction to a career in policing, including:

* Coleg Gwent Partnership Pledge, working together to inspire learners about ‘Careers in Policing’
* Input to Public Services and Professional Policing degree learners in University of South Wales and Cardiff Met
* Careers awareness in local schools
* Upskilling of Work Coaches in Careers Wales & DWP
* Support to unemployed via Department of Work and Pensions
* Engagement with places of worship, such as local Mosques and Churches
* Attendance at local community days of note, such as Windrush and local festivals
* Partnership with Newport Yemini Community Association
* Women in Policing events
* Hosting recruitment-focused open days
* Attending local and national jobs fairs
* Job workshops with Police Cadets & ESOL students

The Positive Action Team also contribute to building a workforce that is informed and educated, delivering internal awareness sessions to all new cohorts of staff and officers and existing PCSOs and PCs on the importance of Positive Action, Allyship and myth busting around recruitment.

Additionally, the Positive Action Team are engaged with the Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales and the National Positive Action Practitioner Alliance working group.

## PROBLEM-SOLVING TEAMS

**This team has recently been renamed *Partnerships & Communities Teams***

Over the last twelve months the problem-solving teams have evolved and undergone several changes in relation to roles and targeted workload. The team is split across our two operational policing areas (East & West) and their work is mirrored in both areas. There is also a Central Problem-Solving Team.

## Central Partnerships & Communities

There are several key roles within the Central Problem-Solving structure. These consist of:

### Design out Crime officers (DOCO)

These officers conduct environmental visual audits and regularly engage with local authorities, councillors, housing providers and work with the domestic abuse team to develop home surveys for vulnerable victims. They have also been involved in the Safer Streets initiatives and provide the recommendations for target hardening.

The officers have enhanced knowledge of crime prevention tactics and methods and have built a library of resources for our corporate communities as well as partners and community groups. They also provide training to our PCSOs to drive the prevention-first model that identifies areas of concerns that have the potential to become crime hot spots, enabling prevention methods to be implemented before offending occurs/increases.

### Problem-Solving Tactical Advisor

The tactical advisor engages with key stakeholders, public service board members and community safety partnership team members in relation to problem-solving methodology. Problem-solving methodology is now firmly embedded within our organised criminal groups and vulnerable person groups. Engagement has taken place with all internal departments to deliver problem-solving training to all staff.

## Partnership & Communities (East & West)

### Demand Reduction Officer (formally Harm & Vulnerability Co-Ordinator)

This role remains a key to demand reduction and protecting the most vulnerable in our communities. They analyse data and problem-solve, engaging with key partner agencies such as Fire Service, Education, Health, Youth offending service, charities, and the Local Authority to assist with problem-solving activities to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. This approach has helped to improve the quality and compliance in relation to hate crime incidents and to identify vulnerable persons and premises susceptible to ‘cuckooing.’  Engagement has also taken place with local memory clinics across the force whereby and innovate dementia wrist band scheme has been launched.  This assists with High Risk Missing person who may be suffering from this illness.

The officer identifies key demand drivers for the Local Policing Area (LPA), focusing on repeat offenders, locations, and victims, and coordinates problem-solving approaches to reduce and remove that demand from the front line. They ensure there is a single Officer in Charge (OIC) for repeat offenders and work alongside the OIC to support investigations and apply for Community Orders to reduce future offending. The officer also collaborates with Crime Prevention and Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCOs) to organise visits and inputs at repeat locations. For example, meeting with store management and loss prevention teams for a national supermarket chain to discuss crime prevention initiatives, which resulted in a marked reduction in offending at the location.

The East Demand Reduction PC also oversees victim safeguarding when Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) are granted, manages updates, and presents these at court as part of a wider rota with the CADROs. The officer supports the East Retail Crime Team (a pilot/seconded team created to address the significant increase in shoplifting over the past year) by coordinating multiple offences and ensuring they are case-ready for the arresting/interviewing officer. Additionally, the officer works alongside licensing to support demand around the nighttime economy, especially in the City Centre, partnering with the Newport Central CADRO and undertaking patrols during nighttime economy hours.

# EAST LPA

## Licensing Officers

The East LPA has two licensing PCs responsible for premises across Newport and Monmouthshire, working a variable shift pattern aligned with demand to conduct regular evening and nighttime operations and licensing checks. There has been a significant increase in partnership working with licensing officers from local authorities and trading standards, focusing on the nighttime economy in Newport (the only city centre within the force’s geographical area). This collaboration has provided reassurance and assistance to both licensees and the public when dealing with licensed premises in breach of their conditions. Engagement has also taken place with local authorities to ensure taxi drivers operate within legal requirements, alongside off-licences and other premises undertaking licensable activities.

