

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

Annual Report 2019/20

INTRODUCTION

This was a year of change.

Both my office and Gwent Police developed new processes, driving significant improvements in how we work together to ensure Gwent remains a safe place to live, work or visit.

The office restructure of 2018/19 was fully embedded and this saw revised working practices and an even greater focus on scrutinising and supporting the work of the force in line with my Police and Crime Plan.

This is being delivered in communities by Gwent Police, where there have been major changes at the top. There is an almost entirely new chief officer team from last year's report that is focusing on protecting and reassuring our communities.

I appointed Pam Kelly as the new Chief Constable of Gwent Police in August, following a confirmation hearing of the Police and Crime Panel. Her knowledge, experience and commitment to the people of Gwent was demonstrated strongly throughout a rigorous selection process.

Following this, a new Deputy Chief Constable, Amanda Blakeman, joined Gwent Police in September. I am confident that they are the right people to drive forward our aspirations for policing in Gwent over the coming years.

They are ably-assisted by a new Assistant Chief Constable, Jonathan Edwards, who joined in May, and long-standing Assistant Chief Officer Resources, Nigel Stephens. Together, this chief officer team will ensure the continued successful delivery of my Police and Crime Plan in Gwent.

During the year, I updated the plan to better reflect the changing nature of crime and how this is impacting on local policing. The constant evolution of criminality poses significant challenges at a time when policing services are facing additional pressures following years of reduced government funding.

Some challenges are predictable – for example, the increase in cyber-enabled crime – but others are less so. This is evident when looking at serious and organised crime and the devastating impact this can have on communities. As these issues have evolved, so must our responses to tackle them.

This can partly be done through adequate resourcing of policing and I'm delighted that we welcomed 59 new recruits to Gwent Police in 2019/20. Of these, 24 are part of the government's Operation Uplift recruitment drive, which should create about 160 new policing posts in Gwent over three years. They will help to protect and reassure our residents, ensuring Gwent remains one of the safest places in the UK.

I know this is the case, as the latest Crime Survey for England and Wales shows this. There was a small drop in recorded crimes in 2019/20 and, for example, we continue to have one of the lowest levels of knife crime in the UK.

High performance is, of course, key to our joint success. While I scrutinise performance on a weekly basis, this is reinforced by external scrutiny. Following an inspection in November, HMICFRS rated Gwent Police 'good' for its overall effectiveness. This includes investigating crime, protecting vulnerable people, and tackling serious and organised crime. The inspection report evidences that Gwent Police is delivering a good and effective service for its residents.

Gwent Police was commended for delivering in a number of my Police and Crime Plan priority areas, such as crime prevention and supporting victims. It has also made significant improvements since the last inspection in the vital areas of domestic abuse and serious and organised crime, as well as how it prioritises investigations.

To ensure this is in line with my expectations and those of the Police and Crime Panel, my team and I have continued to work with Gwent Police on the development of an Organisational Performance Framework. There has been good progress in the development of this and reporting for the Police and Crime Plan. This has been well supported by the Police and Crime Panel performance sub-group.

Keeping Gwent safe is not the sole responsibility of the police, however. It requires a multi-agency approach; examples of which are contained within my report. We invested heavily in the wider criminal justice system in 2019/20, with the contract for the Women's Pathfinder whole system approach and Early Intervention Service for young adults aged 18–25 going live in October. This provides support for women from the point of arrest to the post-release custodial period. It also offers diversion and support services to 18–25-year-olds. Together, these schemes aim to support people, prevent further offending and therefore improve public safety.

I want to continue to work with everyone who supports our vision of Gwent. A Gwent that is safe. A Gwent that isn't hindered by criminal activity. A Gwent where people are free to live the lives that they want to, free of fear or hate.

PROGRESS AGAINST THE PLAN

PRIORITY 1 – CRIME PREVENTION

Promoting and reducing crime that causes the most harm in our communities and against the most vulnerable people.

Number Of Total Recorded Crimes

Crime types	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020
All other theft	4,509	4,753	4,303
Bicycle theft	310	425	329
Burglary dwelling	2,613	2,540	2,546
Burglary non-dwelling	1,121	1,163	1,098
Criminal damage & arson	8,683	9,419	8,584
Drug offences	1,369	1,463	1,498
Homicide	7	4	6
Miscellaneous crimes	1,195	1,403	1,370
Other sexual offences	902	981	1,040
Possession of weapons	208	237	251
Public order offences	4,735	7,872	7,975
Rape	418	574	499
Robbery	257	301	304
Shoplifting	3,883	3,533	3,459
Theft from the person	348	373	314
Vehicle crime	3,353	3,398	3,256
Violence with injury	4,860	5,823	5,741
Violence without injury	9,865	14,176	14,853
Total	48,636	58,438	57,426

There has been a reduction in the number of recorded crimes compared to 2018–19, with more than 1,000 fewer incidents. There were significant drops in thefts, criminal damage and arson, whereas I am reassured that the rises we have seen in areas such as drug offences, for example, represent proactive policing and an increased confidence from the public to report these issues to us. Violence with and without injury remains high and has increased over the last two years. This will include a significant number of domestic abuse offences. We know that this is an under reported crime, so both Gwent Police and I expect this rise to continue and for victims to have more confidence to report. There is a widespread concern that domestic abuse will have been significantly under-reported during lockdown, which began at the end of the 2019/20 year. The impact of this isn't expected until the 2020/21 report, when lockdown will have eased and people would have been more able to report; however, we anticipate seeing an increase.

Crime Prevention Review

While updating the Police and Crime Plan, we reviewed current progress and activity in delivering each of the five priorities contained within it. This included a review of Gwent Police's implementation of crime prevention as a priority.

The updated plan revised this to emphasise the importance of addressing crimes that cause significant harm to communities in Gwent, such as serious and organised crime and modern day slavery. It also stresses the importance of preventing re-offending and educating the public.

In response to recommendations within the review report, the force has appointed a strategic lead for crime prevention. The force has revised its crime prevention strategy and is developing a delivery plan, which will adopt a cohesive approach to crime prevention across all relevant areas of business.

Cyber Crime

Cyber crime is a term used to describe two related criminal activities: cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crimes. Cyber-dependent crime, which can only be committed by using technology, includes spreading viruses and malicious software, hacking, and attacks to take down network infrastructure or websites. They are also crimes generally aimed at computers or networks. Cyber-enabled crimes are traditional crimes that are additionally facilitated by the use of technology. For example, fraud, theft and sexual offending against children. Cyber-enabled crimes have increased by an average of 46% each year since 2014/15, with forms of bullying and harassment making up the bulk of the incidents. Exploitation accounts for about a fifth of cyber-enabled crime.

Gwent Police has prioritised proactive awareness raising to help people stay safe online, while also combatting emerging issues such as live streaming sites where anonymity makes it hard for offenders to be identified. Gwent Police also continues to take a leading role in the all Wales cyber crime meeting. The Chief Constable is the cyber crime lead for police forces in Wales, while I am the lead for Welsh PCCs.

