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**Gwent Police
and Crime Panel**

**Panel Heddlu
& Throseddu Gwent**

For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Charlotte Evans
(Tel: 01443 864210 Email: evansca1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 24th July 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

A digital meeting of the **Gwent Police and Crime Panel** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Friday, 31st July, 2020 at 2.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

The meeting of the Gwent Police and Crime Panel will be held remotely and a video recording will be made available as soon as is practicable after the meeting. If any member of the press or public wish to attend the meeting live, please contact us via the above contact details, in order to make the necessary arrangements for you to be invited as a guest observer via telephone conference .

A G E N D A

Pages

- 1 To Appoint the Chair and Vice Chair for the Ensuing Year.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.
- 3 Apologies for Absence.

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| 4 | Gwent Police and Crime Panel held on 31st January 2020. | 1 - 8 |
| 5 | Verbal Update by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent. | 9 - 36 |
| 6 | Gwent Police and Crime Panel Forward Work Programme | 37 - 38 |

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor Clive Meredith, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Councillor Mrs Lisa Winnett, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Councillor Mrs Christine Forehead, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillor Gez Kirby, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillor Colin Peter Mann, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillor Mike Jeremiah, Torfaen County Borough Council
Councillor Emma Rapier, Torfaen County Borough Council

Councillor Peter Clarke, Monmouthshire County Borough Council
Councillor Tony Easson, Monmouthshire County Council
Councillor William Routley, Newport City Council
Councillor Jason Jordan, Newport City Council
Councillor Mark Spencer, Newport City Council

Co-opted Members- Mrs G. Howells and Mr P. Nuttall

By Invitation

Mrs S. Curley, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr D. Garwood-Pask, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr J. Cuthbert, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
Ms E. Thomas, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner

And Appropriate Officers.

Gwent Police
and Crime Panel

Panel Heddlu
Gwent a Throseddu

GWENT POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL,
RHADYR, USK, NP15 1GA
ON FRIDAY 31ST JANUARY 2020 AT 10.00AM**

Present:

Mrs G. Howells (Co-opted) – Chair
Councillor Colin Mann – Vice Chair

Councillor J. Millard and L. Winnett - Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Councillors C. Forehead and G. Kirby – Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillors J. Jordan and M. Spencer - Newport County Borough Council
Councillor A. Easson and P. Clarke – Monmouthshire County Borough Council
Councillors M. Jeremiah and E. Rapier - Torfaen County Borough Council
Mr P. Nuttall – Co-opted Member

By invitation:

Mr J. Cuthbert - Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent
Ms E. Thomas - Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent
Mrs S. Curley - Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent
Mr D. Garwood-Pask – Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

Also in attendance:

Ms. P. Kelly – Chief Constable, Gwent Police
Mrs J. Regan – Head of Assurance and Compliance, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner.
Mrs E. Lionel – Principal Finance and Commissioning Manager, Gwent Police
Mr R. Guest – Head of Communication and Engagement, Gwent Police

Together with:

Mrs C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager - CCBC) and Ms C. Evans (Committee Services Officer - CCBC)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair opened the meeting and introductions were made.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor W. Routley (Newport City Council).

4. GWENT POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETING HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Gwent Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 16th December 2019 (minute no. 1 - 9) be approved as a correct record.

5. TO RECEIVE AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT.

To the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner from the Chair of the Gwent Police and Crime Panel:

We have seen many reports in the Press about the abuse of police officers on duty, particularly physical abuse which can result in both physical and psychological harm. What is the position over the last 2 years with regard to Officers and Staff being absent from work and for receiving compensation for such abuse and how are you ensuring the Chief Constable is managing the welfare and return to work of officers affected by such abuse.

Response from the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner:

The Commissioner provided the Panel with a detailed breakdown of the number of assaults at work for 2018, which totalled 52 and increased to 85 in 2019. In addition, further figures were provided around short term sickness for each year, with 34 days taken in 2018 and 81 in 2019 and long term sickness at 271 days in 2018 and 0 recorded in 2019.

The Commissioner explained that assaults on duty are a matter of great concern; as a result, he has campaigned for the introduction of the legislation which introduced harsher sentences for those who assault emergency workers. The legislation was passed in 2018.

In addition, it was noted that the Commissioner and his team have flagged concerns that there is under-reporting of assaults and subsequently, linked absence may not be captured. This concern is shared by the Chief Constable and therefore, officers and staff are encouraged by Gwent Police, the Police Federation and Unison to make sure that they report any assaults on duty.

There have been 517 reports of assaults on police officers and staff over the past 2 years. The main reason for the discrepancy between this number and the data above is an issue regarding HR form submissions; this is known by the force and is being addressed. When an officer is assaulted it should be recorded as a crime and an Injury on Duty Form should be completed. Many officers are not completing the Injury on Duty Form. This is being checked and the two Local Policing Area Chief Superintendents are being notified when reporting does not occur. However, there is a current gap between the two data sets. Also, for the purposes of Health and Safety and recording assaults at work there has to be physical contact/bodily contamination e.g. spitting. This is different to crime recording which would include harassment.

There has been particular focus on this issue at the People and Diversity Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and other force meetings over the past 12 months. The Chief Executive attends this meeting in order to monitor and scrutinise this work. In future, this area of work will be reported to the Operation Efficiency and Effectiveness Board chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable. The forms which individuals are required to complete following any incident are scrutinised by the Superintendent who leads on Operational Support to identify any trends or areas of concern. These are reported to the appropriate Board.

Numbers of assaults on duty are also reported to the Police Commissioner via the force performance report to the Strategy and Performance Board and the Chief Constable provides the Commissioner with information on assaults and her actions to deal with them at one to one meetings. The Commissioner explained that he is assured that the Chief Constable contacts those who suffer serious assaults in the line of duty personally in order to provide additional support to the offer provided by the organisation. The Commissioner is pleased to report the amount of support available to officers and staff following an assault on duty. This includes referrals for Trauma Risk Management Support, assistance from the Occupational health Unit and access to Care First the employee assistance scheme. Panel members received a presentation on this provision as part of the presentation on Wellbeing previously.

Return to work plans are dependent upon the injury sustained. This could be on full duties, restricted duties or a phased return with support from supervisors and the organisation.

There have been three employer liability claims relating to assaults on duty since 2017; two of which were accepted and paid. A review of injury pensions is ongoing and due to be reported on by the end of the financial year.

The Panel noted that there are two initiatives that are already having positive impact on numbers of assaults which include the use of Body Worn Video and the user of Taser. It has also been recently reported that the Commissioner has been given the opportunity to bid for funding to increase the number of Taser trained officers which, in agreement with the Chief Constable, will be undertaken on an incremental basis over the next few years. The impact of these initiatives is difficult to quantify but anecdotally it is felt that they do make a difference.

To the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner from the Councillor Tony Easson, Member of the Gwent Police and Crime Panel:

I would like to raise the matter of the potential use of Live Facial Recognition Technology by Gwent Police. Does the Commissioner have, or is he considering, a policy in the use of this facility by his Chief Constable. If he does can he bring a report to the panel?

Response from the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner:

Through collaborative work with South Wales Police and our shared Digital Service Division, Gwent Police has access to the licences allowing them to use Automatic Facial Recognition. The Chief Constable has confirmed that Gwent Police is prepared to use AFR in the future if its use would help keep communities safe. However, prior to any use, we would inform the Police and Crime Panel and public in order to minimise concerns.

The Commissioner is aware of the sensitivities involved in the use of AFR and has been following closely the legal case involving South Wales Police and the use of AFR in other forces. As Gwent and South Wales share a legal service and digital service, we have benefitted from the engagement which has already taken place with the Information Commissioner and Surveillance Commissioner.

This proposal has already been considered by Gwent Police's Ethics Committee and the outcome was that prior to the introduction of the technology there should be a robust policy and procedure developed by Gwent Police. A recommendation which is fully supported by the Commissioner.

The Panel noted that should the Chief Constable decide to implement AFR, the Commissioner will be monitoring its use closely and a further report can be brought back to the Panel once a formal decision on its use has been made.

6. UPDATE BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

The Panel were provided with an update on the activities undertaken by the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner with the support of the Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Panel noted that the Commissioner met with the Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, AM to discuss the impact and challenges of serious violence, and serious and organised crime on children, young people and families. In particular, the impact on vulnerable children and young people in education. A positive meeting saw the Commissioner brief the Minister on the threats and risks on communities across Wales, and allowed the opportunity to discuss these issues and future collaborative working. Since September 2018, the OPCC has been leading on a pilot project in partnership with Newport Youth Justice Board, in order to explore any correlations between children and young people being excluded from school, and their future engagement in criminal activity. The pilot is nearing the end of phase one. The work has been characterised by a strong partnership working approach with key partners across Newport, and has enabled a comprehensive understanding of the correlation between school exclusion and criminality.

The Commissioner highlighted that the OPCC ran a road safety campaign on its social media channels during Road Safety Week, sharing key safety messaging and highlighting the work of Go Safe, the Area Support Unit and the Collision Investigation Unit. It also made a short video with Blaenavon Heritage School's Mini Police who were carrying out parking patrols at the school to keep their school friends and other pedestrians safe. It was noted that a 'Surround the Town' event was held the following week in Cwmbran and brought partners together to engage with the public on a range of road safety issues, including speeding, drink and drug driving, and problem parking. Mini Police from various schools spoke to shoppers in Cwmbran Centre about road safety issues, while Gwent Police Cadets delivered a presentation to future young drivers at the Cwmbran Centre for Young People. The OPCC supported the event via its social media channels and at an engagement event in Cwmbran town centre. In addition, it was noted that more than 600 tyre tread gauges were given out to the public at engagement events during the summer to ensure their car tyres are safe and legal.