The licensing approach in the East LPA follows that of the West LPA, focusing on early intervention to identify emerging demand drivers and engaging with premises to improve standards and reduce escalation. Where licensed premises are not promoting the licensing objectives or suspected of criminality, officers undertake detailed reviews, action plans, and, where appropriate, take premises to full or expedited hearings.

Examples of this approach include:

### Newport

**Newport City Centre PSPO (Bus Station and surrounding streets)**

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is in place in Newport City Centre due to street drinking and increased ASB. Taking a multi-agency approach, licensing officers worked with Newport City Council, Newport Bus, local councillors, and the neighbourhood team to identify ways to reduce alcohol-related ASB. Officers visited off-licences following intelligence that they were serving single cans to street drinkers, despite them being intoxicated. As a result, these premises, when faced with a licence review, ceased selling to intoxicated individuals and no longer sell single cans, leading to a marked reduction in ASB at the bus station.

**Royal Albert**

The Royal Albert had been a concern due to number of incidents including a violent disorder. A thorough review of the licensee’s CCTV revealed numerous serious breaches. The licence holder was unwilling to cooperate with the police and refused to hand over key evidence, resulting in the seizure of the hard drive. An expedited review led to the licence being revoked and the premises closed. The licensee appealed, but the licensing committee upheld the decision in favour of Gwent Police and Newport City Council (NCC). Councillors and the legal barrister were impressed by the fast turnaround and the large quantity of evidence provided.

**The Neon**

Officers received intelligence about an event involving underage individuals. A meeting with the owners and Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) led to the event’s immediate cancellation. On another occasion, a large cannabis factory was found at the premises, resulting in the licence being revoked and the premises shut down.

**The Greyhound**

An expedited review was conducted following a serious crime where an underage female gained access to the premises unchallenged by Security Industry Authority (SIA) staff and was served alcohol. The same evening, an unrelated serious sexual assault was reported to police. The management minimised the incident to attending officers. An application to revoke the licence was made, but the owners voluntarily closed. The licence remained active, and further stringent conditions were added, reducing their opening hours. No serious incidents have occurred since.

**Bar Amber**

Primarily associated with Newport County Football fans, concerns were raised about management, especially SIA door staff, following an incident of violent disorder on a match day. CCTV proved staff allowed the disorder to continue without intervention. An urgent meeting and action plan were drafted, but the premises surrendered their licence and closed, citing costs.

**Vibez Super Club**

Officers identified poor searching practices by SIA staff through covert and overt patrols, CCTV checks, and premises visits. It was clear that patrons were being allowed in with bags without being searched. Furthermore, CCTV footage showed items suspected to be drugs being passed through the fencing into the smoking area. Several partnership meetings took place with Newport City Council (NCC), the owners, managers, and the company providing SIA door staff. These meetings resulted in action plans, stricter conditions around searching patrons, and changes to operating hours. SIA staff were replaced with a new door management team, and the hours were reduced. The premises recently closed but has since reopened under a new name with clear mechanisms in place to manage the issues raised.

### Monmouthshire

**Five Alls Inn, Chepstow**

Concerns around possible drug use and supply at the premises were raised, along with reports of lock-ins. Officers discovered a lock-in on one weekend, and what appeared to be Class A drugs on the premises. An immediate meeting was arranged with Monmouthshire Council Licensing, the license holding company, and their solicitors. Following extensive mediation, the landlord was removed, and additional strict conditions were imposed on the license along with an action plan. This situation is being closely monitored, and any deviation will result in an application to revoke the licence.

**White Hart, Llangybi**

Underage staff were being allowed to drink on the premises. On one occasion, an underage female staff member became intoxicated and later reported a sexual assault to police. Officers mediated with Monmouthshire Council and the premises licence holder, intending to take the premises to review. However, stricter conditions were agreed upon just before the review.

## WEST LPA

### Examples of positive interventions/staff learning

All hate crimes that have been reported in schools have been reviewed. Partnership meetings have been arranged with the Local Authorities, Education Board, Cohesion Trainers/Partners and SLOs which resulted in a more consistent approach across the different authorities when reporting hate crimes in a school setting to police.

### Positive intervention work

An individual in the local area came to the attention of officers to the individual’s concerning overly sexualised behaviour towards women.

Several s115 information sharing meetings were arranged with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), the care company, social worker and mental health nurse who all expressed concerns.

The Public Protection Unit (PPU), Management of Sexual and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) and JLS are all in the process of applying for a sexual risk order. This will protect the local community and the individual against further offences. This is ongoing.