In terms of recording cyber-related crime, the force currently relies on crimes being flagged on the system when they are first recorded by an officer. Automated AI software is being rolled out to review all crime and this will determine if a crime requires additional qualifiers. This should result in increased recorded numbers of cyber-dependant and cyber-enabled crime.

Gwent Police has a dedicated police online investigation team (POLIT) whose primary task is to investigate internet abuse and target people who are in possession of indecent images of children. Working alongside specialist officers in the digital forensic investigation unit, the POLIT team received 216 referrals in 19/20 from the National Crime Agency. Since January 2020, 121 offenders have been identified and POLIT has undertaken 115 investigations. POLIT works closely with social services and uses Connect Gwent to ensure victims and families are supported.

As part of the commitment to tackle serious and organised crime (SOC), we worked with CrimeStoppers on a SOC prevention campaign that was launched in January. This highlighted the impact of criminal gangs on businesses and communities, with digital adverts targeted around drug dealing, violence, cyber crime, and money laundering.

Operation Signature is a successful force campaign to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud. It also raises awareness of the issue and encourages a variety of agencies, such as banks, to work with the team to prevent the vulnerable from becoming victims.

The OPCC arranged for Gwent Police's Cyber Protect Officer to deliver information and advice to more than 70 members of the Gwent business community at an event in Ebbw Vale. Companies' cyber security arrangements were discussed and a series of exercises were run to test participants' cyber resilience. Businesses were asked to commit to ensuring that their passwords were changed to be more robust and less susceptible to hacking. This was complemented during Business Safety Week with key online safety messages for businesses. Advice about how to stay safe online was written with Gwent Police and published in Torfaen Business Voice magazine.

The OPCC facilitated a visit by Connect Gwent to an Abergavenny retirement complex, where 10 vulnerable residents were given advice on how to avoid cyber and telephone scams. This took place after the complex manager met some of the OPCC team at an engagement event in Abergavenny Market. Additional information was also given on the support Age Cymru can provide, and the role of the OPCC. The feedback from the event was very positive, with the residents thanking both the OPCC and Connect Gwent for their messages of reassurance and advice. An additional talk was given by Connect Gwent on cyber scams to about 50 people aged 70+ at a computer club in Caldicot. Again, this was facilitated by the OPCC after meeting the club's organiser at an engagement event.

Throughout the summer and precept engagement events, the OPCC also gave out hundreds of leaflets about staying safe online during conversations with residents about safeguarding. Gwent Police's Cyber CSO regularly shared the OPCC stand to jointly deliver online safety messages. This was complemented with discussions with young people at a Gwent Safeguarding event at Celtic Manor Resort.

Diversion Schemes

We launched the Women's Pathfinder whole system approach and Early Intervention Service for young adults aged 18–25 in October. This followed a collaborative commissioning process with Welsh Government, Her Majesty's Probation and Prison Service (HMPSS), and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales. The contract was awarded to Future 4 (a consortium of G4S, Safer Wales, Include and Llamau).

Operating across the Gwent and South Wales Police force areas, it provides comprehensive support for women from arrest to the post-release custodial period. It also provides diversion and support services to all 18–25 year olds. It works with service users to help them review their choices and consequences. It also helps participants understand their strengths to overcome barriers and take opportunities that will allow them to move forward without further involvement in crime.

The diversion schemes are available at all custody suites across both police force areas, as well as people going to a station for voluntary attendance.

Prior to this, there was only a pilot Women's Pathfinder service for Newport. There was no diversion service for people aged 18–25 in Gwent. I am very pleased with how these improvements are making significant progress in tackling these issues.

CASE STUDY:

In the first six months of the contract, 64% of the women referred for intervention engaged with the service. This helps women to counter the impact of adverse childhood experiences on their own lives and reduce the likelihood of their children experiencing trauma.

A further 85% of the young people who were referred to the service for intervention and support engaged with it, as part of the 18-25 service. This helps young adults avoid the barriers that a criminal record creates. It factors in the benefits of targeted early intervention that takes into account the vulnerability and maturity levels of young adults in the criminal justice system.

Early Action Together:

We are taking a multi-agency collaborative approach to improving the identification of risk and vulnerability, preventing escalation and reducing repeat demand. This uses adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and trauma-informed approaches for policing and partners.

There is an integrated approach to vulnerability that signposts, supports and safeguards vulnerable people 24/7. To help achieve this, there is now a Safeguarding Senior Practitioner within the Force Control Room. The social worker provides tactical advice and guidance to officers. This support allows officers to utilise their skills, knowledge and professional judgement with members of the public. They can then determine the relevant signposting, support and safeguarding responses.

Giving our officers and staff the confidence and skills to respond more effectively to vulnerability is essential. In the last year, 554 officers and police staff, plus 246 staff from partner agencies, received ACE training from Barnardo's. This is funded through my office and brings the total numbers trained since 2018 to 1,292 officers and police staff, plus 412 staff from partner agencies.

There is now a new Vulnerability Trainer at Gwent Police, whose work is complemented by a vulnerability and safeguarding workforce development framework. This ensures that all officers have the skills and knowledge to recognise and respond to all forms of vulnerability at the earliest opportunity.

The ACE team has worked with partners in Newport and Blaenau Gwent to develop 'pathfinder' areas to improve responses. They have created two early intervention

projects (EIPs) with the Information Assistance and Advice Team in Blaenau Gwent and at the Newport Safeguarding Hub. At these, police officers share office space with council staff, resulting in:

- Early screening to identify referrals for safeguarding, signposting and support;
- Early information sharing to inform safeguarding decisions; and
- Timely multi-agency strategy discussions.

CASE STUDY:

The EIP approach has provided more than 400 families with early intervention and prevention services that previously wouldn't have been offered. It has also had a noticeable positive effect on reducing the number of re-referrals for family support. Due to the success of the pathfinder areas, this approach has now been implemented within Torfaen. Work has started to remodel existing safeguarding processes in Caerphilly and Monmouthshire.

Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service:

Alcohol and drugs are two of the main drivers of crime, so addressing these issues is integral to any crime prevention strategy. There are often multiple issues at play, with many people having experienced adverse childhood experiences. This could include abuse, living in violent homes or having parents with substance misuse issues.

Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) provides services using a trauma-informed approach. This works to address underlying needs, as well as managing substance misuse issues. The GDAS work is commissioned by Gwent Area Planning Board, of which I am an executive member.

GDAS offers support for family members, mental health specialist services, services for children and young people, open access pathways for people with drug or alcohol issues, and an integrated recovery intervention service called GDAS Criminal Justice.

My office funds more than 50% of the work that supports people with substance misuse issues involved in the criminal justice system. This support can be provided from point of arrest to release from prison. It aims to improve people's health and well-being, as well as reduce and prevent re-offending.

