



Consultation Report (July 2020)

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Gwent Police

Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-2024

1. Introduction

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Gwent Police published their first joint Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) in 2016 to further support their duties as public authorities set out in the Equality Act 2010. By September 2020, a new joint SEP will be published including objectives that have been set as a result of:

- Review of progress against our previous objectives
- Specific surveys and face-to-face engagement
- Ongoing engagement and consultation with people that share protected characteristics
- Additional supporting information related to the key areas

This document sets out the context against which our objectives have been drafted, drawing on a range of evidence to support our conclusions and setting out the results of our consultation and engagement activities.

2. Our Survey

An online survey was launched by the OPCC in March 2020 on behalf of both the OPCC and Gwent Police, inviting the public to have their say on the proposed objectives for the next four years. The surveys were publicised across social media, via Gwent Police's community messaging system, and sent to a wide range of community groups and key stakeholders across Gwent to capture their views and opinions.

Building on our current objectives, the areas were put forward in the consultation were:

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Hate crime and disability related harassment
- Stop and search and use of force
- Custody
- Community engagement

In addition, we asked people to give their views on the following areas for inclusion:

- Early intervention and prevention
- Criminal exploitation of children and other vulnerable people
- Fraud and cyber-crime
- Crimes against older people
- Complaints
- Public Satisfaction
- Commissioning
- Out of court disposals
- Access to policing services
- Working with partners

- Community cohesion and inclusion
- Positive action
- Gender equality
- Well-being in the workplace
- Staff consultation
- Training

The survey was sent directly to over 60 partner agencies, community groups and services, Welsh and English medium schools, Welsh language organisations, and to OPCC and Gwent Police volunteers.

A total of 771 responses to the survey were received, including 102 paper-based responses obtained through the direct engagement described in section 3.

Demographic information for participants:

- **Age** - Under 18: 5.2%; 18-24: 1.1%; 25-40: 8.7%; 41-55: 20.4%; 56-75: 49.5%; Over 75: 13.5%; Prefer not to say: 1/7%
- **Ethnicity** – White British: 92.5%; White Irish: 0.5%; Any other White background: 1.5%; Asian British: 0.5%; Asian Pakistani: 0.3%; Asian Indian: 0.8%; Black British: 0.3%; Black Caribbean: 0.3%; White and Black African: 0.3%; White and Black Caribbean: 0.3%; Any other mixed background: 0.9%; Any other ethnic group: 0.5%
- **Religion/Belief** – Christian: 65.2%; Muslim: 0.6%; Hindu: 0.6%; Jewish: 0.1%; Sikh – 0.1%; Buddhist: 0.7%; Prefer not to say: 11%; Other: 22% (No belief; Agnostic; Atheist; Wicca; Jehovah’s Witness; Spiritual; Sanatan Dharma; Sceptic; Humanism; Pagan; Druid; Post-Christian; Taoist)
- **Gender** – Female: 48.6%; Male: 47.5%; Transgender: 0.3%; Non-binary: 0.5%
- **Sexual Orientation** – Heterosexual: 86.8%; Lesbian/Gay: 2%; Bisexual: 2%; Other: 2%
- 15.7% of respondents stated they had a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long terms effect on their ability to carry out normal or day to day duties.

3. Engagement

To complement the online survey, face-to-face engagement was planned with a range of community groups. However, due to the advent of COVID-19 and the lockdown restrictions imposed across the UK in the latter part of March 2020, it was only possible to undertake a few meetings before all face-to-face contact was halted. Subsequently, resources were channelled into promoting and supporting the online survey, and virtual contact was provided to anyone wishing to discuss their feedback.

Face-to-face engagement took place at the:

- EYST Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Forum

- Newport Carers Network
- Talk Blaenau Gwent event
- Gwent Youth Question Time event

At the Youth Question Time event, attendees participated in a dot voting exercise to provide their opinions on the proposed objectives and give any other feedback for consideration. Nine schools and youth groups attended, and 37 people took part in the engagement exercise on the day.

In lieu of the planned workshop activity with OPCC staff, a tailored survey was developed from the public consultation. This enabled colleagues to not only provide their views on the proposed objectives, but also to suggest any work activities undertaken that would support the successful achievement of the objectives. 12 responses were received out of a possible 18.

Gwent Police also carried out an online consultation exercise with officers and staff that explored issues linked to the four main Objectives:

- Creating a representative workforce and promoting equality of opportunity
- Improving access, engagement and cohesion
- Supporting vulnerable people
- Fostering positive community relations.

