



Corporate Communications

Annual report

2021 | 2022



Introduction

This report covers the activity of the corporate communications team from April 2021 to March 2022. This was a challenging period as we continued to navigate the COVID pandemic and its impact on the public, our organisation and the team.

The period also saw some significant events that affected the national reputation of policing notably the horrifying murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Met police officer. This was followed by a national focus on the conduct of officers across the country and the high standards to which we should all be held in our public office.

The tragic events in America surrounding the death of George Floyd gave renewed impetus to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement globally, and the sentencing of Derek Chauvin for his murder in 2021 ensured that the relationship between our black communities and policing rightly remained high on the public agenda.

Towards the end of the year, we saw a lessening in restrictions on our day-to-day lives as the levels of COVID reduced which meant a change in focus for the service and our communications.

The report focuses on how the service has managed its reputation and built public confidence in our ability serve Gwent communities, creating a safe place to live, work and visit. The police and crime commissioner's priorities serve the framework for the report.



Our focus

The police and crime priorities for Gwent until 2025 are:

- Keep neighbourhoods safe
- Combat serious crime
- Support victims and protect the vulnerable
- Increase community confidence in policing
- Drive sustainable policing

These priorities set the framework for our activity and key messaging, focussing on the chief constable's delivery plan to ensure that the service can deliver its objectives.



Keeping neighbourhoods safe

The team runs proactive campaigns throughout the year aimed at providing advice for our residents and visitors on how to stay safe, and to demonstrate the work our teams carry out to make Gwent a safer place to work, live and visit. Some of the key work strands are reflected below.

Celebrating the significant additional resource provided by our winning Safer Streets bids, and the subsequent work within local communities was a key theme for the year. This sat alongside the ongoing We Don't Buy Crime programme where we have secured media coverage for their ongoing work including participation in three episodes of pickpockets, scammers and thieves around our work to protect local businesses and to target repeat offenders.

Road safety forms a significant strand of our work with campaigns around motorcycles 'Think Twice Think Bike', drug and drink driving responding to identified trends and of course a third series of the popular Crash Detectives series with BBC Wales. With an average viewing figure of 200,000 in addition to the social media views and BBC news coverage including interviews with officers the series remains extremely popular. To provide context during the first episode broadcast of series three:

- 145,000 viewers in Wales watched Eastenders
- 143,000 watched Holby City
- 166,000 watched Crash Detectives.

Policing the pandemic was an ongoing stand of work across the year, ensuring both our communities and colleagues were up to date with changing restrictions. Communications were structured around the national four E's approach – engage, educate, encourage and finally enforce. By ensuring our messaging was consistent with this guidance we aimed to maintain public confidence and the compliance of the majority. A particular challenge was communicating around protests held during the pandemic. This meant balancing the rights of protestors against the regulations in place at any given point in time, and the concerns of the wider community, and the significant media interest generated each time.

Christmas is a time of significant activity responding to the increased risks around fraud, cyber crime and drink or drug driving the team ran a highly successful campaign targeting the key threats. This was supported by a demand management campaign encouraging members of the public to consider alternative routes of contact to 101.

Instagram takeovers helped us reach a different, younger audience to raise awareness of cyber crime. We have run successful campaigns on crypto currency fraud, online romance fraud and general how to stay safe online advice for young people and children.



We have forged a positive relationship with BBC Crimewatch and have repeatedly contributed to their roadshow with both case studies, advice and to ask for help from the public.

This year saw investment in the creation of two new posts to support local policing areas. The appointment of two new communications and engagement specialists has enabled local teams to enhance their local presence through improved regular blogs and briefings, enhanced content on local social media accounts, localised campaigns and media coverage and targeted updates in response to local priorities. Cases that may not warrant a space on the corporate accounts are now featured on local accounts. This work sits alongside support given to the local management team to engage with their officers and staff on local issues both improving performance and celebrating success.