The Commissioner provided the Panel with details of the Survivor Engagement Co-Ordinator, a joint post, based in Connect Gwent, the victims hub at Gwent Police which has been created following a wider needs assessment undertaken by the OPCC. The primary aim of the co-ordinator is to ensure the services of Gwent Police are victim-centred and that services are more effective through feedback and input from survivors. The post, the first of its kind in Wales, was created to establish a sustainable survivor engagement framework through which survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence can share their experiences. The co-ordinator is acting as a vital link between survivors of abuse and strategic partners, providing them with the opportunities to influence positive change within policies and procedures.

The Panel were referred to the work undertaken by a young person from Maindee Youth Project who have helped to restore a room on their community centre after it was targeted by vandals. The young person, aged 12-16, decorated the room at Maindee Community House during their after school club. The restoration was paid for by the OPCC, which granted Maindee Youth Project funding to run educational and diversionary youth projects in school holidays.

The Panel thanked the Commissioner for the report and discussion ensued.

A Panel Member raised concerns around exclusions and the problems associated with vulnerable people. The Commissioner added that there are also concerns around County

Lines and Serious Organised Crime, and it was noted that this is not just a matter for Policing, the matters require delicate handling in collaboration with a number of partners, such as Schools to safeguard these vulnerable individuals and manage the issue.

The Panel thanked the Commissioner for the update and noted its content.

7. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT'S BUDGET REQUIREMENT AND COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT 2020/21

This report, which is made in accordance with the Gwent Police and Crime Panel's statutory duty contained in Paragraph 3(2), Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent is required to determine the budget for 2020/21 and then set the Council Tax Precept following consultation with the Police and Crime Panel. The greater part of the budget will be allocated to Gwent Police for Operational purposes, but an element needs to be retained to cover the costs of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the commissioning of services from organisations other than the Chief Constable's.

In determining the budget requirement for 2020/21, the Commissioner has had regard to the Police and Crime Plan 2017/21; the Policing Vision 2025; the Strategic Policing Requirement; the Chief Constable's view of the financial resources required to deliver the operational requirements of the Plan; the level of resources to be allocated for commissioning other than from the Chief Constable; and the cost of running the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. With that in mind, the Police and Crime Panel are required to review the proposed Council Tax Precept and make a report to the Commissioner on the proposed Council Tax Precept and make a report to the Commissioner on the proposed Council Tax Precept (whether it vetoes it or not) by 8th February 2020.

The Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner notified the Panel on 24th January 2020 of his proposed Police and Crime Budget and Precept for 2020/21.

The Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner recommended a 6.99% increase in the 2020/21 precept and a budget requirement of £133,623,773. The Panel debated the proposed increase and in particular, considered the impact on the residents and communities of Gwent who are under increasing financial pressures.

The Panel acknowledged that the Commissioner has identified planned efficiency savings in 2020/21 of £539k and further planned efficiency savings of £1.137m (totalling £1.676m). Clarification was sought in respect of the likelihood of efficiency savings being achieved by the reduction in overtime. It was recognised that it will be a challenge but the aim is to also improve staff wellbeing by reducing that it will be a challenge but the aim is to also improve staff wellbeing by reducing long work hours. It is hoped that the recruitment of additional officers will help to achieve this efficiency saving but this must not be at the expense of the effectiveness of the service.

The Commissioner updated the Panel with the details of the core grant from the Home Office, which provided the up-front budget for the Police Officer recruitment uplift announced last week. The settlement figure for 2020/21 has increased from the predicted £1.464m to £5.463m plus an additional £1.725m of special grant if recruitment targets are reached. The initial expectation was that the additional costs such as Fleet, ICT and Training would be allocated at a later date, once recruitment targets are achieved. However, the Home Office has elected to fund not only the salary and direct employment on-costs of the 62 Police Officers, but also the entire consequential costs of the full target of 165 Police Officers.

Therefore, in the medium term the uplift is cost neutral but is not available to offset existing pressures and financial deficits with the Force. The Panel were advised that this accelerated funding has no impact upon the 2020/21 proposed Council Tax Precept increase.

The Panel were advised that some of the Operation Uplift funding from the Home Office has been received as a revenue stream; it must still be targeted toward capital investment (such as the Estate and Fleet). Therefore, this funding provides an additional 'Revenue Contribution to Capital' and will reduce the Commissioner's external borrowing requirement from 2021/22 and beyond.

Assurance was sought with regard to the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed Council Tax Precept for 2020/1, which appeared contrary to views expressed to a Panel Member in his local area. The Panel were advised that the consultation consisted of both an online survey and a series of 25 face-to-face engagement events across all local authorities. These were held in venues chosen based upon areas of high footfall and with good accessibility. Combining the three sources of responses outlined in the report, the overall position showed that when asked if they were in favour of a Council Tax increase up to £2 per month, 1,136 (66.6%) were in favour, 391 (22.9%) were against and 180 (10.5%) were unsure (based on the returns from Gwent residents).

Following a detailed discussion with the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Finance Officer, the Panel adjourned to deliverable the proposed precept.

The Panel considered the Commissioners proposal to a 6.99% increase in the policing precept but did not have the required majority to veto the proposed precept. The Panel did however wish to make a recommendation to the Commissioner and asked if full consideration could be given to their proposal.

Following consideration and discussion and in noting that a 2/3 Majority was not in support of a veto, the Gwent Police and Crime Panel recommended that the Commissioner consider a reduced precept of 6%. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED that the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner review the budget proposal and reduce the precept increase to 6%.

It was noted that the reasons for the proposal include:

- Financial pressures upon Gwent Council Tax Payers;
- Better than expected core grant settlement from the Home Office;
- The opportunity to reduce planned borrowing, which results in the ability to secure financial returns on up-front funding received.

In addition, the Panel wished it placed on record their thanks for Mr Darren Garwood-Pask, Chief Finance Officer, for engaging the Panel in early discussions about the Commissioner's Medium Term Financial Plan and the detailed budget precept report.

8. GWENT POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – PROPOSAL TO JOIN THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS (NAPFCP)

The report required the Gwent Police and Crime Panel (the Panel) to consider joining the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels (NAPFCP).

The Gwent Police and Crime Panel previously considered its response to a consultation paper regarding the establishment of a national association of police and crime panels at its meeting

on 15 September 2017. The Panel were broadly supportive of the proposal to establish a national association but were reluctant at that time to commit to join the association due to the potential of unknown subscription costs. In addition, clarification was required to establish if the Home Office Grant could be utilised for a subscription to become a member of the association. It was agreed therefore not to join the association until assurances could be provided that Panels could use grant finding for such a purpose.

Following a consultation across Panels in England and Wales, the National Association was subsequently established as a Special Interest Group of the Local Government Association on 19 April 2018. Following the establishment of an Executive and a Constitution of the Association was approved, it was agreed that an annual subscription of £500 would be set to join the Association.

The Panel noted that during 2018, representations were made by Police and Crime Panels across England and Wales to the Home Office, seeking clarification on the use of Grant funding for the subscription fee. However, the view of the Home Office was that it was not permissible under the terms of the grant and as a result, a number of Police and Crime Panels were unable to join the Association.

The Panel were advised that at the AGM in November 2019, the Association considered the barriers to Membership as a result of subscription fees and considered and approved a proposal to change to non-subscription membership thereby removing the barrier for many Panels to join the Association. The Panel also noted that terms of reference were approved at a later meeting, as outlined within the report.

The Panel thanked the Officer for the report and considered its recommendations.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons outlined in the Officers report the Gwent Police and Crime Panel agreed to join the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels (NAPFCP).

9. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Mrs C. Forbes-Thompson (Lead Officer to the Panel) presented an overview of the forward work programme which listed the items planned up until March 2020.

The Panel were advised that following respective AGM meetings, a workshop would be arranged, for all Panel Members to outline the new performance management framework to ensure that all members of the Panel have a good understanding.

It was noted that the June meeting would also see a report on Quarter 3 Performance, followed by the Annual report in September.

Subject to the additional reports, the Panel agreed the Forward Work Programme.

Prior to closing the meeting, the Chair wished it placed on record her thanks to Panel Members and Officers for their continued work, efforts, support and commitment to developing the revised Performance Reporting Framework..

The Chair highlighted the invitation from the Commissioner invited the Panel to a Ground Breaking Ceremony at the site of the new Police Headquarters that was to take place that afternoon.

Finally, the Chair thanked all those in attendance for taking part in “Wear Red for Wales” in support of Velindre and for their donations.

Meeting Closed at 12.10pm.

Police and Crime Commissioner's Update July 2020

This is an update on activities undertaken, scrutinised or supported by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in March – July 2020.

COVID-19

The impact of Covid-19 since the last meeting of the Police and Crime Panel has been substantial. Inevitably, this has had a significant impact on how my office and I have undertaken our roles and upon what we have focused our efforts. It has led to much of our planned work being done in different ways, as efforts have been rightly focused on enabling Gwent Police to respond as efficiently and effectively as possible to disruption caused by Covid-19. I am pleased with how flexible and resilient the team has been in adapting to the changes required to respond to Covid-19 and enable recovery.

Before detailing work against the priorities of my Police and Crime Plan, I will explain some of the work that has been undertaken in specific relation to Covid-19 and its implications. In addition to this, almost all the work set against my priorities that is highlighted in this report was delivered as a result of the pandemic or was affected by it.

