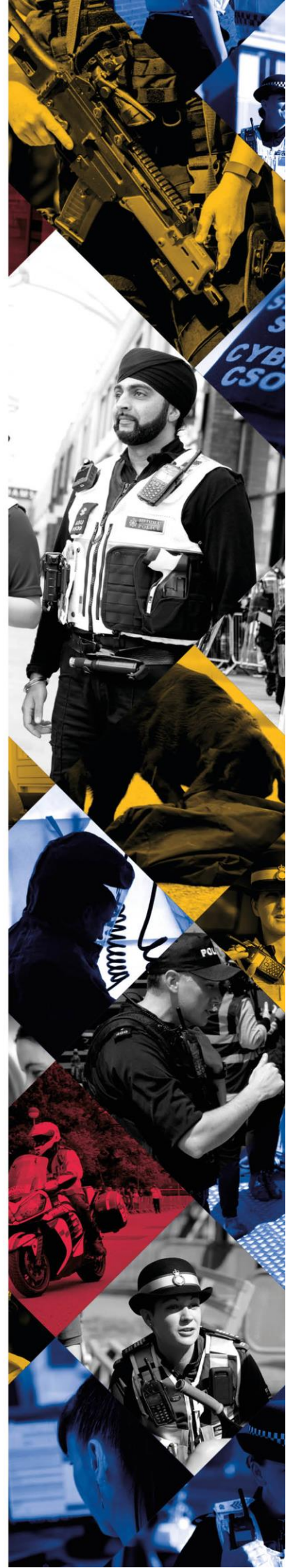




Strategy and Performance Board

Chief Constable's Update Report

November 2021



1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

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

2. OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

2.1 Violence against women and girls

Significant work is underway within Gwent Police in response to the critical issue of violence against women and girls, made all the more important in light of the horrific circumstances surrounding the death of Sarah Everard which has shocked the public and policing alike. It is vital that women and girls feel safe in our communities, and it is even more important that the public have confidence in their officers to protect them from harm. This important issue will be subject of a more detailed update in this Strategy and Performance Board, however the creation of an internal Gold Strategy and Group, a pan-Wales Taskforce and soon to be published National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Strategy serve to illustrate the commitment and intent that policing in Gwent, Wales and across the UK have pledged to tackling this issue.

2.2 Security of Elected Members

Since my last update we have been shocked and saddened by the tragic murder of David Amess MP in Essex. Gwent Police has strong relationships with its elected members both Members of Parliament and Senedd Members. Considerable work has taken place since to review and ensure their safety and to support elected members, their families, and their vital work for communities. Gwent Police has a coordinator at Chief Superintendent level overseeing our response and on-going monitoring of these issues in line with the requirements of Operation Bridger (the UK-wide operation in place to deal with the security of MPs, which began in 2016 following the murder of Jo Cox MP).

2.3 First Point of Contact (FPOC)

Technology:

The department is in the process of procuring a voice analytics capability which will help understand the nature of our demand and will help shape future transformation plans. Upgrades have also recently been delivered to our command and control and incident management software systems which will improve data quality across the organisation.



This autumn our Social Media Desk changed its name to the 'Digital Contact Desk' to better reflect the role the team undertake in managing all aspects of digital contact made to Gwent Police. On average, this vital function deals with over 450 incoming Social Media messages per day.

Performance & Demand

The late summer and autumn months have seen well documented reports of increased pressures across all emergency services. Gwent Police is committed to a partnership approach in managing this demand and the Superintendent in charge of First Point of Contact represents Gwent Police at a coordination group that seeks to implement solutions to alleviate these increased pressures on services.

A 'Winter Pressures Group' has been set up in order to deal with the expected increase in demand across all agencies over the coming months.

A range of indicators have been developed across blue light services to better understand the current situation and the areas of focus required to problem solve the issues. A senior 'blue light professionals' meeting is also held weekly to focus on adverse incidents, opportunities for joint working and the examination of lessons learnt.

Our mental health team continue to be an invaluable asset to Gwent Police and our communities. The BBC recently attended our control room to visit the team, resulting in a news piece which outlined this innovative approach taken by Gwent Police. On average the team prevent over 120 police deployments per month.

2.4 Custody

Our custody and criminal justice staff work with professionalism to ensure that our communities are safeguarded, whilst ensuring that individuals kept in our detention receive appropriate care and support. Recent work within this department has seen:

- Refurbishment works and CCTV enhancements at Ystrad Mynach Custody Unit and the now temporary closure of Newport Central Custody Unit for refurbishments at that suite also.
- An internal weekly and monthly newsletter that ensures timely and concise updates to staff on changes to process, legislation and practice. Work is on-going to expand this to a forcewide custody newsletter, that would adapt this principle raise awareness amongst frontline officers and staff who use the custody suites about the impact any changes may have on them.
- We have also introduced a wellbeing programme which sees monthly wellbeing meetings conducted with staff to monitor and support them in what can be a challenging role and environment.



