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September 2019

**A REVIEW OF INITIAL PUBLIC CONTACT
WITH DYFED-POWYS POLICE**



Police and Crime

Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys

A review of

**Initial Public Contact with
Dyfed-Powys Police**

September 2019

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1.0 Executive Summary

1. There is a national increasing trend of people contacting the police as a *first* resort due to a lack of clarity of how and why the public should make contact. This, coupled with a lack of availability, capability or response by other, more suitable agencies, poses enormous pressures and significant challenges for Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) in managing initial public contact. More so, it poses a challenge in meeting public expectation of a prompt police service, contributing to a detrimental impact on the public's confidence in the police. A shift against this trend requires a culture change alongside a careful, consistent communications approach with our communities, backed by a national campaign.
2. This lack of clarity amongst the public of how and why they should make contact with the police has contributed to the increase in demand on the Force Communications Centre. This has led to increased waiting times on the 101 non-emergency number, and has been identified by the public as the main barrier to making contact with the police.
3. There is a strong national directive on digitalised police contact in the near future through the introduction of Single Online Home. With Dyfed-Powys' ageing population and a high percentage of rural communities not currently digitally connected, any strategy going forward needs to give due consideration to the specific needs of our ageing and rural communities. There is a need for a holistic view across the organisation, alongside a strong Contact Strategy, which explains how we will embrace change in digital contact in the future, ensuring it is fit for purpose for the communities of Dyfed-Powys. A commitment for a clear vision needs to be set out internally, before communicating clearly with the public.
4. Whilst 87% of survey responses were received online, the number of respondents eager to be able to report a crime via social media in the future are lower than expected. Those who responded to a series of surveys expressed their preference of face to face and phone contact over any other form.
5. DPP's residents continue to hold face to face contact high on their preference list, with many, despite restrictions in opening hours, preferring to visit a station in person over any form of written communication.
6. There seems to be a lack of knowledge among the public on the THRIVES concept¹, and it is therefore be of no surprise that the public's feedback is focused on the length of calls, level of questioning or options and call waiting times. They cannot be expected to know what is reasonable and necessary for the police ask when dealing with their call for help, unless the police tell them.

¹ Call handlers are tasked to conduct a thorough assessment on each call for service, using careful questioning based on the mnemonic THRIVES: Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement and Safeguarding.

7. A strong and ongoing communications plan is needed in order to guide callers to the correct agency from the outset, as well as clearly advising the public of the different methods available to contact the police when that is the necessary avenue.
8. There is a need for more clarity and consistency in the use of the community trigger process to deal with antisocial behaviour.
9. Whilst there are examples of good practice, DPP doesn't fully understand the needs of all of its diverse communities. There is a need for better understanding so as to ensure the Force is fully accessible.
10. There is an appetite within DPP to make more use of the four mobile police stations which would facilitate a local policing presence, but a full review is needed to ensure that any investment provides longevity and value for money, whilst delivering a service in line with the needs and reasonable expectations of the communities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys.

2.0 Outcome

This review contributes to Priority 4 within the Commissioner's (PCC) Police and Crime Plan², Connecting with Communities, and specifically the following areas:

- Improving our understanding of communities so that we can respond appropriately to how specific communities and community groups want to engage;
- Ensuring that the public receive an accessible and responsive [police] service;
- Ensuring that all members of our communities, including diverse groups, are provided with an opportunity to engage [with the police] through a variety of means; and
- Exploring the development of new digital opportunities for the public to access policing services when and how they need and want to.

The review sought to:

1. Assess whether the level of public expectation is reasonable within the context of different types of demand;
2. Provide a snapshot of current initial public contact with the Police across Dyfed-Powys;
3. Determine whether public contact methods provided by Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) meet public expectation; and
4. Determine whether DPP are providing an accessible police service at the first point of contact.

Through:

- a) Identifying current national trends and developments in relation to public contact with the police;
- b) Identifying how and why the public are currently making contact with DPP, and how they would like to do so; and
- c) Assessing public perception regarding the accessibility of DPP.

In order to inform this review, representatives of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner carried out a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including:

- A public consultation on initial contact with the police via an online survey and face-to-face consultation at various summer shows and events;
- Interviews with key DPP departments to understand their views of the topic;
- Focus Groups with representatives from DPP's Independent Advisory Group to discuss accessibility issues at the first point of contact;

² <http://www.dyfedpowys-pcc.org.uk/en/the-commissioner/the-police-and-crime-plan/>

- Focus groups with young people through the PCC's Youth Forum and other youth groups;
- Desk research on local and national developments and benchmarking activity in the field of public contact;
- Detailed scrutiny of DPP's performance statistics;
- Data from DPP's Call Logger Exercise.

3.0 Situation

3.1 Background

A number of factors have influenced this review, namely:

- Information gathered from meetings between the PCC and Force Communication Centre staff on the current pressure and demand;
- Public feedback gathered by the OPCC on their ease of contact with the Force;
- HMICFRS's recommendation for the Force to better understand current demand on its services in order to improve efficiency;
- National policing directives on digital communication as a solution to controlling demand placed on Force Communication Centres;
- Intelligence on the high level of demand placed on the Dyfed-Powys Police Force Communication Centre;
- The ageing and rural population within Dyfed-Powys and their potentially limited digital connectivity.

3.1.1 National UK Developments

The National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) draft³ National Contact Management Strategy sets the scene in relation to initial contact with the police at UK level.

It suitably refers to initial police contact as 'the gateway to policing services', whether on a phone, at a police station enquiry office or online; initial public contact is the means by which members of the public seek police services. It goes on to state that the number of ways to contact the police and the nature of services sought has grown significantly and are expected to continue to do so.

The NPCC refers to an increase in public expectation of policing:

"As public finances have become constrained and public services contracted, the police service has become for many the service of last, and too frequently first, resort".

There is a national increasing trend of people contacting the police as a *first* resort due to a lack of clarity amongst the public of how and why they should make contact. This, coupled with a lack of availability, capability or response by other, more suitable agencies, poses enormous pressures and significant challenges for DPP, as explored later in the report, in managing initial public contact. More so, it poses a challenge in meeting public expectation of a prompt police service. It is therefore believed that this has a detrimental impact on the public's confidence in the police. A shift against this trend requires a culture change amongst the public alongside

³ NPCC National Contact Management Strategy (Draft) 2019.

a careful, consistent communications approach with our communities, backed by a national campaign.

Today, the public have grown to expect increasing levels of choice across life on how a commercial service is delivered. This places significant pressure on public services and policing to meet increasing demand for services to be delivered in a range of different formats and across a range of channels.

The NPCC note that control room staff are too often resolving public contact at the point of contact, with an increasing amount of time spent dealing with individual calls or contacts and a reduced ability to respond to new calls for service. As this trend increases, demand is displaced from frontline officers and staff to point of contact. The unintended consequence for many police services has been rising wait times on the '101' non-emergency number, correlating with increasing misuse of the '999' emergency system and failure to meet the national target answer time. The service provided by DPP is not yet at this point, but it is a trend that must be guarded against where possible.

The use of technology within communities has developed widely in recent years, providing significant opportunities for the public to contact the police service. It is seen as a way of reaching a large number of people and at a relatively low cost. More and more people are obtaining their news and information from online sources, and are looking to digital methods of contact rather than the traditional ways⁴.

3.1.2 Current methods of initial contact with DPP

Currently, the public in Dyfed-Powys can make initial contact with the police via the following methods:

- Phoning 999 in an emergency;
- Phoning 101 in a non-emergency;
- Emailing the Force Communications Centre (FCC) via the Contact Us section of the DPP website;
- Visiting Police Stations;
- Phoning 101 via Public Service Points⁵;
- Visiting mobile police stations; and
- Contacting DPP via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Social media is not available as a reporting facility; it is currently used as means of engaging with communities and sharing information.

⁴ Dyfed-Powys Police's Digital Communications Strategy (Draft) 2019.

⁵ Public Service Points (PSPs) are phones which are located on the wall outside the main police stations if there is no access to the station itself at the time (e.g. out of hours/no staff present). The phone dials directly into the FCC in Police Headquarters.

These will be considered fully in section 3.2.1 of this report.

3.1.3 DPP's Strategic Equality Plan

A review of public contact with the police must be in the context of equality and diversity, in order to ensure that the service provided is accessible to all Dyfed-Powys residents.

On the 10th September 2011, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 came into force. In order to comply with the Specific Duties, Police Forces in England and Wales are required to produce 'one or more equality objectives'.

Following consultation and engagement with members of the public, staff and officers, the following objectives have been agreed as the priorities until 2020⁶:

1. To raise awareness of what Hate Crime and Hate Incidents are and how to report them in an attempt to increase the confidence of members of the community to report Hate Crime and Incidents to us;
2. To ensure that our services are accessible to all minority groups within our communities, and further ensure that they receive the appropriate level of service when they do access them;
3. To ensure that staff and officers have the appropriate knowledge and resources to take into account our ageing population through service delivery and workforce management;
4. To provide a high level of service when responding to cases of persons experiencing mental ill health or crisis;
5. To increase the diversity of our workforce to more accurately reflect the communities we serve, across all ranks and specialisms;
6. To promote health in the workplace through raising awareness of mental ill health and distress preventative measures with a view to reduce absence on the grounds of psychological sickness⁷.

This review will aim to assess priority two of the Strategic Equality Plan, and consider the accessibility of people's first contact with DPP.

3.1.4 HMICFRS recommendations

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) state within their PEEL: Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy 2018/19 report on DPP⁸:

⁶ Dyfed-Powys Police website, Equality and Diversity, 2019.

⁷ Consultation on Dyfed-Powys Police's 2020-2024 SEP priorities have been conducted

⁸ <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-assessment-2018-19-dyfed-powys/>

"The force is improving its understanding of what the public expects, which will help it plan for future demand.... The force should undertake further work to better understand the current demand for its services, including hidden demand, so it can make best use of its resources to meet the needs of the public."

In this respect, the Force have been undertaking a significant piece of work to understand demand across the organisation. This work will be used by Chief Officers to help make informed decisions around Force priorities and to ensure that the right staff are in the right place at the right time with the right skills and support to do their role⁹.

As part of this, the Force Communications Centre (FCC) have been one of the first Operational Support functions to be looked at. It aims to identify where there is failure demand or where calls could be better placed within other organisations, or where alternative steps could be taken to prevent these calls coming into the FCC in the first place.

3.1.5 Complaints in relation to Initial Public Contact

A key responsibility of the PCC is to deal with formal complaints against the Chief Constable. Between April 2018 and June 2019, the PCC has recorded 9 complaints, all of which related to dissatisfaction, from the complainants' perspective, concerning the expected level of communication from DPP. None of these complaints were upheld, due to the fact that all correspondence was dealt with entirely in line with process; however lessons have been learnt in relation to the importance of acknowledging all correspondence, to ensure that these experiences are not repeated. This stresses the importance which residents place on written communication and their basic expectation for timely and appropriate responses from DPP.

⁹ Call Logger Exercise, DPP, 2019.

3.2 Main findings of this review

The following chapter seeks to provide a snapshot of the current position in relation to how and why the public contact DPP, including accessibility considerations. This has been informed by public consultation, meetings with key stakeholders and desk-based research.

The public consultation was held between July and September 2019. With a potential target audience of 431,271¹⁰ the consultation survey received 836 responses. With a confidence level of 95%, this gives the survey results a 3% margin of error, which is the industry standard.

96.5% of respondents were residents of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire or Powys. The highest response rate was received from individuals aged 45 to 64 (42%), followed by 25-44 (28%), 65+ (24%) and 16-24 (4%).

¹⁰ StatsWales, 2019.