It would be remiss of me here not to thank all police officers, staff, healthcare workers, local authorities and other partners who have been working around the clock throughout the pandemic to manage the response in Gwent. The situation has been unparalleled and the Chief Constable has needed to ensure the right balance when considering the use of police powers.

My main responsibility is to ensure that Gwent has an efficient and effective policing service and Covid-19 has not deterred this. Although I have enabled the Chief Constable to do what needs to be done, trying my best not to distract or unnecessarily burden, I have continued to hold the force to account over how well the service is being delivered.

This support and scrutiny continues to be achieved through regular conferences (often daily) with the Chief Constable and my office's participation in the Gold and Silver strategic and operational meetings that have taken place seven days a week. This has been important in understanding operational decisions, particularly where a major shift in policy has been implemented. It has also allowed us to offer reasonable challenge where necessary, to ensure appropriate checks and balances are in place.

The approach by Gwent Police throughout lockdown has been to engage, explain and encourage compliance with the guidance about staying home to save lives. It is worth noting that I have been challenged on the police's approach by members of the public. However, there has been an even split between those thinking the force is being too strict, to those believing it is not doing enough. Enforcement has been the last resort, and this is an approach I have fully supported.

The protection of police, emergency and other key workers has been a real focus for me and we have supported Gwent Police to ensure the health and safety of its officers

and staff. Concerns around the police having appropriate measures in place when dealing with members of the public and the need for adequate stocks of personal protection equipment (PPE) for staff have been consistent throughout. These topics have been covered daily in the Gold group meetings and I am pleased with the force's handling in these areas. Neither has caused concern.

Staff well-being has been a key concern throughout and this too was discussed daily, aided by the support of the Occupational Health Manager. Availability and speed of testing were challenged with partners when appropriate. Information was published on the intranet on a daily basis in relation to physical and mental health support, as well as through team briefings.

All these procedures, coupled with investments made in technology over the past 18 months allowing people to work from home, mean that the abstraction rate has remained low throughout. On average, approximately 3% of police officers were recorded as sick (ordinary sickness and those with suspected or confirmed Covid-19), which is lower than the average sickness figure for this time of year. Absence as a result of non Covid-19-related sickness was far better than 'normal' sickness in previous years.

Due to the government's guidance for people to work from home where possible and Regulation 8a in Wales making it an offence to travel to work if one can reasonably work from home, my team and I have been working remotely since the middle of March. A coordination cell was set up with Gwent Police early on to reallocate work so business as usual could be maintained as much as possible.

Our Business Continuity Plan has helped provide resilience around our key decision-making roles and responsibilities within the schemes of consent and delegations, financial regulations and standings orders. Changes to planned work have occurred; however, it has remained 'business as usual' as much as possible. Statutory information has continued to be published, and decisions made and recorded in the correct ways.

This approach meant that we were able to hold a number of formal governance and assurance meetings to help me fulfil my statutory responsibilities, including Strategy and Performance Board, which focused on Covid-19, and Joint Audit Committee. Both have taken place despite the lockdown and have ensured the relevant checks and balances.

The Chief Executive and Deputy Commissioner have taken part in weekly meetings with their counterparts in Wales and the Police Liaison Unit to share learning and ensure a consistent approach wherever possible across Wales. I have been meeting with my fellow Welsh Commissioners and Welsh Government, urging for us to receive early warning of any changes to guidance and regulations so that the force could be briefed and prepared to ensure compliance as quickly as possible.

Partnership working with other organisations and our communities has been paramount throughout the Covid-19 lockdown. At the most recent G10 meeting, which represents the ten main public sector bodies in Gwent, we shared learning with

partners and I have been fully supportive of the approach taken by the Strategic Coordination Group in managing this crisis.

My fellow Commissioners and I have raised concerns about the pressures on the Criminal Justice System with UK Government in our weekly meetings. We have also met with the all-Wales and Gwent local criminal justice boards to discuss working arrangements during lockdown. We have worked closely with the force to understand the pressures and manage any possible mitigations. For the court cases that are continuing, a member of my team is chairing a weekly meeting to ensure that everything is in place that can be. This includes information for victims, direct support, and any issues are addressed with urgency.

Throughout this, we have been working with criminal justice agencies to look at how we can increase court provision, including reviewing possible alternative sites. The Women's Pathfinder Service, which is partly-funded through my office, has been fully utilised to support women on early release.

Our volunteers help ensure an efficient and effective service in Gwent; however, these procedures have had to be adapted too. Both our Animal Welfare and Independent Custody Visits were temporarily put on hold in mid-March. We have maintained regular contact with the force to ensure there are no issues of concern regarding the welfare of detainees in custody, or with Gwent's police dogs. We have asked for evidence from the force that the checks and balances have been in place, and this has been regularly fed back to our volunteers.

As the virus still poses a risk, an alternative monitoring process has been developed to offer detainees the opportunity to speak privately on the telephone with the volunteers, so they can check on their welfare and ensure they have received their rights and entitlements.

As the majority of visits undertaken by Animal Welfare volunteers are outside, it is expected that visits will resume within the next month, provided the relevant risk assessments have been completed. I am pleased to report that the Gwent Police dog section is currently up to its full strength of 15 dogs and that they are doing well.

In order to provide continuity, any volunteer's tenure that was due to end in 2021 has been extended by one year. The quarterly meetings for both schemes were held online last month, instead of face-to-face. I wrote to all volunteers that support the OPCC to thank them for their hard work as part of National Volunteer Week.

I normally run a large-scale summer engagement programme across Gwent. These events were due to start last month. The majority of these events have been cancelled by organisers, so we are in the process of planning how we undertake community engagement over the short and medium term. I find community engagement incredibly beneficial and it helps inform my conversations when holding the Chief Constable to account.

As lockdown restrictions are lifted, it is essential that I help enable Gwent Police to instigate recovery plans. This will culminate in the production of a Recovery Plan that looks to ensure any adverse effects of Covid-19 on the force are actively managed

and reduced. There are opportunities here. The Chief Constable and I will be looking to capitalise on enforced learning from the Covid-19 emergency as, like many other organisations, we have had to become more adaptable and agile in how we work. These opportunities and examples of good work are being captured in the Recovery Plan, rolled out in our day-to-day work, and factored into future business continuity planning.

There will be a phased and gradual move to the 'new normal', as well as procedures put in place to ensure the health and well-being of officers and staff. This is essential. We need to ensure we have the people, processes, equipment and facilities in place to meet the challenges that Covid-19 presents beyond the immediate.

There is a cost implication to this. We believe that government funding will be made available to Commissioners to cover the policing response to Covid-19. While Gwent Police is recording its spend on all activity specifically related to the pandemic, we currently do not know for what costs we can claim. We have had an assurance from the UK Government that all PPE costs will be refunded, although it's not clear yet when and how this money will come.

In addition, although some costs have risen, some savings have also been made. Work is being undertaken across all forces with the Home Office to try to ensure these costs are covered appropriately. Therefore, the cost implications of Covid-19 to Gwent Police remain uncertain at this time. I will, however, try to minimise the direct impact on local council taxpayers.

Throughout this period, we have also ensured that we have paid invoices as promptly as possible to support those who provide us with goods and services. We have ensured that those who provide us with commissioned services have been supported so that they can continue to deliver my priorities.

Finally, Covid-19 also impacted on the planned Police and Crime Commissioner elections that were due to have taken place in May 2020. These have been postponed until May 2021, which means that the next term of office will be three years rather than four years. I have reviewed my Police and Crime Plan in light of Covid-19 and its implications; however, as I only updated it last year, it will be reviewed and extended to 2022.

I want to reassure you that I remain fully committed to delivering the best policing service for the people of Gwent for the next 12 months.

DELIVERING AGAINST THE PRIORITIES

In addition to the support and scrutiny in relation to Covid-19 highlighted above, work in Gwent continued throughout March – July towards delivering my Police and Crime Plan priorities. Here are some examples of this work.

PRIORITY 1 – CRIME PREVENTION

1.1 Latest crime statistics

The latest Crime Survey for England and Wales was released in May and this shows that Gwent remains one of the safest places in the UK. Across Gwent, crime levels remain roughly the same. However, in Newport and Torfaen the picture is improving. Gwent Police's crime levels are in line with other similar forces. For serious acquisitive crime, wounding (serious or other) and racially/religiously aggravated crime, Gwent compares favourably to other similar forces. I am pleased that Gwent Police's continued focus on protecting and reassuring our communities is reflected in the levels of recorded crime.

1.2 Serious and organised crime

Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, I was reassured that Gwent Police continued to tackle serious and organised crime as a priority. In June, 17 raids took place in Newport, which saw 15 people arrested on suspicion of supplying class A drugs. I am proud to see officers continuing to protect our communities from the most serious and damaging crimes that have such a negative impact on many lives.

However, enforcement operations such as this are only part of the solution. Prevention and intervention are equally important. The work to tackle serious and organised crime is supported by projects that my office funds, including those run by Positive Futures, Barnardo's and St Giles Trust. These are on the ground in communities offering diversionary activities to identified young people to help tackle this. Some of this work has had to change due to lockdown restrictions, but the services have been adapted.

For example, Crimestoppers' Fearless project ran online learning sessions to raise awareness of County Lines. We encouraged youth organisations in Gwent and young people to take part in them. Fearless maximised the use of video conferencing to promote its services, resources and anonymous reporting mechanism to professionals in Gwent. Since March, the Fearless outreach worker has delivered e-training to 289 professionals who work with young people, including teachers, youth workers and charity workers. As part of this, each professional committed to sharing the Fearless messages with about 25 young people on average, equalling a potential reach of more than 7,000 young people.