220 responses were received in total, with around 100 comments provided in response to the question *“What do you think Gwent Police could do better to promote equality, diversity and inclusion?”* A separate internal summary report has been shared to enable Chief Officers to consider the feedback and identify appropriate activity within Force delivery plans.

Feedback from ongoing engagement with communities through the year was also incorporated, including observations and findings from:

- Regular meetings with the Independent Advisory Group (a group of community members that provide Gwent Police with advice)
- Engagement with the Staff Support Networks (Gwent Police LGBT&Q Network, Gwent Police Ethnic Minority Association, Gwent Women in Policing Network, Gwent Police Disability Support and Carers Network, Gwent Police Flexible Working Network, Welsh Language Speakers and Learners Network, the Christian Network, and the Mental Health Network)
- Regular Meetings with the Interfaith Network
- Attendance at events through the year, such as Cardiff Pride, the Newport 50+ Information Day, Youth Question Time
- Feedback from the national LGBTQ Conference and the Women’s Conference, both hosted by Gwent Police
- Surveys conducted throughout the year (for example, our victim satisfaction survey and the Your Voice survey undertaken twice per year to capture community priorities)
- Engagement around specific areas of work (for example, stop and search) with communities that are particularly affected

- Regular meetings with community groups that engage with people that share protected characteristics

4. Responses and Feedback

Additional information gathered in support of developing the consultation and engagement process is included at Appendix 1.

Equality Objective One: Supporting Vulnerable People

To identify, support and protect those at risk from harm from crimes that have the greatest impact on vulnerable people

Themes:

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Hate crime and disability-related harassment
- Early intervention and prevention
- Criminal exploitation of children and other vulnerable people
- Fraud and cyber-crime
- Crimes against older people

What Respondents Told Us

96% of online and group respondents agreed with Equality Objective One. Key themes that emerged from our engagement and survey responses were:

- Greater recognition and support for male victims of domestic abuse
- Providing information on the help and support available and how to access it
- Engaging with faith groups, charities and community groups already offering help and support in these areas
- Providing aftercare for victims and survivors to ensure they are able to access appropriate emotional support
- Increased work around early intervention and prevention with educational establishments

As an autistic adult I hope that adequate and current autism training is given to all police employees. This will assist them in all of the themes and not just disability related harassment and hate crime

All vulnerable people need to know that they will be absolutely helped, believed and protected

Particularly in relation to domestic abuse there needs to be support for perpetrators (male and female) to address their behaviour

Actions for our SEP

- Improve the identification of protected characteristics that are disproportionately underrepresented in domestic abuse and sexual violence data
- Work collaboratively to provide appropriate services for domestic abuse perpetrators
- Improve knowledge and awareness in communities of the crimes that cause the greatest harm to vulnerable people
- Work collaboratively to provide sustainable interventions and support for people at risk of, or engaged with criminal exploitation
- Better identify and establish a true picture of cyber-crime and the response provided to victims
- Work to ensure an effective response to crimes predominantly affecting older people

Equality Objective Two: Legitimacy and Fairness

Ensure that policing activities are carried out legitimately and proportionately, fostering positive relations between communities and policing

Themes:

- Stop and Search
- Custody
- Complaints
- Public satisfaction
- Commissioning (OPCC only)
- Use of force
- Out of court disposals

What Respondents Told Us

92% of online and group respondents agreed with Equality Objective Two. Key themes that emerged from our engagement and survey responses were:

- Keeping communities up-to-date with how policies are working
- Ensuring appropriate use of out of court disposals
- Increased engagement with communities to improve understanding in the use of police powers
- Greater commissioning of prevention services
- Identifying and addressing conscious and unconscious bias within the workforce

*Stop and search might result in meltdowns in autistic people.
Same with use of force.
Meltdowns aren't done on purpose and can't be controlled.
Police must respond with that in mind.*

The police are so unknown by communities and there is generally a massive barrier between the police and the people who could proactively support them

Over the years some of the above have been abused because of institutional racism. The points need to be fairly applied across all communities to be effective

Actions for our SEP

- Improve opportunities for communities to provide their views of the use of police powers
- Improve knowledge and awareness of community understanding of stop and search and use of force and their rights
- Improve the experiences of people with additional needs when in custody
- Work collaboratively to ensure that the use of Out of Court Disposals is appropriate and proportionate
- Provide information to communities on when and how to make complaints

Equality Objective Three: Access, Engagement and Cohesion

Ensure that our services respond to the views, experiences, and needs of people that identify with protected characteristics, and the work that we do promotes inclusion and cohesion.

