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# The work of Welsh Government funded Community Support Officers

## Appendix E - Gwent Police Force Area Report

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# 1 Introduction

This Police Force Area (PFA) Report appraises both the process of implementation and impacts associated with the Welsh Government's programme to fund additional Community Support Officers in Gwent PFA. It does this by focusing on the selected case study areas of Ebbw Vale and Newport Central.

The analyses bring together a wide range of data to understand and report on the key issues underlying the recruitment, deployment and day-to-day activities of Community Support Officers (CSOs) within Gwent Police (GP) as a whole and in Ebbw Vale and Newport Central in particular. Wherever possible, officers funded by the Welsh Government are singled out for detailed investigation (WG-CSOs).

Police recorded data on crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as public perception surveys conducted by the force and others are used to assess how far we can infer that the change in CSO resource in the PFA has had an impact on operational policing and public opinion respectively. This type of data is compared over time, where possible, before, during and following the deployment of the new CSOs.

In addition, empirical qualitative data was obtained from interviews and focus groups with key players within the force, from senior officers to the CSOs themselves. By combining these different data sources the report sets out to provide an in-depth examination of both the process of implementing the programme and its impact for the communities within GP.

This PFA Report, together with those for North Wales, South Wales, Dyfed Powys and the British Transport Police in Wales, is presented as an appendix to the research's final report<sup>1</sup> wherein data are brought together for analysis and discussion at an All-Wales level.

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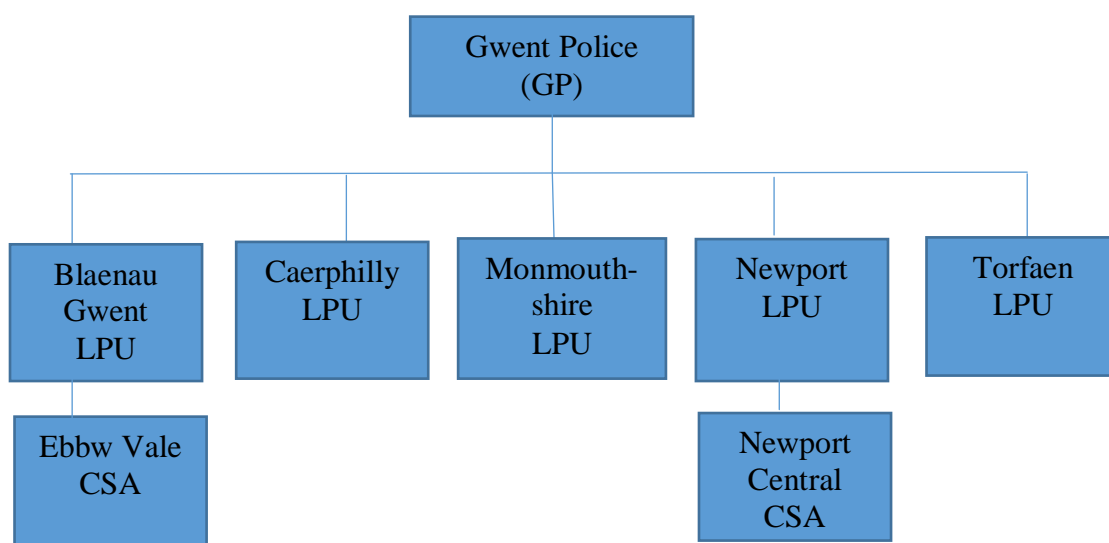
<sup>1</sup> Final Report: 'The work of Welsh Government-funded Community Support Officers', Universities' Police Science Institute, February 2015 (ISBN: 978-1-4734-2962-8)

## 1.1 A Case Study Approach

This research began using national survey data for Wales to report on public perceptions concerning the visibility and ‘presence’ of CSOs in Welsh communities<sup>2</sup>. This data was indicative of broad patterns within different community contexts and helped to inform the selection of six case study areas from across the four PFAs in Wales.

The advantage of the case study approach is that it allows issues of WG-CSO deployment, activity and impact to be explored in more detail within a clearly defined local context. Guided by the findings of the secondary data analysis, as well as by opportunities to tie in with additional data streams, the six locales chosen for case study were sampled to cover a range of different community contexts. In Gwent, two CSAs were chosen: Ebbw Vale to represent a relatively deprived Valley town; and Newport Central as an urban city context with a vibrant night-time economy.

Figure 1.1 shows the data structure for this report. The data is presented at three levels of analysis: (1) Police Force Area; (2) Local Policing Unit (LPU) (3) Case Study Area.



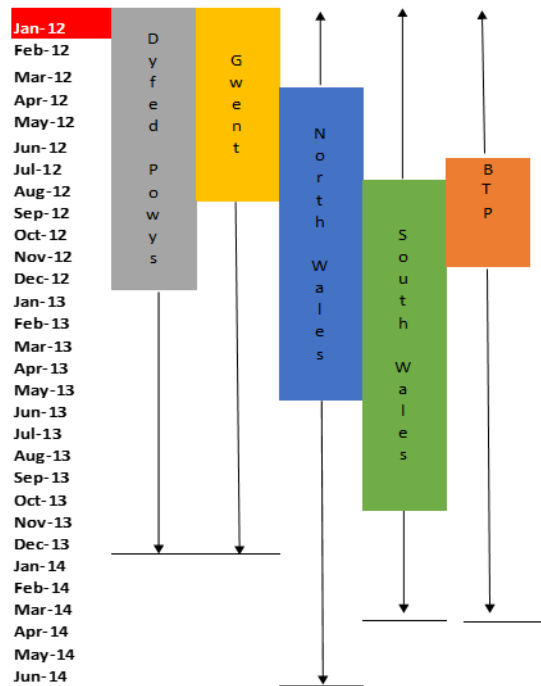
**Figure 1.1 Data Structure for Gwent Police**

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<sup>2</sup> Interim Report 1: ‘Appraisal of the work of Welsh Government-funded Community Support Officers: Empirical testing of underlying assumptions’, Universities’ Police Science Institute, September 2013.

Figure 1.2 shows that national deployment of the Welsh Government CSOs began in January 2012 and the full complement of 500 were recruited by October 2013. The timing of the process varied markedly between Welsh forces.

Gwent, along with Dyfed Powys, began this process in January 2012 and it took eight months. Gwent were the first force in Wales to recruit and deploy their full allocation of WG-CSOs.