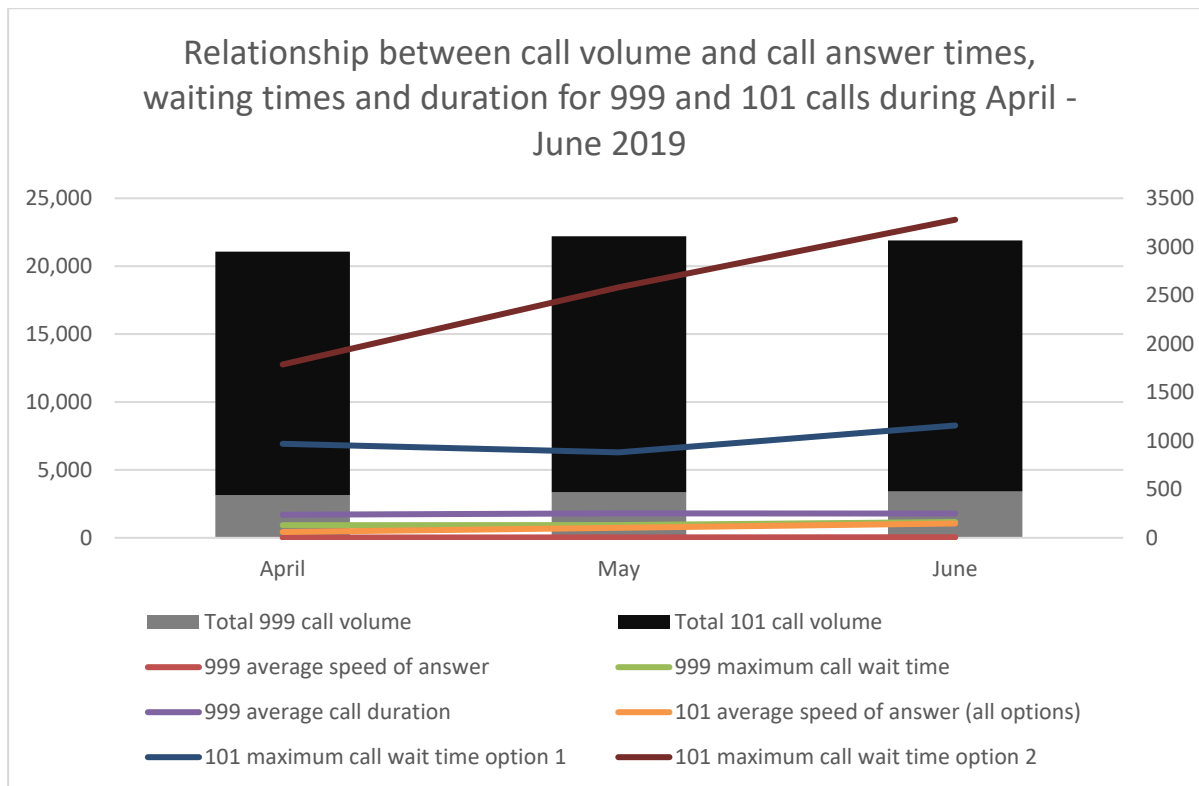
3.2.1 How the public contact Dyfed-Powys Police

Currently, the public in Dyfed-Powys can make initial contact with the police via the following methods:

3.2.1.1 Phoning 999 (or 18000 on text phone) in an emergency

Almost all people surveyed¹¹ knew they could contact the police by calling 999 (98%, n=577) and 99% of those who answered (n=584) would prefer to contact 999 in an emergency.

DPP recorded an average of 3,106 calls via 999 per month between July 2018 and June 2019. The average speed of answer has been consistently considerably lower than their 12 seconds target¹² (averaging at 4.3 seconds across the year)¹³. In recognition of occasional adverse incidents, the Force Communication Centre's management team closely monitors a host of performance data, including call durations and call wait times. Between April and June of this year, the maximum waiting time for a 999 call to be answered was 2 minutes 21 seconds, which is under the 3 minute cut-off point before calls are diverted to another force.



¹¹ Via the PCC's Summer 2019 Public Consultation "Police First Contact and Accessibility"

¹² As set within the National Police Chief's Council's National Contact Management Strategy.

¹³ It must be noted that the data does not illustrate the total number of calls into the FCC over a 24 hour period as it does not include call volumes made between 00:00 and 07:00.

In the not too distant past, DPP service prided itself on being one of the few constabularies to attend every call for service. Through increasing demand and a change in incident handling at the point of contact, they have been forced to re-think this ideology, prompting the introduction of the THRIVES risk assessment. Call handlers are tasked to conduct a thorough assessment on each call for service, using careful questioning based on the mnemonic THRIVES: Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement and Safeguarding¹⁴. This enables the call handler to make an informed decision on the graded response most appropriate for the incident and therefore how quickly, if at all, police resources should be deployed to the scene.

Between April and June 2019, call handlers spent an average of 4 minutes and 7 seconds on each 999 call. This time is used to complete the THRIVES assessment to gather vital information to equip officers heading to the scene, recording and monitoring the situation as well as reassuring and advising the caller whilst officers are travelling to them.

Whilst the justification for this risk-based approach to distributing police resources as effectively and efficiently as possible is clear internally, it is questionable whether the public have had this explained to them. A simple UK web search for THRIVES yields very little information for a member of the public. DPP does provide some basic information on their Force Communication Centre department page, including when to call 999/101 and what will happen:

"You will be asked about your emergency and some details about yourself. It's important to get the right information so officers are fully informed about the incident before they arrive. Risk assessments can also be carried out to ensure the safety of members of the public and police officers."¹⁵

It should therefore be of no surprise that the public's feedback is focused on the length of calls, level of questioning or options and call waiting times. They cannot be expected to know what is reasonable and necessary for the police to appropriately respond to their call for help, unless the police tell them.

3.2.1.2 Phoning 101 (or 18001 101 via text phone) in a non-emergency;

Introduced around 2010 to alleviate the pressures on 999 and centralise calls, dialling 101 from a payphone is free, and costs 15p from mobiles and landlines, regardless of the duration. However some networks will charge more to make the call. The OPCC has received representation from the public complaining about the cost of calling 101 from their mobile.

84% (n=492) of the public surveyed stated they preferred to use 101 in a non-emergency.

¹⁴ THRIVES, based on the National Decision Model (<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/the-national-decision-model/#the-model>) has been adopted by Dyfed-Powys Police following successful implementation of THRIVE / THRIVE+ in other constabularies. Forces use their own variations of methods to assess the level of threat risk and harm.

¹⁵ <https://www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/en/about-us/our-departments/force-communications-centre/>

This service is also available 24 hours a day, however some constabularies provide a switchboard operator during certain hours, transferring to call handlers when necessary. Call handlers will answer 101 calls outside of the switchboard operators' hours.

Police.UK suggests 101 should be used to:

- Report a crime not currently in progress - for example a stolen car, burglary, or damaged property.
- Give information to the police about crime in your area.
- Speak to the police about a general enquiry.
- Contact a specific police officer or member of staff.

When ringing DPP 101, the caller initially selects their preferred language before being connected to their chosen Force, where they are asked again to select their preferred language and then taken through a menu to select one of four options:

- 1: To report a new incident
- 2: To discuss an existing incident, for advice or general enquiries
- 3: If you know the extension number / person
- 4: All other queries

The process takes a total of 1½ minutes before ringing through to a call handler. Whilst there is no nationally set target for the speed of answering a 101 call, on average, DPP take 51.3 seconds to answer from when the caller has selected an option¹⁶. There are however some adverse occasions where callers are required to wait longer due to other, more urgent call demands. The longest waits for a 101 call to be answered during April to June 2019 was 5 minutes 31 seconds for option 1, and 54 minutes 39 seconds for option 2. On average, 101 calls take 5 minutes 28 seconds (option 1) and 3 minutes 8 seconds (option 2) to resolve¹⁷.

Of the average of 21,100 calls made to DPP 101 (all options) each month, 25% result in an incident being recorded. Conversely, an average of 2,000 calls to the DPP non-emergency number were assessed by the call handler as requiring an emergency police response (immediate or priority response time – up to 60 minutes). In total, an average of 1,589 calls received via 101 and 999 each month result in immediate (within 20 minutes) police deployment.

This further compounds the fact that the public are ill-informed about who and how best to contact services when in need of assistance. This is of concern, as whilst DPP are committed to, and are, providing a high quality service to all calls, their priority is rightly focused on answering and dealing with 999 calls first and foremost.

¹⁶ Based on calls received between 07:01 and 23:59 from July 2018 to June 2019.

¹⁷ Based on Dyfed-Powys Police Force Communication Centre call handling data, April to June 2019.

#Choosewell is a national campaign adopted by all Welsh Health Boards, around 10 years ago. It began in response to pressures on the health service during the winter months, but is now a year-long campaign, with peaks of activity during times such as winter and Bank Holidays, to assist the public in choosing the best health support for their needs.

A public education campaign, backed nationally, such as Choose Well, is needed to change the current culture of “999 – they’re always in”.

Recommendation 1: That Dyfed-Powys Police work with Welsh Government, public service partners and other Welsh forces to further develop the #maketherightcall campaign. This will educate all members of the community on the most appropriate service to contact in emergency and non-emergency situations and what to reasonably expect.

3.2.1.3 Emailing the Force Communications Centre (FCC) via the Contact Us section of the DPP website;

As part of their summer campaign asking the public to make the right call, DPP introduced a prompt on their “Contact Us” webpage asking “Are you reporting an emergency?”. If yes is selected, the prompt urges the individual to call 999. If no, a form appears to complete the details of the incident or query, which is then sent via email to the Force Communication Centre (FCC). Emails are dealt with by call handlers for appropriate action. The Force recorded a 107% increase in visits to their online reporting web page during the 10 week long campaign, when compared to the same period in 2018.

Feedback from the public shows that 41% (n=242) of respondents were aware they could contact the Force via email. Interestingly 9% (n=51) would prefer to contact the police via email in an emergency, and 31% (n=185) said they would in a non-emergency, third behind phoning 101 and visiting a police station.

In 2017, as part of “Op Cynefin”, the PCC together with DPP surveyed all householders within the Tycroes ward in Ammanford to understand their perceptions and expectations of the police. This comprehensive exercise was recently repeated in the ward of Newtown East. Early results of this more recent analysis show some slight differences which could be attributable to the differences in demographics of the two areas, or improvements in technology accessibility over the intervening years. There are however some clear similarities in the public’s preferences, which compound what our summer survey found. The majority of people would prefer to contact the police in a non-emergency by phone or visiting a station, followed by emailing. The table below shows the order of preferences of the different surveys:

Contact method order of preference	Op Cynefin Tycroes (2017)	Op Cynefin Newtown East (2019)	PCC's initial contact survey (2019)
1	Visit police station	Phone	Phone
2	Email	Visit police station	Visit police station
3	Letter	Email	Email
4	Phone	Letter	Face to face (approach an officer on patrol)

It is clear from the above that the FCC remains vitally important to meeting the expectations of the public. It is the first point of contact for incoming phone calls, emails and engagement through Public Service Points, as well as being responsible for dispatching officers to scenes, managing incidents and distributing important information to the public outside of regular office hours.

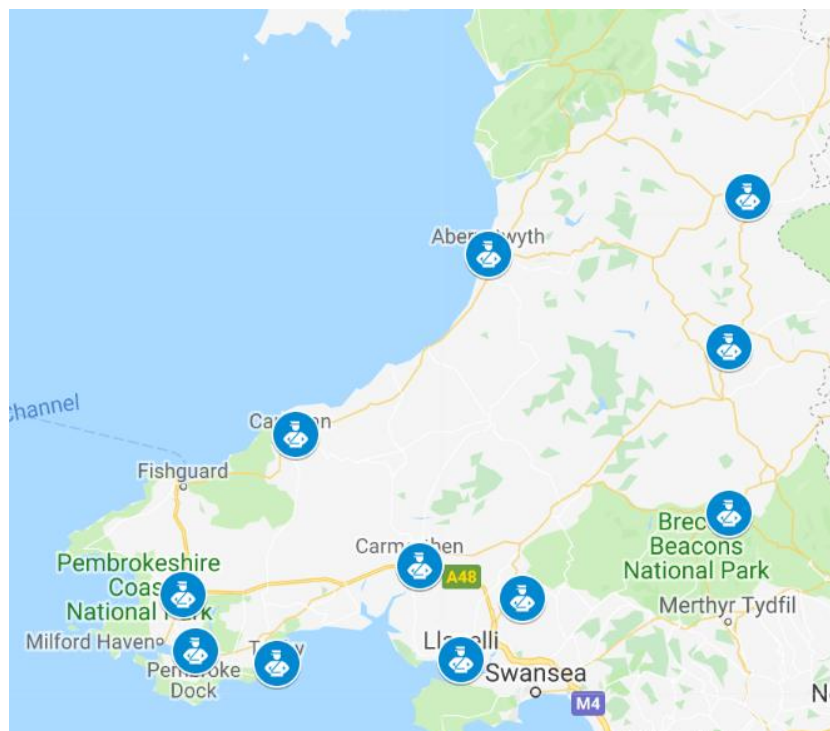
3.2.1.4 Visiting Police Stations and Phoning 101 via Public Service Points;

Police Station	Opening times
Aberystwyth	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm
Ammanford	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm
Carmarthen ¹⁸	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm
Llandrindod Wells	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm
Haverfordwest	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm
Llanelli	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm
Newtown	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm
Pembroke Dock	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm

¹⁸ Police Headquarters in Carmarthen also provides a front counter service between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Tenby	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm (Summer Time opening only)
Brecon	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm
Cardigan	9am to 2pm and 2:40pm to 5pm (Occupied but not full time front desk)

The following map shows Police Stations which have a Public Engagement Officer providing a front counter service. Their general opening hours are 0900-1400 and 1440-1700, 5 days a week. Tenby is seasonal and Cardigan is not full time.