### Licensing Officers

There has been an increase in partnership working with licensing officers from the local authorities and trading standards.  This has provided reassurance and assistance to both licensee and members of the public when dealing with licensed premises that are in breach of their conditions.  Engagement has also taken place with the local authorities to ensure taxi drivers are operating within the legal requirements.

The Licensing approach in the West LPA has returned to the method of “early intervention;” this is to identify emerging demand drivers and then engaging with the premises in question and in collaboration with Partners seeking to work with the premises to improve standards and reduce the escalation.

This approach cost effective in that it prevents the matter going to a Hearing in most cases and so there are not the costs and staff hours needed to preparer and attend a Full Licensing Hearing.

Some examples of this approach are as follows:

### Caerphilly

**The Cwtch (Caerphilly Town)**

Increasing calls and incidents at the venue were putting pressure on Response and Neighbourhood staff in trying to manage the demand. The licensing staff started to work with the “then owners” with the approach of Early advice and interventions. This was supported by unannounced Multi Agency compliance visits (CCBC Trading Standards, CCBC Licensing, Soth-Wales Fire & Rescue as well as local Officers).

The owners closed the venue voluntarily and implemented a number of changes.

The venue has now changed ownership but the conditions and support that we put in previously are still on the licence and the calls to the venue have reduced dramatically.

The improvement was achieved without the cost and demand of taking the premises to Review.

**The Emporium Bargoed**

Historically, this venue was a demand driver for the force with local Response and Neighbourhood Officers were being called repeatedly to incidents at the venue. The Licensing staff through working with the premises and CCBC Local Authority CCTV staff identified that there were issues around congregation; this was caused by persons outside with glasses; there were incidents of fighting and ASB.

On reviewing the existing License conditions for the venue, it became clear that the conditions were not fit for purpose and were confusing for the proprietors.

Licensing Officers started to work with the premises and Local Authority to seek a solution and this resulted in a “minor variation” being submitted by the premises who then invested £60k in a new rear outside area removing the congregation of patrons and other members of the public outside significantly reducing demand on force.

This is a good example of Police, CCBC Officers and the Premises Management working together to find a workable solution without the need of taking the premises to a Licensing Hearing.

The West LPA Licensing Officers not only work with pubs and clubs, but they also deal with other matters including supporting LA (Local Authority) Partners with Operations to target illegal sales of Vapes and cigarettes. This have resulted in seizures of counterfeit tobacco products across the LA areas.

Licensing staff undertake regular compliance visits to pubs across the LA. These are coordinated by Gwent Police and involve Partners (Trading Standards, Environmental Health, South Wales Fire & Rescue, and local Neighbourhood Officers) The visits are titled “Operation Check” and have proven to be very successful with early intervention being more cost effective and reducing demand through repeated calls. Some examples of success are as follows:

### Torfaen

**Premises in Pontypool**

Intelligence indicated that a pop-up premises in Pontypool town centre was selling illegal vapes to children, through positive action with Torfaen Trading Standards, the premise was visited, and a quantity of illegal vapes/cigarettes was seized from a “stash vehicle.” Trading Standards are seeking prosecution of the shop owner and shop closed.

**Rhymney**

Trading Standards and Police received intelligence about the sale of illegal vapes to children. Gwent Police Licensing officers carried out a visit to the premises in question and located/seized a quantity of illegal vapes. From the evidence obtained, further investigations are ongoing by CCBC Trading Standards.

**Crosskeys**

Trading Standards received information around the sale of alcohol to children, the sale of illegal vapes to children and the sale of single cigarettes.

This resulted in several proactive visits by Licensing Officers/Trading Standards and Local Authority licensing which resulted in several breaches of license conditions being discovered. The positive outcome of this matter was that the premises license holder is being prosecuted.

## SCHOOL POLICE OFFICERS

Throughout the last year, School Policing Officers attended at both high schools and primary schools across Gwent to deliver the Welsh Government School Beat initiative. They engage with the Youth Service, Social Services and Educational establishments to ensure the safety of our young people in Gwent and to assist in identifying interventions to keep children out of the criminal justice system. The officers worked closely with the Neighbourhood Teams to deliver key Crime Prevention and Safety messages to schools. During the summer months the officers ran a MOY project (Motivating our Youth) whereby they used this as an opportunity to build opportunities for diversionary activities with disengaged young people regardless of background or circumstances in a safe environment.

Due to the removal of funding by the Welsh Government, the All-Wales Schools Programme ceased at the end of March 2024. Gwent Police honoured the funding for the programme to run until the end of the Academic year at which time our approach will change to embedding schools into our local policing teams with Local Ward Teams adopting responsibility for engagement and building new working relationships with schools and young people.