**Figure 1.2 The Phased Deployment of WG-CSOs across Wales**

The data streams for the appraisal are grouped according to whether they primarily address questions of Implementation or Impact.

**Implementation:** How was the additional CSO resource integrated and used?

- Who are the new CSOs?
- Where are they deployed and why?
- What are they doing?

For Gwent, these questions are addressed using administrative and HR data on recruitment, in-depth interviews and focus groups with CSOs in each of the case study areas.

**Impact:** What changed as a result of this extra resource?

To assess any change over the appraisal period that may be attributable to the increased numbers of CSOs, the following are reported on using police-force data:

- Monthly trends in the volume of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Public perceptions of crime, ASB and policing

Questions concerning Implementation and Impact are likely to overlap and the research methods work together to paint a rich picture of the deployment, activities and impacts of CSOs within Gwent.

## **1.2 About Gwent Police Force Area<sup>3</sup>**

Gwent Police covers the five local authority areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. These represent diverse communities totalling 600 square miles, bordered by Abergavenny in North, to Newport in the South, Chepstow and Caerphilly in the East and West.

Gwent contains a mixture of rural and urban populations, with market towns and rural farming areas differing greatly from the busy city centre of Newport with its thriving night-time economy. Large volumes of traffic travel through Gwent via the M4 link which includes the Second Severn Crossing, and the development of the existing Heads of the Valleys road.

Figures from the Census show that the Gwent population has risen from 553,000 in 2001 to 576,700 in 2011. The population has also become more ethnically diverse over that time period; in 2011-12, Gwent Police provided services in 40 different languages.

Within Gwent, Newport has the highest levels of migrant workers, asylum seekers, homelessness and ethnic minority groups compared to the four other local authority areas. Unemployment is greatest in Caerphilly and Newport, particularly in the valleys. The local authorities vary widely in residents' reported health, with the poorest health in Blaenau Gwent and the best health profile in Monmouthshire.

Priorities set out by the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner include specific measures around public confidence, victim satisfaction and reducing anti-social behaviour. The five priorities for this PFA are identified as:

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gwent.pcc.police.uk/plan/>



- Delivery of the best quality of service available
- Prevent and reduce crime
- Take more effective action to tackle anti-social behaviour
- Protect people from serious harm
- Make the best use of resources and provide value for money

Gwent Police is made up of five policing areas based on local authority boundaries, known as Local Policing Units (LPUs). At the end of March 2014, Gwent Police reported more than 1,300 officers and 855 police staff, including 206 Community Support Officers (funded via central government grant, Welsh Government and local partners).

### **1.3 About Ebbw Vale and Newport Central**

Ebbw Vale lies at the head of the valley formed by the Ebbw Fawr tributary of the Ebbw River in the south east of Wales. It is the largest town and the administrative centre of the county of Blaenau Gwent and lies within the central neighbourhood area<sup>4</sup> of Ebbw Vale, itself consisting of six electoral wards. The combined population of the area at the time of the 2011 census was 23, 340. The town and valley has a rich industrial heritage based on coal mining and the steel industry – at its height in the 1930s the steel works in Ebbw Vale was the largest in Europe. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however both industries had all but collapsed, leaving the area with an unemployment rate of 6.7%, the largest in the Wales and one of the largest across the UK.

The city of Newport is one of the largest commercial and industrial centres in Wales. Located in the county of Monmouthshire, the city has a population of 145,700. The Newport area is managed as a Local Policing Unit of Gwent Police with neighbourhood and response officers working out of five police station locations. The Central Station team covers four electoral wards in and around the city centre.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/documents/Documents\\_Governance/Ebbw\\_Fawr\\_Neighbourhood\\_Area.pdf](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/documents/Documents_Governance/Ebbw_Fawr_Neighbourhood_Area.pdf)

## **2 Key Findings**

### **2.1 Who are the Gwent WG-CSOs?**

This question was addressed by the analysis of: administrative data and Welsh Government returns for Gwent Police force area as a whole; interviews with LPU management and a member of the force working group for the project; and qualitative data derived from focus groups and interviews with the Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) and local police management in Ebbw Vale and Newport Central.

#### **2.1.1 Working Pattern and Recruitment**

Gwent were allocated 101 full time equivalent (FTE) WG-CSO posts at the commencement of the project, increasing their existing CSO workforce at that time (142) by over 70%.

From the beginning the force recognised that demand for police presence is variable across the week, particularly in some town centre areas, and undertook to explore how best to utilise the additional CSO resources in order to maximise visibility at peak times. A working group under the direction of the Chief Inspector, Community Safety developed proposals to utilise a proportion of the additional FTE posts for part-time positions, covering times of peak demand over the weekend period<sup>5</sup>. Working with colleagues from Human Resources an innovative part-time employment contract was developed and approved by senior officers.

The initial basic contract was for 16 hours per week: Thursdays 12.00 – 16.00hrs; Fridays 16.00 – 22.00hrs; and Saturdays 18.00 – 00.00hrs. The basic contract took into account unsocial hours and shift start or finish times could be varied by a two hour 'either side' margin with 5 days' notice. It was envisaged that this working pattern would be attractive to a "diverse workforce pool" and would enable "flexible resource deployment at peak times".

It was initially planned to utilise 35 of the forces allocated FTE posts to create 83 new part-time positions. Together with the remaining 66 full time posts, the force set out to recruit an additional 149 headcount positions under the terms of the Welsh Government grant, more than doubling their original CSO workforce.

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<sup>5</sup> Internal Report: Allocation of Additional PCSO Posts, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Amended Report (04/05/2012). Administrative data provided by Gwent Police.

Recruitment commenced rapidly, with both internal and external candidates being considered (an informal briefing held for potential external applicants at a conference centre in Newport was advertised via social media<sup>6</sup>). The first cohort of 20 new CSOs were appointed in November 2011, completed their training at the end of that year and were operationally deployed at the start of January 2012. A further 6 cohorts commenced their 6-week training courses January, February, April (3) and August 2012, with a total of new 119 officers (70 full time and 49 part-time) being deployed by September 2012<sup>7</sup>.

The relative allocation of FTE posts to part-time and full-time positions, and the weekly hours worked by the former, has varied over the first three years of the project. By October 2014, GP reported an increase in the working hours of 29 part-time officers to full time working (37 hours per week over Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays 12.00 – 22.00hrs)<sup>8</sup>

### 2.1.2 Demographics

Detailed demographics of the Gwent Police CSOs at the time of first recruitment were not made available to the research and it is therefore not possible to compare the profile of WG-CSOs with those existing officers funded from other sources in relation to age.

