



Strategy and Performance Board

Chief Constable's Update Report

1st September 2021



1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To update members of the Strategy and Performance Board (SPB) of significant events and work that has recently taken place.
- 1.2 There are no recommendations made requiring a decision.

2. OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

2.1 Covid-19

The last 18 months and the COVID pandemic have presented unique challenges for the police service and have placed immense pressure on our communities. At the time of writing this update, restrictions in Wales have been considerably eased and I am exceptionally grateful to all our staff and partners who have worked tirelessly to keep people safe. Our staff continue to work tirelessly as we deal with the significant increase in demand seen across UK policing as restrictions have eased.

COVID has not gone away completely and the force continues to designate a Chief Inspector with responsibility for COVID recovery to support partners and the workforce. Though the force has, and continues to maintain low sickness levels linked to COVID, we must remain vigilant, behave responsibly and proceed cautiously in order to ensure that effective service delivery is maintained for our communities. This care will be particularly important as we approach the autumn/winter period and the onset of seasonal infections. To assist with workforce management, we continue to operate our extremely effective 'COVID Hub'; established to manage all COVID related sickness, contact tracing and preventative advice. This provision has resulted in consistent guidance, accurate data on absences being recorded and has reduced demand on frontline supervisors during this very busy and challenging time.

Key updates:

2.2 First Point of Contact (FPOC)

First Point of Contact is a critical, busy and often challenging environment and an area of continued focus when exploring opportunities to streamline and improve the service we deliver to the public. This element of our business is our 'front door' and where colleagues often interact with people at times of crisis or significant vulnerability. Some recent updates include:

- Single Online Home (SOH) - a national standardised platform for police websites that allows greater online reporting - in June 2021 we received 891 requests for service through SOH following a continued month on month increase. The two most popular provisions were our general 'contact us' service (which as a result reduces demand on 101 calls), and Crime Reporting, which again saw increases through the summer.



- 101 call demand has increased by a third since January 2021. We operate a quality assurance process specifically to examine calls that experienced long wait times or were abandoned. A popular feature now available to assist people at times of high demand is our 'call back service'. This retains the caller's place in the queue but allows them to terminate the call and be called-back directly by an operator when their place in the queue is reached.
- 999 call demand has also increased - we continue to answer almost 90% of 999 calls within 8 seconds.
- Social media contact also rose through the summer – with 12490 contacts made during June alone.
- Our embedded mental health practitioners continue to play a significant role in assisting the frontline and have averted 114 police deployments and prevented 18 detentions under the Mental Health Act.
- Our FPOC recruitment campaign in June resulted in significant interest with 15 new staff set to join us in September 2021 and January 2022.
- Staff wellbeing remains a key focus within the department with bi-monthly wellbeing meetings taking place which are aligned to the focus areas of the national wellbeing service (Oscar Kilo).

2.3 Custody

I am very proud of the work that our custody and criminal justice staff undertake to ensure that our communities are safeguarded, whilst affording individuals kept in detention appropriate care and support. Recent work has seen:

- Significant improvements in the management of bail and released under investigation (RUI) cases as a direct result of oversight by a dedicated Inspector and improvement working groups held every 6 weeks.
- Our custody senior management team take part in our force domestic abuse working group in order to contribute learning from that environment and further develop our 'Domestic Violence Protection Notice' procedures and training to assist officers (a preventative tactic in domestic abuse cases, where no charges are brought).
- In Newport, we are taking part in an all-Wales pilot to provide alternative accommodation for children who are remanded overnight to prevent them being kept within a custody suite.



- A number of specialist ‘champions’ have also been implemented within out custody units providing expertise on wellbeing, young people and vulnerability in order to improve the care provided to detainees. Specific Custody Officer training days have also been implemented.
- We are also placing a heavy focus on recruitment, resourcing and training in order to ensure that vacancies are filled and our custody provision is appropriately staffed to deliver for our officers and communities.

2.4 Criminal Justice

One of the most significant updates since my last report is the launch of our Victim Care Unit which will act as a central point of contact for victims in order to keep people updated as an investigation takes place or progresses to court. The unit’s objectives include:

- Providing excellent support to victims with a focus on the most vulnerable.
- Improving victim satisfaction.
- Promoting effective use of commissioned victim support services.