Combat serious crime

Following Gwent Police's contribution, the National Crime Agency's Operation Venetic which targeted criminals using the EncroChat encrypted communications, and working with our regional organised crime unit, we secured coverage of the operation to target the drugs supply across south Wales and Gwent. We later secured coverage of the court outcomes of individuals convicted. This enabled us to highlight the complex world of serious organised crime and its impact on our community.

This was echoed during the sentencing for Operation Empire which saw the sentencing of individuals for their part in a £1m drugs conspiracy sentencing, again reflecting the complexity and scale of the cases we are dealing with.

We have also sought to educate the public around the impact of serious organised crimes through highlighting the signs and identifiers. Working with the police cadets we shared a video highlighting the signs of exploitation or involvement of young people in a county lines operation. We also participated in a BBC documentary on the vulnerability of looked after children and young people to exploitation and our role in keeping them safe.

The outcome of court cases featuring the conviction of drug dealers and suppliers regularly gather headlines ensuring the community is aware of the successful outcomes of the work carried out by our officers to disrupt the supply of drugs to the area.

Over the past year we have experienced murder cases which have drawn national media interest and the team has worked with the investigative team and family liaison officers to deliver tributes and coverage of court outcomes that is sensitive to the needs of the families involved while offering public reassurance around the robust and timely response from our police service.



The team also support Operation OPAL the national intelligence team tackling acquisitive crime, supporting on media work around the targeting of high-net worth individuals, dog theft and most recently fuel theft.

The virtual Behind the Badge also featured content around county lines aiming to increase awareness of this to enable friends and family to spot the signs of young people who may be targeted.

Support victims and protect the vulnerable

The launch of the victim care unit gathered significant coverage as we sought to share the aims of the new unit widely with our community. The experience of victims of crime naturally shapes their view of policing and the wider criminal justice system and our work aimed to share how the service is prioritising the needs of victims.

Violence against women and girls dominated the national headlines following the tragic murder of Sarah Everard. The team has supported the all-Wales violence against women and girls taskforce with its communications, in addition to supporting our own efforts to demonstrate how we are tackling violence against women and girls, and to encourage women to come forward and report to us. This has been mirrored by a significant tranche of internal work to ensure all colleagues understand and follow the standards of professional behaviour we expect from them toward each other and towards members of the public.

The scrutiny of the behaviour of police officers nationally has led to an increase interest in the outcomes of any disciplinary hearings and the team has navigated this with the support of the professional standards department and in line with the requirement of the independent chair leading disciplinary panels.

Reporting of hate crime increased following repeat campaigns to encourage individuals to come forward, reinforced with our work to establish our position as a service that is anti-discrimination against all protected characteristics.

The Welsh Government introduced legislation to end physical punishment in Wales and the team played a role in building understanding of policing's role in enforcing the new legislation taking a practical approach to managing expectation of what the changes meant to our community.

The team has also worked closely with officers and family liaison officers to manage the media coverage around some extremely high-profile cases including the tragic death of Jack Lis, the death of two children on the M4, and the conviction of David Maggs, recognising the significant impact on the families involved and ensuring that we work sensitively in line with their wishes.



Increase community confidence in policing

Work across the corporate communications portfolio aims to build community confidence in policing:

- Our proactive media work tells the story of Gwent Police works on behalf of the population to prevent and tackle crime. During the year we shared more than 1,000 releases providing updates on the work of our officers, incidents or successful court outcomes. We celebrated the achievements of our colleagues and reinforced the work of our teams across portfolios and geography. From the launch of the victim contact centre, White Ribbon Day activities, the soft launch of new HQ and the new values-led awards, the team has identified opportunities to secure positive media opportunities to share our story.
- We responded to more than 2,200 incoming media enquiries through our press desk and on-call service which operates 24/7. This ensures local, regional and national media are able to provide timely updates on incidents and reinforce messaging from Gwent Police.
- We have sought to promote engagement with different groups within our communities who may be more vulnerable from sharing our support of the Herbert Protocol to creating a sign language video in support of Rose and Giovanni's fantastic work on Strictly Come Dancing to promote the inclusion of deaf individuals.
- Improving support for local teams has enabled more content aimed at reassuring on highly localised community issues increasing their relevance to the audience.
- Our work during the pandemic focussed on ensuring that our community felt we were working to keep everyone safe during the restrictions, while continuing our ongoing policing role.
- Internally we have worked to support the service's focus on performance improvement. By working with colleagues we have helped drive the focus in key areas to improve our performance on crime data integrity, the use of body worn video and professional standards of behaviour. This results in outcomes that demonstrate to the public that we are continuously improving the service we offer. The team has worked to introduce creative ideas delivered through a multi-channel approach that help overcome barriers to delivery.
- Our recruitment campaigns have offered an opportunity to bring to life the reality of different roles within policing from contact centre operators to officers, specials or police community support officers (PCSOs), as well as highlighting the values the service lives and breathes. Operation Uplift has also enabled us to demonstrate the real increases in resourcing that we are bringing to the people of



Gwent.

- Work on the estates portfolio has provided reassurance around our commitment to maintaining a local presence in key areas for example working with key stakeholder in Abergavenny to ensure that they were aware of our plans.
- Our work with the force control centre to reduce the demand into the call centre has focussed on reassuring the public that we will be there when they need us and to invite them to work with us to use all available methods of contact.
- The team supported the move to the new single online home website working with the project team to ensure the right content was in place, and to raise awareness of the new online reporting features. This has now moved well beyond the remit of a website to become an on-line contact centre.
- Training colleagues whether on our social media handling platform Orlo, and on how to get the best from social media or delivering media training on our PIP2 courses the team helps the service have better conversations with the public around the work we deliver for them.
- The design team carried out rebranding exercises for Operation OPAL, several of the staff networks and their creativity has brought to life the campaigns run internally and externally, including the welcome materials for new HQ, our innovative Christmas campaign graphics and the Six Nations campaign.
- The work of the digital and design team also enabled a virtual Behind the Badge to run again in 2021. A different approach saw content released over the week with an opportunity to feature teams that we could not successfully include in a real-life event. We took the opportunity to focus on tackling major crime with features on county lines as well as the force control centre, joint scientific investigative unit as well as the most popular sessions – a live session with the chief constable and a feature on roads policing and specialist operations (RPSO). This was a significant amount of work for the team to bring together and it reached nearly 220,000 individuals.



Drive sustainable policing

The team has supported the Greener Gwent initiative and sought opportunities internally and externally to share this approach.

The development of our estate, and in particular the new headquarters, has been a great opportunity to highlight its green credentials.

The design team has also played a key role in delivering a corporate branding package for the building which works with the interior design scheme to enhance the building as part of our corporate estate. The work carried out for the new HQ will be used across other sites as our programme continues. Mamhilad was one of the first sites to benefit from this approach, with Newport Central next.

Corporate communications has played a significant role in delivering the uplift recruitment programme for new officers, delivering a wide-ranging campaign across Gwent and the surrounding areas which has delivered:

- More than 1m people reached
- 300,000 listeners to radio content
- 67,000 targeted invites to recruitment events
- Nearly 300,000 impressions on social media
- Nearly 23,000 views of video content
- 13,200 views on our website

The recruitment campaigns run over this year have focussed on PCSOs, officers and force contact centre operators. The next stage of the campaign will focussed on highly targeted personas to complement this broad brush approach.

The team has also worked to support the roll out of new technology within the force – from embedding Office 365, introducing new functionality such as the use of forms on the intranet, facial recognition technology and agile working approaches. These all help us deliver an improved service in a cost-effective way.



Internal communications

For the first time, we have a strategic approach to internal communications set out within an agreed internal communications and engagement strategy and roadmap framework.