In 2020/21, the service received 1,361 referrals and approximately 460 people were worked with at any one time throughout the year.

CASE STUDY:

Mike* had been repeatedly offending for a number of years.

He was caught in a cycle of prison, re-offend, return to prison. Alcohol and drugs misuse triggered his offending. He was also homeless for long periods.

Mike had a poor relationship with police. He did not initially engage with the Integrated Offender Management team and his pattern of offending continued.

However, after much persistence, weekly contact and support, the team were able to gain his trust. This allowed intervention measures to be put in place. Mike has been helped to access benefits to reduce his need to commit crime for financial gain. He has also engaged in recovery support to be involved in positive activities.

He is no longer using drugs or misusing alcohol and has not offended for six months.

* Not his real name

Police Community Fund

The Police Community Fund aims to enable children and young people in Gwent to be safe, healthy and happy. It does this by supporting projects that work with young people at risk of or involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

In 2019/20, eight organisations received funding totalling £252,182. A further two organisations were awarded second year funding, subject to conditions. This brings the total value of grants awarded in 2019–20 to £298,141.

A wide range of projects and interventions have been supported. For example:

- Children involved in the Cymru Creations project in Blaenau Gwent have worked with an award-winning media company to create short films focusing on topics such as dangerous driving, anti-social behaviour and hate crime.
- Up to 100 children and young people per night have been attending Cwmbran Centre for Young People where they have the opportunity to take part in social activities and offered support with education and training.
- The #stopstabbingstartjabbing project at Alway Amateur Boxing Club is offering community boxing sessions and one-to-one mentoring to children and young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

Children attending these projects have achieved outcomes including improved health and well-being, increased feelings of safety, more positive relationships with family and/or friends, and have been better able to make informed life choices.

CASE STUDY:

Urban Circle organised 'Summer Fest' at Tredegar House in August. The festival was devised and organised by young people aged 13–25 as part of Urban Circle's U-Turn project, which is funded by my office. The project uses the creative arts to tackle social problems affecting young people in Newport.

The young people on the event team gained stewarding and first aid qualifications, and about half of them also completed safeguarding and youth work accreditations.

Urban Circle also organised a Halloween music event that more than 200 young people Newport attended. It was designed to give young people something positive to do on a night associated with high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Serious and Organised Crime:

Serious and organised crime (SOC) and serious violence remain a significant concern nationally. However, I am naturally pleased that Gwent remains one of the forces with the lowest numbers of weapons-related crimes in the UK (41st of 43 police forces). The majority of these crimes are not linked to organised criminality.

That is not to say that I take this issue lightly. I do not. I know this is an area of significant concern for some residents and I have witnessed first-hand the harm caused by the supply of drugs. Working with partners, we need to intervene as early as possible to help prevent young people from being exploited like this.

Pilot projects that help achieve this in Gwent continued to be delivered throughout the year. Funded by the Home Office and my office, St Giles, Barnardo's and Crimestopper's Fearless initiative delivered targeted interventions to young people most at risk of being drawn into SOC and serious violence. Some of those supported had experienced significant harm and adverse childhood experiences in their lives, including domestic abuse and exposure to drugs supply.

These projects continue to work across the whole of Gwent, with direct support for children aged 11-17 and their families. There are also interventions through schools, with education and information about SOC and serious violence being provided to residents.

CASE STUDY:

In 2019/20, the SOC and serious violence interventions:

1. Provided direct support to 70 children and their families or carers;
2. Delivered more than 500 support sessions; and
3. Were attended by 6,877 school children across Gwent.

Individual reviews with the 70 children were completed at the end of the year and demonstrated an 89% improvement in school attendance, an 89% reduction in offending, and a 100% improvement in mental health and well-being among the participants.

More than £270,000 was invested in the programmes in 2019/20.

PRIORITY 2 – SUPPORTING VICTIMS

Providing excellent support for victims of crime, particularly focusing on those who have experienced the most serious harm.

Victim Satisfaction Survey Results

	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020
Whole experience	81%	75%	75%
Ease of contact	88%	89%	95%
Action taken	76%	71%	76%
Way treated	92%	87%	85%
Kept informed	65%	64%	46%

The Victims' Board (see below) has continued to oversee a programme of improvement work and scrutinise performance of services for victims. There has been some improvement in two of the five areas; however, the area of significant concern remains that victims do not feel that they appropriately kept informed. The satisfaction rate for being kept informed has, historically, been lower than other aspects of service. To help understand the issues further, the survey script will be modified in the first quarter of 2020/21, so that the question will not be asked of anyone whose case is "resolved without deployment". It is hoped that the satisfaction rate will rise as a result and enable a more accurate understanding of victims' experiences. However, both the force and I recognise the need for further improvements in this area. Improvements are planned for 2021/22 that I expect to provide better services for victims in Gwent.

Connect Gwent:

Connect Gwent is a multi-agency victim support service that provides a range of services to people impacted by crime to help them cope and recover. It is funded by my office, via a Ministry of Justice grant.

Being a multi-agency service allows people to access the most relevant and appropriate support according to their needs. Support may be provided by a single agency within Connect Gwent or by agencies working together in a coordinated way.

During this year, Connect Gwent:

- Received 15,061 referrals;
- Provided one of instance of support to 1,109 people (7% of referrals); and
- Provided ongoing support to 1,599 people (11% of referrals).

This means 2,708 people were supported in total (18% of referrals).

Outcome	Number reporting improvement
Better able to cope and recover	679
Better informed and empowered to act	624
Improved health and well-being	681
Improved feelings of safety	640

CASE STUDY:

Alice* was referred to Connect Gwent for support after a domestic assault.

She had been married more than 30 years, but her husband controlled all her finances and many other aspects of her life. Alice's eldest daughter had also witnessed the abuse throughout her childhood.

At her first meeting, during which Alice was very upset, the specialist domestic abuse caseworker agreed that they could advocate, attend meetings with her and help her with any paperwork as she is dyslexic.

Alice and the caseworker met on many occasions and developed a safety and support plan, so she had something visual to help her achieve her goals. Alice privately rented her property, so the case worker helped to discuss the situation with the landlord. The landlord then agreed to the fitting of alarms and lock changes.

Alice is now getting divorced, attended a survivor's forum held by Gwent Police, and says she feels empowered to do things by herself.

* Not her real name

Mental Health

Our joint project to help deal with the amount of mental health calls Gwent Police receives continues to provide support to vulnerable people experiencing mental health illness or crisis.

Since February 2018, a team of dedicated mental health specialists has worked alongside staff in the Force Control Room providing:

- Appropriate support for mental health crisis; and
- Management of risk and harm at the first point of contact.

In the last 12 months, the team has recorded a 9.2% increase in mental health consultations, receiving an average 870 service requests per month. The number of detentions under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act remained consistent, with 273 recorded in 2019/20 compared to 278 for 2018/19.