However, by July 2014, demographic breakdown in relation to gender, ethnicity and working pattern of the 122 officers employed at that time was reported to the Welsh government as detailed in Table 2.1<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 2.1 Demographic and Work Pattern Details of Gwent Police CSOs, July 2014**

Total FTE Posts	Total Headcount	Full Time Working	Part Time Working	Female (%)	Male (%)	BME (%)
101	122	82	40	60 (49%)	62 (51%)	7 (6%)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/gwentpolice/posts/10150529290480452>

<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government Funded Community Support Officers: Annual Reports 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Provided by the Welsh Government.

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government CSO Monitoring Report: Position as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Provided by the Welsh Government

<sup>9</sup> Welsh Government CSO Monitoring Report: Position as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014. Provided by the Welsh Government

The WG-CSOs in Ebbw Vale are equally split between men and women and of varying ages, from backgrounds including a re-deployed traffic warden, a recent criminology graduate and an individual who had successfully obtained a position as a warranted officer with GP before the post was cut and a CSO role was his only option within the force.

The WG-CSOs in Newport Central are slightly weighted towards women and are generally under thirty. They come from a variety of backgrounds including retail, catering and the leisure industry and for some the role was their first after graduating in police sciences or similar. Some had previously held other civilian positions in the force and one of the existing CSOs had previously been a CSO in the Metropolitan Police Service before moving to Wales.

### 2.1.3 Churn

In common with many forces, GP were not recruiting regular police officers at the time the new WG-CSOs were being recruited and data obtained in the Case Study Areas indicate many of the new recruits applied for the role as a 'stepping stone' to becoming police officers:

*'..I think a lot of us, probably everyone, just wants to be police officers now and this is the only way in...it's a route, it's a foot in the door to get yourself to be a PC'*

[CSO22]

There has been particular churn of personnel amongst the part-time WG-CSOs in the Blaenau Gwent LPU and indeed the remaining part-time officer in the Ebbw Vale team had recently secured a position as a police constable with the British Transport Police at the time of fieldwork. The full-time officers feel this was inevitable given the nature of the part-timers' role and the sense of distance it created from the rest of the team, who did not feel they were 'fully fledged' members;

*'..they were part of the team, but they were not. They couldn't take work off us, they wouldn't contribute anything, 'cause they weren't accountable [to the NPT] where they?'*

[CSO26]

Interestingly, the initial use of part-time staff to man the county-wide 'ASB Response Vehicle' appears to have been abandoned as local management also recognise that the part-time role is not always bearing the fruit that had been anticipated when the strategy was devised. Whilst the idea of boosting resource at peak times has many merits from a policing perspective, it is not providing opportunities for the diversity of community engagement activities inherent in the CSO role and development opportunities for the often young,

ambitious individuals who were recruited into the positions. In an effort to alleviate the rapid turnover seen in Blaenau Gwent efforts are being made to provide such opportunities by giving officers increased hours and/or responsibilities at a ward level and fully utilising the flexibility allowed for within their contracts in relation to shift timings. One senior officer described his approach;

*'There is obviously consequences both intended and unintended to all these kind of decisions. The good was we had a really good group of CSO's to be fair and quite a diverse spread [but] working Thursday, Friday, Saturday, has raised an issue...in that they are limited to the type of engagement that they can do. So they tend to engage in the evening time with night time economy kind of issues. So there has been a desire from some of that group to increase their working hours to a full time role so they can cover a better spread of experience, to working with day time economy, business and communities in a different kind of way... I try to address that locally by making sure that they are aligned to ward. They have work they can do with councils, they can develop themselves'*

[LMT8]

In Newport, the team have seen a number of their colleagues move on over the last two years. At the time of fieldwork, a number of CSOs had ambitions to move on to a PC and indeed many have already made the move leaving the team short of its planned strength. Unusually that move has not always been within the force or indeed within Wales, as one officer explained;

*'Everyone's gone to the police force, but you've got the majority just off to the Met and three part timers have gone off to the Met. Then one got off to Devon and Cornwall, one of the part timers joined here, another two of our full timers joined Gwent so out of the nine of these guys, four of them have gone down to the Met and they retained one and that's it'*

[CSO21]

## 2.2 Where are the Gwent WG-CSOs?

### 2.2.1 Deployment Strategy, Gwent PFA

Gwent Police had a very clearly defined strategic approach to the force-wide deployment of its allocation of Welsh Government funded CSOs from the outset. A working group was established (consisting of: the Chief Inspector of Community Safety; an analyst from the force's Corporate Services Performance Section; Head of People Services (HR); a Finance Officer; and LPU Commanders) and tasked with developing a proposal for senior officers<sup>10</sup>.

The emerging decision making model<sup>11</sup> profiled each electoral ward within the PFA in terms of the presence of the Communities First Programme, Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation level, crime and anti-social behaviour trends and current CSO resourcing level. The model applied a baseline minimum CSO allocation of one per ward for all LPUs except Monmouthshire, allocated 0.5 FTE per ward, regardless of deprivation level and 12 FTE WG-CSO posts were allocated to uplift deployment to this minimum level. The most deprived wards, and those with pockets of deprivation (45 FTE posts), were allocated an additional CSO per ward as were the poorest performing wards in terms of recorded crime and ASB (force's RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status at 23/09/11; 24 FTE posts). The remaining 20 FTE WG-CSO posts were allocated by way of professional judgment. The final, central deployment of the new resources in 2012 is detailed in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Welsh Government CSO Deployment, Gwent Police**