The Fearless outreach worker filmed a short 'true or false' knife crime awareness video, which reached 7,284 people, was viewed 1,643 times and received 331 engagements. Further videos will be shared with young people to promote personal safety during the summer.

Crimestoppers also concluded a serious and organised crime (SOC) awareness campaign in March, which aimed to educate and increase the level of community information received. It did this by raising awareness of the issue of organised crime group activities and encouraging safe and anonymous reporting via its channels. Launched with the support of the Wales Crimestoppers volunteer committee and Newport SOC prevention stakeholder group, it featured a series of social media messages across Gwent that reached 100,000 people. Of these, about 13,000 watched the campaign videos all the way through, which is very good. The story videos on Instagram and Snapchat reached between 46,000 and 52,000 young people, with more than 5,000 choosing to swipe up/click through to the website.

The campaign resulted in a 20.5% overall increase in reports disseminated to Gwent Police during the campaign compared to prior to the campaign. There was a 100% increase in reports relating to Fearless in Gwent during the campaign compared to prior to the campaign.

A community action day was also held in Newport in June to highlight the charity's anonymous crime reporting service.

1.3 Scam awareness

Throughout the lockdown, we have proactively shared scam awareness information from Gwent Police, Scam Aware and Action Fraud. Gwent Police led a national proactive scam awareness campaign, and this was supported internally and externally. We have also targeted specific scam awareness information to specific demographics; for example, we contacted Age Concern with information targeting older people and requested that this was cascaded to service users. We worked with Gwent Police's cyber protect officer to arrange for scam information to be delivered through local authority food parcels as a way of reaching off-line communities.

We have sent advice to businesses encouraging them to ensure their own cyber resilience and took part in Scam Awareness Fortnight last month. Some of the scams focused on Netflix, Snapchat, TV Licencing, and NHS contact tracers phishing emails. Information about these scams have also been shared with more than 58,000 residents via email. In June, I was invited on BBC Radio Wales Breakfast to talk about Covid-19 scams, where I reinforced the advice on how to stay safe. I have since become the all-Wales Commissioner lead for tackling cyber-crime, with Chief Constable Pam Kelly leading from a Welsh force perspective.

1.4 Online safety support and advice for children

The increase in the use of online technology since schools closed due to Covid-19 raised the importance of keeping children and young people safe online. Throughout the lockdown, my office has been sharing safety information with our key partners working with young people.

We have just launched a joint campaign with Gwent Police around child sexual exploitation (CSE) called 'Stop. Talk. Protect.'. We provided insight and support to the planning of this, arranging workshops with local children and young people to help co-produce the key messaging, branding and approach.

CSE is when a child or young person is exploited. The abuser may give gifts, drugs, money, status or affection in exchange for performing sexual activities. CSE may also result in children becoming victims of grooming, where they are tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused.

One area that is becoming more common is sexting. This is when a child sends or posts sexually explicit images of themselves, films or streams sexual activities or has sexual conversations. An abuser will often gain a child's trust or control them through violence or blackmail before moving onto sexually abusing them. This can happen in a short period of time.

The new campaign, working with key partners and the local education authorities, will warn parents about the dangers that lurk online.

1.5 Youth Endowment Fund grant

The Home Office announced a £6.5m Covid-19 grant to support vulnerable children at risk of youth violence. Funding was for digital/virtual and face-to-face projects. We repeatedly promoted this and encouraged our key partners who work with children and young people to apply. We also supported all those that requested our assistance in completing the applications. Submissions closed at the start of the month. Maximum grant amounts were £50,000 and 50% of the funding was ring-fenced for the charitable sector.

1.6 Violence in pharmacies

Following a presentation by the Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) at the All Wales Policing Group, work has begun to raise awareness of violence against community pharmacists in Gwent. Pharmacists are included in the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018. I campaigned for this.

Internal communications for Gwent Police officers on this issue were published on the force's intranet, while statements of support to pharmacists were issued during the Covid-19 lockdown. Gwent Police's pharmacy officer now provides support when visiting pharmacies to run checks. Posts on this issue reached about 4,500 people on social media and drew praise from pharmacists across Wales. I also raised this issue in articles in the South Wales Argus and Caerphilly Observer.

The PDA has since thanked us for our support in tackling this, and for enabling a meeting between the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the PDA. This resulted in other PCCs championing this cause. We are currently looking to highlight some case studies on this issue in 2020/21 and continue to support the PDA's work.

PRIORITY 2 – SUPPORTING VICTIMS

2.1 Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)

My office teamed up with Gwent VAWDASV Regional Team and Gwent Police to run 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 information. This is to allow analysis in shifts of use and will form part of the post-campaign evaluation.

In total, 30 survivors of VAWDASV informed its content and some of them took part in the actual campaign. The campaign began a soft roll-out at the end of February to tie-in with Sexual Violence Awareness Week and the promotion of the new Survivor Engagement Co-ordinator post. Full rollout happened over the end of March and start of April.

As part of the campaign:

- We have distributed approximately 1,200 posters and 9,500 leaflets to more than 280 locations in Gwent;
- Generated more than £21,000 worth of media coverage;
- Had more than 200k impressions on social media; and
- Sent the information to 58,00 residents via email.

In order to ensure this messaging reached as wide an audience as possible, a series of paid-for promoted posts also ran on Instagram and Facebook. Critically, this was reaching people who don't follow our channels, so we were communicating with people who don't normally see our messages. The Instagram posts were tailored to target people aged 35 and under in Gwent, while the Facebook posts targeted people aged 45+. This was done following a data analysis with VAWDASV partners.

In addition to £21,000 worth of media coverage and approximately 200,000 impressions already achieved on social media organically, the boosted posts cost £700 and:

- Reached an additional 95,120 people;
- Resulting in 3,015 people engaging with the content; and
- 99 people visiting the advice pages as a result.

Due to Covid-19, Gwent Police also brought forward its 'Read Between the Lines' campaign on domestic abuse. We also supported this, repeatedly shared key messaging and encouraged our partners to do likewise. This complemented our existing work within the wider VAWDASV agenda.

Throughout this period, both the Chief Constable and I have been very clear in all our communications that we want people who are experiencing VAWDASV to seek help. We have monitored this situation closely and reports of domestic abuse in Gwent have increased by 10% compared to last year. I have worked with the force encouraging them to develop ways to ensure that vulnerable victims of domestic abuse are safeguarded, regardless as to whether there are current reports. Local Commanders have been working closely with the Public Protection team, identified repeat victims that have not reported during lockdown and contacted them. They have also worked with the Probation Service to identify and manage high-risk perpetrators where they

are living with or having contact with victims. We will continue to focus on this post-lockdown, as these incidents could rise as restrictions are lifted.

I have also attended the Victims' Commissioner's meeting where there is a national monitoring of all victim issues, including crime trends, support services activity, and court issues. This allows us to share and learn from best practice.

2.2 Domestic abuse and sexual violence funding

I was delighted that our bid to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) for Covid-19 extraordinary funding was successful. The money will support local charities to meet additional costs incurred whilst adapting services during the pandemic and dealing with additional demand from victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Eligible organisations were invited to submit their requests to us for the available funding and we were able to award more than £200,000 to New Pathways, Cyfannol, Phoenix Domestic Abuse, BAWSO, Llamau and Victim Support. The funding will help these frontline charities to provide survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence with the help they need during this challenging time.

Barnardo's Cymru received additional funding of £640,000 from the Home Office to continue its whole family approach to tackling domestic abuse. This will help fund the Opening Closed Doors project for the next 12 months, which has supported 261 families since it began last March. The money will allow it to be able to continue to operate in Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. Barnardo's is one of our key partners as it continues to work effortlessly in offering advice and support to keep victims safe.

We also made an expression of interest to the MOJ earlier in the year for three Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs). In March, we were informed that we were successful in securing funding for two posts, and this month we were notified of funding for a further post. Funded for two years, a total award of £234,097 has been made to fund three new ISVAs; one to support children, another for victims with mental health issues, and another to provide community outreach support.

2.3 Elder abuse

Monday 15 June was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which aims to focus global attention on the problem of physical, emotional, and financial abuse of older people. As part of this, I urged older people and their families to learn how to spot the signs of financial abuse and elder exploitation. We know that older people are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and we fear that opportunities for this to happen have risen due to the increased isolation caused by Covid-19. There will always be people who seek to exploit the vulnerable, so it has never been so important for people to keep an eye out for any signs of abuse.

To help tackle this, a press release and supporting materials were issued to the press, 58,000 residents via email, councillors and councils, registered social landlords and sheltered housing schemes, care agencies, Age Cymru, 50+ and senior citizens

forums, Age Connects Torfaen, pharmacies, community connectors, voluntary organisations, and council staff organising Covid-19 volunteers.

Local transport companies shared information with staff to look out for signs of elder abuse, as did some of the housing associations. Information was also shared on our social media platforms and those of partners.

2.4 Modern day slavery (MDS)

An eight-week digital campaign, supported by Wales' four Police and Crime Commissioners and anti-slavery partner agencies, encouraged the public to look out for signs of trafficking along the coastline and sexual exploitation of vulnerable people in towns and cities.

I am the all-Wales Commissioner lead for modern day slavery and campaigns such as this by Crimestoppers are important in encouraging people to be on the look-out for suspicious activities and pass on what they know about modern slavery.

