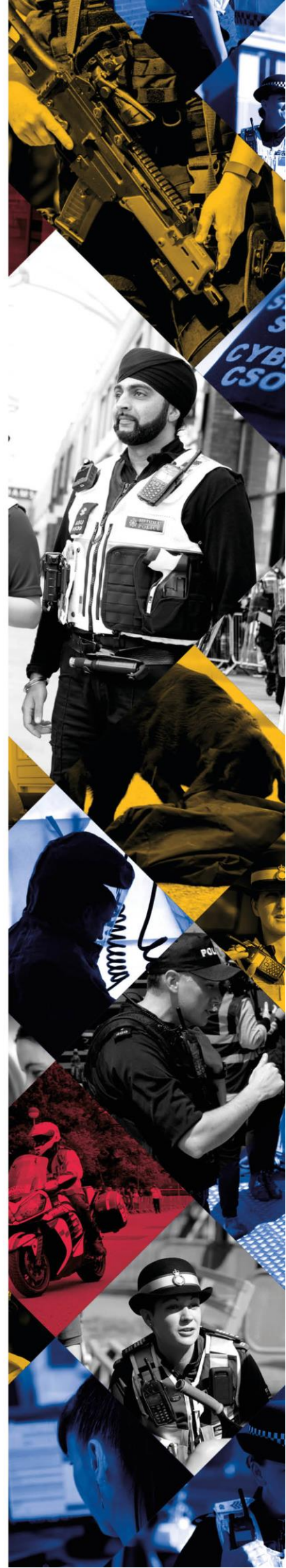




Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
Office of Chief Constable

Connect Gwent Annual Performance Report 2020 - 21

7th June 2021



1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for monitoring and information.
- 1.2 There are no recommendations made requiring a decision.

2. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Connect Gwent is a multi-agency victim support service that aims to provide a range of services to people impacted by crime to support them to cope and recover. Connect Gwent is made up of externally commissioned support services and Gwent Police teams and personnel. Commissioned support services and the Connect Gwent Coordinator are funded by the OPCC via the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Victim Services Grant.

Connect Gwent receives referrals from multiple sources. Following receipt of referral Connect Gwent personnel will attempt to contact the individual. If successful contact is made, a needs assessment will be completed and any required support will be offered as appropriate, this may be an instance one off support (e.g. providing information) or ongoing support (e.g. emotional and practical support).

Being a multi-agency services allows those being supported 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.

External commissioned services within Connect Gwent are:

Age Cymru Gwent – An Older Person's Support Worker who provides specialist support to victims over the age of 50.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – A Mental Health Nurse who provides specialist mental health and wellbeing support, including supported access to community health services.

Umbrella Cymru – provides specialist support to people who require support relating to their gender or sexual identity.

- Umbrella Cymru also currently provide the Interim Children and Young People Victim Service which provides specialist support to children and young people impacted by crime.

Victim Support – Provide a range of services / teams:

- **Victim Contact Team** who complete the initial intake and assessment functions on behalf of Connect Gwent
- **Victim Support and Engagement Team** – who provide and required ongoing support



- **Domestic Abuse Case Worker**

Gwent Police personnel and teams within Connect Gwent are:

- Connect Gwent Coordinator
- Survivor Engagement Coordinator
- NICHE Officer
- Witness Care Unit
- Telephone Survey Team

This report will detail the performance of the **externally commissioned services**.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1

Connect Gwent and Gwent Police's wider victim services and support have been subject to a Business Change review of how Gwent Police supports victims of crime during their journey through the criminal justice system.

The review resulted in a business case being submitted that proposed a restructure of Gwent Police's victim services and how we support victims through their criminal justice system. The main aspect of the business case to transfer the intake and assessment element of Connect Gwent from Victim Support to a newly established Gwent Police staffed Victim Care Unit (VCU). In addition to the intake and assessment functions the VCU will also have responsibility for maintaining regular contact with victims throughout the investigation, ensuring they receive the information they are entitled to under the Victims Code of Practice and act as a central point of contact for victims contacting Gwent Police in relation to an ongoing investigation.

The business case was approved by the Service Improvement Board in December 2020. The VCU partially went live on the 1st April 2021 and will be fully launched in July 2021.

The below presentation provides an overview of the VCU and subsequent changes and benefits to Connect Gwent, Gwent Police and victims in Gwent.



VCU%20Overview.ppt

3.2

Connect Gwent Performance Information 2020 – 2021

Referral Information:

Referral Data, presented below, is provided by Victim Support who provided the intake and assessment functions of Connect Gwent in 2020/21. However, referral figures for the other partner agencies within Connect Gwent are included in a separate table below. They have not been amalgamated as this would lead to double counting of referrals.