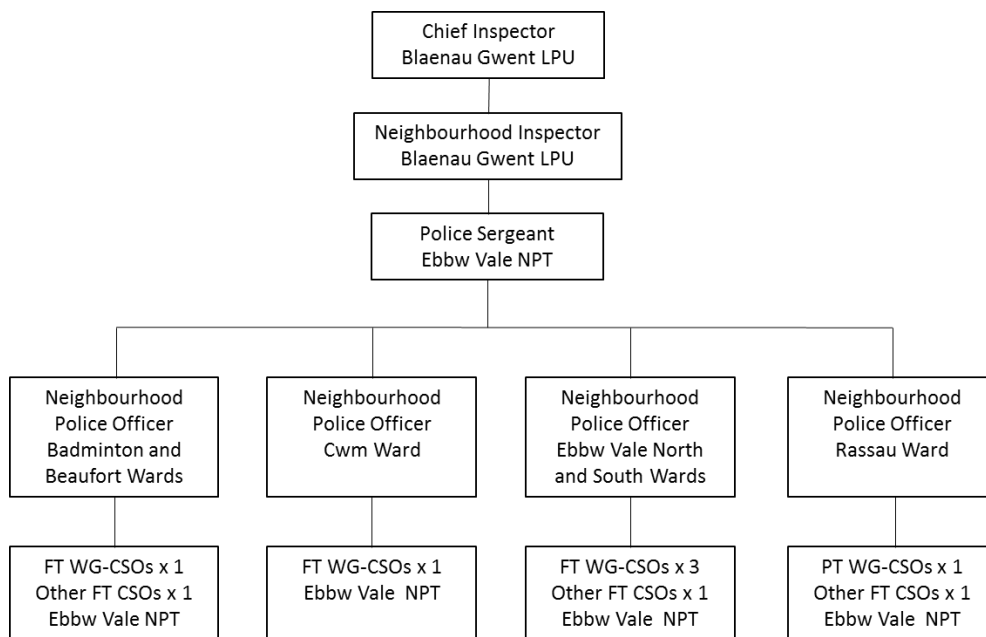
LPU	Existing CSO Posts (09/2011)	WG- CSO Deployment (uplift based on model)	WG- CSO Deployment (uplift based on prof. judgment)	Total WG-CSO Deployment (FTE)	Total Full Time Posts	FTEs allocated to Part time posts	Total Part Time Posts
Newport	44.5	18	6	24	16	8	19
Torfaen	21	12	1	13	8	5	12
Monmouthshire	23	7	4	11	5	6	14
Blaenau Gwent	20	15	3	18	12	6	14
Caerphilly	33.5	29	6	35	25	10	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>83</b>

<sup>10</sup> Internal Report: Allocation of Additional PCSO Posts, 14th December 2011. Amended Report (04/05/2012). Administrative data provided by Gwent Police.

<sup>11</sup> Administrative data provided by GP (WAG\_Issue Ward Analysis\_CS0\_06\_06\_2014.xls)

## 2.2.2 Deployment Strategy, Ebbw Vale

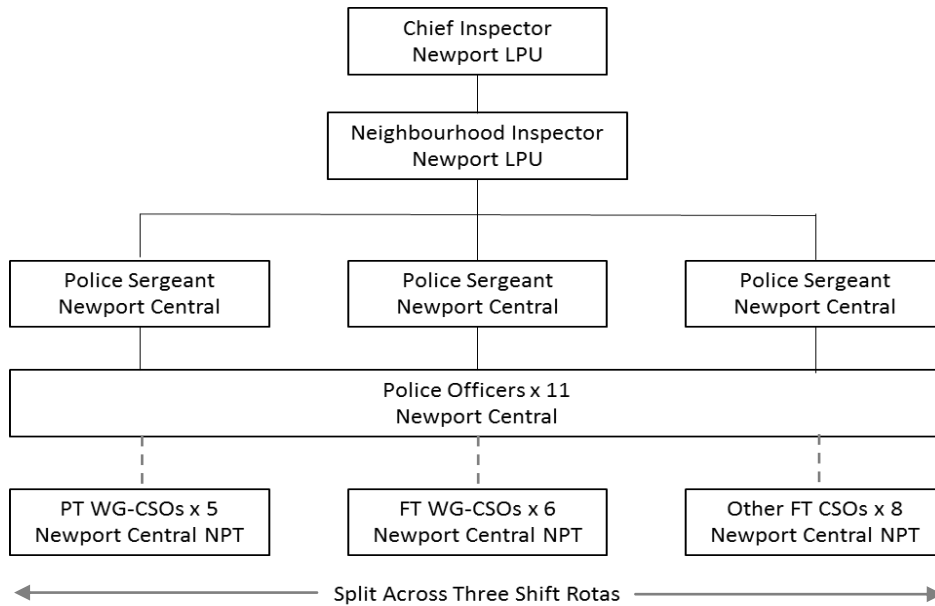
Eighteen (18) of the 101 full-time equivalent WG-CSO posts in the Gwent PFA were initially allocated to the Blaenau Gwent LPU of which six were converted to 14 part-time positions. At the time of fieldwork, the Ebbw Vale NPT consisted of eight full-time CSOs, five of whom were WG-funded, and one in a part-time WG-funded post covering Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening shifts. Individuals aligned with each of the six wards covered by the team, supervised and supported by four dedicated neighbourhood PCs and managed overall by a dedicated neighbourhood police sergeant. The part-time CSO works every weekend alongside others in the LPU, providing a resource boost at peak times in towns and beyond.



**Figure 2.1 Neighbourhood Policing Team Structure, Ebbw Vale**

## 2.2.3 Deployment Strategy, Newport Central

Twenty-four (24) of the 101 full-time equivalent WG-CSO posts in the Gwent PFA were initially allocated to the Newport LPU of which eight were converted to 19 part-time positions. At the time of fieldwork, the Newport Central NPT consisted of 14 full-time CSOs, six of whom were in WG-funded posts and five in part-time WG-funded posts covering Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening shifts. Individual full-time CSOs are organised into three shift rotas, each managed by a police sergeant and including a total of 11 PCs, two of whom have dedicated neighbourhood roles. The part-time CSOs work every weekend across the shift rotas and are colloquially known as the “Stowhill Super Team”, providing a resource boost for the city centre at peak times for its thriving night-time economy.



**Figure 2.2 Neighbourhood Policing Team Structure, Newport Central**

### 2.3 What are the Gwent WG-CSOs doing?

This section uses qualitative data derived from in depth interviews and focus groups conducted in Ebbw Vale and Newport Central.

#### 2.3.1 CSO activity in the Ebbw Vale Neighbourhood Policing Team

As far as the full-time officers are concerned, a 75% increase in resource in Ebbw Vale initially resulted in a much needed boost to community cohesion activity in a deprived area where it is much needed. The team was well resourced with CSOs aligned with wards and supported by dedicated neighbourhood police officers and in the more affluent parts of the area covered a variety of innovative community cohesion building activities are flourishing. Engagement with young people in local schools and colleges includes active activities for children at a special needs school and the establishment of an office where officers regularly run a confidential surgery for the LGBT community. More mature residents are catered for through events co-hosted with third sector partners such as the Dogs Trust and regular community clubs such as 'Knitting Nanas'.