This campaign highlighted the trafficking of people, drugs and weapons across the Welsh coast and borders, as well as sexual exploitation of trafficked women. The campaign resulted in more than 5,200 views of the campaign page, while Facebook adverts reached about 378,000 people. Gwent Police received an 18% increase in Crimestoppers reports relating to drug manufacture and cultivation during the campaign.

At the most recent National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery Network meeting, we discussed at length the impact of Covid-19 on the police's ability to successfully monitor human trafficking. We also looked at how, with the closure of businesses typically associated with this kind of criminality, such as nail bars or hand car washes, criminals are looking for other ways to exploit trafficked victims. Police forces in England are starting to work with local authorities to take a public health approach to tackling modern day slavery. This is work that we are already doing here in Wales.

2.5 Surveying victims

We have been working with Gwent Police to improve support for victims during investigations and how it deals with reported rapes. An anonymous survey has been promoted to specialist services working in this area asking people to give feedback about their experiences after they reported a rape to Gwent Police. It has also been shared on our external channels. A survey for frontline officers and staff in the force control room has been created and shared to support this. Together, the responses from these will inform an OPCC review on the handling of reported rape cases by Gwent Police. I expect this to be completed in the early autumn.

2.6 Operation Encompass

Due to school closures, Operation Encompass, which ensures support for children involved in domestic abuse incidents, has had to work differently. The process has been altered as it would be for school holidays and still ensures that safeguarding leads in schools are made aware of domestic abuse incidents in children's homes and families.

Diversion and other commissioned provisions have changed significantly due to the need for social isolation, but all services are offering remote contact using Skype, text messaging and a variety of social media platforms. Some children have expressed that they find this kind of contact more accessible. Lessons learned will be used for future delivery.

In some cases, our commissioned services have been identified as having the best relationship with vulnerable children and there have been socially distanced face-to-face meetings. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has brought personal challenges for many and I have been grateful to the commissioned services' staff that have made considerable effort to maintain relationships and support children and families through some challenging times and significant life events.

PRIORITY 3 – COMMUNITY COHESION

3.1 Community concerns

To help me hold the police to account on behalf of the public, it is important that I listen to, and understand, the issues communities and individuals are facing. The impact of Covid-19 has reinforced this essential need. I have continued to respond to correspondence, complaints and complements received. This information has been used to shape my communication with the public and partners. It has also been fed into the Chief Constable and senior officers when appropriate, to address any issues as they arise.

As my external engagements were cancelled as part of the Covid-19 lockdown, I ran a Q&A initiative on social media. This offered residents the opportunity to ask any questions they had about Covid-19 and local policing. The request for questions was published on all our channels, as well as in the Abergavenny Chronicle, Monmouthshire Beacon and South Wales Argus.

In total, more than 50 questions were submitted. Many of these focused on similar themes, the responses to which were posted on social media. Where people had emailed questions, my team and I responded to them personally via email to reassure them, as well as posting general information more widely on social media.

Some common themes were:

- Availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) for police officers and staff;
- Reporting instances where social distancing was not being adhered to; and
- The lack of clarity from UK government around what constitutes an essential journey.

In addition to this, we continued to provide a proactive and reactive service to the national, regional and local media to ensure awareness of my responsibilities and decisions, in support of openness, transparency and public accountability. We worked closely with the force to ensure public messages were co-ordinated and properly contextualised.

My team has also been engaged in weekly community dial-in meetings. Run by Gwent Police, the meetings enable us to hear from a wide range of organisations, including members of Independent Advisory Group, faith organisations, Sanctuary refugee group, Travelling Ahead representing Gypsy Traveller communities, and Mencap Cymru. The meetings help foster relations and strengthen engagement between the communities, the force and my office. Although these meetings were set up to improve community cohesion during Covid-19, the meetings are going to continue.

3.2 Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales

My team attended the Gwent Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Forum, which is organised by Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales (EYST), before the lockdown began. We used this opportunity to carry out some engagement work around our Strategic Equality Plan (see below) and gained some valuable insight into issues of concern within these communities. We have continued to engage with the forum via online meetings since. This has enabled me to hear the voices of our communities and helped us maintain a positive relationship with the forum during lockdown.

In July, my team and the VAWDASV Regional Team provided information to EYST's older people's forum about the many aspects of abuse that affects all communities. The group welcomed the information and were able to feedback valuable insights. This will help VAWSDAV and my office to convey the most appropriate messages to our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

We have also started working with EYST to increase opportunities to engage with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents. This will develop throughout 2020/21, as part of a comprehensive engagement plan that was already being developed as part of the OPCC business plan. However, the response to the Black Lives Matter campaign in recent months has reinforced its importance.

I made clear statements of support for the Black Lives Matter campaign but urged people not to gather in numbers because of the risk of helping to spread Covid-19. Despite this, a number of gatherings were held in Gwent and the reports that we've received show that they all passed peacefully, with many doing their best to observe social distancing. I have urged all public services in Gwent, through the G10 forum, to seriously consider how representative we are of our communities when it comes to recruitment and engagement.

3.3 Strategic Equality Plan

We have been engaging with residents across Gwent to help shape the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP). We have developed objectives and an action plan to ensure the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded into everything we do. The objectives aim to challenge discrimination and support my Police and Crime Plan.

A comprehensive series of face-to-face engagement sessions had been planned for the end of March and April, but these were largely cancelled due to Covid-19. Therefore, the engagement was undertaken predominately via social media and partnerships. Despite this:

- 771 responses were received (almost double the previous SEP survey response);
- The views of more than 100 children and young people were captured at the Youth Question Time event in March; and
- A number of responses were generated from a Talk Blaenau Gwent event and an Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales meeting, helping us reach some seldom heard groups.

The responses are currently being analysed to influence the final document.

3.4 Hate crime

We have been monitoring the levels of hate crimes reported during lockdown and the impact of the easing of restrictions. We have done this through the internal hate crime meeting and at the All-Wales Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board. Local hate crime case management is a feature of the internal hate crime meeting, which supports and drive improvements in Gwent Police's performance in this area. At the beginning of lockdown reporting levels fell rapidly; however, they have since returned to expected levels.

We are also a member of Gwent Police's new Police and Communities Hate Crime Forum, which met for the first time this month. This is a multi-agency meeting to improve the partnership response to hate crime victims, case management and any other matters agreed by the forum.

In addition to this, we have been monitoring the impact of Covid-19 on our communities through the following:

- Participation in Gwent Police's weekly community tensions dial-in, which was established to compensate for the lack of physical engagement with community groups.
- Following our initial recommendation, we have supported the force in undertaking an equality impact assessment on Covid-19 and this is informing recovery planning.
- Monitoring the use of fixed penalty notices through a number of internal mechanisms to identify inequality and understand usage.
- We have continued to attend the force's Independent Advisory Group meetings, albeit virtually, and the IAG is also acting as a critical friend to the force in its response to the Black Lives Matter movement.

3.5 Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel

Due to lockdown measures, the Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel was unable to meet for its planned session on 'stop and search' in May. To ensure continuity in the scrutiny process, my office carried out a random dip-sample of stop and search records for October 2019 to March 2020. While we acknowledge this does not provide the same level of independent scrutiny as the Legitimacy Scrutiny Panel, it supports me in holding the Chief Constable to account in this area.

Key findings from the dip sample include:

- Stop and search activity is on an upward trend, with around a 26% increase overall. The reasons for this have not yet been provided by Gwent Police; however, stop and search is a proactive policing tactic particularly relating to drugs supply and serious violence. This is a national trend.
- The majority of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) encounters were recorded in the Pillgwenlly and Stow Hill wards of Newport. A greater number of searches were performed on people identifying as Asian, which is consistent with previous exercises.
- BAME people in Gwent were stopped and searched at 4.5 times the rate of White people compared to the national figure of 4.3 times (based on 2018/19 Home Office data).
- The greater number of encounters continues to take place with the 18-25 age group; compared to census data, this group continues to be over-represented in stop and search activity in Gwent.
- Drugs remains the highest purpose for stop and search in Gwent, with 36.2% of BAME and 28.7% of White subjects recorded under this purpose in the dip sample.
- Searches for bladed articles provides the second highest purpose in the dip sample in 3.9% of BAME and 2.9% of White encounters.
- Asian ethnicities continue to experience a higher rate of stop and searches for drugs; Black ethnicities continue to experience higher rates for bladed article searches.
- No further action (NFA) remains the highest recorded outcome within the dip sample. Across all records, NFA outcomes had increased for BAME searches, but reduced for White. Stop-searches on BAME individuals result in a disproportionate number of NFA outcomes.

Overall, Gwent Police continues to demonstrate improvement in the recording of stop and search encounters during the scrutiny period. The next scrutiny panel exercise might identify any impacts arising from the limitations to force monitoring and scrutiny during the Covid-19 period.

A number of recommendations are provided in the report, focusing on:

- Monitoring data transfer processes;
- Stop and search training content;
- Understanding the impact of operational activity;
- Publication of stop and search data;
- Understanding and communicating the reasons for disproportionality/inequality;
- Build trust and confidence with communities regarding use of police powers; and
- Feedback to my office on progress against the recommendations.

3.6 Behind the Badge

This year's popular Behind the Badge open day was cancelled due to Covid-19. For the last couple of years, it has given residents a chance to look behind the scenes of policing. It is one of the largest community events in Gwent and is a fun, engaging way in which to highlight the work of a modern police force and other emergency services to a wider, diverse audience. Gwent Police ran a virtual open day on social media instead this year. This proved incredibly popular, with more than 51,000 people viewing content. We complemented this throughout the day by posting a range of clips to give residents a greater insight into the work of my office.