Referrals received: 25357

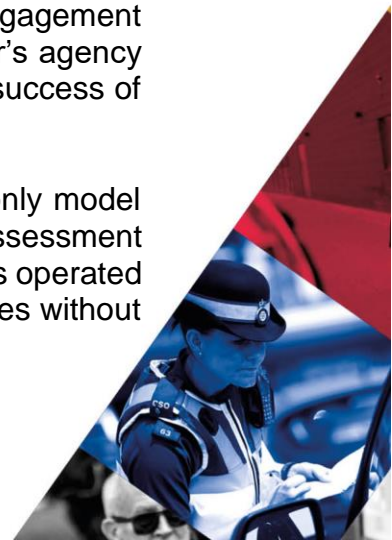
Referral Source:

Referral Source	No. Referrals	% of Referrals
Gwent Police	23179	91%
Other Police Force	172	1%
Self	215	1%
Other Agency	1791	7%

Crime Type	Number of Referrals	% of Referrals
Criminal Damage & Arson	3929	15%
Fraud	1721	7%
Sexual offences	310	1%
Theft	3482	14%
Violence against the person	10358	41%
Other	5557	22%

91% of referrals were received from Gwent Police. Engagement and communication activities were planned for this financial year, with the aim of increasing the number of self-referrals and referrals from other agencies as these referrals are made with the knowledge that support is required. Whereas referrals from Gwent Police are automated and therefore the victim may not require any support. This work did not go ahead as planned this year due to COVID as many outreach mechanisms such as events did not go ahead. There will be ongoing communications and engagement throughout 2021 in order to increase the number of self-referrals. This year's agency and self-referral rates will be used as the benchmark and measure for the success of communication and engagement work over this year.

For the financial year 2021/22 Connect Gwent have moved to a consent only model meaning that victims are referred to support agencies following a needs assessment to understand if support is required. Whereas previously Connect Gwent has operated an implied consent model therefore, victims were referred to support agencies without



a need to so being identified. The implied consent model resulted in only 3% engaging in ongoing support. By moving to a consent model, it will allow support services to target their resources at those that require support. This change will result in smaller numbers of victims being referred to support services however, the transition rate from referral to engaging in support will increase in 2021/22.

Other Connect Gwent Partner Agency Referral Information:

Partner Agency	Number of Referrals
Umbrella Cymru (Child and Young Victim Service)	77
Umbrella Cymru (Gender and Sexual Identity Service)	30
Age Cymru Gwent	116
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	118

3.3

Connect Gwent Support & Engagement Information:

The data relating to support, presented below, is separated for each Connect Gwent Partner agency, please note that a victim may have been supported by more than one agency and therefore may be included in more than one partner's data.

Victim Support:

Support Received	Number of people	% of relevant referrals received
People provided one off support (e.g. provided information / signposted to other service)	7736	31%
People provided ongoing support (e.g. ongoing emotional and practical support)	769	3%
People supported (total)	8505	34%

The above shows that the transition rate from referral to receiving ongoing support is low (3%). This indicates that, as a result of the implied consent model in operation during this year, most referrals

received may not have been required which results in the ineffective use of resources attempting / contacting these individuals. As mentioned above as a result of the

restructure of victim services and introducing the VCU Connect Gwent will be able to move to a consent only model which will increase the transition from referral to support thus allowing agencies to focus their resources at those in need of support.

Umbrella Cymru (Child and Young Victim Service):

Support Received	Number of people	% of relevant referrals received
People provided one off support (e.g. provided information / signposted to other service)	6	8%
People provided ongoing support (e.g ongoing emotional and practical support)	68	88%
People supported (total)	74	96%

Umbrella Cymru (Gender and Sexual Identity Service):



Support Received	Number of people	% of relevant referrals received
People provided one off support (e.g. provided information / signposted to other service)	0	0%
People provided ongoing support (e.g ongoing emotional and practical support)	23	77%
People supported (total)	74	77%

Age Cymru Gwent:

Support Received	Number of people	% of relevant referrals received
People provided one off support (e.g. provided information / signposted to other service)	35	30%
People provided ongoing support (e.g ongoing emotional and practical support)	62	53%
People supported (total)	97	84%



Support Received	Number of people	% of relevant referrals received
People provided one off support (e.g. provided information / signposted to other service)	44	37%
People provided ongoing support (e.g ongoing emotional and practical support)	47	40%
People supported (total)	91	77%