In the more deprived parts of the area, particularly Newtown, community work is focused more on developing relationships in an area that is historically anti-



police. Such 'barrier-busting' activity is slow but crucial work and is beginning to prove successful in relation to community intelligence gathering;

*'Newtown... has had a problem with drugs for a good few years... When me and [name] started it was like 'what you going to do about all these drugs over here?' Well, we would say 'what drugs? Tell us'. [They'd say] 'Oh, can't tell you' and then they would all go. But slowly you know, that's changed now. We got, it's all private chats, you know? I give out my Blackberry number, someone might ring me - 'can I pop over?' or 'can I come and see you at the station?' And it works. It's breaking down those barriers, saying we are not all bad, we are here as well. But you got to help us to help you'*

[CSO26]

Whilst the initial impact of increased resources in Ebbw Vale was recognised and valued by the existing PCSOs and management, the current team feel the community advantages have been almost completely offset over the last two years by a significant increase in police-focused 'tasks' delegated to them by both neighbourhood and response officers. Although some of this work is investigative in nature, much is community based, including routine victim follow up which is arguably a CSO function. But documenting that follow up for compliance has become a monumental administrative task which, until recently, was conducted by an administrative assistant. The apparent volume and need to update force systems in duplicate has also dictated that follow ups are generally done by telephone rather than face-to-face, with the consequence that CSOs are being kept inside the station rather than out on patrol or otherwise engaging with the community as a whole;

*'Out and about? You are lucky if you can get out by 10 – 11 o'clock in the morning... woe betide you if you are in the office any longer than you should be, 'I need you out there!' But yet they want their data bases'*

[CSO30]

That said, the team are regularly performing high visibility patrols, particularly at peak times in the town centre. In common with their colleagues in Newport, the Ebbw Vale CSOs often find themselves in situations where their powers are insufficient and although they presented as less likely to act outwith those powers, local management did accept there are times when this does occur. The following conversation between two CSOs illustrates the frustration they feel with balancing the two aspects of their role;

[CSO30]: *'Basically we are engagement tool Monday to Thursday and then Friday and Saturday, 'cause we have so less police officers, it is walk the town. We will try and arrange back up if*

*something happens, but just withdraw and observe from a distance if anything is going on!*

[CSO25]: *“We’re non- confrontational, we are an engagement tool. From 10 o’clock to 12 o’clock, that two hour period, [we’re] just like a cardboard cut-out outside the police station, we’re as much use’*

### **2.3.2 CSO activity in the Newport Central Neighbourhood Policing**

#### **Team**

One of the aims behind the force’s decision to utilise some of the WG’s funding for part-time positions was to encourage applications from a diversity of candidates, keen to work flexibly in a time of austerity. Indeed this was highlighted as an example of forward thinking resource management in a recent HMIC report<sup>12</sup> but our data show that in Newport Central at least, some frustration has crept in. Limited hours devoted almost exclusively to high visibility patrol in the city centre has meant individuals have a lack of opportunity to develop their role, particularly in relation to the community project-based work with local residents and businesses that they see their full-time colleagues engaging with. Many have sought to increase their hours and, where this has not been possible within the force, they have chosen to apply for PC roles outwith Gwent. At the time of fieldwork half of the original nine individuals had already moved on. Those who remain have sought to reconfigure their working pattern with some success – swapping and dropping back shift start times has allowed them to become involved with a city centre surgery, work from the mobile police station and engage with younger people for example.

That said, the focus of the Newport Central NPT is very much on high visibility patrol within the city centre and in that regard the extra resources provided by the WG have allowed the team to significantly increase their activity. Working alongside each other, full and part-time CSOs are engaging with the transient population using the city’s facilities day and night. During the day their function has much to do with being a visible, reassuring presence for the public for whom they predominantly provide an everyday problem solving function, dealing with low level nuisance and anti-social behaviour as well as parking issues and the like. Liaison with local businesses is a key aspect of their role and the link between them and business owners via the Store Net radio system has proved a successful method of responding quickly to the latter’s everyday issues. There is some evidence of proactive engagement and cohesion building activity with local residents although there is recognition that this is a somewhat neglected aspect of the role in a city centre;

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<sup>12</sup> Policing in Austerity: rising to the challenge, HMIC 2013

*'I think it would be nice to have more, I don't want to say festivals, something to do more with the residents but we haven't got that patch of land as such to put together something like that...I don't think we've got that connection with our residents. I tend to focus more on the city centre I do'*

[CSO23]

At night, with visible presence boosted at the weekend by the part-timers, the CSOs' function becomes focused on the prevention of anti-social behaviour associated with the night-time economy of the city. Despite their remit not to be become involved in conflict, the context in which they are performing their role is such that there are inevitably situations when they do, as this officer explains;

*'The issue we have got is people see a uniform and they expect you to deal with it. They expect you to help, you know. They do not see you are a PCSO...'that person round there is having their head kicked in, you go round there and help'. And 9 times out of 10 we're gonna be there, you know, just, sometimes we even walk around the corner and we fall into something... the average length of an actual fight on the street is about 6 seconds, that is not even enough time for someone to call the police. We do not really have a choice, there is not enough time, for even us to call and wait for someone to come. Because three minutes, five minutes, it is over and done and the person responsible is gone at that stage. We have to deal with it, by virtue of the fact we are there'*

[CSO16]

This difficult contextual situation has led to the CSOs performing a very reactive, policing-orientated function without the necessary powers and protection afforded to warranted officers. Whilst the team are appear adequately supported by their PC colleagues, many appear to actively seek out opportunities to become more involved in the 'cop' side of their role, to the frustration of local management;

*'It does my head in, right, they come round like bees round a honey pot looking for the keys for the car - get out and walk! You're supposed to be there and visible, engagement, and the danger I got, I can foresee is going to happen in time, is the PCSO's are going to become like the PC's, just a cheaper resource...invisible, then we will have to reinvent the wheel again'*

[LMT6]

Given the ultimate ambitions of many in the team to move on in "the job" this is maybe not surprising and highlights the dangers associated with the use of the CSO role as a stepping stone to PC, particularly in urban environments.