More than 1,100 officer dispatches to incidents were averted during the year due to this scheme, which is a 19% increase on last year. This reflects changes in team recording processes and does not currently cause concern that Gwent Police is being less responsive to calls.

The project forms part of the commitment by my office and Gwent Police to support the key principles outlined in the Wales Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat. I naturally welcome the positive difference this service is making for people in crisis.

The well-being practitioner based at Connect Gwent continues to provide specialist support for victims of crime with mental health requirements. During 2019/20, 73 referrals for mental health support were made. This is a reduction in referrals on the previous year, but this was due to staff sickness.

Survivor Engagement Coordinator

Following a recommendation from my office, a new survivor engagement coordinator has started work at Gwent Police. The post is a first of its kind for a police force in Wales.

The role is ensuring a victim-centred approach is at the heart of Gwent Police's response to survivors of sexual abuse and domestic violence. The coordinator has established a sustainable survivor engagement framework, through which survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence can share their experiences.

Supporting all victims of crime is a fundamental priority within my Police and Crime Plan. The new coordinator post is helping us to ensure that we deliver that in an effective and inclusive way.

Victims Board:

In May, a Victims Board was created to ensure and scrutinise the effective delivery of consistent and good quality services for victims and witnesses. Chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable, it reviews current delivery and performance. Crucially, it also agrees any changes to the delivery of victim services. This is to ensure they meet the requirements set out within my Police and Crime Plan, Victims' Code of Practice and Ministry of Justice's Victims' Strategy.

The board has overseen considerable work to enhance services to victims including:

- Scrutinising communication and updates for victims;
- Establishing a performance monitoring process; and
- Examining victim satisfaction.

As a result, training has been delivered to Sergeants focusing on improving communication with victims. Victims who need additional support should now be referred to Connect Gwent as standard.

The board has commissioned a review of the end-to-end journey of a victim's involvement with Gwent Police. An options appraisal was due to be submitted in May 2020. This will provide alternatives to the ways in which victims are currently supported in order to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of service.

I remain responsible for monitoring and reporting criminal justice agencies' compliance with the key aspects of the Victims' Code to the Ministry of Justice. To support this, my office established and chairs the Victim Code Compliance Group. This is attended by Gwent Police, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS), Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

The group:

- Agrees data collection methods;
- Reviews compliance;
- Identifies good practice and areas for development;
- Coordinates multi-agency working to improve Victims' Code compliance; and

- Feeds compliance information, issues and development to Gwent Police Victims Board and the Gwent Criminal Justice Board.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV):

One in three women experience some form of violence or sexual abuse in their lifetime in Wales. In total, 11% of all crimes in Gwent are related to domestic abuse and more than half of the offences using weapons happen in the home.

VAWDASV causes significant harm to families, communities and, most of all, the victims themselves.

Specialist services supporting victims and survivors of VAWDASV are vital for both people who report to the police and those who do not. This year, I provided £300,000 to services supporting children, young people and adults.

In March, my office was also one of 17 commissioners’ offices to be successful in obtaining further funding from the Ministry of Justice for two independent sexual violence advocates.

I have made it a priority for Gwent Police to support victims and survivors of VAWDASV. We know that this is a significantly unreported crime and I would expect incidents to rise next year due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

Partnership working is essential in addressing VAWDASV and the Deputy Commissioner is an executive member of the Gwent Regional VAWDASV Partnership Board. This aims to ensure the most efficient and effective response to preventing serious harm caused by VAWDASV.

My office and I continue to work with Gwent Police to ensure the best response to victims of VAWDASV to members of the public and employees. Work this year has included reviewing the VAWDASV work-based policy. This now contains an additional section on the granting of special leave for employees who are victims of VAWDASV through a collaborative approach.

Gwent Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have achieved excellent results at court. Prosecution rates for domestic abuse, sexual offences and rape offences are higher than both national (England and Wales) and Welsh rates.

Offence type	National	Wales	Gwent
Domestic Abuse	77.5%	77.6%	82.8%
Rape	65.6%	62.3%	69.3%
Sexual Offences	83.2%	85.1%	89.4%

CASE STUDY:

My office teamed up with the Gwent VAWDASV Regional Team and Gwent Police to launch a joint campaign to highlight VAWDASV and encourage people experiencing it to seek help.

The ‘Don’t Suffer In Silence’ campaign encourages people to report via the Live Fear Free helpline and signposts people to Gwent Safeguarding’s

website for advice and information. The campaign is encouraging partners (particularly public sector and registered social landlords) to use the resources created and promote the campaign through their channels.

In total, 30 survivors informed its content and some of them took part in the actual campaign.

The campaign began a soft roll-out in February to tie-in with Sexual Violence Awareness Week and the promotion of the new survivor engagement co-ordinator post, with full rollout happening over the end of March and start of April.

PRIORITY 3 – COMMUNITY COHESION

Increasing understanding and respect among communities to improve equality, safety and well-being.

Number Of Hate Crime Incidents And Repeat Victims

	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020
Hate crime occurrence	1,005	1,138	967
Hate crime repeat victims	85	92	89
Hate crimes sent to Home Office	651	797	668

A sustained reduction in hate crime offences saw 16.2% fewer hate crimes reported compared to 2018/19. Recognising that reporting of hate crime is significantly affected by national and international events and news, it is challenging to understand the true picture. Work has been undertaken and will be continued by my office and Gwent Police along with local communities, to explore ways to encourage people to report.

Hate Crime and Community Tensions:

We continue to work with Gwent Police and partners to monitor hate crimes and incidents. My office and I regularly attend partnership meetings to review hate crime reporting and the response to victims and offenders. During the year, we also supported Gwent Police to ensure effective internal scrutiny processes and improvements.

My office is a member of Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board Cymru. This provides strategic oversight and influence of key issues across Wales. It also feeds into the development of relevant Welsh Government strategies such as the Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan 2017-2020. This contribution to Welsh strategy and policy development was recognised by the Deputy Minister Jane Hutt this year.

Towards the end of 2019/20, additional challenges linked to the outbreak of Covid-19 saw the potential for an increase in hate crime and tensions. This provided further opportunity to develop our engagement with partners and support our communities to stay safe during the lockdown period.

High Sheriff's Community Fund:

I made an award of £55,000 to the Gwent High Sheriff's Fund, which aims to provide a safer and better quality of life for people in Gwent. It does this by supporting community-based initiatives that reduce crime and improve community safety.

A participatory grant making event was held, where decision-making is devolved to the local community to support the initiatives that they feel offer the best solutions to the issues facing their community. The High Sheriff made 17 awards, totalling £76,025, with another nine organisations receiving a £500 donation for participation. A wide range of community organisations were supported across Gwent, including youth projects, community hubs, domestic abuse support, parent groups, art projects, dance sessions and a nature reserve.

Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel:

The Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel is co-ordinated by my office to provide independent review and feedback to Gwent Police on 'stop and search' and 'use of force'. This is to ensure police powers are used correctly in Gwent. Working with members of the Independent Advisory Group, the panel meets quarterly to examine body-worn camera footage, related performance data and 'stop and search' records.

During 2019/20, there were a number of successes, including:

- Improvements to the way in which the grounds for searches are recorded;
- Improved data recording due to the resolution of technological issues;
- Evidence of effective training in recording practice for new officers;
- Greater internal scrutiny of performance and outcomes; and
- Positive examples of engagement by officers captured on body-worn video.

During the year, we invited HMICFRS to attend panel meetings. Its feedback has supported improvement to our scrutiny function and process. We will continue to work closely with Gwent Police and HMICFRS to ensure an appropriate focus on continuous improvement and legitimacy.

Positive Impact Fund:

The Positive Impact Fund is designed to deliver short term positive outcomes for recipients and communities in Gwent.

In 2019/20, I made 10 awards, totaling £9,692.50. Funding was provided to help events such as volunteer awards, a domestic abuse conference and Maindee Festival. It also contributed to the ongoing good work of organisations that support policing, such as the Severn Area Rescue Association.

CASE STUDY:

I gave £1,000 from my Positive Impact Fund to Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA). Based out of Malpas fire station and crewed entirely by volunteers, it helps Gwent Police in missing person searches and incidents that occur along the Severn Estuary.

SARA provides valuable assistance to Gwent Police and the emergency services, and relies on volunteers who do an incredibly important job. The SARA lifeboat station in Newport costs about £20,000 every year to operate and the donation helped to cover the costs of maintaining boats, vehicles and equipment.

Strategic Equality Plan Update:

In April 2016, we published our first joint Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) with Gwent Police. The priorities within it are supported by two separate action plans aligned to and supporting the delivery of my Police and Crime Plan. They also recognise the needs and expectations of our diverse communities in Gwent.

The joint annual report for 2018/19 demonstrated how we performed against the equality objectives during the year. Key activities highlighted in the report focused on:

- Domestic abuse and violence against women;
- Scrutiny of 'stop and search' and 'use of force';
- Hate crime performance;
- Ensuring accessibility of the new police headquarters; and
- Supporting of the representative workforce strategy.

Work also began on developing a new SEP for 2020-2024. This included a review of the existing plan, plus internal and external stakeholder engagement. Draft objectives will be published early in 2020/21 ahead of a final SEP document.

Volunteer Schemes:

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme allows volunteers to attend police stations to check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held, and whether their rights and entitlements are being observed.

Throughout 2019/20, there were eight scheme volunteers who conducted 69 unannounced visits at various times in the day. This resulted in:

- 62% of detainees in custody during visiting periods accepting a visit by the ICVs; and
- 100% of issues identified by ICVs were addressed by the custody Sergeant at the time of visit.

Through this process, we can be confident that the appropriate arrangements are in place for detainees to receive their rights and entitlements and that the conditions in which they are held meet high standards.

Following the scheme's quality assurance framework assessment by the Independent Custody Visiting Association, our scheme retained its 'Code Compliant' status.

The Animal Welfare Scheme sees volunteers visit, observe and report on the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained and transported.

During the last year, 11 checks were carried out by eight volunteers. Outcomes from the visits recorded by my office were shared with Gwent Police to ensure that any issues or concerns raised by the volunteers were addressed.

I am satisfied that both these schemes continue to ensure that those in custody and our police dogs are kept in acceptable conditions.

Welsh Language Conference

My office has continued to work closely with Gwent Police in support of our shared commitment towards the provision of a bilingual service.

We have:

- Held regular meetings to oversee compliance and improvement;
- Published an annual Welsh language annual compliance report;
- Met with the Welsh Language Commissioner, Aled Roberts;
- Integrated our internal Welsh speakers and learners network within the existing staff support networks structure; and
- Ensured compulsory basic Welsh language sessions have been delivered to all staff.

In February, I was also pleased to support Gwent Police's 'Welsh – Our Language' conference, which celebrated Welsh language and culture as a part of everyday life.

PRIORITY 4 – TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Ensuring Gwent Police works to resolve anti-social behaviour (ASB), working closely with partner organisations to help address this issue effectively.

Number Of ASB Incidents

	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020
East LPA	7,597	4,781	4,856
West LPA	10,141	5,944	5,999
Total	17,738	10,725	10,855

The increase in ASB is linked to the Covid-19 lockdown at the end of 2019/20. Therefore, it is difficult to judge whether there is a true rise in incident numbers. Both the East and West LPAs saw similar patterns of reporting, which has resulted in an overall year-on-year increase of 1.2%. It is likely, however, that without the spike caused by Covid-19 that there would have been a decrease in the number of recorded ASB incidents. Gwent Police continues to work closely with partners to reduce ASB, using varying levels of intervention, particularly when it is linked to crime.

Positive Futures

Throughout the year 1,872 young people benefitted from the Positive Futures programme delivered by Newport Live. A youth inclusion programme that uses sport and activity to engage young people aged 10-18, it received £181,000 from my office in 2019/20.

Positive Futures delivers diversionary activities and alternative education to young people living in significantly deprived areas in Gwent, who are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and crime. Many of the young people attending have difficult family backgrounds. They also often lack positive role models, safe spaces and boundaries in their lives.

During the year, 37 weekly diversionary sessions were held. This was complemented by 16 reactive sessions, which were held specifically in response to instances of anti-social behaviour. Young people who regularly attend the sessions have seen outcomes including improved confidence, mental health, self-worth and resilience through making new friends. They have also experienced being part of a successful team and having positive role models in the staff.

In addition to the diversionary programme, a bespoke alternative education programme was delivered to 116 young people, totalling 9,164 hours of provision. While for many of the young people return to mainstream education is not possible due to being excluded or having severe barriers in relation to coping with the mainstream environment, eight were able to re-enter mainstream educational provision. Four took part in external placements and/or volunteering roles.

Participants saw outcomes including increased engagement in education, employment or training and improved life skills as a result. This is due to opportunities to volunteer, attend courses, achieve qualifications, and learn skills such as swimming, cooking and self-care coping mechanisms. Sport and physical

activity is offered as a hook to get young people enthused about their placement, and as a tool to help control emotions and behaviour.

CASE STUDY:

My office joined the team from Positive Futures for a five-a-side football tournament in Caldicot. Teams from Positive Futures projects across Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen competed to be crowned tournament champions and, following a day of high quality sport, culminating in victory for BME Sport Newport (over 16s winners) and Abergavenny LC (under 16s winners).

Safer Gwent and Regional Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator:

The regional anti-social behaviour coordinator is funded through my Safer Gwent fund. The coordinator leads on the Safer Gwent work programme for anti-social behaviour (ASB).