Themes:

- Access to policing services
- Working with partners
- Community cohesion and inclusion
- Community engagement

What Respondents Told Us

90% of online and group respondents agreed with Equality Objective Three. Key themes that emerged from our engagement and survey responses were:

- Greater police visibility and community presence in all areas
- Effective and accountable partnership work
- Increased engagement with local councils in rural areas
- Use of alternative contact methods and formats to keep people updated
- Using appropriate engagement methods and attitudes with children and young people

The priority has to be visible policing. It should be remembered that the primary purpose of policing is prevention and detection of crime

The more involvement with the community, the better, I think

Better partnerships and sharing of information creates better trust at local level

Actions for our SEP

- Ensure police services, including buildings, are accessible for people that share protected characteristics
- Provide an effective response to community tensions, when they occur
- Provide inclusive engagement that enables participation across all protected characteristics
- Work to promote and embed the principle that children and young people are treated according to their age
- Ensure that commissioned services consider the needs of people with protected characteristics
- Improve awareness of Connect Gwent services across all communities, focusing on where there is evidence of disproportionate access to victim services

Equality Objective Four: Creating a Representative Workforce and Promoting Fairness

Work towards developing a representative workforce and ensure that everyone working for Gwent Police and the OPCC is treated fairly and without discrimination.

Themes:

- Positive action
- Gender equality
- Well-being in the workplace
- Staff consultation
- Training

What Respondents Told Us

91% of online and group respondents agreed with Equality Objective Four. Key themes that emerged from our engagement and survey responses were:

- Effective use of positive action
- Fair and transparent recruitment and selection processes

- Increased cultural awareness and sensitivity across the organisation
- Increased community awareness of success by sharing positive stories
- Involving communities with training programmes

It is a must that all people are treated fairly and correctly regardless of their gender, race, religion, etc. In today's society there should be no discrimination

As far as training goes, I would like the police to work closely with partners who have direct contact with communities, they tend to know what problems communities have

Positive action is OK, as long as it doesn't change to 'positive discrimination'

Actions for our SEP

- Improve knowledge and understanding of positive action within the wider community
- Ensure senior management and those involved in recruitment processes understand and take steps to redress and organisational or personal unconscious bias
- Work to address gaps in representation across all protected characteristics
- Scrutinise complaints relating to bullying, harassment, and/or sexual misconduct in the workplace
- Work to better understand the reasons for people from underrepresented groups leaving the organisation
- Provide effective workforce training on equality, diversity and inclusion matters

Respondents also made suggestions to consider specific inclusion of the following areas:

- Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Transparency
- Children and young people
- Access to victim services
- Economic deprivation

Conclusion

Our joint Strategic Equality Plan provides us with an important opportunity to consolidate and build on achievements already made against our previous Equality Objectives, as well as incorporate emerging areas of work that we know will present new challenges over the next few years. This document evidences the rationale

behind the objectives within our new Plan, but we are aware that the climate and context we operate in is constantly changing. International events have shone a spotlight on the relationship between policing and race, and the Black Lives Matter movement has reinforced the need for services to do more to tackle issues of disproportionality wherever they occur. The disproportionate impact of Coronavirus on our ethnic minority communities has also further highlighted issues of “embedded racism” and the need to act now eliminate institutional discrimination.

Ensuring our Equality Objectives set the right priorities is now more important than ever. They will help to drive necessary institutional change and contribute to improved community cohesion by identifying and tackling inequality and disproportionality within policing and the wider criminal justice process and provide an increased sense of inclusion across the police service.

To ensure that our commitments to tackling inequality, increasing our diversity and fostering a culture of inclusion are measured and tested, we will create and maintain individual Equality Delivery Plans for the OPCC and Gwent Police. The Delivery Plans bring together the activities that support and further our work towards being the best we can be and ensuring that we are delivering the right service for our communities in Gwent.

We will continue to consult and engage with our communities and staff to ensure our Equality Objectives and Delivery Plans are always relevant, ensuring that the views of all our key stakeholders continue to inform our activities.

We will conduct a review of our Equality Objectives each year as part of our annual reporting process, ensuring that our activities provide positive outcomes for those affected by them.