## 2.4 Impact on Recorded Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

This section uses police recorded crime and incident data to look at the rate of crime and ASB in Gwent relative to other Welsh forces. Monthly trends for crime and anti-social behaviour are presented for Gwent PFA and for the wards in each case study area. These data are indexed to January 2012 – the latest date before any police force deployed a WG CSO in their area – to facilitate comparison between Welsh forces.

### 2.4.1 Time trends in Crime

Recent crime figures released by the Office for National Statistics for the year ending September 2013 show a fall in the number and rate of offences recorded by the police forces in Wales over the previous year, with the exception of Gwent police where there was no change.

Gwent police force have the second highest rate of crime offences after South Wales, a total of 34,828 recorded offences (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3 Police recorded crime data for Wales, year ending September 2013**

Police Force	Total recorded crime	Percentage change from previous year	Rate of offences per 1,000 population
Dyfed Powys	18,547	-10	36
Gwent	34,828	0	60
North Wales	36,384	-12	53
South Wales	83,890	-2	65
WALES	173,649	-5	57

Source: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-september-2013/index.html>

These figures for Wales mirror a fall in recorded crime by police forces in England between 2012 and 2013 of 6%. The overall trajectory of falling crime in recent years is further supported by reported victimisation in the Crime Survey for England and Wales between 2011 and 2013<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-326518>

The longstanding national trend of falling crime that is mirrored throughout Europe is the focus of much debate about how far it truly reflects a 'real' fall in offending, police recording practices, better or 'smarter' policing. However, in this period of prolonged economic austerity, figures from HMIC show that the explanation does not lie in 'more' policing as workforce numbers in all four Welsh forces have remained static over the last four years.

Whilst the overall number of CSOs has increased as a result of the investment, this has merely offset the reduction in the number of police officers and other police staff over the last four years.

This issue, and the consequences it has for assessing the contribution of WG CSOs at this time, is discussed in some detail in the main findings report. In brief, it means that we cannot conclude that any change in police recorded crime over the period of WG CSO deployment is associated with additional overall policing resource.

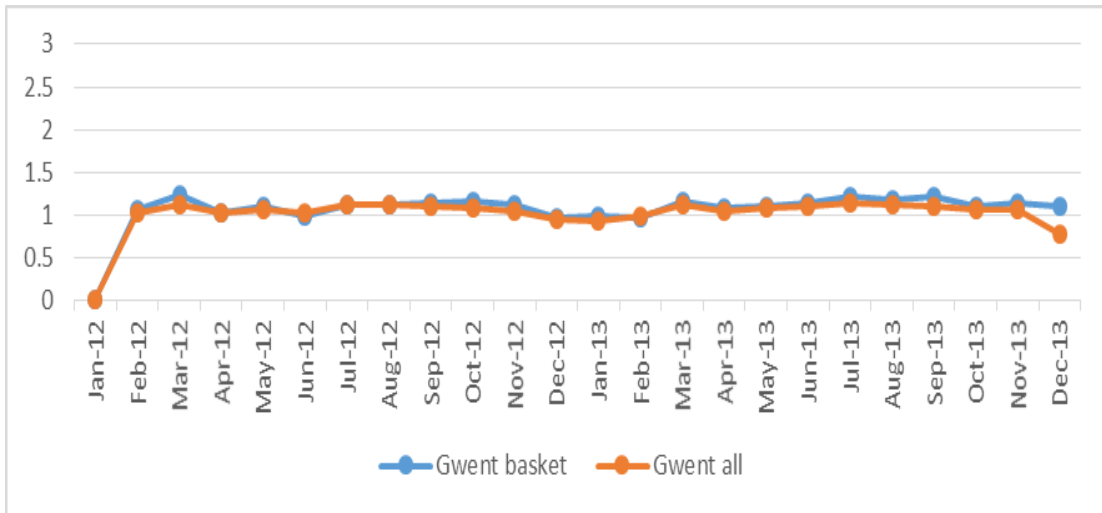
The figures presented in this section are based on raw and pre-tabulated data provided by Gwent Police. It is important to note that:

- The raw crime data provided by the force did not include all categories of crime<sup>14</sup> but where possible 'all crime' is calculated from pre-tabulated data for each LPU.
- Trends in ASB are taken from pre-tabulated data.
- There is no data available on CSO attendance or deployment at the scene for this force.

Figure 2.3 shows no overall change in recorded crime in Gwent Police Force Area relative to January 2012. The trend is the same using figures summed for 'all crime' and those for selected crimes ('crime basket').

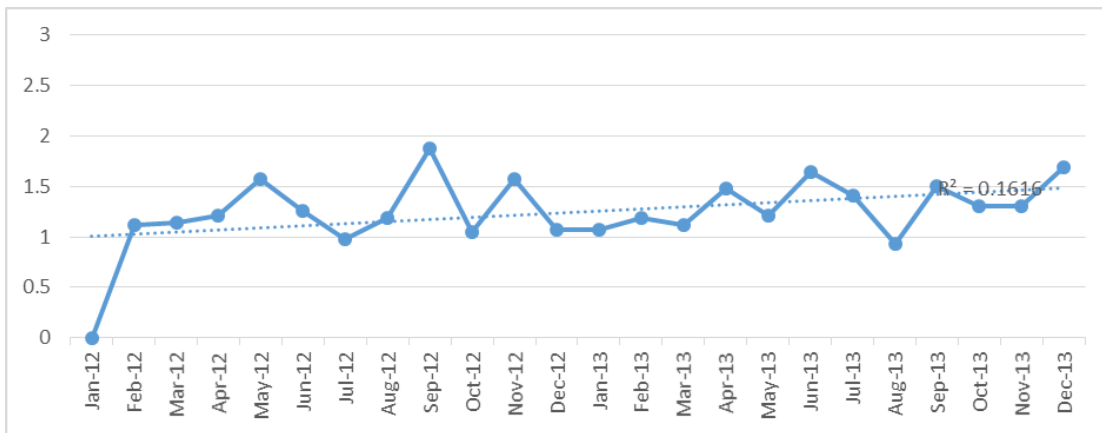
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<sup>14</sup> Crimes included in the 'Crime Basket' are: Theft; Criminal Damage and Arson; Shoplifting; Theft from the person; All other theft.