This year the coordinator introduced 'effective practice' groups in Gwent, where officers and partners can discuss difficult cases. They also allow them to share knowledge on the most effective way to deal with ASB and support victims. Through this work, the lack of mediation available to police and partners was highlighted. The coordinator therefore set up training for 14 Gwent practitioners and officers.

During the year, the Victims' Commissioner raised concerns nationally regarding supporting victims of ASB. This included a recommendation to review the community trigger process. A community trigger enables victims to require agencies to carry out a review of their response to the ASB they reported if they feel they did not get a satisfactory response.

A full review of the community trigger process was conducted in Gwent with the community safety leads and my office. While all five local authority areas were consistent in their approach and already meeting the Victims' Commissioner's recommendations, the profile of the trigger process needed raising. Clearer guidance and advertising about the process were therefore agreed by all parties. We expect more victims to utilise the trigger process, but this will be a positive development through improved information and awareness rather than an increase in issues.

A review of good practice across the five community safety hubs has taken place and a report will be written in May 2020 to enable shared learning. The review looked at all community safety matters that are discussed at hubs, not just ASB. This was to capture the wider picture of community safety across Gwent, while recognising that ASB and crime are often linked. A new Community Safety Coordinator will be in place for 2020/21 to support the hubs to take the recommendations forward.

During ASB Awareness Week, Gwent and Wales-wide campaigns were held. A week of activities highlighted examples of positive outcomes, while joint operations were held with Gwent Police, the five local authorities and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. A final showcase event was held on the last day.

CASE STUDY:

We have recently looked at the possibility of utilising the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act as an additional means of addressing organised criminality.

It was agreed to test the approach with a problematic individual who posed a significant risk to the community through his activities within an organised crime group.

The issues were discussed at a community safety hub meeting. A number of partners were able to identify the individual by cross-referencing their databases allowing evidence to be gathered and the local authority to take action against the male for the ASB. This impacted on his ability to be involved in organised crime.

PRIORITY 5 – EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Ensuring that Gwent Police deliver services that meet the priority needs of our communities.

Number Of 999 And 101 Calls

	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020
Total 999 Calls	74,693	83,269	81,290
Total 101 calls	214,576	221,235	199,082
101 Answered	175,441	181,415	180,407
101 Abandoned	39,068	39,847	18,607

Both demand from 999 and 101 calls dropped this year. It is not known whether the implications of Covid-19 will have an influence on demand going forward. These reductions could present both a positive and negative picture, and further analysis is needed.

Social media now plays a massive role in how Gwent Police interacts with the public. It introduced its social media desk in December 2018, which provides a service 24/7 through Facebook and Twitter. The desk manages reports of crimes and incidents, provides advice, and is proactive in reviewing the response to appeals for information. The desk also publishes community information with the intent of reducing the demand on the call centre. Introduction of the desk was supported by an uplift of five staff. This was reviewed in December 2019 and extended to March 2021.

Feedback shows that its introduction has been well-received by the public. Regular surveys are undertaken and the results of the 2019 survey showed that 27% of respondents would not have contacted Gwent Police to report their issue if the social media desk was not available, 93% of respondents would recommend the service to others, and 94% of respondents stated that they would use the service again.

Complaints and the Public Response Unit

Prior to its move to Gwent Police's Professional Standards Department (PSD), the Public Response Unit was based within my office for the first ten months of the financial year. During this time, it dealt with and resolved 238 cases of dissatisfactions, supporting the public of Gwent to get answers to areas of concern and stopping them escalating into complaints. This reduced demand on Gwent Police and also helped ensure public confidence in policing was maintained.

During 2019/20, two complaints file inspections took place. This involves a list of closed complaints from a six-month period being dip sampled by my office to ensure that the correct processes were followed by PSD. Any issues identified are queried with PSD, which provides a response. These are collated and monitored year by year to ensure the same issues are not repeated. A decision log is then drafted and published to the OPCC website. On both occasions, all files inspected were found to be in order. This process ensures that the public can be confident that their complaints are being dealt with appropriately.

Joint Audit Committee:

The Joint Audit Committee (JAC) provides independent assurance of risk, internal control, scrutiny and oversight of financial performance reporting processes for both Gwent Police and my office. In July, it published its annual report for 2018/19 alongside the statement of accounts. These provided reassurance of the robustness of the work undertaken by the JAC during the year.

During 2019/20, the JAC altered its meetings to provide a greater focus on risk management. A detailed review of its terms of reference was also undertaken to ensure compliance with new Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. This ensures the JAC is meeting its statutory requirements and is providing value to the work of my office and Gwent Police.

People:

We finalised and began the delivery of our business plan, which sets out in more detail how the office is delivering my Police and Crime Plan. It is primarily intended as an internal document and is an operational tool to enable planning and delivery.

The business plan is a 'live' document and changes over the year are expected. If new significant pieces of work are required throughout the period of this plan, my management board will consider whether they should supersede current projects.

The business plan does not provide full details of activities that are considered to be business as usual. As such, this document does not provide a comprehensive overview of the activity that will be undertaken by my office. The intention of this document is to outline areas of work that will be prioritised and driven forward.

This is complemented by the introduction of performance development reviews (PDRs) that help to make everyone work smarter. The environment in which we work is constantly changing, so it is essential that we evolve with it to ensure we deliver the best possible service to the communities of Gwent. The PDR process is helping to ensure everyone works more efficiently and effectively, while highlighting opportunities for professional development and learning.

Police and Crime Panel

We have continued to work productively with the Police and Crime Panel throughout the year. The panel maintains a regular check and balance on my performance on behalf of residents.

The panel approved my appointment of Pam Kelly as new Chief Constable and I reduced the rise of council tax precept following conversations with the panel.

My team and I have continued to work productively with the panel as a whole and the sub-groups for finance and performance. We have agreed to establish an estates sub-group to examine our estates strategy going forward.

We arranged a series of informative talks and demonstrations for the panel in 2019/20, which highlighted the pressures facing Gwent Police and some of the

hidden aspects of policing. We also invited them to police headquarters for a day-in-the-life experience of front-line policing.

Resources:

We have continued to invest significantly in policing, with more than 400 new officers and 160 new posts than three years ago. Our establishment figure at year-end was 1,323 police officers and 122 PCSOs.

Throughout the year, our investment in technology continued to be rolled out to staff, with more officers receiving laptops and phones. All frontline police officers have access to work systems wherever they are and can enter details and pick up information to best respond to incidents in real time. By investing in this technology and equipping officers with it means they can receive calls, collect evidence, file reports and access data on neighbourhood ASB hotspots at any time. This means they spend less time in offices and more time out in their communities. It allows police officers and PCSOs to quickly capture and share information, making them more efficient and effective.

This technology also means staff have been encouraged to work in an agile manner and the importance of this was highlighted at the end of the financial year with the Covid-19 pandemic. It has allowed people needing to shield or self-isolate to continue working, including answering 101 calls.