3.7 Engaging businesses

Just before the lockdown, I met with businesses in Ebbw Vale to gain an insight into how safe people feel in their communities. I was pleased to find a general feeling of safety, but I did share some concerns about anti-social behaviour with the Local Neighbourhood Team. I will revisit this area later this year to re-engage with local people and find out if improvements have been made.

3.8 Stephen Lawrence Day

We marked Stephen Lawrence Day this year by issuing a statement that reinforced my commitment to building community cohesion in Gwent, and to ensuring that our police force and staff are reflective of the communities they serve. We also shared statements from Gwent Police's Positive Action Outreach Officer and senior police officers. We have since received a report on workforce representation and how we can use Operation Uplift money to further address proportionality. I am very proud that here in Gwent we are making serious strides in these areas.

3.9 Race Equality First

Race Equality First has launched a competition for young people to help raise awareness of its 2020 anti-racism competition. We have been liaising with schools, local youth groups and organisations working with children to encourage them to take part. Improving community cohesion is at the heart of my Police and Crime Plan and such interactions between communities and policing services can help build relationships.

We are also working with Race Equality First to organise racism awareness training for all OPCC staff. This will help inform our future engagement work and work in tackling hate crime in our communities. My office is also undertaking unconscious bias training, which is also being rolled-out across the force.

PRIORITY 4 – TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

4.1 Peer-led youth campaign

The approach by Gwent Police throughout lockdown has been to engage, explain and encourage compliance with the guidance about staying home to save lives. We therefore created a peer-led unbranded joint communications campaign on social media using short clips of pledges from young people to reinforce the national social distancing messaging.

Linking in with the participation leads at the five Gwent councils, as well as project leaders from some local youth diversionary projects funded by my office, we crowd-sourced content. This meant we were capturing authentic voices and views from within our communities. This approach also meant it was not police-driven, but focused on young people reinforcing safety messages. The campaign wasn't locked to Gwent, so it could be replicated wider, and we deliberately didn't brand the content with anything to do with Gwent Police or my office.

The aim of the peer-led campaign was to encourage young people not to go out during lockdown. It began on Friday 2 April and in total:

- 32 organisations endorsed the campaign;
- More than 160 tweets mentioned #StayInForGwent;
- 120 posts on Instagram mentioned #StayInForGwent; and
- There was a combined reach of more than 600,000 using #StayInForGwent

Throughout April and May #StayInForGwent was included in tweets from a range of youth organisations and forums, residents, local authorities, Gwent Police, members of the Welsh Youth Parliament, sports development teams and Newport County Youth team. #StayInForGwent was pushed at key dates such as Easter, VE Day and bank holidays.

The campaign was endorsed by local sports stars, including Commonwealth Games Medallist and professional boxer Sean McGoldrick, and Gwent Dragons player Leon Brown. Their combined following is 10,296 on Instagram and 6,949 Twitter.

Welsh Government's Youth Work Bulletin highlighted the #StayInForGwent campaign as best practice and it was also featured in communications by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

4.2 Positive Futures

A youth inclusion programme that uses sport and activity to engage young people aged 10-18, Positive Futures received £181,000 from my office in 2019/20. It 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. As these are largely delivered in community settings, the programme had to adapt its work during lockdown.

It has increased use of its social media platforms to share important messages using its ambassadors, as well as running online question and answer sessions to reinforce key messages to young people. These promoted the importance of the role of sport and having positive engagement in their lives, as well as how people have managed to cope with difficult situations and mental health struggles. Online social media challenges for young people have also been created, while staff have been signposting people to information about what provision is available for vulnerable families. In addition, schools and social services accessed sports equipment.

In Blaenau Gwent, it has been developing and delivering door to door well-being packs to young people who are part of the Positive Futures referred groups and individual referrals. It has also provided IT equipment to vulnerable young people who are digitally excluded and unable to complete booklet task or maintain engagement with staff.

In Caerphilly, there has been weekly contact with parents of young people in its alternative education programme, plus weekly visits for those deemed as the most vulnerable on the programme. If young people do not respond to communication within a set number of days, a visit takes place and a referral/phone call may be made to safeguarding partners. Asdan (qualification) booklets have been given to those parents that have asked for some extra work, while sports packs been given out to households to help young people to take part in sport at home.

In Monmouthshire, support was provided to the school hubs from the start of the lockdown to the end of the Easter holidays, when this support was no longer required.

In Newport, an adverse childhood experiences/sport training package is being developed and was due to be delivered this month as a pilot to a 'critical friend' group from Positive Futures. Positive Futures has also been attending a multi-agency anti-social behaviour meeting to discuss what support agencies can offer to aid service delivery.

In Torfaen, the team have been working full-time in Torfaen hubs to support the delivery to children who are attending. This will take place until schools return in September.

PRIORITY 5 – EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

5.1 Criminal justice

As highlighted in the Covid-19 introduction to this report, we have been working with partners, both in Gwent and on an all-Wales basis, to develop plans to ensure that the criminal justice systems are able to recover from the impact of Covid-19. It was agreed early on that steps should be taken to focus on recovery planning for the local criminal justice system as a way of mitigating some of the emerging strategic risks.

With regards to criminal justice system recovery and learning, we are currently trying to identify:

- What are the areas/risks/issues that are of concern to us about recovery?
- What are the opportunities/learning from the way we've been working during the crisis?
- What can we do now to help prepare for recovery?
- How will we work together as criminal justice partners to come out of the crisis?
- How does this affect the priorities we agreed as a Gwent Criminal Justice Board?

We are engaging with partners to ensure that protocols, such as the new Charging, Police Custody Interview, and Custody Time Limit protocols, are effective in Gwent

and nationally. We have also responded to the Improving the Victims' Code consultation from the Victims' Commissioner.

We are engaged in the weekly MOJ Silver Command meeting for victims and witnesses. Regular updates are fed back to forces and Commissioners regarding key issues and developments. The two main issues of concern at the present time are the Early Prisoner Release Scheme and the plans regarding re-opening courts/access to justice. Work is under way locally to increase the use of telephone, video and other technology to continue as many hearings as possible remotely.

We are continuing to work closely with HMCTS on understanding the courts backlog and progressing to solutions. There are concerns that the delays in criminal justice will have an impact on victims' confidence in the system and we are working hard to try and progress to solutions. Since discussions began, magistrates' courts are now opening for more days a week.

5.2 Statement of accounts

Existing Welsh legislation allows for revised timescales for the delivery of the annual statements of accounts of public bodies, in the event of extraordinary circumstances. Many public bodies are therefore taking advantage of this provision when closing their 2019/20 Statements of Accounts.

The production of the annual Statements of Accounts for my office and that of Gwent Police has only been slightly delayed from normal timeframes, despite the disruption caused to by Covid-19.

Draft Statements of Account were produced on 10 June and presented to the Joint Audit Committee on 11 June. This is only 11 days after the normal deadline of 31 May. The final, audited Statements of Accounts are due for sign-off and publication in early August (the normal deadline is 31 July). This has been an exceptional effort, which has been greatly assisted by excellent working relationships and communication with Audit Wales.

5.3 Social media

Between March and Friday 10 July, the OPCC Twitter account grew by 10%, taking the total number of followers to 5,293. There were 374 posts, totalling 15,100 impressions during this time, as well as 474 retweets and more than 973 likes. Facebook has shown a 3% increase in followers to date, bringing the total number to 2,067. So far, there have been 217 posts, with a combined reach of almost 696,272. Instagram followers are still low at 433 but has grown by 63% in this time-period and is high compared to comparable OPCCs. The e-bulletin continues to grow steadily, with 1,422 subscribers. Analytics show that 57 percent of subscribers are highly engaged and regularly open their emails. This is exceptionally high and it is expected that this will reduce, in line with typical opening rates of public sector email bulletins.

I have also launched a new Welsh language Facebook page to allow better engagement with residents through the medium of Welsh. I am committed to ensuring that Welsh speaking in residents in Gwent receive the best possible service. A

dedicated Welsh language Facebook page will allow us to engage with them more effectively in their preferred language.

5.4 Cadets

We have been actively promoting Cadet recruitment via social media and have proactively sent emails to local organisations working with children and young people. This includes groups who attended the Youth Question Time event and assisted us in welcoming guests, as well as town and community councils, all secondary schools in Gwent and GAVO. The recruitment drive was successful, with 104 applications being received from young people across Gwent. The Cadets were also an integral part of the #StayInForGwent campaign, with the Cadets setting a wonderful example for others to follow.

5.5 Special Constabulary

Prior to National Specials Weekend in June, I wrote to all 68 Special Constables at Gwent Police thanking them for their service. Their contribution to policing in Gwent is significant and their commitment and dedication must be admired. This has never been more apparent than during the current pandemic, where Gwent Police's Special Constables have gone above and beyond the expectations of them as volunteers to boost police resources at this critical time. This can be seen in their hours increasing from 1,012 in January to 3,065 in May. This commitment to public service is commendable.

5.6 New recruits

Finally, we have welcomed 29 new recruits to Gwent Police since my last update. We also have plans for three cohorts of new constables to start their training up to March 2021. The College of Policing has developed online assessment centres to ensure that recruitment processes can go ahead while restrictions remain in place. Planned start dates for police staff investigators and Community Support Officers have gone ahead as planned during Covid-19.

COVID-19- Gwent Police Response

Date:	22/05/2020
Persons Producing:	C/Supt. Nick McLain
Document Owner:	DCC Blakeman
Version:	Version 1.0
Classification:	OFFICIAL

Purpose

This report is intended to provide a summary of how Gwent Police responded to the Covid19 Pandemic throughout March, April and May 2020.