2.5 Criminal Justice

- Our Body Worn Video evidence system now has improved connectivity into our Digital Evidence Management System (DEMS) allowing the sharing of this vital evidence source to prosecutors and partners with ease.
- Digital Interview Recordings will soon feed into the DEMS with work also on-going to synchronise our crime and case management systems with the DEMS to increase opportunities for automation and efficiency.
- The DEMS project continues to operate as a collaboration with South Wales Police through our joint Digital Services Division.
- Work is on-going with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service to deliver the 'Common Platform' project which will pave the way for increased ease of digital evidence sharing between Police, CPS and the courts.

2.6 Local policing

Our frontline officers, both uniformed and detective resources, continue to deliver exceptional results whilst managing significant daily demand, all whilst often putting themselves in harm's way to protect our communities.

Gwent Police leads a collaborative piece of work on behalf of the Welsh 'Joint Emergency Services Group' that has seen a Gwent Police analyst deployed to collate and report on data relating to assaults against emergency workers. This work produces a bi-annual report, the second of which was published this autumn and covered the period January 2021-June 2021. The report found that across Wales, 1,365 assaults against emergency workers occurred during that six-month period, 29% of which caused injury to the victim. The monthly average of emergency worker assaults across Wales increased from 210 in the 12 months to June 2020, to 229 in the 12 months to June 2021 with assaults against police being the most prevalent across the services.

In terms of investigations, just some examples from our local teams include:

- The conviction of a suspect for burglary and criminal damage (domestic related against his ex-wife) where weapons were involved. The suspect received a 16-month custodial sentence and a 10 year restraining order to safeguard the victim.
- A 4-year custodial sentence for a suspect responsible for a knife-point robbery that took place within the home of a vulnerable female.



- An investigation into a serious sexual assault that left the victim with significant injuries for which the suspect was convicted and jailed for two years and four months and ordered to register as a sex offender for 10 years.
- An excellent example of partnership working, safeguarding and sensitive victim management, involving the arrest of a male suspected of committing multiple sexual offences whilst in a position of trust.

2.7 Operational Support

Road Safety is an incredibly important issue and keeping people safe on our roads is a key focus of many colleagues within our Operational Support department.

The team recently began an initiative titled 'Through the Eyes of a Child' which saw a fascinated young boy (aged 9) spend the day with our Safety Camera Unit. This day of engagement allowed questions to be answered, a visit around our vans and speed monitoring equipment and will lead to a talk to peers in his school about his experience and the key safety messages shared. This is crucial early intervention initiative which will soon be repeated with other children across Gwent.

Presentations have also been delivered to students at colleges in Torfaen and Caerphilly focussing on the 'Fatal Five' (careless driving, drink and drug driving, not wearing a seatbelt, using a mobile phone and speeding). The presentation was aimed at students who had either recently passed their test, were learning to drive, or were thinking about learning to drive. Numerous requests from other schools and colleges have since been received to hear the presentation which (from feedback) has changed the mindset of students in relation to the dangers that driving can present and the wider impact that inappropriate driving can have on families, friends and loved ones.

'Op Snap' continues to go from strength to strength and allows members of the public to submit dashcam evidence of dangerous and anti-social driving for action to be taken against the minority of drivers who choose to put others at risk on our roads. Over the last 3 months, over 450 educational warning letters have been issued to offending drivers, in addition to 76 Notices of Intended Prosecution (leading to driver awareness courses, fixed penalties, or court appearances).



2.8 Organised Crime

Our determination to respond to serious and organised crime has led to several recent successful operations including:

- An operation involving an organised crime group operating in the Caerphilly area - responsible for offences of handling stolen goods, illegal dog breeding and supplying controlled drugs. A multi-agency operation led to twelve arrests, the recovery of drugs and cash and has seen suspects imprisoned for a combined total of more than 37 years.
- Operation Empire involved 10 suspects who had conspired to supply over £1m pounds worth of cocaine during a four-month period. Their trial concluded in July with sentencing set for December 2021.
- Operation Airbrush – disrupted an organised crime group based in Newport who were distributing wholesale quantities of high-grade cocaine and amphetamine. A day of enforcement took place on 15th September 2021 and involved warrants at several addresses in Newport and Liverpool. Eight suspects were arrested and 30kg of amphetamine paste was recovered. £200,000 worth of jewellery was confiscated during searches of the Newport addresses. The head of the organised crime group attempted to flee however was soon located by a police helicopter. He has been charged and remanded for conspiracy to supply multi kilos of cocaine.
- Images of the amphetamine and some of the jewellery seized are included below:



2.9 Modern Day Slavery (MDS) and Exploitation teams

- Our MDS team have created a short film in partnership with our Next Generation Team aimed at preventing Child Sexual Exploitation. This is being delivered to all children in education across Wales.
- A 'Cuckoo Watch' initiative has been established aimed at protecting vulnerable people from Organised Crime Groups who sometimes take control of the homes of vulnerable victims to further their drug supply or sexual exploitation enterprises. A partner referral system has been established that allows agencies such as Housing Associations to flag concerns about potential victims so that safeguarding and enforcement action can be taken.
- The team recently took part in an 'intensification week' that focussed on the organised sexual exploitation of women and girls. As part of this initiative the MDS team used an analytical tool to identify potential victims. This approach has since been shared nationally by our Regional MDS Co-ordinator as an example of good practice.
- Our local exploitation teams have also continued to deliver excellent results and strive to safeguard some of the most vulnerable people within our communities. Several investigations continue in relation to sexual exploitation, drugs supply and the exploitation of vulnerable adults. The teams also work closely with specialist advisors and other law enforcement agencies to ensure our response is coordinated and robust.
- Our Heroin and Crack Action Area Coordinator has also delivered training to frontline staff on the identification of county lines and criminal exploitation, the associated risks and how to manage investigations. A diversion project is also underway with St Giles Trust with a view to conduct work within our custody units to help 'break the cycle' and prevent re-offending for children and young people who may be at risk of exploitation.

2.10 Financial Crime

Our Financial Crime Unit seeks to safeguard the vulnerable and deny criminals access to the gains of their offending. The unit has seen some significant results and since the beginning of this financial year have processed:

- 60 civil detention orders totalling £1,131,905
- 29 civil forfeiture orders totalling £651,615
- 43 confiscation orders totalling £263,022

Gwent Police continues to hold the best fraud detection rate nationally and a significant enabler of this success is the work undertaken by our Fraud Triage team, who scrutinise all referrals / logs coming into the force and



provide advice and investigation plans to our officers. The team have conducted over 700 such engagements this financial year alone.

Our performance and approach in this area has attracted the attention of the City of London Police and many other forces who are keen to follow our processes.

2.11 Cybercrime and Police Online Investigation Team

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

- The creation of awareness and guidance documents that have been shared with our local authority partners to improve safeguarding procedures. The documents increase awareness of the POLIT and its procedures and this work has now seen the appointment of dedicated single points of contact within the local authorities to improve information sharing.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services has recently signposted other forces to Gwent Police's POLIT as an example of best practice.
- A recent warrant identified the viewing of indecent images of children online and a suspect was arrested. Some excellent investigative work led to the discovery of 'first generation' images which enabled the team to immediately safeguard the suspect's children and allow the process to begin of working with them to provide support and gather evidence.

2.12 People Services and Learning and Development

- Our commitment to delivering against Operation Uplift continues (UK Government pledge of 20,000 additional officers) and despite the challenges presented to the recruitment team due to the COVID pandemic, our Year 1 objectives have been achieved with praise received from the Home Office on our approach. Year 2 is on track with 45 student officers having recently commenced employment at the beginning of October. Recruitment campaigns have already taken place to fill further intakes scheduled for January and March 2022.
- The Welsh Government have promised funding for an additional 20 PCSOs and a Police Community Support Officer recruitment campaign is currently open to bring in a new cohort in January 2022.



- 15 apprentices also joined Gwent Police in September gaining qualifications in the following areas: Business Administration, Public Service, Digital and Facilities. Furthermore, a full class of new Special Constables began training in October.
- Our work to promote a representative workforce has also been recognised by the central Operation Uplift team with 7 candidates from ethnic minorities due to join the force in our January 2022 intake, and 6 candidates due to join who are supported with a disability or neurodiverse condition. Our Positive Action team continue to drive our ambitions in this area and have engaged the public across all five local authority areas delivering recruitment events in town centres, colleges, and community settings. The percentage of female officers within Gwent Police is also continuing to rise and currently stands at above the national average.
- The team continue to make significant progress on the critical issue of wellbeing; led by a 3-year strategic wellbeing plan. Recent updates include the development of a Wellbeing Toolkit containing over 40 documents for officers, staff and managers. Two new Wellbeing Specialists have also been recruited to the force and are working to target specific areas of the business, for example, custody and public protection, by holding focus groups, and delivering training. In order to help deal with anticipated winter pressures, our flu vaccination campaign began in October and will be followed by a Wellbeing Winter Event launching in late November.
- The focus on wellbeing is critical to supporting officers and staff. With this in mind we have a peer review of our Occupational Health agenda planned by Oscar Kilo (National Police Wellbeing Service).
- Our commitment to delivering against Operation Uplift continues (UK Government pledge of 20,000 additional officers) and despite the challenges

2.13 New Headquarters

- I am delighted to inform the Strategy and Performance Board that we are soon to implement a phased move to our new headquarters. This will begin shortly with a formal opening of the building planned for the summer of 2022 once all departments are embedded in this exciting, sustainable and cost saving working environment.



3. EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Joint Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.
- 3.2 In preparing this report, consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

4. RISK

- 4.1 None

5. PUBLIC INTEREST

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

6. REPORT AUTHOR

- 6.1 Insp Robin Fuller

7. LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

- 7.1 Chief Constable Pam Kelly

8. ANNEXES

- 8.1 None



9. CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

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

9.2 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain

Signature: 

Date: 17.11.21