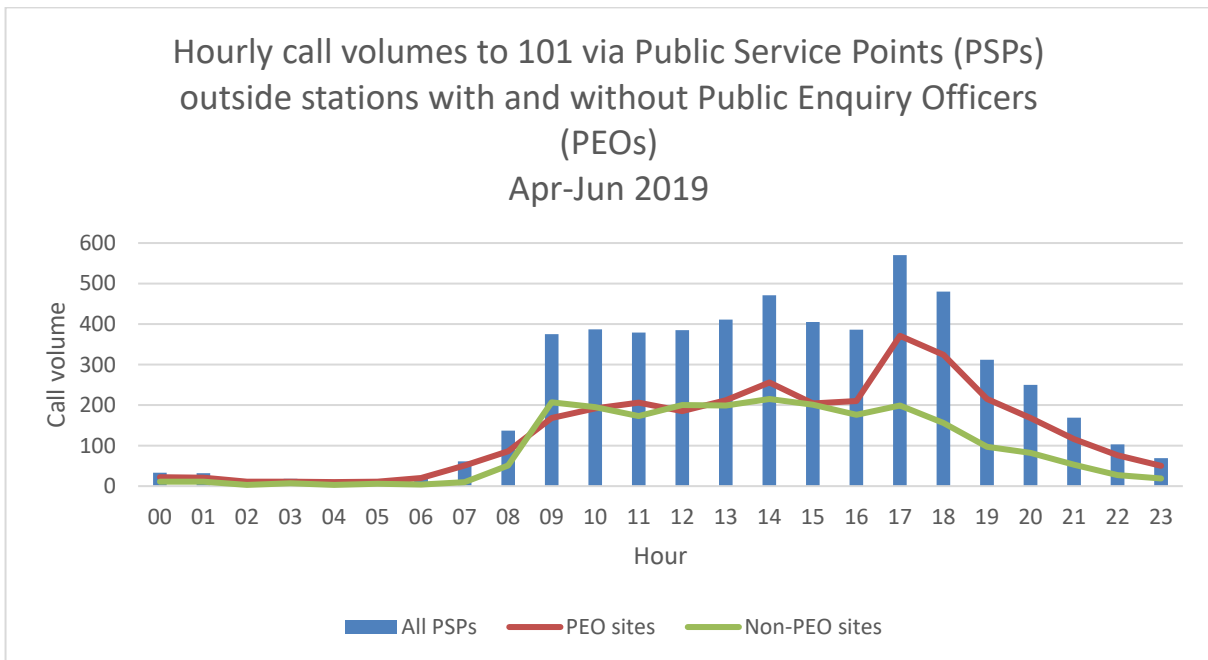
Public Service Points (PSPs) are phones which are located on the wall outside the main police stations for use if there is no access to the station itself at the time (for example out of hours / no staff present). The phone dials directly into the FCC in Police Headquarters.

The following stations have PSPs installed:



On average, the FCC receives 1,834 calls per month through the PSPs, with an average of 30 incidents generating from these calls¹⁹. This represents 0.3% of all incidents recorded, which is consistent with anecdotal evidence from DPP staff that PSPs are predominantly used to make non-urgent requests for information or administrative matters. Detailed analysis of the times calls were received between April and June 2019 show the peak hours as 5pm, 4pm and 2pm respectively. The following graph displays how these peaks compare in stations with Public Enquiry Officers. It also shows how these contribute to the overall PSP call volumes over a 24 hour period.

¹⁹ Based on data from the Force Intelligence Bureau, April to June 2019.



Whilst no footfall data is currently available to show the number of visitors stations actually receive, PSP call volumes can provide some indication. Whilst this suggests that, positively, Public Enquiry Officers are based at the most appropriate sites, the public may benefit from the counter service shift being extended to be open beyond the “working day”. The new 4G roll-out will provide valuable data regarding demand, and should also be considered as means of mapping current footfall in the area.

As expressed in the earlier section about email access, DPP’s residents continue to hold visiting police stations high on their preference list, with many, despite restrictions in opening hours, preferring to visit a station in person over any form of written communication. In addition to this, 93% of survey respondents stated that it is important to them that there is face to face contact available with PCSOs in their area. In recognition of the importance of personal contact, Carmarthenshire County Council have launched Community Hubs in Llanelli and Ammanford, called ‘Yr Hwb’. The Community Hubs provide face-to-face advice on a range of council issues, as well as being a place people can make payments, get job and training support, access digital facilities, find out about volunteering opportunities and more. Five computers are also available for the public to use. Partners, Workways + are located inside the Hwb and offer support around employment and training, with more partners planned to join the Hwb. The Rural Hwb has joined forces with the mobile libraries taking council services out to the rural communities. This will allow customers to use services more conveniently.

Recommendation 2: That the concept of working within Community Hubs is fully explored as means of proactively engaging with the public face to face.

Research confirms that much progress has been made in attempting to improve accessibility of urban public services by reconciling opening hours with residents' travel and activity schedules²⁰.

Further work is required to understand how this applies to rural services and how this may impact positively on the public's experience of visiting DPP stations. It is also recommended that the Force conducts some form of police station visitor footfall analysis to understand how often, and for what reason, residents are attending stations.

Whether any such review results in changes to station opening times or not, it is of paramount importance that the public are appropriately educated about the accessibility of stations. Previous narratives such as "when we're in, we're open" need to be clarified, countered or enhanced, to ensure the public know what they can reasonably expect from their local police stations.

"They need to answer the door when people knock or ring. People are losing faith in the police when they don't do a simple task as opening the door when people knock."

"Would love a leaflet with a list of when to contact the police, plus alternative contact numbers (specific to the area) if the police is not the first port of call."

"I wish there were specific times when our local station was open."

"More information on how to contact in certain situations; preferably leaflets etc."

"Only aware of 999 and 101, can I email, where is my local manned police station and when is it open?"

(Response to PCC's Summer 2019 Public Consultation)

Recommendation 3: That a review of the volume, time and nature of front counter engagement in all stations be conducted in order to assess actual demand for the service. This review should be used to inform public communications advising of station opening times. These communications should be linked to the #maketherightcall campaign.

3.2.1.5 Visiting mobile police stations;

Mobile police station (MPSs) are specialised vans designed to support engagement with communities away from police stations. In 2007, DPP purchased and equipped 8 Ford Transit vans to be used as MPSs. One was later converted for use by the DPP Search Team, resulting in Ceredigion policing area owning one MPS and each of the other three counties owning two each. A review conducted in 2013 revealed they were being used "sporadically" and sometimes

²⁰ ["The relationship between opening hours and accessibility of public service delivery"](#)

more for transporting Neighbourhood Policing Team staff to a location rather than using them as an engagement base, due to issues with their suitability and accessibility. As such, a decision was made to replace the existing fleet of Ford Transits with 4 bespoke, fully equipped vans. The first of these were delivered to DPP in July 2015.

Four years on, the larger, more heavily equipped units appear to have had a similarly sporadic use. Neither the first vehicles nor the current ones have had any official usage or footfall data collected, which poses a challenge when coming to an informed decision about the value of retaining or replacing them. However, an attempt has been made to assess the usage by taking the current mileage of the vehicles, which suggests that an average of around 190 miles have been travelled per unit per month. When compared with the geography of the DPP force area (which spans just over 4,000 square miles), this might mean that on average the Mobile Police Stations cover just under 20% of the force area each month. When compared with the distance of a "round trip" (measured by the mileage of travelling around the edge of the divisional borders), the statistics show that Pembrokeshire has the highest relative usage, followed by Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Powys displays the lowest usage, both in terms of actual miles covered and how it compares to the size of the area. This data can be seen in the table below.

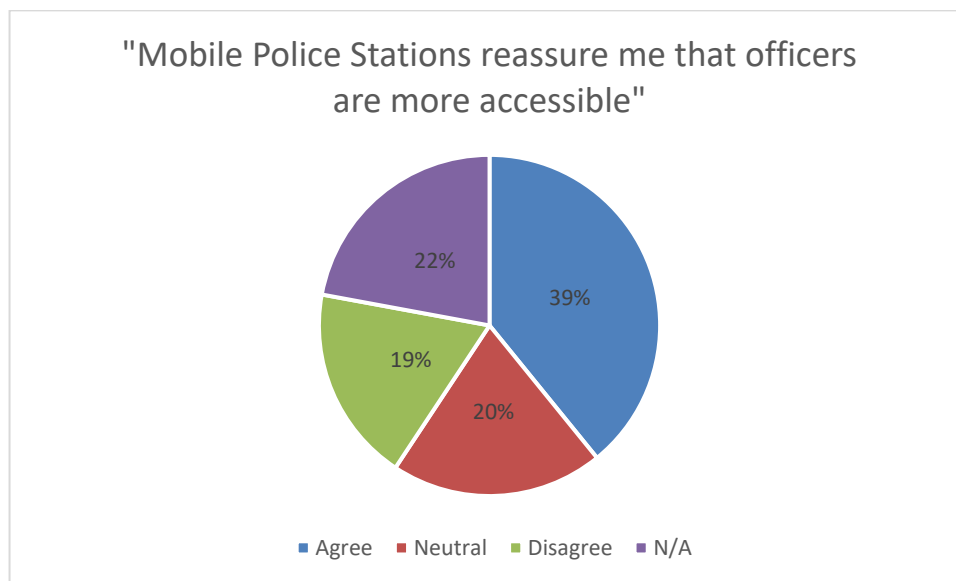
Division	Average Mobile Police Station miles per month	"Round trip" distance (miles)	Difference
Pembrokeshire	248	142	+ 106
Ceredigion	181	127	+ 17
Carmarthenshire	192	175	+ 54
Powys	151	278	- 127

Anecdotal feedback gathered as part of the Force's neighbourhood policing review suggests that officers are not maximising the potential use of the vehicles due to concerns with their size and weight, with some officers not confident in driving such large vehicles. There appears to be some confusion over who is actually legally able to drive them, with officers suggesting only those with longer standing driving licenses are. This has been clarified by the Fleet Services Department, who state that the weight of the vehicle does not exceed the limit for standard licenses. Officers also report that the ground clearance under the vans limit the type of grounds they can go on. Again, this is not substantiated by Fleet Services, as there have been no reports of damage to the underside of any of the vehicles. It is therefore perhaps reasonable to believe

that the issue is one of officers' confidence and perception, which may be resolved through training and education.

The vehicles' locations are also cited as a restriction, due to the time it may take to retrieve and return the vehicle to its base. This may explain why usage is lower than initially projected, especially in the largest division, Powys.

Through the PCC's summer 2019 survey, just over a third of respondents consider Mobile Police Stations as increasing accessibility of officers. Whilst this figure may be disappointing, it is not surprising, when 75% (n=434) of people said they had not seen or visited one and many respondents stated they were not aware of their existence.