Resources

The force prepared for COVID by instigating a new, force wide Gold/ Silver/ Bronze command structure prior to 'lockdown', on March 18, 2020. It established a daily Gold meeting to manage the force, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC). It also established two daily Silver meetings to ensure continuity of Operational Policing and Business Support functions. Each of these meetings is chaired by a Chief Superintendent or police staff equivalent and is attended by representatives from all operational and business support functions across the force, along with the Staff Associations. Gold and Silver meetings have run 7 days a week to this point.

Business continuity plans were requested from all departments across the Force in early March 2020, to help plan for staff absences and any shortages of supplies and equipment. These are kept up to date and constantly reviewed by Heads of Department. They proved effective in ensuring the force was able to continue providing its full range of services to communities throughout the pandemic.

The plans were supported by the force mobile IT capability which ensured staff were already well equipped with mobile phones and laptop devices. This ensured non-operational staff had the ability to work from home without a loss of capability. Meetings and communications were uninterrupted as the force adopted an online solution provided by Microsoft 'TEAMS' in place of face to face contact. The use of TEAMS was shared with our partners, which ensured multi agency meetings and work, including safeguarding of the vulnerable, was able to continue.

Staff from the Continuous Improvement Department were utilised to quickly and efficiently introduce a Logistics Cell. This cell co-ordinated allocation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), reviewed daily absence, allocated additional laptops to self-isolating staff and arranged COVID 19 testing appointments with the Public Health testing Centres. It began to produce a new, daily performance report for the Gold Meeting. This report contains up-to-date daily data about Crime, ASB, hate incidents, domestic abuse, and other areas of work so the organisation can respond to threat, risk or harm trends. The document keeps staff up to date by summarising the latest updates from national and regional governments and policing bodies. It also contains the results of force horizon scans to ensure it is sighted on potential future developments and able to put appropriate plans in place.

The Force responded to the initial outbreak by providing all available PPE to officers and staff. Due to initial shortages suffered by all agencies across the country, 'COVID Cars' (vehicles crewed by officers who had immediate access to enhanced PPE equipment) were used to deploy to incidents where the presence of the virus was suspected. This was recognised as best practice nationally and some Forces still use this approach. Gwent's approach was subsequently enhanced so that every response vehicle

was equipped with two enhanced PPE kits, thereby, turning every vehicle into a 'COVID Car'. PPE was successfully sourced through both local and national channels to ensure there was sufficient supply within a short period of time.

The force did not experience the anticipated spike in absence as a result of COVID. This was facilitated by robust daily management, clear guidance issued through an internal communications strategy and regular contact with officers who were unwell or experiencing symptoms. A new, central reporting line was established for officers to phone into if they were unwell, which streamlined the process and made absence reporting more efficient and effective.

University accommodation was sourced for officers and staff who were concerned about residing at home during the COVID 19 outbreak, due to living with vulnerable family members. This provision enabled officers and staff to continue to work during the pandemic, whilst providing a level of protection to their family members.

Welfare support for officers has been prioritised by the Occupational Health Unit who have worked closely with the force logistics cell and the Gwent Strategic Co-ordination Group (a multi-agency forum that directs the partnership response to the crisis and which is chaired by the ACC). There has been a focus on arranging the COVID testing of officers and providing clear guidance about self-isolation and shielding. Staff Associations are involved in the process and dial into Gold/ Silver Business Support each day to provide additional support.

To maximise operational capability, officers and staff who are self-isolating but have the ability to work from home are provided with a laptop (if they do not already have access to one) and tasked with organisationally important work. The force implemented a structured process to ensure these officers were both properly supported and effectively tasked. This involved personal telephone contact from a supervisor, which provided opportunity for wellbeing check-ins and a skills and abilities assessment.

An example of the work completed is the use of shielding Custody Detention Officers to complete outstanding tasks in the force record management system. Where officers, such as schools liaison officers, are unable to carry out their roles as a result of COVID, they have been deployed to other areas of work, such as the Force Control Room.

Staff from across the force were tasked using this process, including community support officers, interview transcript clerks, station enquiry officers, business support officers and front-line officers. Examples of the work achieved because of this initiative include:

- A review of custody records
- Improved data quality in our NICHE records management system
- Processing of central ticket office backlogs
- Completion of taped interview transcripts
- Reviews of open investigations.

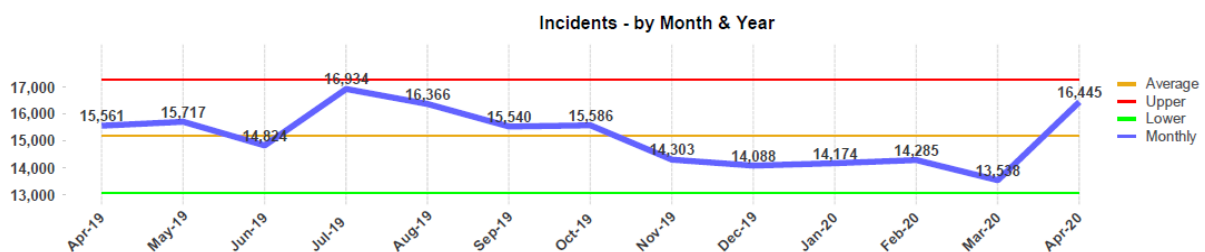
Our First Point of Contact centre (Control Room) has continued to operate normally, after being redesigned and relocated to three separate sites to ensure the safety of staff.

There has been a substantial increase in demand on the Social Media Desk. This provision has helped ensure that call demand remains manageable.

With regards to officer training, the Learning & Development Dept introduced online, 'virtual learning' for the January intake of new student officers. Where classroom-based learning is still required, social distancing measures have been introduced, and classes are split into smaller 'pods' to provide a safer environment. Online 'Skype' interviews have also been arranged for the next set of potential Gwent Police recruits.

Operational Policing

Overall demand upon Gwent Police increased during the COVID period, although the nature of that demand changed. The number of reported incidents increased in April 2020 (as can be seen in the chart below), although the number of reported crimes fell.



In company with the rest of the country, crime in Gwent has fallen through the COVID period. Table 1 (below) shows the difference in reported crime for the 47-day COVID period from the 26th March to 11th May in 2020 compared to the same period in 2018 and 2019.

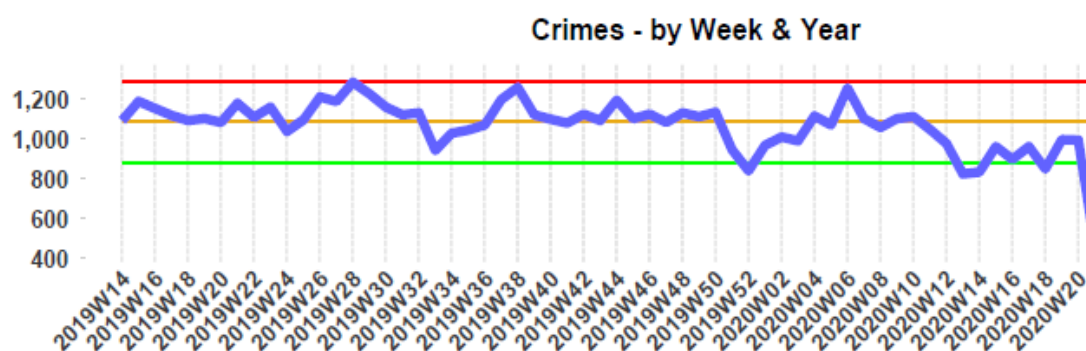
During this period in 2020, there were a total of 6221 crimes recorded. This was a decrease of 19% on the same timeframe in 2019, when 7679 crimes were recorded. It is a 16% reduction on the same period in 2018.

The biggest volume reductions in crime rates were seen in Criminal Damage & Arson, which fell by 549 (39.4%), Shoplifting, which fell by 218 offences (48.9%) and Violence With Injury, which fell by 196 (26.2%). The largest increases are in drugs and weapons offences, which is likely to be driven by increased police proactivity during the period.