## CITIZENS IN POLICING

### Citizen in Policing

This portfolio consists of the Special Constabulary, Police Support Volunteers, Police Cadets, and Mini Police (Heddlu Bach). The portfolio is continuing to grow with the support from the Citizen in Policing Board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable. The day-to-day management of the programme is led by a member of the Senior Management Team as portfolio Lead and Citizens in Policing Coordinator, who is continuing to develop and deliver the business-as-usual model across all areas of volunteering. Since the disbandment of the national programme, opportunities for volunteers have been identified and the alignment into policing priorities has allowed for the Citizen in Policing integration into core policing functions. The all-Wales Citizens in Policing programme has recently moved into the all-Wales Collaboration board, for better oversight and guidance. This should see a more project-based approach to delivering Citizens in Policing on an all-Wales level.

### Special Constabulary

The Special Constabulary is made up of fifty-two serving volunteers who commit their spare time to support policing the communities of Gwent. The Special Constabulary has played an integral part in policing over the past twelve months. The value and importance of the Special Constabulary in Gwent continues to be fundamental and core to volunteering.

The Special Constabulary contributed 18,428 hours, delivered across 2,485 duties, with an average of 1,535 hours a month, 29 hours per Special Constable, significantly exceeding the nationally asked minimum of 16 hours per month.

Gwent Police has made considerable leadership changes to the Special Constabulary to maximise its focus on supporting local policing, engagement and problem-solving. The changes have included removing the rank structure within the Special Constabulary, and only retaining the posts of Special Sergeants and Special Constables. We have also changed the way in which Special Constables claim subsistence, to ensure they fall in line with the Special Constables Regulations Act 1965, and we have integrated Special Constables into response policing for the purpose of management and tasking. These changes have helped support the welfare of officers and integrate them into localised teams.

### Police Support Volunteers (PSV)

Gwent Police has 36 volunteers, playing an active role within our communities and organisation. Traditional volunteer roles in Gwent have predominantly been Chaplains, Community Crime Prevention Volunteers, Police Sport Gwent Assistants, Samaritans, and Airwave support Volunteers. In the past twelve months, we have introduced new innovative volunteer roles in the Cyber Crime department and Rural Crime Team. These new opportunities have allowed us to expand our offering of innovative roles. We hope to see further roles like these be introduced over the next twelve months.

### Volunteer Police Cadets and Mini Police (Heddlu Bach)

The Volunteer Police Cadets and Mini Police are central to Gwent Police’s engagement with young people in our communities. There are currently 159 Police Cadets within our cadet programme. The NxtGen (Next Generation Police Community Support Officers) are working with Neighbourhood teams to increase volunteering opportunities for Cadets, across five Local policing authority units.

Mini Police is a fun and interactive volunteering opportunity for children aged 9 to 11-years of age. The programme is led by school staff and supported by police. Children learn about policing issues, staying safe and undertake several volunteering activities in support of local policing priorities. As well as benefitting the community, research highlights the benefits for the personal development of young people involved, as well as the positive benefits this can have on their overall trust and confidence in the police.

We currently have 142 Mini Police Schools, supporting 1800 school children.

## WE DON’T BUY CRIME DEPARTMENT (WDBC)

The WDBC team target acquisitive crime from every angle and engage with members of the public, businesses, and partner agencies to improve security and provide crime prevention.

The team are the link for all teams across Gwent Police who are involved in dealing with acquisitive crime from minor offences to more serious organised crime.

By taking a stand on preventing acquisitive crime, the team help to increase public confidence, create safer neighbourhoods, and improve our opportunities to bring offenders to justice.

The WDBC team maintain a strong presence through social media with hundreds of posts and over 40,000 post impressions within the last twelve-month period.  This has allowed the team to provide awareness to the wider community regarding crime prevention and detail the good work that has taken place.

The team regularly attend events within the Gwent area; this has included providing engagement at local groups including recent events at Rogerstone Golf Club, The Big Event, 999 engagement days and a community event at Eugene Cross Park whereby security advice and Smartwater was given. A local netball team was visited and provided with robbery packs and personal attack alarms to prevent violence against women and girls. The team have also used Smartwater to mark mobility scooters, motorbikes, and pushbikes for Gwent residents.

The team work with our volunteers, police cadets, community councils, key stakeholders, community groups, NxtGen (Next Generation Police Community Support Officers) and Neighbourhood Policing Teams to raise awareness across our communities to enhance our engagement and partnership working.