In its first week the unit contacted 168 victims, completed 148 needs-assessments and sent 286 victim information packs.

2.5 Local policing

In addition to dealing with increased call demand, our frontline officers have continued to deliver exceptional results related to proactive and preventative activity. Recent highlights include:

- A warrant in the Caerphilly area which recovered a cannabis factory worth £1.3m.
- A running total of over 200yrs sentenced imprisonment held by our West Serious Organised Crime team since their establishment eighteen months ago. The team have also seized drugs to the value of £989,000 and over £150,000 in cash seizures.
- Our recently implemented ‘We Don’t Buy Crime’ (WDBC) initiative outlined in my last update is also growing from strength to strength. The team have made significant progress in preventing crime by working with business to install deterrent signage and raise awareness of acquisitive crime. Over 1000 support and prevention packs have been delivered to victims and communities and in partnership with Gwent’s Police and Crime Commissioner; smart-water packs have also been distributed to several local businesses.



Work continues with second-hand goods retailers to assist and monitor due diligence around suspected stolen goods with over 50% of such retailers in Gwent signing up to support the WDBC initiative.

By utilising a variety of tactics, the team have located, arrested and convicted a number of suspects linked to thefts and burglaries. Recent activity in this regard has seen the recovery of property worth over £10,000. The ability to return property to its rightful owner has been particularly rewarding for the team in addition to increasing public confidence within our communities.

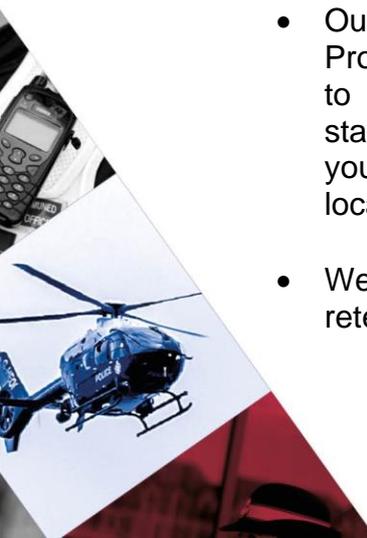
A dedicated trainer has now begun work with the WDBC team's growing network of partners in order to raise awareness at hotels, night-time economy locations and community organisations. The intent is to enable us to better protect those at risk of harm by improving the ability of staff to identify potential exploitation.

Building on our commitment to prevention, we have also secured two Safer Streets bids in the last round of funding to the value of £700,000. Elements of the funding will be used for WDBC interventions including street lighting and CCTV while a further submission has been made for funding relating specifically to the prevention of violence against women and girls.

2.6 Cybercrime and Police Online Investigation Team

Our Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT) focuses on protecting vulnerable people online, particularly by targeting those involved in the viewing and distribution of indecent images of children. Recent significant activity includes:

- A collaborative operation with our regional organised crime unit to arrest a suspect for offences of engaging in sexual communication with a child and meeting a child following grooming.
- Operation Javelin - a proactive investigation targeting those possessing and sharing indecent images of children online. 11 warrants were executed with 9 suspects arrested and several safeguarding visits conducted with children identified as sharing self-generated images.
- Our cybercrime team also have responsibility for safeguarding and our Protect Officer and Cyber Community Support Officer have continued to engage with the public; providing advice and guidance around staying safe online. The team have also provided 'prevent' advice to young people with Autism in Cwmbran and held a Cyber Surgery with local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Ebbw Vale.
- We have also recently implemented a new approach for the seizure and retention of Cryptocurrency. This system was approved by the National



Police Chief's Council and is accredited by the Financial Conduct Authority.