The strategy outlines how as a function we will work in partnership with senior leaders, acting as trusted advisors, to:

- connect our people to the force mission, vision and values
- engage our people in delivering organisational priorities and support cultural change
- positively influence our people's behaviours and engagement, in turn improving organisational performance.

We have set three core strategic objectives that link directly to objectives set out within the chief constable's delivery plan. Setting this direction has enabled us to focus our internal communications and engagement activity in areas that we feel will have the greatest impact on our performance, people, and culture, and therefore public confidence.

Our internal communications journey so far

In the first half of 2021/2022, we brought in dedicated internal communications resource to create a rhythm of content production and manage volume. We developed this further during the second year period to implement a proactive editorial calendar and consistent design and tone across our internal communications activity.

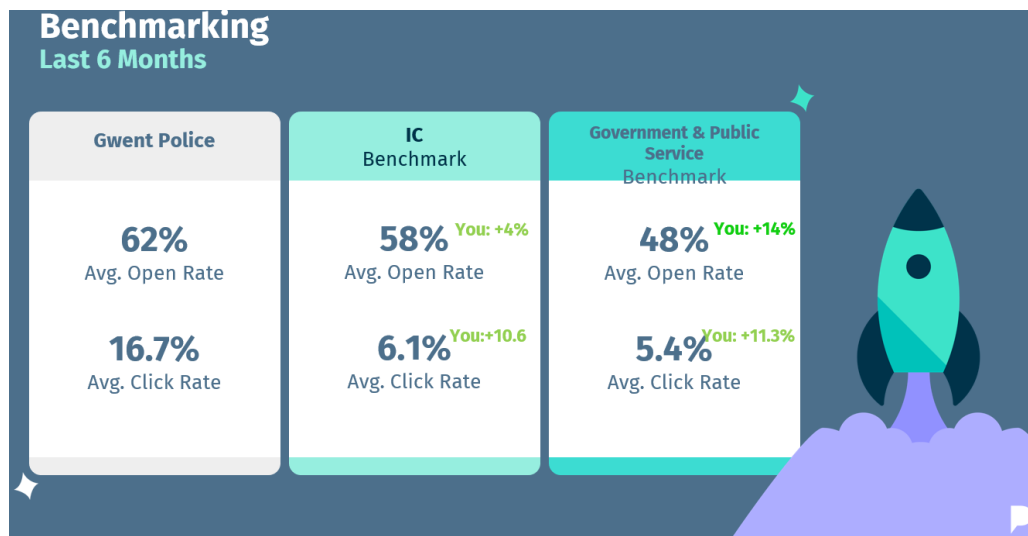
Our adoption of Poppulo has been central to this progression. Poppulo is a third-party platform and has enabled us to implement a more effective approach to email communications across the force and target email content to specific audiences, while providing robust analytics to help tailor future content.

Recent survey data evidenced that colleagues often felt overwhelmed with information offered through The Beat. Using Poppulo, we established a new round-up weekly email news bulletin that uses existing HR establishment data to ensure content is highly targeted.

Each bulletin that individual colleagues receive acts as a personalised curation of need-to-know news and updates, cutting out the volume and noise they were previously experiencing on The Beat.

Data tells us this approach has been well received by colleagues and that we are consistently performing at above industry standards in relation to engagement across our email communications:





The Beat continues as a well-established and active two-way communications channel – acting as a single source of truth for all our communications. However, limitations around measurement and targeting; the adoption of Office 365; and increased expectations around employee digital experience means we continue to review this channel with South Wales Police and DSD.

Examples of internal communications and employee engagement activity and outcomes in 2021/2022

While some real impact has been delivered around crime data integrity, managing our internal response to the pandemic and supporting our reward and recognition approach in line with our values two strands of work had real impact. The first was as a result of our work internally on violence against women and girls.