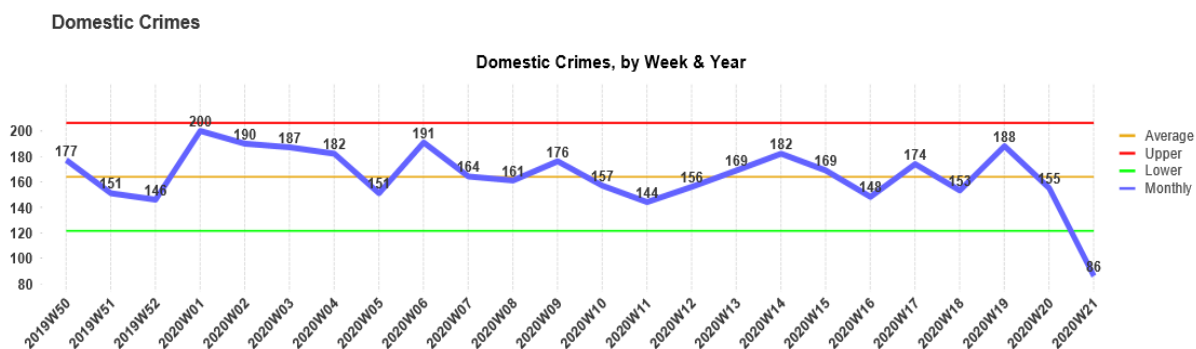
Force Wide				
Crime Type	2018	2019	2020	% Change 19 to 20
All Other Theft	625	614	337	-45.1%
Bicycle Theft	57	64	32	-50.0%
Burglary Dwelling	354	331	285	-13.9%
Burglary Non-Dwelling	162	151	114	-24.5%
Criminal Damage & Arson	1096	1394	845	-39.4%
Drug Offences	157	195	238	22.1%
Miscellaneous Crimes	208	195	217	11.3%
Non-Notifiable Offences	10	11	8	-27.3%
Other Sexual Offences	107	120	110	-8.3%
Possession of Weapons	24	27	46	70.4%
Public Order Offences	1027	1057	987	-6.6%
Rape	54	64	46	-28.1%
Robbery	31	37	26	-29.7%
Shoplifting	535	446	228	-48.9%
Theft From Person	48	39	24	-38.5%
Vehicle Crime	494	407	345	-15.2%
Violence With Injury	736	749	553	-26.2%
Violence Without Injury	1683	1778	1780	0.1%
Total	7408	7679	6221	-19.0%

Table 1 – All Crime Force Wide

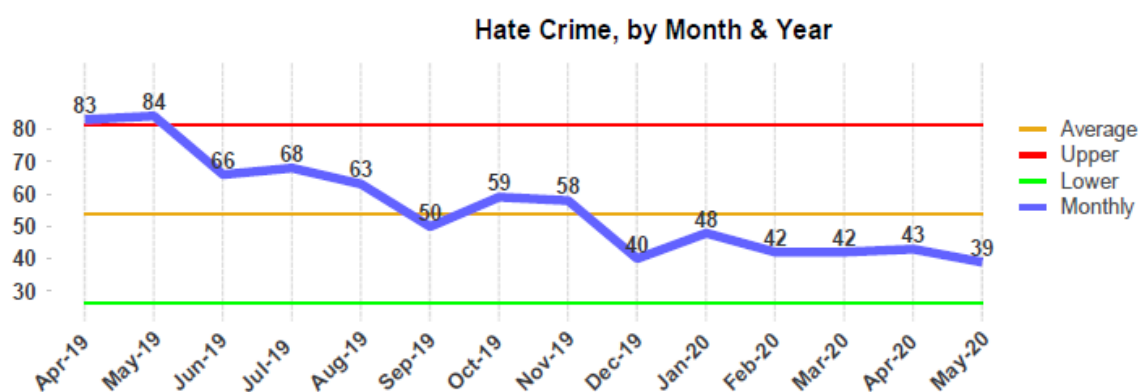
The weekly fall in crime can also be illustrated in the below chart, which shows the number of reported crimes against weeks of the year. Lockdown began in week 13 of 2020.



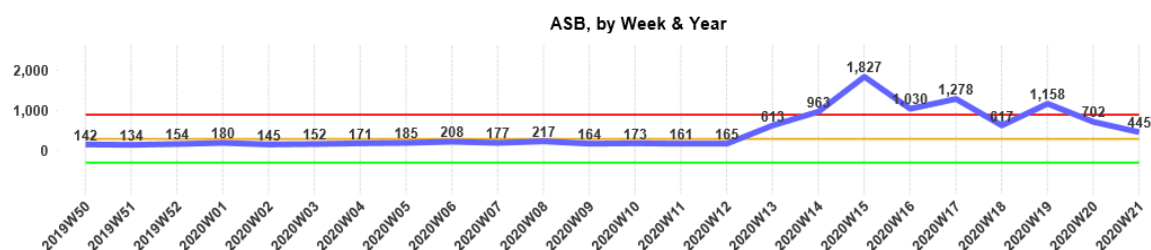
The number of domestic related crimes remained relatively stable, despite concerns that lockdown would lead to a fall as victims may lose the opportunities to report. This is illustrated in the below chart, which shows the number of reported domestic crimes against the week of the year. Lockdown began in week 13 of 2020.



The numbers of hate crimes has remained low through the COVID period, as illustrated in the below chart which shows the number of reported hate crimes against time. To encourage reporting, monitor community tensions and support BAME communities the force has established a Community Tension Forum to engage with community representatives to identify and address potential COVID related tensions. The Forum has been well received and representation is high. There is discussion about the forum continuing on a long term basis, supported by the Independent Advisory Group. The force has also completed an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the crisis to ensure that our COVID response does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.



Anti- social behaviour has risen during the COVID period, although it is difficult to obtain an accurate reflection of ASB incidents due to the huge rise in reports linked to Covid-19 and the lockdown (such as reports of groups of people outside). This is illustrated in the below chart, which shows the number of reported incidents of ASB against the week of the year. Lockdown began in week 13 of 2020.



The table below breaks down incidents by 'Normal ASB' (pre-COVID types of ASB) and COVID related ASB for the aforementioned 47-day period (26th March to 11th May), and shows the difference between the periods of 2018, 2019 and 2020.

ASB Force Wide				
Crime Type	2018	2019	2020	% Change 19 to 20
Normal ASB	1072	1284	767	-40.3%
Covid Related ASB	0	0	6611	N/A
Total	1072	1284	7378	474.6%

The force continued to make arrests during the COVID period, and the numbers of people arrested were higher for the 47 day COVID period in 2020 (26th March to 11th May) than for the same period in the previous year (1257 arrests in 2020, compared to 1090 in 2019).

To manage this demand, both Gwent Custody units introduced hand washing facilities and glass screens in the interview rooms to increase hygiene and provide extra protection against COVID 19 for detainees, solicitors and officers. The Gwent Law Society were appreciative and grateful for the force approach.

COVID pressures in other areas of the Criminal Justice system have contributed to the force being restricted in the number of people it can charge with offences from the custody unit. However, there has been a daily focus on improving criminal justice outcomes, and this has resulted in a steady improvement in the force Criminal Justice Outcome rate to 8.4%.

The use of new COVID legislation is tracked and reviewed through the Force's Silver Meetings to ensure the Forces approach is consistent. The Joint Legal Services team are present in the Daily Gold meeting and have been integral to the forces ability to interpret and disseminate the legislation swiftly. In common with national guidance, the Force strategy has been to Engage, Explain and Encourage, with Enforcement being the last option. A COVID 19 Fixed Penalty Notice application was developed quickly and made available to officers on their mobile devices. 91 FPN's have been issued to date.

Business Support

The introduction of a Silver Business Support function allowed the force to focus on and continue to deliver key functions such as Fleet, Payroll, IT functionality, Procurement, HR and Continuous Improvement during the disruption caused by Covid19. As a result of agile working capabilities, performance has not been noticeably affected by the pandemic. For example, the Finance Department was able to work toward closing the

annual accounts in the usual manner and with the exception of face to face support, victim support services have continued through agile working of Connect Gwent staff.

Fleet services had to identify alternative suppliers for parts and supplies at short notice due to business closures and lack of available products. This was managed efficiently and effectively with no disruption to front line services.

An Electronic time sheets project was prioritised as a result of COVID and introduced ahead of the planned implementation date. Police Staff members working from home are now able to complete and submit their time sheets online, making efficiency savings at all stages.

A waste management system was introduced to deal with the safe disposal of used PPE. This was undertaken and implemented by the Estates Department and saved an estimated £7000 for the Force when compared to using the services of an external supplier.

The Corporate Communications team has worked hard to make sure that our communities have been clear about the role of Gwent Police in policing the pandemic. There has been a developing conversation as the force gains clarity around the regulations and amendments that have been introduced and differences between regions have emerged. Our approach has been to:

- recognise the efforts of the many who are diligently following the restrictions
- reassure them that we are supporting them by tackling the behaviour of the few who are not following the guidance
- send a clear message to those breaching the guidelines that we will take action if they do not comply.
- instil confidence that we continue to police as normal to tackle non-Covid related issues.

This has been achieved through working with national, regional and local broadcast and print media, and a greatly improved use of social media.

In addition the team has both initiated and supported campaigns to tackle issues that have been key during the pandemic including domestic abuse (Read between the lines), mental health, appropriate use of 999/101 (Think before you dial), cyber-crime and stalking. We have worked on engagement activities such as a colouring pack for young children and next weekend we run our virtual open day. We have also worked closely with our partners to ensure strong support for our Gwent-wide messaging.

Internally, the team have kept staff and officers up to date by instigating daily updates channelled to a dedicated intranet page. They also developed a direct email for officers to ensure that they can target operational, wellbeing and mental health messaging directly to them in a timely way. Messages of appreciation from the public have been collated and passed to officers through the force intranet.

The force was forced to cancel its annual awards ceremony in March, and is seeking to deliver a virtual awards ceremony as part of our Reward and Recognition approach to ensure that the good work carried out before the health crisis is not forgotten.

The Business Support Silver group is now tasked with managing the recovery of the force. Each department has been tasked with developing plans that will lead to:


- a resumption of business as usual
- anticipating and planning for a new normal
- delivering improved and transformed operating processes and procedures building on lessons learnt and capturing and embedding good practice.
- an appreciation of the cost of COVID to the force.

For OPCC use only

Office of the Chief Constable

I confirm that **COVID Performance report** has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers' meeting.

It is now forwarded to the OPCC for **approval / information / monitoring purposes.**



Signature:

Date: 28/05/2020

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:

GWENT POLICE AND CRIME PANEL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

31 July 2020 at 2pm

- PCC Response to COVID-19

25th September 2020 at 10am

- PCC statement,
- Quarter 4 performance report
- PCC's Annual Report

11th December 2020 at 10am

- Complaints Annual Report
- Budget Briefing
- Chief Constable 'Ask'

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