Umbrella Cymru, Age Cymru Gwent and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board typically receive their referrals from Victim Support (they also accept referrals from other sources) following a needs assessment that has identified a need for support, whereas Victim Support receive a referral from Gwent Police without a need for support being identified. When the transition rate from referral to engaging in support of the other Connect Gwent partner agencies is compared with Victim Support there is a much lower transition rate for Victim Support. This is not a reflection on the service provided by Victim Support, rather it illustrates the inefficiencies of the implied consent model in operation during 2020 / 21. As mentioned above the introduction of a Gwent Police staffed VCU within Connect Gwent will enable Connect Gwent to move to a consent only model



Connect Gwent Outcome Information

The below outcome information is obtained from initial and closing assessments through which people are asked to rate themselves in relation to the outcome area in order to measure distance travelled and the impact of support provided by Connect Gwent. The data presented below reflects the outcomes reported by all partner agencies combined:

Outcome Indicator	Number of people reporting improvement
Better able to cope and recover	681
Better informed and empowered to act	728
Improved health and wellbeing	599
Improved feelings of safety	559
Total	2567

3.4

Connect Gwent (Victim Support) Case Study

(Victim referred to as SU)

Case Overview:

SU was referred to Victim Support by the Officer in the case. SU has been experiencing ASB from a neighbour for over 2 years, over time the incidents involved threats, criminal damage and noise nuisance. The neighbour has also started encouraging other people in the street to behave in the same way and as a result SU has started receiving abuse from them too. SU is not from the area and lived in a different borough until they moved here; they don't have any family/friends close by. They felt unsafe in their home and outside in the community. SU also has existing mental health issues which have been exacerbated by these incidents.

Needs Identified:

- Ongoing emotional support
- Lack of awareness in relation to their rights
- Building support networks
- Housing advocacy
- Mental health support
- Safety and security advice

Services Provided:

- Confidence and self-esteem building
- Personal safety information
- Provided with security items – personal alarm and window and door alarms
- Advocacy with housing provider
- Referral to MIND
- Referral to Connect Gwent Wellbeing Practitioner

Support is still ongoing for SU as they are awaiting specialist support with mental health services. During the initial assessment SU was very emotional and it was clear that support for their mental health was a primary need. Throughout support the client has been in contact with their GP and is waiting an assessment with a psychologist. A referral was made to the Connect Gwent Wellbeing Practitioner in the interim so they could provide advice and additional support to the client. Joint working has continued throughout this support and discussions were had with SU around MIND and the support groups/classes they run to help with stress and anxiety; with their consent Victim Support made a referral to this service. SU was also informed about My Support Space and had started keeping a diary of their thoughts and feelings which SU said was helping.

SU felt these issues were being dismissed by housing so Victim Support nominated this case to be discussed at Caerphilly Problem Solving Group (PSG). Police and housing were both present at this meeting; housing agreed they would make further contact and re-assess the situation. The community safety team also arranged for wardens to carry out more foot patrols in the area. SU was on the waiting list to move to a new house, VS provided a supporting letter to point out the issues SU was experiencing and the need to move. VS also provided window and door alarms and a personal alarm. Initially SU had little knowledge about the CJS and particularly ASB. Both have been discussed and SU now feels more confident when speaking to agencies about these issues, SU was also informed of the Community Trigger and the benefits this could bring.

Distance Travelled – Interim Monitoring		
Outcome	Initial Self Assessed Score	Interim Self Assessed Score
Better able to cope and recover	2	5
Better informed and empowered to act	3	7
Improved health and wellbeing	2	8
Improved feelings of safety	3	7

*Additional case studies are available on request.

Connect Gwent Developments and Improvements



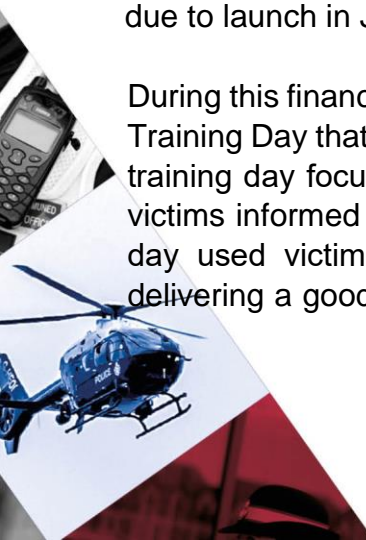
At the end of last financial year Connect Gwent had a backlog of 501 victims awaiting initial contact. At the highest point there were 2000 victims in the backlog during last financial year. The backlog was eliminated in May this year which reduces the wait for victims to be offered support.