Some other examples of recent work by WDBC are:

* + Operation Widen, funded through the Safer Streets initiative allowed the team to provide crime prevention packs to over 100 residents in Cwmbran.
  + Fuel Station Action Week gave visits to fuel stations where signage was provided and training to recognise the signs of exploitation was given to fuel station employees.

## RURAL CRIME TEAM

The Rural Crime Team have been working and engaging with several partners and stakeholders that include:

• Local Neighbourhood Policing Teams, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service (SWFRS) Fire Crime team, Dyfed Powys Police (DPP) Rural Crime Team, Brecon Neighbourhood Policing Team for a cross border multi-agency operation targeting off-road bike issues.

• Gwent Ornithological Society re Op Seabird, Twmbarlwm Society to protect Historic landscape features and the RSPB in regard to raptor persecution.

• Severn Area Rescue Association, Natural Resources Wales, Newport Wetlands Trust to coordinate and promote the launch of Op Seabird.

• Grass fire patrols and media outlets with SWFRS/Fire Crime Team.

• The Woodland Trust, Monmouthshire Council, Natural Resources Wales are all engaged with frequently as part of a stakeholder working group, collectively seeking Welsh Government funding to improve a community woodland.

• CADW, to help secure a prosecution for a heritage crime case in court. This being the first ever prosecution in Wales for this specific offence and the second time the team have now secured a Heritage Crime first prosecution type in Wales.

The Rural Crime Team take part in regular training courses, most recently becoming accredited stolen vehicle and plant machinery examiners. They have also undertaken farm health and safety awareness training and various wildlife crime inputs from NGO groups. This learning is utilised forcewide to support crime investigations within rural communities.

The team have engaged with many farms and equine premises across the force providing Crime prevention advice and smart water packs. We have run various media campaigns promoting the teams work in relation to Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime across Gwent. The team have also attended many events, including agricultural shows, force 999 days and delivered talks to many local interest groups at events/meetings.

## CYBER POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

### Cyber Police Community Support Officer Cyber Volunteers

Gwent Police is part of the All-Wales Cyber Framework. In 2023/24, the Cyber Crime Team utilised two dedicated Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) to deliver the framework and the Cyber Protect message.

Our PCSOs work with neighbourhood teams, schools, colleagues, partner agencies and community groups to raise awareness of cyber-crime, current cyber threats and promote good cyber hygiene. They deliver inputs at events and surgeries and offer bespoke events to suit specific audiences. Our PCSOs work closely with our Protect and Prevent officer and engage with our communities in person and online, delivering Cyber Protect messages via social media and through our Comms team.

Examples of public engagement over that last twelve months include:

* Age-appropriate cyber inputs at local schools focusing on social media use, protecting yourself online and image sharing.
* Inputs and awareness sessions for parents promoting parental controls, age-appropriate use of social media and good cyber hygiene.
* Delivered inputs at network and learn breakfasts for local businesses with the Cyber Innovation Hub discussing current threats to business and industry.
* Engagement with business owners providing *protect* advice, literature from National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), promoting Police Cyber Alarm and raising awareness of the current threat landscape.
* Regularly supporting other neighbourhood PCSOs with local engagement and Community Hub Cyber Surgeries.
* Gwent Police Instagram ‘takeover’ providing hints and tips for protecting yourself online and a question-and-answer session.
* Engagement with education, including Student Wellbeing events, Fresher Fayres, Careers and Higher Education Fayres.
* Protect and Prevent inputs to partner agencies such as Youth Offending Service (YOS) and Social Services.
* Online scam awareness sessions with the community and businesses, such as shops and local banks, engaging with both customers and staff.
* Social media Cyber Protect messaging via Gwent Police’s main Facebook account with one post reaching almost 70,000 and receiving almost 4.000 interactions.

### Cyber Volunteers

In addition to our dedicated PCSOs, Gwent Police have recruited six dedicated Cyber Volunteers. The volunteers have a keen interest in cyber and experience of working within cyber and digital. They have brought experience and enthusiasm to the team and are utilised for engagement, events, projects and research and development. We are currently exploring other ways to use volunteers within the Cyber Crime Unit (CCU) to make full use of their skills and experience.

## SAFER STREETS

Safer Streets is the name of central government funding. This funding has enabled the force to apply for grants for specific projects over the last five year. Over the last financial year, we received funding totalling £500k for safer streets and £500k for violence against women and girls. The aims of the two projects were to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Acquisitive Crime and Violence against Women and Girls.

For the ASB project, there have been several initiatives implemented, working closely with the youth offending teams to engage with youth offenders. Topics that were covered included, drug misuse, cybercrime, and exploitation. *Positive Futures* were engaged with, and parenting sessions undertaken. Children were introduced to the Alway Leisure Centre Kitchen where they learned to cook food, and a youth shelter was built in Tredegar Park after funding was authorised for two youth intervention workers to engage with the children there for an eighteen-month period.

The introduction of a gaming vehicle with a built-in Xbox proved successful and saw engagement with 200-400 children at every event.

Additionally, funding for a neighbourhood watch co-ordinator helped to sign up 780 new members to this scheme.

The engagement and prevention work has yielded a reduction in acquisitive crime by 34% in the areas targeted and in one area a reduction of 54% has been seen in relation to anti-social behaviour.

**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TEAM**

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team shares its experience and skills *help* our communities, *listen* to our communities and *learn* from our communities.

EDI are resposible for actions under Gwent Police’s Strategic Equality Plan, Police Race Action plan and other policing or Welsh Government policies focussed on improving trust and condfidence in policing. Their ultimate airm is to assist the force in delivering fair and equitable policing for our diverse communities. We deliver this work through community engagement activities, educating the workforce on EDI topics, and working with colleagues and partners to ensure the golden thread of EDI is maintained throughout Gwent Police’s approaches to policing.

### Community Engagement

In the financial year 2023-2024, the EDI Team marked key cultural dates which are important to the diverse communities of Gwent, they included:

* Pride month – attendance at Pride events across Gwent (Torfaen, Caerphilly, Abergavenny, Pride Cymru, Pride on the Port) to celebrate and engage with the LGBTQ+ community.
* South Asian Heritage month – visits to places of worship that are important to the South Asian Community, cultural dress events at police stations across Gwent run by women for the South Asian Community.
* Black History month – attendance at events celebrating the Windrush generation to build connections with our local Black communities and delivered food to Windrush elders.
* Hate Crimes Awareness month – led roadshows with NPT and OPCC colleagues across Gwent promoting awarenss of what hate crime is and how to report it.
* Ramadan – attended the Iftar (breaking the daily fast) at Mosques across Gwent and presented gifts of food in each Mosque we visited.

EDI also attended community engament events and hosted bespoke meetings with our communities, they included:

* Facilitating quarterly meetings between Gwent Police and Mosque leaders forecwide.
* Delivering workshops in schools and LGBTQ+ youth groups on anti-racism and hate crime awareness.
* Attendance at conference and events hosted by groups including the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communites, Windrush elders, South Asian community members and women of Newport.
* Public engaement survey as part of the development of the Police Race Action Plan, with stakeholders from the diverse communities of Gwent.

### Workforce Engagement

We work alongside staff network and the Learning & Development (L&D) team to improve awareness of issues facing our diverse communities, as well as educating the workforce about cultural topics of sigificance to these communities. This ensures our coummunities’ voices are heard throughout Gwent Police.

## FORCE CONTROL ROOM (FCC)

### Non -English speaking options

All FCC staff have access to a system called *Language Line* which enables immediate, simultaneous, telephone-based translation in almost every well-spoken language should this be required to assist communication with a caller.

### Digital Contact Desk (DCD)

The Social media desk was launched for Gwent Police formally in early 2019 so that users can contact and report incidents to Gwent Police via the Facebook and Twitter platforms. The service is managed by the Force Control Centre (FCC) Operators who have received additional training in dealing with social media and communications.

The role changed in 2021 to the Digital Contact Desk (DCD) to reflect the broad range of digital contact handled by the team (in addition to social media). Demand via these channels has increased significantly, whilst the intent was to balance out and re-route some telephony demand, this has not been the case, and we now regularly receive a larger volume of social media contact than the average 101 call (option 1 and 2) monthly demand. On average during 2022-2023, we received over 12,400 Digital contacts per month.

### Single online home (SOH)

SOH was launched in late October 2020 as part the NPCC’s Digital Policing Portfolio key national programme, Digital Public Contact (DPC). The aim of SOH is to provide a simple, well-known, and reliable digital contact service between the public and the police that ensures the public are informed and digitally enabled. In practical terms, this is achieved through our website where the public can report or request a variety of information, which includes crime and incident reporting. There are opportunities that are being progressed to grow the use of this service and opportunities to provide more advice and information to the public more efficiently. During the April 2022 – March 2023 period Gwent police received 13,444 reports via SOH, an average of 1,120 reports per calendar month. This is an increase of 21% in comparison to previous financial year.

### Social media

Social media is crucial to enable Gwent Police to share messaging with a different audience, and to share more real-time messaging. It also enables communication in a wider range of ways using video and visuals that may appeal more to audiences. Social media also enables Gwent Police to target messaging and to gain direct feedback on how content lands with the audience – both from responses to content and via analytics.