**Figure 2.3 Indexed trend in police recorded crime in Gwent PFA**

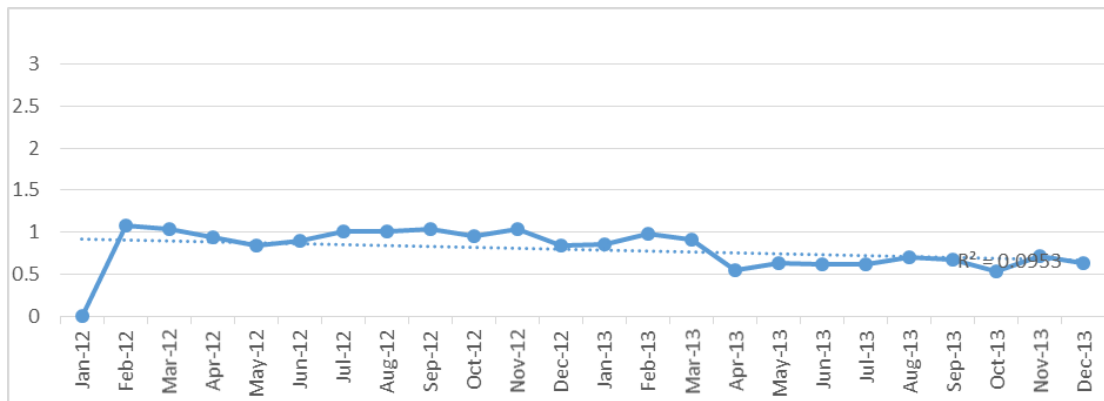
The same data presented for wards covering Ebbw Vale only show a trend of increasing crime relative to January 2012. This increase began prior to the full deployment of WG-CSOs in Gwent in August 2012 and continued thereafter. It is important to note that this trend is based on the ‘crime basket’ of predominately acquisitive crime types and is not indicative of all recorded crime<sup>15</sup>.



**Figure 2.4 Indexed trend in police recorded crime, Ebbw Vale (selected offences)**

The same figure for wards comprising Newport Central show a modest decrease in recorded crimes based on the same selected offences. Again, the trend suggests that this change is a continuation of what was happening in Newport Central before WG CSO deployment was fully completed.

<sup>15</sup> Data for ‘all crime’ not available at Case Study level



**Figure 2.5 Indexed trend in police recorded crime, Newport Central (selected offences)**

### 2.4.2 Time Trends in Anti-social Behaviour

Police recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour released by the Office for National Statistics show a fall in the recorded incident rate across all Welsh forces over the last six years, from 2007/8 to 2012/13 (Table 2.4). This fall is particularly marked from 2011 onwards following changes that were made in the way anti-social behaviour is recorded by police in England and Wales (reduced from 14 categories to 3). Data prior to this change is therefore not directly comparable and it is possible that these changes in recording have had an impact on the incident rate<sup>16</sup>.

Gwent had an incident rate per 1,000 of the population of 44 for anti-social behaviour in 2012/13, second only to Dyfed Powys, but still a sizeable reduction on previous years.

**Table 2.4 Police recorded incident rate\* for ASB in Wales, 2007-2013**

	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
<b>Dyfed Powys</b>	70	71	65	64	51	46
<b>Gwent</b>	121	118	114	97	66	44
<b>North Wales</b>	75	64	58	54	44	37
<b>South Wales</b>	96	85	85	72	57	35

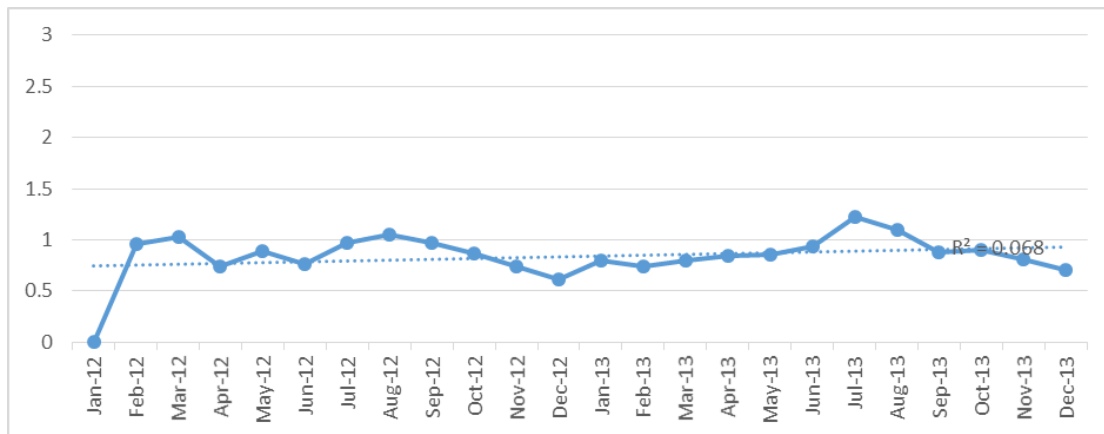
Source: [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime.../rft---police-force-area.xls](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime.../rft---police-force-area.xls)

\* calculated per 1,000 of the population.

<sup>16</sup> It is also estimated that only around one-third of ASB incidents are reported to the police (HMIC, 2012) and the police are not the sole agency involved in responding to antisocial behaviour.

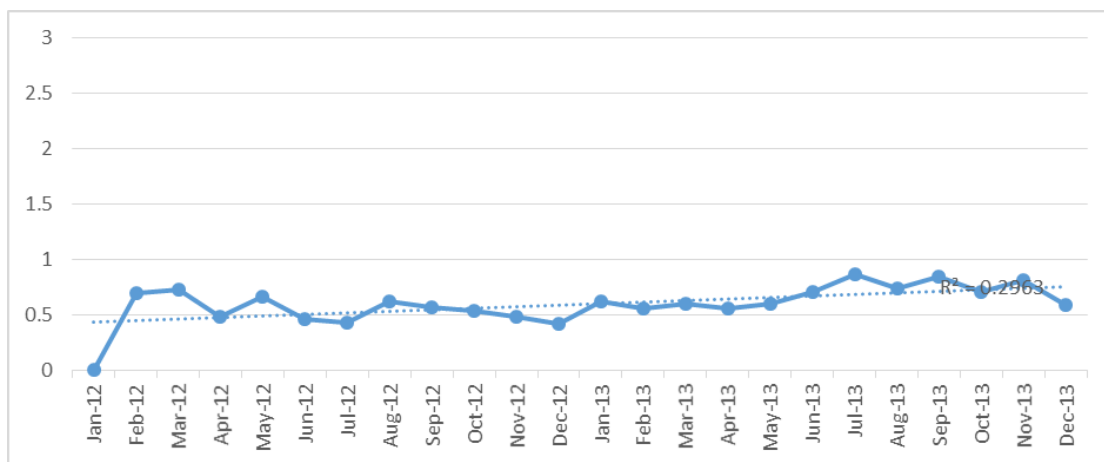


Based on an indexed trend of ASB in Gwent, there has been a slight rise relative to January 2012.