2.7 Financial Crime

Our Financial Crime Unit seeks to safeguard the vulnerable and deny criminals access to the gains of their offending. The unit has seen some significant results and in the first quarter of this financial year has made:

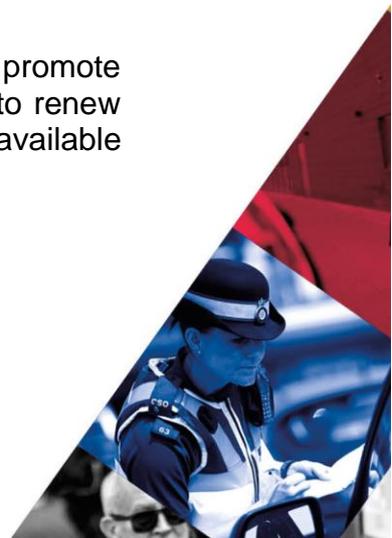
- 27 civil detention orders totalling £425,529.26
- 13 civil forfeiture orders totalling £301,738.27
- 25 confiscation orders totalling £143,829.93

The team also supports Gwent Police investigators with specialist tactical advice and has done so on over 450 investigations since the start of this financial year. It worth noting that Gwent Police holds the best fraud detection rate nationally and has the third lowest rate of 'no further action' outcomes.

2.8 Digital Services Division

The force benefitted significantly from its investment in digital technology during the COVID pandemic and our continued focus on providing digital solutions for our staff is aimed at increasing productivity and efficiency. Recent updates include:

- Whole-force implementation of our 'digital evidence management system' which allows digital evidence to be uploaded by the public, centrally managed and shared with the Crown Prosecution Service to provide crucial evidence in charging decisions.
- The roll-out of our new mobile devices commenced in July; providing enhanced integration with Microsoft 365 applications in order to increase flexible and remote working options for staff.
- Our joint electronic time management project (with South Wales Police) has formally completed providing a full digital timesheet experience for staff and better organisational understanding of hours worked and abstractions.
- Body Worn Video is a vital tool in order to secure evidence and promote legitimacy and we are currently undertaking demonstrations to renew our provision to ensure that officers have access to the best available technology.



2.9 People Services and Learning and Development

Our commitment to delivering against Operation Uplift continues (UK Government pledge of 20,000 additional officers) with a focus on ensuring we attract candidates who fully represent the communities that we serve. To ensure that we reach our diverse communities, we have developed strong partnerships with community groups and engage closely with our Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to promote the various career opportunities offered by Gwent Police. We have developed an expression of interest process through the E-recruitment platform to identify and work with those from underrepresented communities. We have also developed a bespoke 'positive action supportive journey' for each recruitment campaign which includes support mechanisms such as workshops, mock interviews and mock fitness tests.

The following figures highlight the successes of our recent recruitment campaign that closed at the end of June:

- 621 candidates began an application.
- 203 candidates were successful and are ready for assessment centre.
- 30% of successful candidates were female.
- 5% of successful candidates declared a disability.
- 5.6% of successful candidates were from ethnic minorities and non-British communities combined.

In respect of employees from Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities, our current workforce representation is as follows:

- Police officers: 2.5%
- Police Community Support Officers: 6.47%
- Police staff 1.68%

(Gwent's population representation is 3.9% based on the 2011 census and 5.1% when using more recent estimates).

'Keep learning' is one of our force values and our Learning and Development team play a crucial role in developing new officers and staff, nurturing talent and ensuring accredited skills are maintained. Recent departmental highlights include:

- Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF): a further 46 student officers commenced their initial police training on 5th July 2021. They will spend the next 26 weeks working through a collaborative timetable in partnership with South Wales Police as they start their policing journey.
- Talent Management: we are now entering our fourth year of the talent management Programme titled 'My Runway' with 13 successful candidates recently beginning a 10-month modular programme.

- 27 Sergeants were successful at our recent promotion process and will now begin their National Police Promotions Framework (NPPF) work-based assessment to become confirmed in rank.
- A cohort of 17 new Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) joined their local Neighbourhood Teams at the beginning of July 2021.
- Police Now: our cohort of Police Now Detectives have now moved into the 'reactive' criminal investigation phase of their development programme and we continue to receive positive feedback on this initiative from their supervisors and colleagues.

3. EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.

4. RISK

- 4.1 None

5. PUBLIC INTEREST

- 5.1 In producing this report, has consideration been given to 'public confidence'? **Yes**
- 5.2 Are the contents of this report, observations and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain? **Yes**
- 5.3 If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons: N/A

6. REPORT AUTHOR

- 6.1 Insp Robin Fuller

7. LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

- 7.1 Chief Constable Pam Kelly



8. ANNEXES

8.1 None

9. CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

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

9.2 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain

Signature:  Date: 12.08.21