In the business case for the current vehicles, the following issues were reported with the initial Ford Transit Mobile Police Stations:

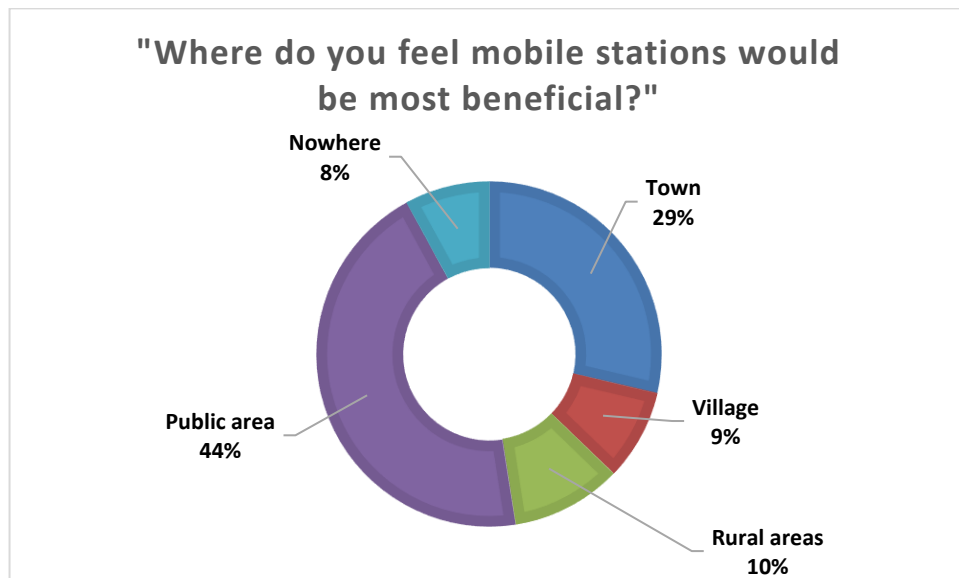
- difficulties with temperature regulation;
- no private or waiting area for discussing sensitive issues;
- not accessible (not Disability Discrimination Act compliant);
- health and safety concerns, including no ability to observe a detainee in the prisoner cage (which was described as "a waste of space") and a diesel generator being inappropriately housed within the van; and
- the "Battenberg" marking was seen as a deterrent to engagement – it was thought that members of the public were discouraged from visiting the van, believing it was involved in operational activity.

Ironically, in a more recent request to alter or replace the current vehicles, the neighbourhood policing teams have suggested they should:

- be similar to those used by Basic Command Units, configured to carry four to six officers;

- have a prisoner cage to enable transport of detained persons;
- have a fold-up table to provide an area for 1-1 discussion with members of the public;
- have an awning or shelter on the side for use at events (the current ones do);
- be clearly marked as a neighbourhood resource (the current ones are); and
- have the ability to display information for the public on the vehicle.

Whilst there appears to be potential benefits to community engagement from dedicated neighbourhood policing vehicles, the above demonstrates that there is difficulty in defining the optimum design which balances functionality with accessibility. When asked where they consider Mobile Police Stations would be most beneficial, a third said public areas such as car parks and beaches and just over a fifth suggested town centres. Interestingly, just 14% (n=31) suggested village or rural locations, as can be seen below.



Probably the most obvious shortcoming identified from reviewing the initial business case for the current fleet and feedback from neighbourhood officers, is that there is a real need for a robust deployment model and engagement strategy, coupled with a thorough evaluation of the actual and potential impact of Mobile Police Stations.

"...now that NPTs (Neighbourhood Policing Teams) are fully established, we should consider taking the opportunity to review the current model to ascertain whether we can utilise a more cost effective and efficient way of providing our communities with appropriate engagement opportunities – one which could serve the Force well into the next decade."

(Mobile Police Stations – A case for replacing current vehicles, Dyfed-Powys Police, 2013)

Without each of these elements in place and therefore reliable evidence to assess the value and impact of MPSs, it would be poor stewardship of public resources to significantly alter the current fleet at this moment in time.

Some dated news articles suggest some Welsh and English forces have trialled them in the past, but no further information could be found to suggest other forces use Mobile Police Stations regularly. Probably the most widely known and closest comparable example would be mobile bank branches, which are increasingly being deployed to plug the gap left by fixed branch closures in smaller and more remote towns and villages. Some of these mobile branches appear to be of a similar size to the DPP MPS, therefore there is the potential for some learning from this sector in terms of deployment and communication models.

Recommendation 4: That a thorough needs assessment, deployment model, engagement strategy which is NPT-led, and robust evaluation be developed to facilitate the best use of the current Mobile Police Station fleet

3.2.1.6 Contacting DPP via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Social media is not currently available as a reporting facility; it is currently used as means of engaging with communities and sharing information and therefore the current usage was not considered within the scope of this review, but is considered as a potential future way for the public contacting the police later in the report.

3.2.3 Reasons why the public contact Dyfed-Powys Police

This review also seeks to identify why people would make contact with DPP in the first instance.

As referred to previously, at the time of writing, DPP were undertaking substantial work to understand demand across the organisation. As part of this work, all call handlers in the FCC used a desktop tool called call logger to record all 101 calls that came in using an Option 1, 2 or 4 over a 6 week period.

DPP's demand review sought to identify where there is failure demand in the FCC or where calls could be better placed within other organisations, or where alternative steps could be taken to prevent these calls coming into the FCC in the first place²¹.

The Demand review's relevant headlines include:

- 32.7% of calls recorded on call logger resulted in a STORM²² report being created
- 67.3% of the calls were being made for other reasons including transfer requests, advice, custody enquiries, updates in existing crime and incidents and queries around whether staff were working.

The demand report breaks down those calls where a report was not created and also looks at what this might be costing the organisation in terms of resource time whilst also offering some ideas/solutions as to how this could be improved.

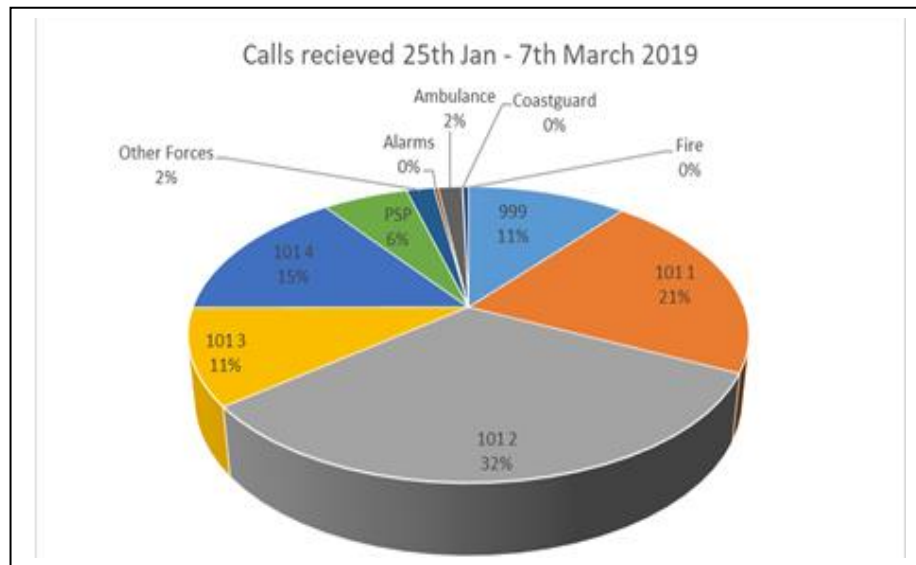
Of the 67.3% calls that did not result in a STORM report being created, nearly 37% were transfer requests from the public who need to speak directly with Officers. The current system means that their call goes to an Officer via the FCC, which acts as a switchboard, and uses valuable call handlers' time where they could be answering more urgent 101 calls and reducing call waiting times.

Furthermore, our survey has proven that the public want to speak directly to local officers, and that's important to them. Being kept informed is consistently the lowest reported satisfaction in User Stats Surveys, and there may be a link with call wait times and the length it currently takes to contact officers via the FCC.

The call logger exercise goes on to explain in detail the type of transfer requests dealt with currently in the FCC, along with ideas and recommendations on how to fundamentally change their current contact management.

²¹ Dyfed-Powys Police Demand Project ToR.

²² Dyfed-Powys Police's Command and Control System.

Calls received in DPP Police Jan-March 2019


As over two thirds of calls were being made for reasons other than reporting a crime, it could be argued that these calls to the FCC could be better placed elsewhere, and in moving the majority of this contact to a different method, the quality and speed of call handling could be significantly improved.

Police.UK define an emergency as follows:

- A crime is happening right now.
- Someone is in immediate danger, or there is a risk of serious damage to property.
- A suspect for a serious crime is nearby.
- There is a traffic collision involving injury or danger to other road users.

In contrast, we regularly see national press articles about inappropriate “emergencies” being reported by the public:

“Panic-stricken man calls police to confess murder... of a spider” (Cambridgeshire Live, 6/9/19)

“I’ve got a broken toenail – West Yorkshire Police reveals nuisance 999 calls” (Telegraph & Argus, 11/9/19)

“Dyfed-Powys Police reveal barmy 999 calls: peacocks on lawns, spider-like leaves in the kitchen and the weather in Carmarthen...” (Wales Online, 31/3/13)

The PCC's Quality Assurance Panel²³ has reviewed the quality of the police's handling of calls for service from members of the public on a number of occasions. Panel Members regularly find the service to be professional, helpful and courteous, despite often questioning the suitability of the caller's choice of service. The Panel often express frustration that the police service's resources are being stretched by calls which would be more appropriately made to other agencies such as local authorities, health, citizen's advice or lawyers dealing with civil matters, however this is a point which is yet to be resolved. Members do however congratulate Dyfed-Powys' call handlers' perseverance and thoroughness in providing every caller with the same high level service to ensure any potential emergencies, crimes or safeguarding issues are identified appropriately.

Just over half (56%) of all incidents which originated from 999 calls resulted in an immediate (within 20 minutes) or priority (within 1 hour) response grading being applied. During April, May and June 2019, DPP recorded over 4,500 calls to 999 which were assessed as not needing an emergency police response²⁴. This indicates that whilst the public are confident in knowing that they can contact 999 and should do so in an emergency, there is a discrepancy between the public and police understanding of what constitutes a police emergency.

The demand on the FCC increases significantly over the summer months. With this in mind, the Force's Corporate Communications Team ran a campaign over the summer 2019, #maketherightcall, to make it easier for members of the public to know when and how to contact the police, and who to contact when reporting matters that are not for police, such as stray dogs, fly-tipping and parking problems.

The campaign also aimed to make sure all members of the public are aware of the 101 non-emergency number and how to use it correctly. To help people decide if they needed to call 101 or another organisation, such as the council or Natural Resources Wales, a new Contact Us section has been added to the DPP website. It holds icons which once clicked on give information on who best to contact about that issue, as well as contact numbers, online reporting forms and links to partner websites or information pages.

It is hoped that the move will not only improve the service people receive when they call 101 but also ease the pressure on the Force Communication Centre, where all emergency and non-emergency calls are taken. An average team of 6 call handlers working twenty-four-seven receives over 1,000 calls a day. Around a third of all calls are not actually for police to deal with.

²³ Consisting of volunteer residents from across the Dyfed-Powys area, the Panel reviews the quality of police contact with the public in a transparent and independent manner.

²⁴ These calls were graded as priority 3 (scheduled response [within 72 hours]) or priority 4 (resolution without deployment)

Initial analysis demonstrates that the social media campaign #maketherightcall has proven to be a successful way of alleviating pressures and demand on the FCC. During 9 July and 15 September 2019, the DPP website saw a 107% increase in page views, and a 313% increase in the number of times visitors entered the website itself through the specified page. Furthermore, the number of STORM reports resulting from online and email reports (June-August) have risen from a total of 914 in 2018 to 1173 during the same period in 2019, which is linked to the awareness raised via the campaign.

This initial analysis strongly suggests that a focused communications effort, and clear directive to the public is strongly needed by building on the Make the Right Call summer 2019 campaign and should be further explored.

This review sought to identify why people are making contact with the police, or why they may do so. Our public survey asked whether the public knew which organisation to contact in the following situations (see table below).

Highlights:

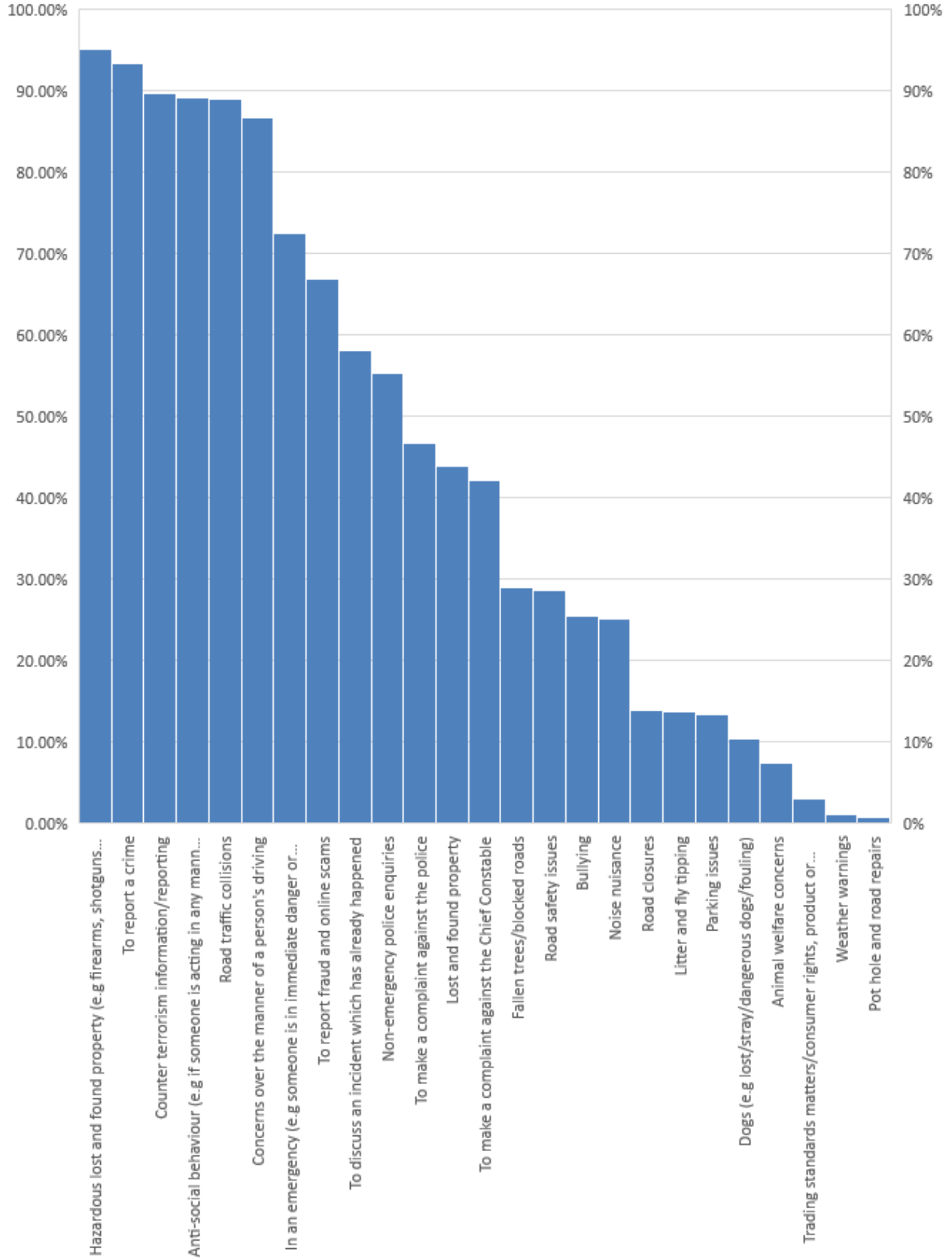
93% of respondents would contact the police to report a crime.

89% would contact the police to report antisocial behaviour, while the DPP website is unclear whether the first contact should be to the Local Authority.

90% would contact the police for information/to report counter terrorism, whereas Dyfed-Powys Police tell the public to report via Counter Terrorism Police.

67% would contact the police to report fraud/online scams, rather than contacting Action Fraud.

% of respondents who would contact the police in the following situations, from the highest to lowest



Whilst it appears that overall, the public have a fairly good awareness of the situations which require police contact, in looking at the figures in more detail, specifically those who would have contacted the police for non-police issues (e.g. parking), the accumulative figure for these situations is 1949; 1949 individuals whose contact should have been made to other agencies. Interestingly 84% of survey respondents were confident that they knew when they should contact the police, although the graph suggests otherwise.

The public consultation also showed some confusion regarding contact:

"The times I have contacted 101 to be told you don't deal with what I would call antisocial behaviour, i.e. music/ shouting/ intimidating behaviour, and that I should report to housing ... and housing say report to police ... it seems everyone's passing buck to make things rosey in each department or looking after the people causing anti social issues, making people who live by law lose faith in police".

"Lot of mixed messages about what to use police for"

(PCC's Summer 2019 Public Consultation)

A strong and ongoing communications plan is needed in order to guide callers to the correct agency from the outset, as well as clearly advising the public of the different methods available to contact the police when that is the necessary avenue. DPP has gone some way in communicating this clearly with the public, via the Contact Us section on the website and the #maketherightcall campaign.

There is a need for clarity and commitment on a strategic level within the Force when it comes to initial public contact. It is perceived that the public are not suitably told often enough, and clearly enough, how and why they should make contact with the police, and with this lack of clear and consistent message, it only leads to confusion from the public. By improving the clarity and consistency of DPP's communication with the public, it should also give the Force more control over the subsequent contact it receives.

Whilst the new Contact Us landing page on the DPP website is to be welcomed as part of the Make the Right Call campaign, more clarity is needed where more than one organisation may need to be involved. Antisocial behaviour is described on the DPP website as:

'Some antisocial behaviour is not categorised as criminal activity, but can still have a significant effect on the quality of people's lives. Because of this, we and our partner agencies encourage people to report any antisocial behaviour, especially if it is ongoing'. (source: DPP website).

A list of local authorities is included, with the above reference, which may confuse individuals as to the correct point of contact.

Anti-Social Behaviour continues to be a significant problem in England and Wales and is one that is growing. The most recent Crime Survey of England and Wales reported that 38% of adults have experienced or witnessed anti-social behaviour in the year to 31 March 2019,

compared to 33% in the previous year. For some time, there has been concern from key NGOs that the Community Trigger has been generally ineffective, largely because it is unknown and inaccessible to victims. This concern was reinforced in a report from the Victims' Commissioner earlier this year titled 'Anti-Social Behaviour, Living a Nightmare'.

The PCC has recently endorsed two recommendations in relation to Community Triggers in response to a consultation from The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners:

It becomes a legal requirement to display accurate guidelines regarding Community Triggers on websites, notice boards and publications. The PCC agreed that in order for the Community Trigger process to be an effective tool in combatting anti-social behaviour, the process needs to be publicised and the public need to be aware of their entitlement to instigate a review.

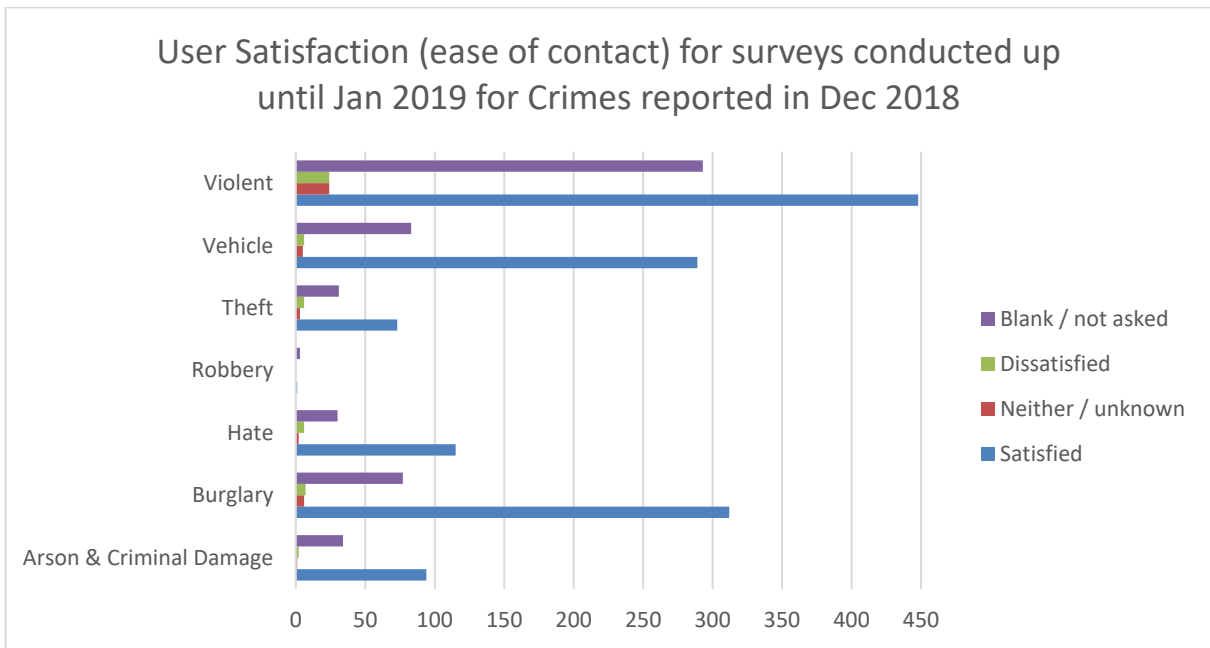
The appointment of a Community Trigger Officer or Ombudsman by the Home Office who would have the power to require local agencies to comply with legislation. This forms part of the PCC's Priorities i.e. Priority 1: Keeping our communities safe and Priority 2: Safeguarding the vulnerable. The central oversight of this part of policing by the Home Office would provide reassurance to the public that the Dyfed Powys Policing area is fulfilling their priorities, complying with the relevant legislation and ultimately assisting victims of anti-social behaviour and placing them at the centre of the situation.

In addition to the above, the OPCC and Dyfed Powys Police are currently working together to consider ways in which the operation of the community trigger could be improved; including accessibility on the Internet and publication of information.

The PCC has a responsibility to ensure victim (also known as user) satisfaction surveying is undertaken. DPP conduct their own surveying on a continual basis for a selection of crime types. Feedback from the surveys are used to:

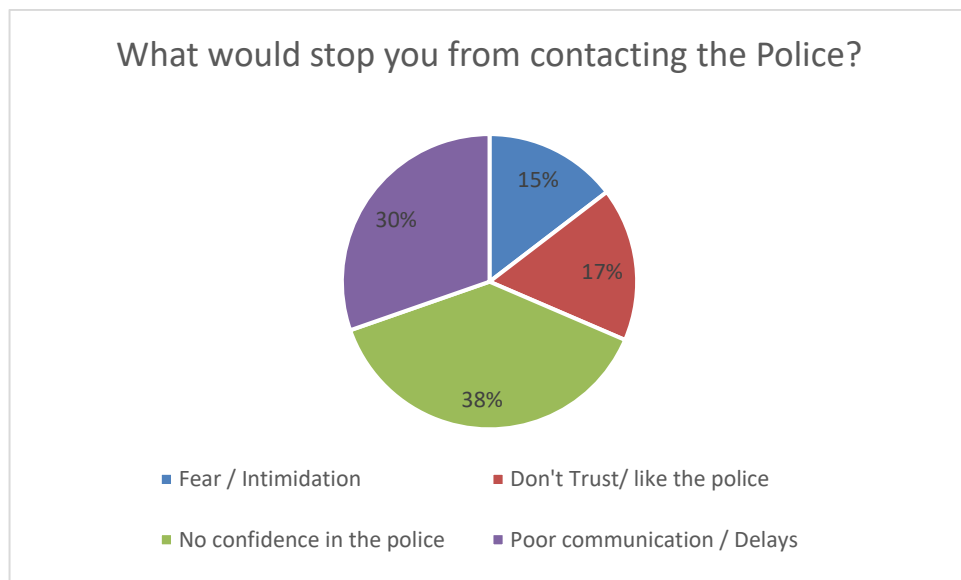
- identify feedback to help improve services to victims of crime;
- to assist with safeguarding and support for victims; and
- to recover service where necessary.

Results from surveys conducted up to the beginning of 2019 show that the majority of victims report that they are satisfied with how easy it is to contact the police. The results for victims of each of the categories of crimes surveyed can be seen below.



In addressing the issue of ease of contact with the police, factors which prevent the public from making contact in the first instance also need to be considered. We therefore explored in this review whether there are any current barriers that would stop the public from making contact with the police.

Of the 20% of respondents who said that there are barriers to them contacting the police in the future, the following table sets out their reasons for believing so:



Of the 30% who stated that poor communication/delays was a barrier to their contact, many made reference to long waiting times on 101 calls, with people abandoning calls on occasions

due to the time they spend on hold before a call had been answered. It is suggested that this failure to answer non-emergency calls before the caller puts the phone down has a direct impact on their confidence and trust in the police.

"In non-emergency a call to 101 could result in being on hold for an hour".

"Long wait times on 101 would cause abandon of calls".

"After 20 minutes on hold I put the phone down".

"Being told 'not a police matter' without equivalent support from alternative agency."

"Nobody at available at the station. I had to use a remote speaking system that didn't work. I gave up in the end. Totally unacceptable".

"When trying to contact a specific officer on an ongoing mater, it can take from 45 to 90 mins for your call to be answered on 101".

"No answer on 101 when I phoned late at night (around midnight), so I had to phone 999 in the end although I don't think it was an emergency".

"As the police are under immense pressure, I would be concerned that I'd be wasting their time, and that I would stop them from dealing with more important calls".

The OPCC has also received anecdotal reports from members of the public who have waited in excess of 30 minutes on the 101 line before their call was answered, along with details of the subsequent considerable mobile phone bills.

Our discussions with DPP staff and officers, in addition to DPP's emerging data on their call logging review suggest that the long waiting times are partly based on the police having to deal with calls which should be dealt by other agencies.

DPP's Data Driven Insights report from August 2019 states:

"Average Call Duration for all 101 calls has increased from 163 seconds in Jan '15 to 241 seconds in Jun '19. This means that 101 calls are taking longer to resolve than ever before. This is due to an enhanced focus on quality and ensuring that every incident is correctly risk assessed (via THRIVES) and that all relevant information is captured at point of contact, preventing future failure demand and provides a better service to the public.

Average speed of answer has seen 270% increase when comparing May '18 to May '19, exceeding the target average answer time of 45 seconds. There is a

distinct trend between increasing average speed of answer times and call abandonment rates (i.e. the longer a caller has to wait, the more likely they are to hang up). Increased average speed of answer times reflect that (a reduced number of) staff are already committed taking other calls."

Data from the Force Communication Centre shows that calls relating to new incidents (option 1) are answered quicker than calls relating to existing incidents (option 2). New incident calls also take longer to resolve, most likely because the call handler is going through the THRIVES assessment in new calls, rather than accessing previously recorded information when dealing with existing incident queries. The table below shows the data for April to June 2019:

	Calls Offered	Average Speed of Answer	Average Call Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Average Max Call Waiting Time (hh:mm:ss)
999	3,378	00:00:04	00:04:07	00:02:21
101 Option 1	5,995	00:00:51*	00:05:28	00:16:43
101 Option 2	8,645		00:03:08	00:43:31

* Average Speed of Answer for all 101 options displayed – breakdown per option is not available.

Whilst the emphasis on quality of experience for the caller is welcomed due to the application of THRIVES, the implications on callers who are on hold appear to have resulted in a lack of trust in the police. Again, a need to manage the public's expectations and give context to why calls are taking a longer time to handle at first point of contact, is imperative.

We were also eager to hear from young people across Dyfed-Powys, and spoke to a variety of youth groups in relation to any perceived barriers they would have in making contact with the police for the first time. The diagram below depicts the main themes discussed by the young people on the topic.

As a young person, would anything stop you from contacting the police if you needed to do so?



Recommendation 5: Provide 101-2 callers, who usually phone for transfer requests, with direct dial numbers to officers/departments. A message also to be included on 101 to explain why calls may take longer (brief and simple explanation of THRIVES), to educate and manage public expectation.

Recommendation 6: Work is needed to raise user satisfaction around being kept informed, in particular in setting out reasonable expectations at the initial point of contact.

Recommendation 7: There is a need to fully engage with young people, via the PCC's Youth Forum and other youth engagement methods, to understand their perceived barriers to police contact, and improve relationships with young people.

3.2.4 Accessibility of first point of contact

It is important to note that in looking at accessibility within the scope of this review, we have focused on the perspective of disability. This review does not seek to address wider accessibility considerations such as gender, age or language.

In relation to enabling the public to contact the police, DPP has the following schemes in place for those with disabilities. Pegasus and the non-emergency text messaging service are two good examples of where DPP have understood accessibility issues within certain communities, and responded to them positively.

3.2.4.1 The Pegasus scheme

Pegasus is a scheme for people with communication difficulties, who find it hard to speak to the Police on the telephone or in person. By joining Pegasus, it makes it easier to contact DPP quickly and easily on both the 101 and 999 numbers. DPP is the only force in the whole of the UK that offers it for 999 and 101 calls.

Once registered the individual would select a password. Information is stored in the person's search field on STORM. Then when phoning the police, the caller only has to say the word 'Pegasus' and their password to be identified by call handlers.

Call handlers have access to the caller's details, including their full name, home address, support worker details if necessary, and how best to communicate with the caller. This information is available to the incident handlers who can then advise the officers on the nature of the caller's disabilities and how best to communicate with them. Pegasus users are provided with a key fob, so that if they are approached by Officers/PCSOs on patrol, and find it difficult to communicate, by showing their card and providing their password, officers can be informed via radio of the person's details.

There are currently 458 people registered on the Pegasus Scheme. Although the scheme does not cover all disabilities, considering that one in five people in Dyfed-Powys identify themselves as disabled²⁵, it does appear that the scheme needs to be publicized wider. Usage figures were not able to be obtained by DPP due to the fact that not all calls generate a STORM report.

Through our qualitative research, it has emerged that there does not appear to be a clear strategy in the way that Pegasus is promoted. Whilst the DPP Contact Us section on the website informs the public about the scheme, there needs to be a clear strategy on how it is continually promoted amongst potential users across the area. This needs to be a joined up approach with the health sector, with clear signposting from the health sector to potential users of Pegasus.

²⁵ Source: (StatsWales, 2019).

Recommendation 8: That the Pegasus scheme is driven by DPP, and is thoroughly and consistently promoted across Dyfed-Powys to potential service users, in collaboration with Hywel Dda Health Board and the Engagement PCEOs.

3.2.4.2 Text Messaging Service

DPP has a non-emergency text messaging service mobile number for the Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired. The public can also text in an emergency on a separate number, but users need to have registered in advance for this service.

In the survey responses, those who had additional communication needs were asked whether they had heard of Pegasus or the text messaging service. 64% of respondents who had additional communication needs were unaware of the schemes, which raises concerns of the way in which they are currently promoted.

Our discussions with Corporate Communications suggest that there is a need for a more consistent approach to promoting the non-emergency text messaging service. There is also a need to ensure that the text messaging service has a suitable platform which is fit for purpose and ready for the digital future.

The DPP Independent Advisory Group (IAG), have previously questioned the way in which the text messaging service is promoted, and have helped to ensure that details of the text messaging service is now included on documents/leaflets and every press release. However, there is a need to evaluate the current use of the text messaging service, as it is sometimes used by non-Deaf members of public.

In 2018 the deaf representatives on IAG advised DPP that Facetime could be a useful tool to use as a means of contact, as the Deaf community already use Facetime to contact the bank, Insurance brokers etc. InterpreterNow is a service that enables deaf and hearing people to communicate with each-other. They deliver immediate access to online interpreting for deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users via the InterpreterNow App²⁶. It can be used in the workplace for face-to-face meetings, appointments, in shops or businesses and for telephone conversations – where deaf people can call a business or service and they can call them back. InterpreterNow already provides deaf people access to many different public, private and charitable organisations such as NHS England, Police 101, Public Health England and the Scottish Government.

Recommendation 9: To reassess the way in which the Deaf Community access the police, to include reviewing the text messaging service for Deaf people. To pilot

²⁶ InterpreterNow is a social enterprise, dedicated to providing high quality services to improve the health and wellbeing of deaf people, Interpreternow.co.uk, 2019.

InterpreterNow with the Deaf community in Dyfed-Powys in order to improve their access to the service.

Other examples of good examples of accessibility in DPP include Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) identifying the different languages used within their communities, and ensuring that key information around Hate Crime and Antisocial Behaviour is available to the communities in those languages.

A few years ago, an Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in relation to custody practices which identified various accessibility issues, and an action plan was initiated. This needs to be revisited to ensure actions have been implemented forcewide.

The new NPT structure, in particular, the introduction of Police Community Engagement Officers (PCEOs) is an opportunity to improve the accessibility of the police service. Not only will this assist in understanding the needs of individual communities, but it will also upskill officers to provide a more accessible service. An example of how this will be implemented on a local level is that all PCEOs will commence British Sign Language (BSL) training in the New Year.

In discussion with the Equality, Diversity and Welsh Language Manager, it has been identified that it is difficult to measure the contact that the police don't receive due to lack of accessibility. DPP does not collate accessibility data on people who contact the organisation, and therefore there is a lack of knowledge as to who isn't making contact. Whilst DPP receive dissatisfactions and feedback from IAG members, there is a real lack of understanding of the communities as to whether what DPP currently offers meets the needs of the public. This lack of understanding of the needs of communities is a potential barrier to accessibility.

Concerns have also been shared on the potential lack of consideration as to the needs of diverse communities when considering access to policing. It's vital that all new processes, procedures and systems are Equality Impact Assessed from the outset in order to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on certain communities.

Recommendation 10: That a full Accessibility Audit is undertaken across the force area, focusing on stations and the website.

Recommendation 11: That Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken every time a new policy, procedure or system is established, or when procuring new services. This needs to become second nature, and a part of the fabric of DPP.

The Dyfed-Powys Independent Advisory Group (IAG) provides the valuable role of critical friend to the Police Service and the OPCC. It is a forum where independent advisors can give independent advice about specific issues identified by the Police and the OPCC. IAG includes representatives from specific protected characteristics.

IAG has historically advised DPP on accessibility issues, including public contact advising on a practical issues such as the accessibility of the website. Former suggestions have included uploading more video content for the Deaf, information about the text messaging service to be placed on the Contact Us page, and advising on the colour and size of font to be used on websites²⁷. The contribution of IAG members and their constructive feedback to DPP has been invaluable in assisting DPP provides a service which is fit for purpose for all residents.

For the purpose of this review, IAG members provided input on the topic of accessibility of first point of contact in a meeting during the summer of 2019, and subsequent interviews were offered and held with IAG members who represented people with visual impairments as well as those living with hidden disabilities, such as autism.

Common themes highlighted included noting that there is a distinct link between having a physical or hidden disability, and feeling vulnerable in society. When having to deal with uncomfortable or new situations, such as contacting the police, their vulnerability is heightened, and anxiety would naturally increase. There were also examples of members who were unsure how they would make contact with the police in an emergency if they had to do so, due to having a disability, which was also mirrored in the public survey:

"I wouldn't know who to contact without calling someone when it's not an emergency. I and many other people do not use telephones to call people due to their anxiety, phobias and disabilities".

PCC's Summer Survey, 2019.

The public who have accessibility needs need to be clearly educated on how they can make contact, and how the Force will make it easier for them to do so. Considering the close link between disability and vulnerability, there is potential in widening a scheme such as Pegasus to include those with other disabilities, in order to ease their first point of contact.

IAG members also suggested that there may be a perception among vulnerable people that they shouldn't contact the police and not trouble them; vulnerable people need to be reassured that they should always make contact with the police if they think they're in danger, even if that is not actually the case.

Although the scope of this work was to look at the initial point of contact, IAG members also spoke about the need for the police, when dealing with the individual, to get to know the person from the outset, and that building a profile of the individual at the first point of contact is important. They noted that relevant information about a person's disability is not always handed over at each point of 'transfer' within the police service. The proactive offer of additional

²⁷ February 2018 IAG Minutes, Dyfed-Powys Police website, viewed September 2019.

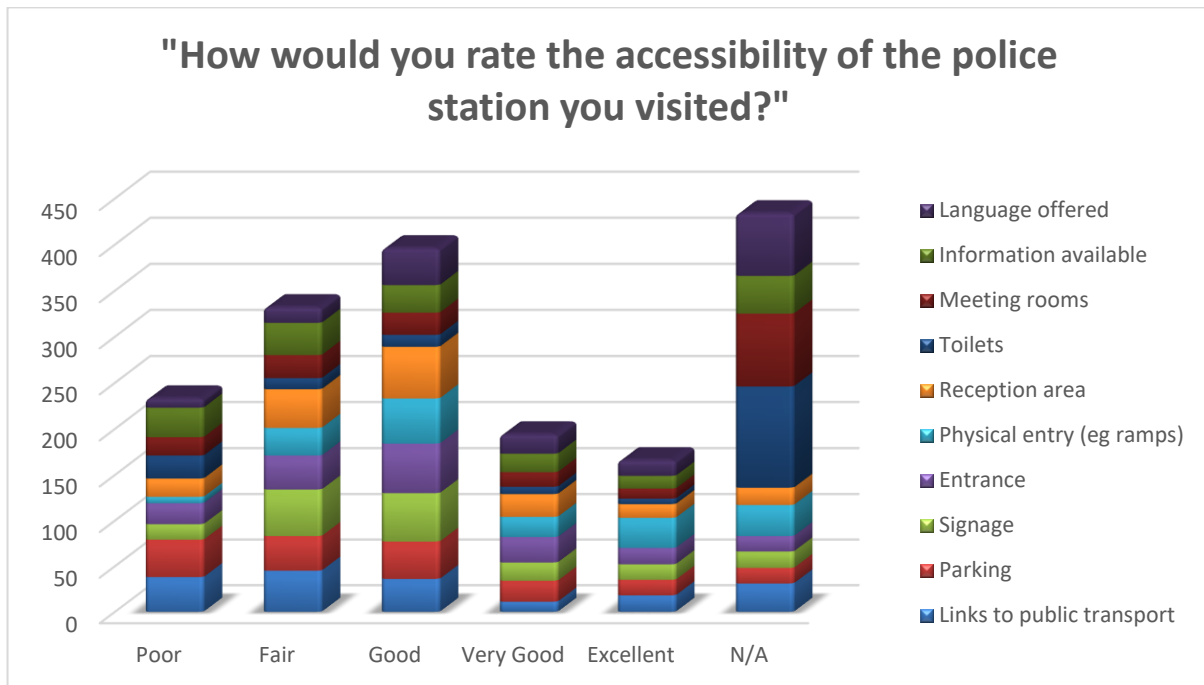
assistance or care has to come from the organisation, rather than expecting the individual to continually repeat or ask for additional assistance, which could lead on to anxiety.

"When I give appropriate information across (about my disability at the initial point of contact) I expect that to be taken on board. The problem is lack of consistency in staff's awareness of disability". IAG member, 2019.

Although the IAG have already played a crucial role in reviewing the accessibility of public-facing documents and the website, as well as methods of contact, there is a need for a full accessibility audit to be undertaken of DPP's first points of contact, to include police stations and the corporate image of public-facing documents/websites/contact methods. Discussions with the Equality, Diversity and Welsh Language Manager suggest that, although there are elements of good practice, accessibility considerations with regard to creating new contact can be sporadic at present, and that there is a lack of consistency and awareness across the organisation when it comes to producing accessible documents.

With respect to the accessibility of police stations, the Director of Estates provided an overview of the current situation to IAG members in June 2019, highlighting the measures that are in place front of house, in reception, and in toilets. Whilst these developments were well received by IAG, it was highlighted that not all of the PSPs included a sign to tell Deaf people or those with communication needs, that they can text the police. A Deaf IAG member had attended a closed station where there was a PSP, but couldn't use it, and felt that there currently isn't real access for Deaf people to contact the police. Signage needs to be placed next to all PSPs across the area to notify Deaf people to use the text messaging service.

The survey collected the following responses from respondents who have accessed a police station in the last 12 months:



Whilst colour coding has been suggested by IAG as means of improving ease of access in public reception and entry areas, discussions with IAG members confirm that people with different disabilities can have conflicting needs with regard to colour coding and ease of access. Guidance is required on a national level on a consistent method of making police stations fully accessible, bearing in mind the conflicting needs of our service users.

In order for DPP to provide a fully accessible service, the Force needs to be proactive, rather than putting the onus on the individual who is in need of the service. This consistent and increased proactivity from the Force's perspective would hopefully break down existing barriers to police contact.

"I don't use the telephone due to disabilities and DP Police are unavailable on social media".

"I attended Ammanford Police Station yesterday in my Mobility car and electric wheelchair, disabled door was switched off and police officers private vehicles were parked in all the disabled parking".

Response to PCC's Summer 2019 public contact survey

The disclosure of a person's disability status at first point of contact was discussed at length by IAG members, with many noting that not everybody want to make that disclosure. Access Cymru is a charitable organisation based in Carmarthen, who work with private and public sector employers to advise workforces how to make public spaces more accessible to disabled

people²⁸. Founded by a visually impaired individual, the service now covers all disabilities, with the aim of giving practical advice on accessibility considerations for their public spaces. They have also devised a series of yellow information posters for businesses/organisations so that disabled people know that they are an accessible service, with smaller cards for disabled people to carry with them, as discreet means of disclosing a disability to a front counter at first point of contact.

Bearing in mind that not all people want to disclose a disability, there is potential in exploring working with an organisation such as Access Cymru, to pilot an accessibility awareness scheme within the force. Ensuring this is a success would require close collaboration with the health sector, to raise awareness of the scheme with potential users, as well as suitable training for front of house staff.

Recommendation 12: to assess whether DPP can be part of a wider community-based accessibility awareness scheme. Ensuring this is a success would require close collaboration with the health sector, to raise awareness of the scheme with potential users, as well as secure suitable training for front of house and management staff.

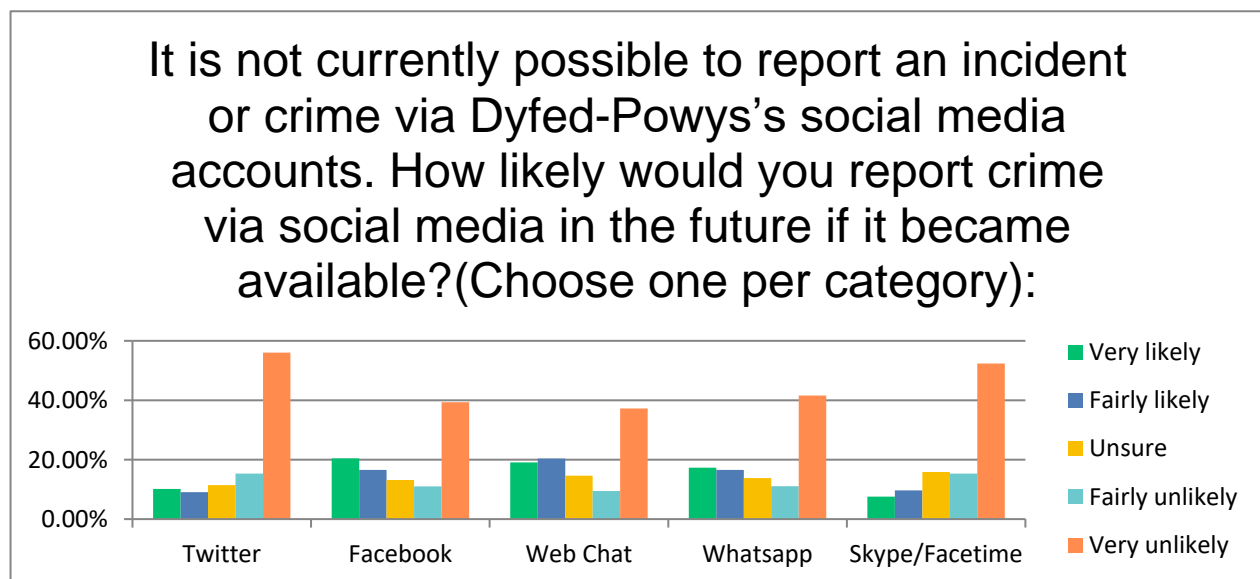
²⁸ Existing users include Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, M&S and Cardiff Airport.

New Technologies and Future Considerations

Nationally, the use of technology within communities has developed widely in recent years, providing significant opportunities for the public to contact the police service. It is seen as a way of reaching a large number of people and at a relatively low cost. More and more people are obtaining their news and information from online sources, and are looking to digital methods of contact rather than the traditional ways²⁹.

Research³⁰ suggests that over the next 5 years, whilst bank branches will remain important to consumers, actual fixed branch interactions will decrease by 35%, whilst mobile phone interactions will increase by 113%. It suggests that older, rural consumers will drive future digital migration, which is interesting when compared with our survey results which suggest the people of Dyfed-Powys are not quite ready to leap into “digital policing”.

Whilst 87% of survey responses were received online from mobile phones, tablets or computers, the number of those respondents eager to report a crime via social media in the future are lower than expected. Of those who indicated they would use social media to report an incident or crime, Facebook and web chat were the most favoured options from all categories provided. This, coupled with the public’s strong appetite for face to face contact with the police in Dyfed-Powys needs to be carefully planned when considering the rollout of a more digitalised front counter.



²⁹Dyfed-Powys Police’s Digital Communications Strategy (Draft) 2019.

³⁰ <https://www.globalbankingandfinance.com/consumers-now-visiting-bank-branches-just-five-times-per-year-as-mobile-banking-continues-to-grow/>

Furthermore, our qualitative discussions with groups of young people have demonstrated that there is clear divide in opinion between those who would rather contact the police via face to face contact, and those who would prefer to do so digitally. Qualitative responses are summarised below:

Those who favoured face to face:

"You know that they are listening and care about your concerns"

"More comfortable to talk and feel safer".

"Communication is more professional".

"Ensure they understand the issue and it enables them to understand"

Those who favoured digital:

"May want to remain anonymous if it is sensitive"

"Find it hard to community with strangers face to face.

"Faster to find them digitally".

"Digitally because you may be too nervous"

In looking at the future generation, it could be easy to assume that they would prefer digital contact, but this needs to be fully assessed prior to making any changes.

DPP currently has Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. Social media is not available as a reporting facility; it is currently used as means of engaging with communities, and sharing information.

"Our current position is that we have approximately 85 Twitter accounts currently attributed to Dyfed-Powys Police, which include team accounts such as Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Roads Policing Units, as well as individual officers using social media in a professional capacity. The initial roll-out of Twitter accounts some years ago focused on Neighbourhood Policing Teams, and aside from the corporate account this was the first step into social media for Dyfed-Powys Police. Since then, on request further accounts have been created covering other areas and departments, however these have always been tailored to the needs of the police service and not necessarily towards the public."

DPP's draft Digital Communications Strategy sets out that they are looking to shift their focus from Twitter to Facebook on a local level; making it easy for the public to find information they need in one place, or area; and look at further ways of integrating social media and digital contact within the Force Communications Centre. One new development to note is their imminent introduction of 'Virtual Police Stations' on Facebook, using the Facebook groups to meet the need for a local presence.

Nationally, a digital first point of contact and a digital reporting facility is inconsistent at present, with some forces already benefiting from a digital reporting facility, whilst others, including

DPP, currently using social media for engagement and for providing information only. All the other Welsh forces have introduced digital reporting to different extents. Initially, as new means to contact the police developed it was believed that this may move demand from other, more traditional, contact methods or channels. However, there is limited evidence to indicate that this is the position realised.

Gwent Police launched their Social Media Desk in December 2018, with official external communications and promotion taking place from January 2019. They utilised the media, their social media channels, and a message on their phone line to inform the public of this new method of contacting Gwent Police.

Gwent Police states that the Social Media Desk has both increased and shifted demand. They receive between 12,000 and 16,000 interactions through their Social Media Desk every month. Of those who used the Desk, 30% said they would have rung the Force if the Desk wasn't available. The individuals who noted they would not have rung the Force if the Desk wasn't available were reporting incidents such as sexual assaults against children and domestic violence incidents not previously reported. Due to this, Gwent Police are happy to take on the extra demand which comes with the Social Media Desk. Other benefits include the ability to deal with more than one incident at a time, unlike when a phone call is received, and the increase in intelligence gathered.

The residents of Gwent are responding positively to the new online method of contact; a 96% satisfaction rate with the Social Media Desk, and 98% of those asked said they would use it again and refer it to others. Our contact said that *"it is well established that the public would rather us engage with them in their space"*.

On a more strategic level, there is a national directive towards the rollout of Single Online Home (SOH) as a preferred channel for non-emergency contact, which will be a digital front counter to members of the public. SOH aims to deliver a consistent national website template, with a local identity, to all forces.

Digital Public Contact or the SOH Programme will provide the public with an easy to use, trusted digital platform where they can communicate with their local police. SOH will:

- Provide the public, and specifically those living in the more rural areas of Wales, with a means of making contact with the police from their home computers via the internet or using their mobile devices.
- Encourage vulnerable people, who may not feel safe due to their personal situation making contact with the police by telephone, to make that contact on-line for example, victims of stalking and harassment or domestic abuse.
- Act as a knowledge hub - providing advice, guidance, crime data and information on services available to the public.

- Enable the public to undertake financial transactions on-line such as firearms certificates and penalty fines.
- Help improve police response and quality of victim support through on-line reporting and tracking.
- Provide a tool for officers to engage with their communities and empower them to play an active part in keeping their area safe.

SOH will provide the public with an on-line 101 capability³¹ and the NPCC wants to maximise the use of SOH as the preferred channel for non-emergency transactional contact.

Through discussions with Corporate Communications, the shift towards SOH will be welcomed, but there was an emphasis on ensuring that it is properly linked to the systems and infrastructure of DPP. Instilling a new way of getting the public to contact will not be without its challenges; this should not act as a barrier, but more as an opportunity for communities to engage, if the background and planning work is done correctly. There is currently a high percentage of underreporting within Dyfed-Powys, at 45%³²; the introduction of social media reporting may well be an enabler for public contact for those who aren't currently doing so. Corporate Communications feel that it is a duty for the Force to consider new approaches for contact, if it enables the public to report. Work needs to be done on the infrastructure and staffing in order to be ready to deal with potential additional demand as a result.

Recommendation 13: With the imminence of Single Online Home, it must be ensured that Dyfed-Powys Police's systems are ready and people are appropriately skilled for the change, giving cognisance to any anticipated increase in demand ensuring a resource model to meet any change in demand;

This is a developing programme with some forces already using SOH, such as Thames Valley Police, and others are at different stages of the journey³³, with development of SOH for DPP planned for 2020.

It is thought that SOH is likely to instil benefits for Welsh forces through a reduction in 101 calls through a triage first approach which will pass information directly to the appropriate department, or sign-post the public to other agencies. This may reduce calls to Force Communication Centre staff and also reduce police time in dealing with incidents, allowing for prioritisation of other critical policing functions.

DPP state that they will be looking at further opportunities to integrate social media and digital contact within the Force Communication Centre in the longer term, supporting the national

³¹ Interview with SOH Project Manager, Dyfed-Powys Police.

³² Op Cynefin Data, DPP.

³³ Dyfed-Powys Police's Digital Communications Strategy (Draft) 2019.

drive for digital public contact and the SOH project, and in accordance with emerging new legislation on reporting crime via social media.

Bearing in mind the reference young people have made as part of this review on the barriers to contacting the police, and notably their fear of repercussions, Crimestoppers and its service for young people, Fearless, need to be further promoted. Both schemes are designed to protect the public, securing 100% anonymity if reporting crime, as stated on the Fearless.org website:

- *You can give us information about crime without giving any personal details.*
- *We will not make note of your gender or age.*
- *We will not record any personal details you might mention.*
- *We cannot trace your email or IP address.*

Whilst digital contact is inevitable for Dyfed-Powys in the future, due consideration has to be made of the way in which any major changes will fit within the uniqueness of our communities. Dyfed-Powys has an ageing population, with almost half of the total resident population aged 45 and over, and 22% are aged over 65³⁴. The area is predominately rural, with a few localised areas of dense urban population. An effort needs to be made to ensure that the dispersed rural population do not experience barriers to the access and use of policing services³⁵.

In 2018, the NFU conducted a pan-Wales Broadband and Mobile Survey to measure the digital and mobile connectivity of farmers in rural locations. The review highlighted that poor broadband and mobile connectivity is still a significant issue in rural Wales. Only 16% of those surveyed received a reliable mobile signal in all outdoor locations on farm, and 46% still not having access to sufficient broadband speeds sufficient for their business³⁶. In planning for change in public contact in Dyfed-Powys, there needs to be a thorough analysis of communities' connectivity and access to mobile devices; we cannot assume that all Dyfed-Powys residents can afford and/or have reliable access to digital means of contact.

In contrast to most other communities, the majority of the public of the DPP area continue to value, and prefer, written communication, as proven by a thriving printed newspaper scene. When surveyed, both the residents of Tŷ Croes and Newtown East rated printed newsletters as their preferred method of receiving information from the police.

Below are examples of printed Newspaper circulation in areas within Dyfed-Powys, which prove that there is still a need to ensure contact is not all digital in the future.

³⁴ Dyfed-Powys Police website, 2019.

³⁵ Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Plan, 2017-2021.

³⁶ NFU Broadband and Mobile Survey 2018.

Weekly Newspaper	Average Numbers sold³⁷
Milford Mercury	1,814
South Wales Guardian	4,157
Tivy-Side Advertiser	4,756
Llanelli Star	7,747
Carmarthen Journal	9,759
Western Telegraph	11,089
The Western Mail	15,259 (daily)

As mentioned previously, the new NPT structure, and in particular, the introduction of Community Engagement Officers is an opportunity to improve the accessibility of the police service, and to maintain a personal, more traditional feel to the police service as new technologies are embedded. The use of more traditional methods of contact, including community newsletters will be a way bridging between digital and traditional methods of contact, and reinforcing key messages to the public. The new NPT model needs to be implemented consistently and clearly across the force area in order to maximise engagement opportunities.

Although not necessarily initial point of contact, DPP's 'Community Messaging system (DPCM) enables the police to issue fast time messages to the public and, enables the public to play a part in policing. Messages received through DPCM will be relevant to the information the public provides when signing up and could include specific crime prevention advice, direct appeals based on local incidents and information about community events near to them.

DPCM is especially useful in support of the 'Watch' schemes (Farm Watch, Horse Watch, Boat Watch, Neighbourhood Watch) – where very specific information needs to be communicated to a distinct community very quickly. DPCM is strong in certain areas, e.g. areas of Pembrokeshire and Powys. Several thousand people have already signed up, with a relaunch of the service in October 2019 in line with the new Neighbourhood Policing restructure.

³⁷ <https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/abcs-uk-local-weekly-newspapers-lose-print-sales-by-average-of-11-2-per-cent/>

Recommendation 14: There is a need for a holistic vision across the organisation, alongside a strong Contact Strategy, which explains how DPP will embrace change in digital contact in the future, ensuring it is fit for purpose for the communities of Dyfed-Powys. A commitment for a clear vision needs to be set out internally, before communicating clearly with the public.

4.0 Consequences

Although national developments are rapidly moving towards digital police contact and digital reporting, the public in Dyfed-Powys strongly value phone and face to face contact. Bearing this in mind, along with the area's ageing and rural population, the public need to be consulted and included in the planning of future public contact methods, so as to avoid a lack of engagement, and subsequent trust in the police.

More people are contacting the police, on a national and local level, as a *first* resort, as well as phoning the police for transfer requests and non-police issues, which places immense pressures on the FCC. As over two thirds of 101 calls are made for reasons other than reporting a crime, these calls to the FCC could be better placed elsewhere. Current increased call waiting times contribute to staff pressures, has a detrimental impact on the public's confidence and trust in the police, and will act as a barrier of future contact if nothing changes.

DPP needs to ensure it is appropriately and consistently educating all members of the community on the most appropriate service to contact in emergency and non-emergency situations, how to do so and what to reasonably expect. By not sharing these messages consistently, it will be difficult for DPP to have more control over its management of public contact, and will have resource and cost implications.

DPP doesn't fully understand the needs of all of its diverse communities and doesn't have appropriate infrastructure in place to assess the impact of new developments or policies on equality. There are a few examples of good practice with regard to accessibility of first contact, but there is a need for a more strategic approach so as to ensure the force is fully accessible.

5.0 Actions

Upon consideration of the information gathered through this review, the Police and Crime Commissioner requests that the Chief Constable consider the following recommendations:

1. To develop a holistic vision across the organisation, alongside a strong Contact Strategy, which explains how DPP will embrace change in digital contact in the future, ensuring it is fit for purpose for the communities of Dyfed-Powys. A commitment for a clear vision needs to be set out internally, before communicating clearly with the public;
2. With the imminence of Single Online Home, it must be ensured that Dyfed-Powys Police's systems are ready and people are appropriately skilled for the change, giving cognisance to any anticipated increase in demand ensuring a resource model to meet any change in demand;
3. That DPP works with Welsh Government, public service partners and other Welsh forces to further develop the #maketherightcall campaign. This will educate all members of the community on the most appropriate service to contact in emergency and non-emergency situations and what to reasonably expect;
4. That a review of the volume, time and nature of front counter encounters in all stations be conducted in order to assess actual demand for the service. This review should be used to inform public communications advising of station opening times. These communications should be linked to the #maketherightcall campaign;
5. That the concept of working within Community Hubs is fully explored as means of proactively engaging with the public face to face;
6. That a thorough needs assessment, deployment model, engagement strategy which is NPT-led, and robust evaluation be developed to facilitate the best use of the current Mobile Police Station fleet
7. That 101-2 callers, who usually phone for transfer requests, are provided with direct dial numbers for officers/departments. A message also to be included on 101 to explain why calls may take longer (brief and simple explanation of THRIVES), to educate and manage public expectation;
8. Work is needed to raise user satisfaction around being kept informed, in particular in setting out reasonable expectations at the initial point of contact.
9. To fully engage with young people, via the Commissioner's Youth Forum and other youth engagement methods, to understand their perceived barriers to police contact, and improve relationships with young people;

10. That a full Accessibility Audit is undertaken across the force area, focusing on stations and the website;
11. That Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken every time a new policy, procedure or system is established, or when procuring new services. This needs to become second nature, and a part of the fabric of DPP;
12. To assess whether DPP can be part of a wider community-based accessibility awareness scheme. Ensuring this is a success would require close collaboration with the health sector, to raise awareness of the scheme with potential users, as well as secure suitable training for front of house and management staff;
13. That the Pegasus scheme is driven by DPP, and is thoroughly and consistently promoted across Dyfed-Powys to potential service users, in collaboration with Hywel Dda Health Board and the Engagement PCEOs;
14. To reassess the way in which the Deaf Community access the police, to include reviewing the text messaging service for Deaf people. To pilot InterpreterNow with the Deaf community in Dyfed-Powys in order to improve their access to the service;

6.0 Review

6.1 Aims

The review sought to:

1. Assess whether the level of public expectation is reasonable within the context of different types of demand;
2. Provide a snapshot of current initial public contact with the Police across Dyfed-Powys;
3. Determine whether public contact methods provided by Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) meet public expectation; and
4. Determine whether DPP are providing an accessible police service at the first point of contact.

Through:

- a) Identifying current national trends and developments in relation to public contact with the police;
- b) Identifying how and why the public are currently making contact with DPP, and how they would like to do so; and
- c) Assessing public perception regarding the accessibility of DPP.

6.2 Conclusion

The impression formed through this review was that DPP cannot maintain the status quo in relation to public contact management. Whilst the next year is set to bring new changes to the culture of initial public contact with the emergence of Single Online Home as a digital front counter, Dyfed-Powys cannot disregard the high percentage of its residents who are not ready to depend solely on digital contact. The strong appetite for a more personal contact approach needs to be fully explored and adequately catered for.

Nonetheless, the mounting pressures of increasing calls to the FCC need to be addressed urgently, and unnecessary calls moved to more appropriate agencies or individuals within DPP where suitable.

Any future change to public contact with DPP needs to be strategically planned by DPP, and there needs to be a commitment for a robust, forward-facing contact management strategy. This needs to be implemented in close collaboration with relevant partners and applied consistently by DPP across the force area.

In light of this, the PCC is committed to monitoring the Chief Constable's progress against the recommendations set out within this report through quarterly reviews of progress with the aim of providing greater assurance to the public.