There was also investment in Taser this year, via additional funding from UK Government. This only covered the cost of the equipment, so we have had to pay for training and associated costs. However, the funding allowed Gwent Police to ensure it has sufficient equipment to train an additional 80 officers in the use of Taser, bringing the total to 320 Taser-trained officers by the end of March 2020.

Construction started on Gwent Police's new headquarters this year. This is one of the key aspects of my estates strategy to improve policing facilities in Gwent. It will be home to the control room, which is the first point of contact for calls to the force, alongside major crime teams, training functions, support services, senior management and the OPCC. This development in Llantarnam is a major step forward in delivering a modern police service to the people of Gwent.

Once complete, the new headquarters will play a key role in ensuring the well-being and training needs of policing staff in Gwent are met, to help them protect and reassure the communities they serve. The current headquarters in Croesyceiliog is almost 50 years old and needs substantial investment. All viable possibilities for staying at the current site, along with purchasing existing buildings, were assessed, but I have been reassured that building a new headquarters in Llantarnam offers the best value for money.

CASE STUDY:

The new HQ will cost £32million, which is coming from a specific reserve fund. The annual running costs of the new headquarters will be £1.1million less per year than the current costs of running the existing HQ.

The new building will occupy about half the site footprint of the existing headquarters and will provide agile work space for about 480 police officers and staff. It is expected that the new facility will be completed at the end of 2021.

ENGAGEMENT:

Engagement activities were planned throughout the year to provide as diverse a range of opportunities as possible, so that a wide selection of residents from across Gwent had an opportunity to participate. The aim was to support community inclusion and involvement by providing opportunities for people and organisations to link in with me and my office.

In addition to the smaller engagement activities, walkabouts and events that the office took part in throughout the year, there were three sets of large-scale public engagement in 2019/20. These focused on the summer events held in communities across Gwent, surveying people on precept, and asking people their views in relation to the Strategic Equality Plan.

Throughout the summer, my office and I attended more than 20 community events across Gwent, engaging with more than 7,500 people face-to-face. Each of these was provided with some crime prevention advice and crime prevention items including anti-skimming card holders, crime prevention booklets and purse bells. In addition to this, it also:

- Conducted 13 referrals to the PRU, Connect Gwent or partners;
- Surveyed 234 people; and
- Signed up 70 new people to the ebulletin.

By being active in Gwent communities, it allowed us to explain policing pressures to residents and direct them to other services where appropriate. Sometimes these were to other public bodies, but often they were to police support services, notably Connect Gwent.

This approach is supported by the Police Foundation's report, 'Understanding the Public's Priorities for Policing', which evidences that the more people know about policing priorities, the more they support policing in their communities. My office was involved in this national research and four community workshops were held in Gwent as part of it.

As it is my responsibility to set the level of precept for Gwent every year, I again ran a robust engagement programme. The precept engagement ran for 13 weeks from 14 October 2019 to 12 January 2020. Six of these weeks occurred during the pre-election period.

The main focus of this year's surveying was face-to-face engagement. This approach is part of a wider drive by me and my office to increase public awareness and understanding of my role and responsibilities. We encourage people to give their views on policing, and establish and grow effective working relationships with partners and stakeholders.

The approach of sustained face-to-face engagement allowed consistent pulse-testing of public opinion on the subject matter. It also allowed greater visibility and was a significantly more efficient and holistic approach than in previous years. In total, we attended 25 precept engagement events across Gwent. Of these, four dedicated events were delivered in each local authority. We attended five additional events that we were invited to. Seven engagement events were held on Saturdays.

In total, my office and I carried out 145 hours of engagement as part of the precept surveying. In addition to this, surveys were undertaken at eight summer events, meaning an additional 40 hours of engagement.

Combined, this resulted in 1,730 people answering the precept question, "Would you support the principle of a £2 a month increase on your council tax (based on a band D property) to maintain policing provision at current levels?". In total, 66% of respondents said yes, 22% no and 12% unsure.

It was agreed, prior to the launch of the survey that a representative sample size of 600 would be used. Prior to last year, the OPCC had always struggled to achieve a representative sample, only achieving it twice (606 in 2018/19 and 1,875 in 2019/20).

Of the 1,730 respondents, 1,086 people completed the survey at one of the public engagement events, with 644 people choosing to complete the survey online. This means that this year's precept survey not only achieved a representative sample of respondents, but it had more than the required number of respondents both online and a significantly better number face-to-face.

The majority of responses received were in English, with the exception of 37 in Welsh. Last year there were 21 responses in Welsh and the previous year only one.

We also carried out community engagement in March on our new Strategic Equality Plan (see above). As part of this, we asked residents if they agreed with the draft objectives. To achieve this, we contacted 58,000 residents via email, as well as sharing multiple times on our social media channels. An extensive list of Gwent-based support groups were also contacted, including groups focusing on race, disability, age, LGBTQ+, young people, mental health, Welsh language and volunteers. We also held face-to-face engagement, but this was cut short due to Covid-19.

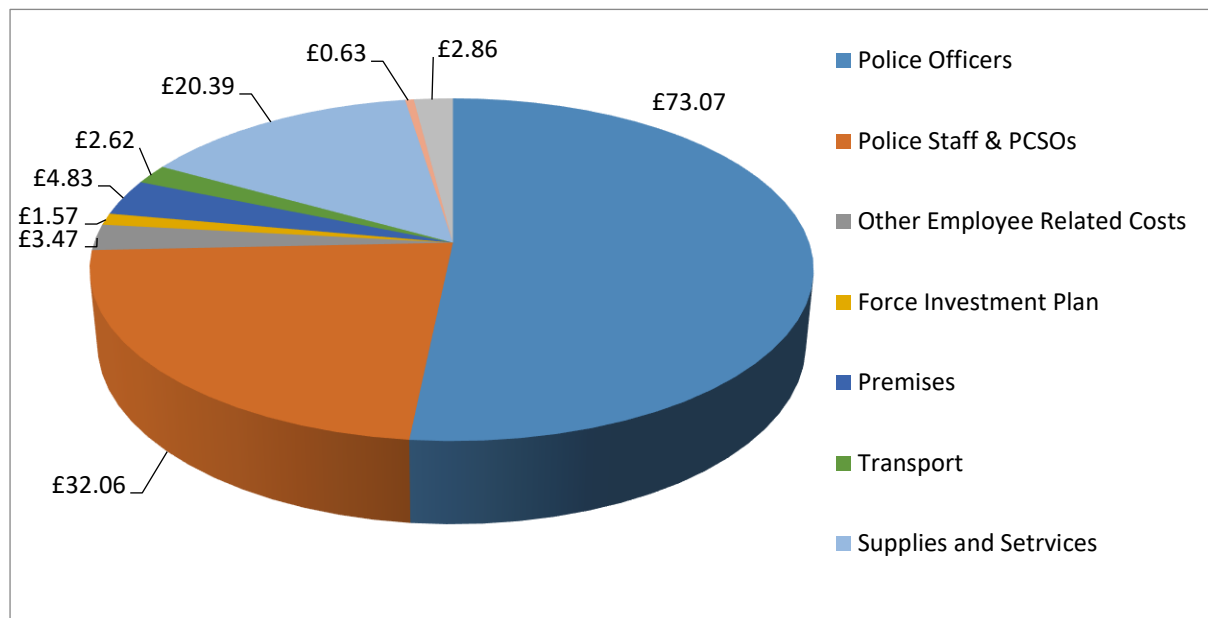
FINANCE:

I receive regular reports from Gwent Police to help ensure that we have a police service that is value for money. This year I have:

- Agreed a budget for Gwent Police for 2020/21 of £154.54m (£13m more than the previous year);
- Set the council tax increase at 6.82%;
- Created a capital budget for 2020/21 of £26.37m; and
- Continued to monitor Gwent Police's service improvement work, which has delivered £50.77m of cashable efficiency savings since 2008/09.