Not in my force			
Objective To challenge colleagues' perceptions and behaviour around misogyny and discrimination within the workplace			
Article views	Likes	Comments	Engagement rate
2,506	147	64	8.4%

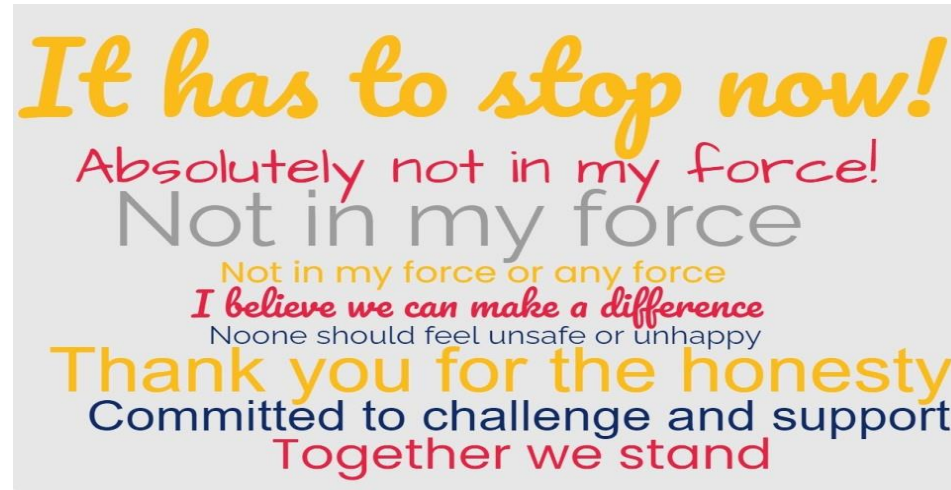
Overview

Designed to be hard-hitting, the 'not in my force' campaign featured the honest but uncomfortable filmed responses of male colleagues when faced with some of the sexist experiences of female colleagues. The video was intended to prompt colleagues into re-thinking their attitudes and behaviours in the workplace, as well as encourage conversations around discriminatory behaviour. Colleagues were asked to pledge 'not in my force' in a direct call to action within the video's supporting article.

- Since its launch on Wednesday 1 December, the article hosting the video on The Beat (intranet) has been viewed 2,506 times
- Typically, we would expect to see popular articles reach 700/800 views (low popularity 200/300 views). With 2,506 views, this is one of the highest viewed articles published last year, with the highest number of comments.
- The bulletin encouraged around a fifth of the article visits, with 473 clicks through to the article.



Sentiment and further impact



- All comments left by colleagues on the article were positive and in support of the initiative, with some of the comments going further than the clear call to action, demonstrating strong engagement.
- We plan to further survey colleagues to understand what impact the video has had and how it has changed behaviour.
- The video has inspired a probationary officer to carry out her dissertation on the subject, delving deeper into the experience of women in policing.

The second high impact project was the chief constable's roadshow:

More than **1,200** staff attended live

346 colleagues responded to the survey which asked three simple questions:

Do you understand our mission and vision?

100% responded **YES**

Are you clear what our force values are?

100% responded **YES**

Do you have a better understanding of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan and the CC's Delivery plan?

99% responded **YES**

939 colleagues have visited the chief's roadshow page on The Beat

Ignite

There were **25** ideas submitted to the chief constable's roadshow challenge

The challenge was viewed **3,488** times

There were **135** comments made, with **84** likes which is a significant level of engagement.

Ideas submitted were from both staff and officers and ranged from advancing technology, improving service delivered to MOP, opportunities to develop training and improvements to wellbeing.



Performance

This section sets out analytics that help us measure our success across key communications channels.

Single online home

This table demonstrates the most visited pages on our website. The two key draws are news and vacancies. The high bounce rate from the news pages indicated that visitors are reading a news item and leaving, while the low bounce rate but high length of time spent on the vacancies page demonstrates that visitors are more engaged. Most traffic to the site is via social media links highlighting the importance of these channels in flagging more detailed content available via the website.