Whilst we know that not everyone in our communities is on social media, many people do value this method of communication.

Our intention is to move from X (formerly Twitter) to Facebook, based on feedback from our communities. We have already seen some very positive feedback and ‘interactions’ from members of the public in the Blaenau Gwent area where this has been rolled out since the beginning of November 2024.

## WELSH LANGUAGE

### Welsh Language Standards Compliance

The PCC and Chief Constable have three strategic Welsh language aims over the next four years:

* to improve the range of Welsh language services we currently offer to make it easier for members of the public to receive a service in Welsh.
* to increase the number of Welsh speakers and learners we employ to reflect the percentage of Welsh speakers in the communities we serve in the Gwent area.
* to use the information, we obtain from monitoring and other sources to help us to identify areas where we can improve the quality of our Welsh language services and the Welsh language skills of our officers and staff.

Gwent Police offers all those contacting us via non-emergency lines the option to speak with us in Welsh. This is achieved via automated (IVR) messages on our 101-telephone line. Where a caller elects to have their call handled in Welsh, the call is routed via Welsh only menus and messages and routed to a Welsh speaking resource wherever one is available.

Should no Welsh speaker be available, all staff have received training and guidance to facilitate the management of these calls using internal process to identify another Welsh speaking officer or staff member who is working to speak with the caller.

To assess compliance with this process, on a quarterly basis 10% of calls received via the Welsh lines are assessed to ensure we are providing the service to the Welsh speaking public.

All written material open to the public is produced bilingually with the Welsh positioned so that it is likely to be read first; this is replicated across all mediums including electronic communications. All signage is bilingual in our public areas and at any public meetings held. This is reviewed on a regular basis with Corporate Communications.

Reception at Headquarters has two receptionist that have undergone Level 2 Welsh language training to be able to understand a basic interaction, can introduce themselves and be able to identify a Welsh language speaker to support the request. When a vacancy arose on reception at HQ last year, it was assessed as a Welsh Language essential role.

In relation to the front desks in our stations, staff are trained to Level 1 in the Welsh Language. Staff at station front desks can greet individuals in Welsh and are confirm in Welsh that they will contact someone to deal with their request in the Welsh Language.

Work is ongoing to increase our Welsh Language speaking workforce. This is a challenge given the recruitment pool of Welsh speakers within the force area. All posts are now reviewed to identify the Welsh language skills required for each role is assessed and categorised in accordance with standard 134 (as posts where Welsh language skills are essential, needed to be learnt whether on appointment, desirable or not necessary) and the rationale for the decision. This is undertaken prior to the post being advertised. This allows for improved marketing and recruitment opportunities. All job descriptions note the level of Welsh Language skills required, and this is reflected in any advertisements. Where there is a requirement for Welsh Language Skills the roles are advertised in Welsh language publications such as Safle Swyddi.

In the reporting period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 a total of 384 posts were advertised:

* 375 posts were advertised as Welsh desirable (Level 1)
* 2 posts were advertised as Welsh desirable (Level 2 or above).
* 1 post was advertised as Welsh essential (Level 4).
* 3 posts (internal secondments) were advertised as Welsh language skills not applicable (please note that these were incorrectly advertised as referenced above).

Candidates are asked to indicate their level of Welsh ability and note whether they would like to be interviewed in Welsh should they reach that stage of the process.

All advertisements state, ‘we are proud to be a Welsh speaking policing service and welcome applications from candidates with Welsh Language skills’. Candidates can apply and their application is processed in the Welsh Language. All documents are available in Welsh and English.

We also continue to promote the opportunities are available for employees to enrol on Welsh for Adults courses that are provided by Coleg Gwent. Where possible, employees attend during work time.

## RIDE ALONG SCHEME

The Ride Along Scheme is intended to support the aims of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in identifying and engaging with local under-represented groups and aiding in securing public confidence in the police by questioning issues that are particularly pertinent to the local community.

The Gwent Police Ride Along Scheme (RAS) was introduced to enable members of the public to experience first-hand what officers deal with daily. It provides an opportunity to go on patrol, visit the Force Communication Suite or other teams within the force, allowing members of the public to observe how our officers and staff work. The scheme often attracts members of the public that are considering a career in policing and therefore is a potential pipeline for attracting new talent into Gwent Police.

The numbers taking up the scheme are low; provisions are provided to those wishing to take up the scheme however numbers have not increased over the last year.

Our Positive Action Co-ordinator is currently working with one of our Neighbourhood Chief Inspectors to reinvigorate the scheme to ensure the public and potential applicants have the best experience possible and are signposted to the Positive Action and Recruitment Teams, for information and support about applying to Gwent Police.