Setting the Budget:

For 2019/20, the following budgets were set for policing services in Gwent:



At the end of 2019/20, the overall spend on policing services in Gwent produced a small surplus of £0.01m (0.07%) against the overall budget of £141.51m.

In addition, the following capital budgets were set in Gwent:

- Estate - £22.3m
- Vehicles - £1m
- Information and Communication Systems - £0.2m

The overall capital spend on policing services in Gwent was £9.9m against the overall capital budget of £23.5m, due to expenditure on significant capital estate schemes (such as the replacement HQ) slipping into the next financial year.

Ensuring Value for Money:

I have ensured that my office and Gwent Police have delivered value for money, while ensuring residents have an effective and efficient police service, by:

- Annually benchmarking costs via HMICFRS value for money profiles;
- Receiving an assurance judgement from internal auditors that we have adequate and effective management, control and governance processes;
- Receiving an assurance statement of 'generally satisfactory' from Torfaen County Borough Council for IT services provided by SRS;
- Publishing my Annual Governance Statement, which evidences the effectiveness of our governance; and
- Ensuring the Wales Audit Office audits my statement of accounts annually.

CASE STUDY:

This year, I increased the council tax precept for Gwent residents by 6.82%, meaning the average household in Gwent paid £1.45 extra per month for its policing service.

As well as the financial case put forward by Gwent Police and recommendations from the Gwent Police and Crime Panel, we also carried out extensive engagement across Gwent. More than 66 per cent of respondents indicated they were content to support a precept rise of up to £2.

The extra funding allowed Gwent Police to maintain its previous investment in recruitment, and in priority areas such as child protection, domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault, hate crime, and serious and organised crime.

MEETING STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS:

My main responsibility is to ensure that Gwent has an efficient and effective policing service. One of the ways in which I do that is by holding the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Gwent Police. My office and I do this on a daily basis, while I also hold a quarterly Strategy and Performance Board in public.

A Board Assurance Framework is being developed to assist in identifying where we meet our statutory duties, as well any areas of compliance that need improvement.

I ensure that my office is accessible, transparent and provides the public with the information they require to build their confidence in the work being undertaken. The key statutory areas for compliance are detailed below.

HMICFRS Inspection Responses:

I am required to respond to the Home Secretary on any HMICFRS inspection reports prepared under Section 55 of the Police Act 1996. During 2019/20, I responded to seven reports providing information on how Gwent Police would address any recommendations, but also commending positive work. Responding to the reports provides information to the public on the performance of policing, not just locally but nationally as well. It also allows the Home Office and HMICFRS to determine future areas of inspection and if any further action may be needed.

Data Protection:

We have a Data Protection Officer who monitors compliance and advises us on our statutory obligations. It is a statutory requirement under data protection legislation to ensure all staff receive annual training. We completed this in February, in partnership with Dyfed Powys and North Wales OPCCs.

One data breach was reported in 2019/20, but was not deemed necessary for referral to the ICO.

Three Subject Access Requests were received, but all were requesting information held by Gwent Police. They were informed of the error and were provided with the correct contact details.

The Retention and Disposal Schedule was reviewed during 2019/20. Work will begin during 2020/21 to review all electronic and hard copy information held, to ensure we are complying with our requirements under the Data Protection Act.

An annual report regarding the performance of the OPCC in relation to Data Protection will be developed in 2020/21.

Freedom Of Information Act

During the year, there were 28 requests received under the Freedom of Information Act. The compliance rate within the 20 working day response period was 96% (27 of 28). This was due to one email request being overlooked.

Key themes were in relation to finance and policy. Finance is a recurring theme annually and generally covers salaries and office costs. It took 10 days on average

to respond to a request. No appeals were received. A FOI Annual Report for 2019/20 has been published on my website that provides further information.

My office maintains a publication scheme that commits us to making information available to the public as part of our normal business activities and supports the information we are required to publish under the Specified Information Order 2011. This is monitored by my Head of Assurance and Compliance, who confirms compliance with these requirements during 2019/20.

Transparency Award

There is a large amount of information that we are required to publish under the Specified Information Order, Freedom of Information Act and other legislation. Therefore, I am pleased to report that for the fifth year in a row my office has achieved a national award for transparency. This is due to key information being published on my website in an accessible, navigable and transparent format. The award was given by Comparing Police and Crime Commissioners (known as CoPaCC), an independent body that monitors police governance.

Changes to the Police Complaints System

From 1 February 2020, the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020 introduced the legal requirement for Commissioners to become the relevant body for reviews (formerly known as appeals) requested by the public into recorded complaints that meet a specific set of criteria.

The complaint review role was previously undertaken by Gwent Police's Head of Professional Standards. As a result of these changes and to ensure that the reviews are as independent as possible, I decided that the Public Response Unit, which had previously sat within my office and dealt with low level dissatisfactions, would move to the Professional Standards Department within Gwent Police.

This also ensured there was clarity for the public that there was a single department that they needed to contact to report a dissatisfaction or a complaint.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

At the time of writing this annual report, the entire nation and most of the world is affected by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

These are unprecedented times and we are seeing unprecedented measures; not only to slow the spread of this disease, but to protect the health care system and our communities at large. This created a new set of challenges for all us, both in terms of our private and professional lives.

I would like to again reaffirm my on-going thanks to all police officers, staff, healthcare workers, local authorities and other partners who have been working around the clock to help tackle this.

It hasn't been easy for our officers, who have been on the frontline dealing with the enforcement of the lockdown.

My office has had to change many of its working practices to ensure that we still meet our statutory duties and deliver my priorities, albeit in innovative and different ways.

Covid-19 also impacted on the planned Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May, which have now been postponed until May 2021. I want to reassure all our communities that I remain committed to ensuring that the best police service is delivered for them over the next 12 months.

The current Police and Crime Plan will now end in 2022, a review will be undertaken to ensure that it remains fit for purpose until that time.