	Page Title	Unique Page Views ▾	% Δ	Page Views	% Δ	Bounce Rate	% Δ	Avg. Time on Page	% Δ
1.	Home Gwent Police	54,819	98.6...	70,254	82.9% ↑	11.94%	-32.0...	00:00:34	-17.0...
2.	Vacancies Gwent Police	54,613	169....	60,754	174.7%...	14.42%	-34.2...	00:06:48	20.1...
3.	Boy dies after dog attack in Caerphilly Gwent Police	32,650	-	34,400	-	93.95%	-	00:04:30	-
4.	Latest news Gwent Police	30,969	250....	40,889	224.4%...	44.73%	-7.8% ↓	00:00:48	45.8...
5.	Join us Gwent Police	27,816	67.5...	34,901	61.1% ↑	13.67%	14.7%...	00:00:19	19.1...
6.	News search Gwent Police	18,097	191....	23,656	164.0%...	50.31%	10.7%...	00:00:58	25.2...
	Grand total	639,931	197....	751,957	187.0...	56.04%	7.9% ↑	00:01:17	12.4...

1 - 10 / 3364 < >

Media

In the past year, the team responded to:

- 2,251 media enquiries compared to 2,677 recorded in 2020/21. This is a significant increase as the recording of internal requests for support moved during 2021 to be recorded elsewhere.
- Issued 1,090 releases or statements
- Covered 1,570 new topics

The South Wales Argus continues to be our most frequent point of contact given their focus on Gwent news. In terms of media types, online news remains our largest outlet across all media, followed by print press and broadcast.

Top 10 sources by volume		
	SW Argus (Web)	993 items
	SW Argus	864
	Real Radio Wales	353
	Wales Online (web)	342
	Pontypool Free Press	185
	South Wales Echo	171
	Western Mail	142
	BBC (web)	137
	BBC Radio Wales	137
	Monmouthshire Beacon	102

With younger audiences now turning away from BBC as a trusted news source post-pandemic we must increasingly balance our resources between traditional media channels and social media. The focus of the team will continue on opportunities to gain TV and radio coverage with traditional media as they have a significantly increased reach.



Social media

Twitter	Followers	Impressions	Reach	Link clicks	Engagement rate
Gwent Police	81.7k	8.5m	164.7m	46.2k	0.82%
Heddlu Gwent	550	173.1k	2.5m	1.5k	1.43%
Individual accounts (total)	66k		60.5m	16.46k	
Facebook					
Gwent Police	147.5k	63.8m	35.7m	230.6k	0.91%
Heddlu Gwent	421	69.6k	53k	608	1.10%
School Beat	1.1k	8.4k	5k	N/A	2.71%
Instagram					
Gwent Police	19k	688k	649.5k	9	2.62%

Total link clicks during period	296.6k
Total reach during period	264.2m
Total comments	184.3k

Comparing our engagement rate across **corporate accounts** we have seen an increase in our engagement:

Engagement rate			
	2020/21	2021/22	Industry standard of 'Good'
Twitter	0.56	0.82 (+0.26)	0.122% for the top 25%
Facebook	0.83	0.91 (+0.08)	1
Instagram	2.51	2.62 (+0.11)	1 - 3

Link click rate – for more information		
	2020/21	2021/22
Twitter	27.3k	46.2k
Facebook	97.5k	230.6k

Conclusion

The team continues to progress the development of communications that support the delivery of the police and crime commissioner's objectives in line with the chief constable's delivery plan. With an increased focus on an evidence-based approach to what works, and what works for Gwent we aim to continue to deliver successful campaigns and channels internally and externally for the coming year.





1. PUBLIC INTEREST

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

2. REPORT AUTHOR

- 2.1 Nicola Wesson

3. LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

- 3.1 T/ACC Mark Hobrough

4. ANNEXES

- 4.1 None

5. CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

- 5.1 I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers' meeting.
- 5.2 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain.

Signature:

Date: 10.08.2022