All partner agencies have had to modify their working practices and service delivery during this year due to the impact of the pandemic. This has included staff working from home for the majority of this financial year. To support this partner agencies have put measures in place to enable staff to work effectively and safely at home such as online team meetings and communication, provision of ICT equipment and enhanced staff wellbeing practices to mitigate issues caused by working from home such as isolation. Partner agencies have had to adapt how they support victims throughout the pandemic as face to face visits were initially suspended. Partner agencies developed systems and procedures to enable victims to be supported over the phone or via online platforms such as Zoom. Partner Agencies are now increasingly working from office spaces on a rota basis and are all scoping and risk assessing re-establishing face to face support.

As mentioned above significant development activity this year has been planning the introduction of the VCU into Connect Gwent. This has included setting out, amending and agreeing internal processes and procedures in readiness for the VCU launch. One example of this is establishing a weekly Case Management Meeting (CMM). The CMM is a forum where partner agencies can discuss victims that have been referred to the Connect Gwent in order to share expertise and agree a support package to be offered to the victim. This enables victims to access the expertise of all partner agencies and enables the victim to receive coordinated and effective support. Connect Gwent will be releasing information in the coming weeks in relation to the launch of the VCU including the benefits of the changes for victims.

The implementation of the VCU has provided the opportunity to review and amend our Victim Satisfaction surveying processes. Until March 2021 all surveys took place via telephone between 6 – 12 weeks after the crime was initially reported. This did not allow for feedback to be gathered relating to the victims' experience of their journey through the criminal justice system. The surveys are currently being redesigned to allow for a blend of telephone surveys as well as electronic surveys being sent to victims via email. Also rather than one survey taking place 6 – 12 weeks after the crime has been reported separate surveys will be conducted with victims at different stages of the criminal justice system to enable us to gather a truer reflection of victims experiences of the criminal justice journey as a whole and make any necessary improvements to service delivery as necessary. The refreshed surveying process is due to launch in July 2021.

During this financial year Connect Gwent led on the delivery of a Victim Focused Force Training Day that was delivered to Police Officers and Sergeants across the force. The training day focused on the key entitlements of the Victim's Code including; keeping victims informed and ensuring they are offered and receive appropriate support. The day used victims' experiences to enable attendees to understand the impact of delivering a good service to victims on victim satisfaction and trust and confidence in



Gwent Police. All attendees received an in-depth input about Connect Gwent and the service it provides to victims in order to support officer to effectively offer support from Connect Gwent to victims of crime. Diversity and Inclusion and unconscious bias inputs were also given as part of the day.

The Survivor Engagement Coordinators' role has continued to develop over the year, although the pandemic posed challenges to engagement work with victims due to the risk of face to face meetings. The Survivor Engagement Coordinator has engaged with survivors of domestic and sexual abuse using online platforms and via the telephone. This has enabled them to obtain feedback on the victim's experience of their engagement with Gwent Police. Processes have been established that ensure that this feedback is shared across Gwent Police departments, this is mainly done via reports presented to the Victim and Vulnerability board. The Survivor and Engagement Coordinator has also used feedback to inform the development of training packages by working closely with the Learning and Development Department.

Connect Gwent are currently utilising temporary offices in Blackwood Police Station. Connect Gwent are working with Gwent Police Estates Department to scope and secure a fit for purpose permanent location for Connect Gwent

4. COLLABORATION

4.1 N/A

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Fully launch the Victim Care Unit in July 2021 – including an effective communication strategy ensuring internal personal and communities are aware of the service available.
- 5.2 Continue to review and develop VCU and wider Connect Gwent processes and procedures to ensure effectiveness and continued development and improvement.
- 5.3 Monitor and scrutinise VCU and Connect Gwent performance information to ensure victims receive effective support.
- 5.4 To launch refreshed Victim Satisfaction surveying process in July 2021.
- 5.5 Continue to work with Estates Department to secure long term location for Connect Gwent Victims' Hub.
- 5.6 Increase the number of self and other agency referrals via an Engagement and Communication Plan.



6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 N/A

7. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 N/A

8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 N/A

9. EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

10. RISK

10.1 N/A

11. PUBLIC INTEREST

11.1 In producing this report, has consideration been given to 'public confidence'?
Yes

11.2 Are the contents of this report, observations and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain? **Yes**

11.3 If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons: N/A

11.4 Media, Stakeholder and Community Impacts:

12. REPORT AUTHOR

12.1 Sam Heatley Victims' Lead



13. LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

13.1 ACC Ian Roberts

14. ANNEXES

14.1 Documents embedded

15. CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

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

15.2 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain / is not suitable for the public domain for the reasons stated in 11.3.

Signature:



Date: 13th May 2021

Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

I confirm that I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:

Date:

