

# SUMMARY REPORT: UNDERSTANDING THE PICTURE OF COMMUNITY SAFETY – A workforce review of local government and policing in Wales

## Aims

- Improve the understanding of community safety in Wales, and the involvement of Police & Local Authorities (LAs) within community safety and community safety partnerships (CSPs) at a local level, to enable, empower and raise the profile of community safety at local, regional and national levels.
- Help identify opportunities to support the development of multi-agency training and development programmes to assist the community safety workforce.

## Findings (Police)

- Participants cover on average 2.5 Local Authority areas, and at least two CSP meetings
- Police most commonly engage with Local Authorities teams in Housing, Community Safety & Youth Services
- Majority of participants (67%) do have access to analyst support
- Majority of participants (88%) would like to be part of a Community Safety Network group
- Top priority area within current CSP working is Anti-Social Behaviour (all participants); Joint second – VAWDASV, Hate Crime, Community Cohesion (58% of participants).
- Priorities for multi agency learning and development include CONTEST/Prevent, Anti-Social Behaviour & the Community Trigger, Designing out crime, Violence Prevention, Problem solving approaches.

## Themes (Police)

**RELATIONSHIPS**- Varied between police and different Local Authority areas which impacts on CSPs.

Relationships range from 'excellent' and 'improving' to sometimes 'challenging'. An acceptance and understanding around the different local needs within different local authority footprints. Police seen as integral to community safety; often the lead partner for enforcement and problem-solving, where there are others who may be better placed to assist.

**RESOURCING** - Funding for community safety activities can act as a barrier but there have also been opportunities both external (Safer Streets) and internal (Police) commitment to increase resourcing (staff) into community safety.

**PROBLEM SOLVING** - Renewed focus and direction towards preventative work. For example, working closely within neighbourhood teams using problem solving and partnership working. Often an expectation Police will take the lead in resolving issues and end up acting as advisers when working with partner organisations.

**INFORMATION SHARING** - opportunity for systems to speak to each other or a platform arrangement where all relevant information can be shared easily.

**MEASURING PREVENTION** - can be difficult, and a lack of focus on outcomes. Different perceptions within CSP of a positive outcome, such as improved public confidence and views, savings made or crime recorded.

**SAFER STREETS** - good opportunity for community safety, improved joint working, but the applications and implementation are resource intensive and not always appropriate nor available for all areas.

## Discussion points

**ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES** - Participant views emphasised the distinctive roles of Local Authorities and Police within Community Safety, rather than truly reflecting a joint endeavour. Close working relationships exist, but within a division of local community safety responsibilities.

**CAPACITY** - Lack of resources, particularly for developing community safety activities identified. Opportunity to explore further how additional roles, such as PCSOs, can support the work of the partnership. Recognition that "community safety runs through many departments" reflected within LA and policing structures.

**ACTIVITY** - Aligned focus on Anti Social Behaviour, Hate Crime and Community Cohesion. However, Analyst capacity can act as a barrier to evidence-based partnership working. This could be further strengthened by greater information sharing, improved ways to measure prevention and more partnership learning of what works, such as 'Safer Streets' projects.

## Recommendations

- Championing the work of the Wales Safer Communities Network to help raise the profile of Community Safety across Wales - locally, regionally and nationally.
- Promoting the activity of Wales Data & Analysis Innovation & Improvement Network to support a culture change of data sharing across the public sector.
- Wales Safer Communities Network to conduct annual survey to capture the views and data from all agencies involved in Community Safety Partnerships.
- Wales Safer Communities Network scopes the opportunity to establish a Joint Community Safety leads group, which brings together Local Authority, Policing, with other key partners to work together on learning and practice development.

## Methodology

Survey via LA community safety leads in Wales during March 2021 (15 responses covering 17 LAs). An online focus group for police involved in community safety in Wales in June 2021 (18 participants across the 4 forces, majority Chief Inspector). Focus group included online survey element, 12 out of the 18 participants completed. Additional stakeholder discussions.

## Findings (Local Authorities)

- 80% of respondents said they had a dedicated Community Safety Team
- An average of 3.36 full time staff working in Community Safety Teams and 53% of staff have responsibilities additional to Community Safety
- 80% said they did not have a specialist data analyst for community safety
- Of those without a data analyst, two-thirds said that they did not have enough access to analyst capacity to complete their strategic needs assessment and/or local problem solving.
- Top responsibilities /priority areas were - Hate Crime, Crime Prevention, Community Cohesion, Anti-Social Behaviour & CONTEST/Prevent.

## Themes (Local Authorities)

**AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY** - vary and demonstrate the complexity of the role of community safety within LA. In addition to core priorities, responsibilities included Domestic Homicide Reviews, Road Safety and Serious Violence and Organised Crime prevention. Community Safety runs through many other departments.

VAWDASV and Substance Misuse often led at regional level.

**PREVENTION** - Concerns around the lack of ability and capacity for prevention activity and alignment to other partnership working. Focus is reactive and on many legislative duties.

**RESOURCING** - Lack of sustainable funding for Community Safety as a reoccurring theme, affecting CSP activities or preventative initiatives. Resources seen as problematic around ensuring compliance with Statutory Duties and new duties. For example, the lack of funding for specialist training.

## Participant quotes

- "I welcome some light being shone on the Community Safety Partnerships in Wales"
- "Community Safety has been a forgotten service, therefore it's good to see that Community Safety is now having more of a spotlight on it."
- "A commitment to long term funding would allow us to commission services properly and run more early intervention and prevention schemes rather than being reactive to problems."
- "[We] are looking forward to working more with the Network."



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