A Ride Along SPOC working group has been created and each area has an assigned point of contact for the scheme.

The application for the Ride Along Scheme sits on the Gwent Police external website. A leaflet on the RAS, has been created to be given to members of the community, highlighting the opportunity as an insight into policing and will be given out at community and recruitment events. Further internal and external communications will be provided in 2024 about the scheme, how to access it and any FAQ.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Funding for PCSOs**

Over many years, the Welsh Government has funded 500 PCSOs across Wales, which equated to 101 PCSOs in Gwent with the Commissioner committing to match fund this with a further 101 PCSOs.

Welsh Government announced cuts to PCSO funding in 2024, from £3.8m to £2.6m between 2023/24 and 2024/25 (see Annex A for full details). This funding reduction will result in Gwent Police reducing PCSO numbers to a total of 122 by the end of 2025-6.

This decrease in funding will add an additional net pressure of approximately £0.3m in 2024/25, resulting in a net reduction of funding of £0.9m.

**Funding for Schools’ Police Officers**

As part of further required savings, Welsh Government announced the full £2.98m grant to public bodies for the Schools Liaison Programme would be cut from its 2024/25 Draft Budget published in December 2023.

The Chief’s Bid included expected grant funding for the Schools Liaison programme of £478k which will not now be received from Welsh Government. The previously funded programme in Gwent was delivered by thirteen officers at a cost of £766k. Without funding, these dedicated posts will no longer exist. However, a comprehensive plan of integrating schools’ liaison into local neighbourhood teams has been created, with the plan having commenced in September 2024 in line with the school, academic year.

PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

All above. All agreed.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Joint Legal Services is in the final stages of completing the agreement between GWP and Torfaen County Borough Council (as the lead local authority) for the funded partnership project.

EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Joint Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.

In preparing this report, consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

RISK

Force risk assessment for operational policing.

PUBLIC INTEREST

In producing this report, has consideration been given to ‘public confidence’?

Yes

Are the contents of this report, observations, and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain?

No

If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons:

There is specific reference to operational policing strategy and tactics.

REPORT AUTHOR

CI Stevie Warden, on behalf of C/Supt Carl Williams.

LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

ANNEXES

None.

GOVERNANCE BOARD AND CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

This report has been presented to the following board:

**Scrutiny Executive Board**

Meeting chaired by: **DCC Brain**

Meeting date: **05.11.24**

Actions and amendments arising from meeting:

**DCC Brian noted that the report could be a bit more concise. ACC Townsend looking to change report for OPCC going forward. ACC McLain noted that in future this may form part of the Culture Strategy.**

I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers’ meeting.

Meeting chaired by: CC Hobrough

Meeting date: 15.11.24

Actions and amendments arising from meeting: CC requested social media section to be added. That has now been done.

Signature:



Date: 15.11 24

# ANNEX A

## Background to PCSO funding

In 2022/23, Welsh Government provided funding for an additional 100 PCSOs across Wales. This brought the total to 121 PCSOs in Gwent, through £4.6m of funding.

Over the past three years, the Commissioner has been steadily growing the number of locally funded PCSOs at 10 PCSOs per year to achieve the agreed 101 PCSO numbers. The total Welsh Government and locally funded PCSOs included in the 2023/24 Gwent Police budget stood at 172.

This late loss of funding will be absorbed from other savings for 2023/24 and has been planned into the Chief’s Bid and medium-term financial plan (MTFP) for 2024/25 with an assumed cost pressure of £0.6m. This reflects the level of reduced Welsh Government funding for 80 PCSOs which, when matched by 80 PCSOs in the Chief’s Bid, would have meant a total number of 160 PCSOs across Gwent budgeted for in the Chief’s Bid.

In December 2023, Welsh Government confirmed it will now fund a revised total of 60 CSOs in Gwent compared to the 80 PCSOs assumed in the Chief’s Bid and the original 121 PCSOs funded in 2023/24.

Total PCSO numbers on 31 March 2024 were 155 PCSOs. With a recruitment freeze remaining in place and predicted attrition levels, the position on 31 March 2025 is predicted to be 133 PCSOs.

# ANNEX B

Example of an engagement plan for our Neighbourhood Policing Teams



# ANNEX C

Example of an engagement and visibility (patrol) plan for our Neighbourhood Policing Teams



# ANNEX D

Example of a successful engagement project



1. This is based on 2023-4 so includes now former Chief Constable Pam Kelly and the roles fulfilled by Chief Officers in the roles that they occupied during that time. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)