**Figure 2.6 Indexed trend in police recorded anti-social behaviour, Gwent PFA**

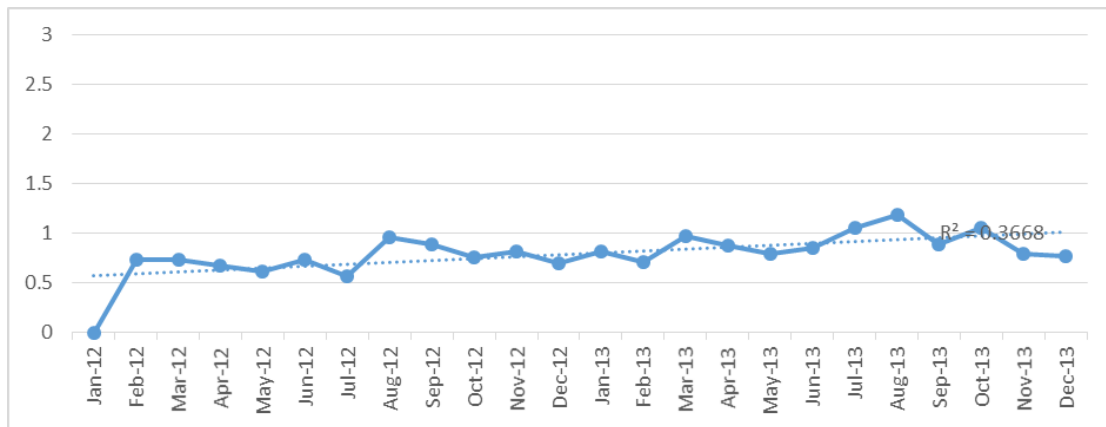
A modest increase in ASB is found for Ebbw Vale over the last two years. This is of a slightly greater magnitude than for the force as a whole. Other police data for Ebbw Vale [not shown] indicates a rise in the percentage of ASB calls recorded as ‘emergency’ or ‘priority’ since the start of 2012 but it is not possible to look at the role of CSOs in responding to these calls.



**Figure 2.7 Indexed trend in police recorded anti-social behaviour, Ebbw Vale**

The greatest upward trend in ASB is found for Newport Central relative to January 2012 (Figure 2.8).

Problems with ASB in the centre of Newport have been reported in the local media in 2014 and centre on problems with public drinking (coinciding with changes to licensing laws), as well as begging, graffiti and rowdy behaviour. From July 2014 until the end of the year, Gwent Police in partnership with Newport City Council have a dispersal order in place which will give CSOs power to direct groups to leave an area if they are engaging in ASB, or else risk arrest<sup>17</sup>.



**Figure 2.8 Indexed trend in police recorded anti-social behaviour, Newport Central**

<sup>17</sup>[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/11307392.New\\_powers\\_bid\\_to\\_curb\\_bad\\_behavior\\_in\\_Newport\\_city\\_centre/?ref=mc](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/11307392.New_powers_bid_to_curb_bad_behavior_in_Newport_city_centre/?ref=mc)

## **2.5 Impact on Public perceptions**

This section uses survey data available from the Wales Omnibus survey and Gwent Police to examine how far the introduction of WG CSOs have registered with the public in this area, and how local policing has been received by people living in the areas<sup>18</sup> of Blaenau Gwent and Newport during this time.

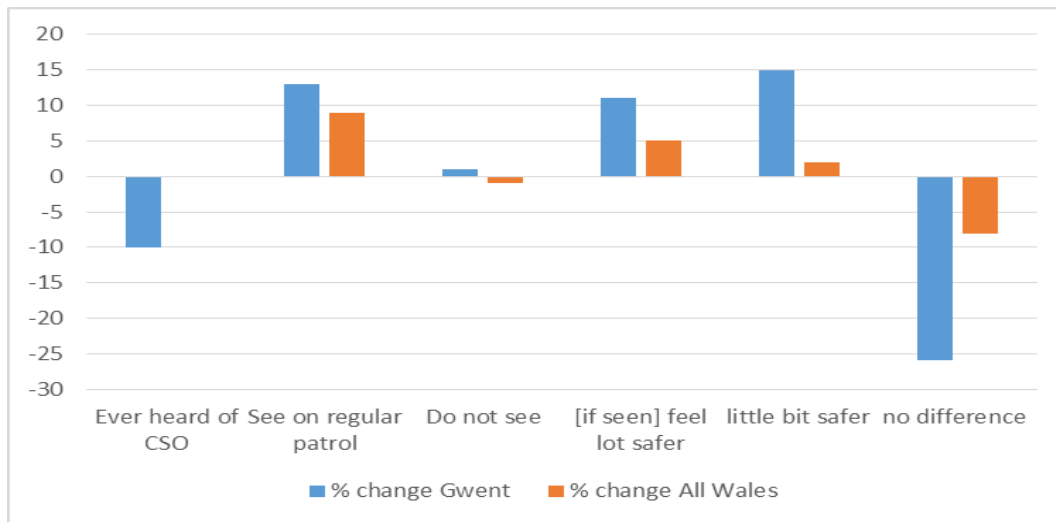
### **2.5.1 The Wales and Gwent public**

The Beaufort Omnibus survey asked a different sample of the public their views on CSOs in 2012 and 2013. Any change in public opinion during this time is shown in Figure 2.9 for all of Wales and for Gwent in particular.

- In Gwent, there was a negative change in CSO familiarity between these two years (-10 percent) although the vast majority of the Gwent public say they have heard of a CSO in both years.
- Exceeding the national picture, there was a sizeable increase in the percentage of the Gwent public who reported 'regular' sightings of foot patrol and a slight decrease in those who said they never see any patrol.
- There has been a sizeable shift over the last year in how the Gwent public relate visible CSO patrol to their safety. Over the last year, members of the public who have seen foot patrol have become markedly less likely to say it makes 'no difference' to their safety and more likely to agree that makes them feel 'a lot' or 'a little' bit safer. This trend is more pronounced in Gwent than in Wales as a whole.

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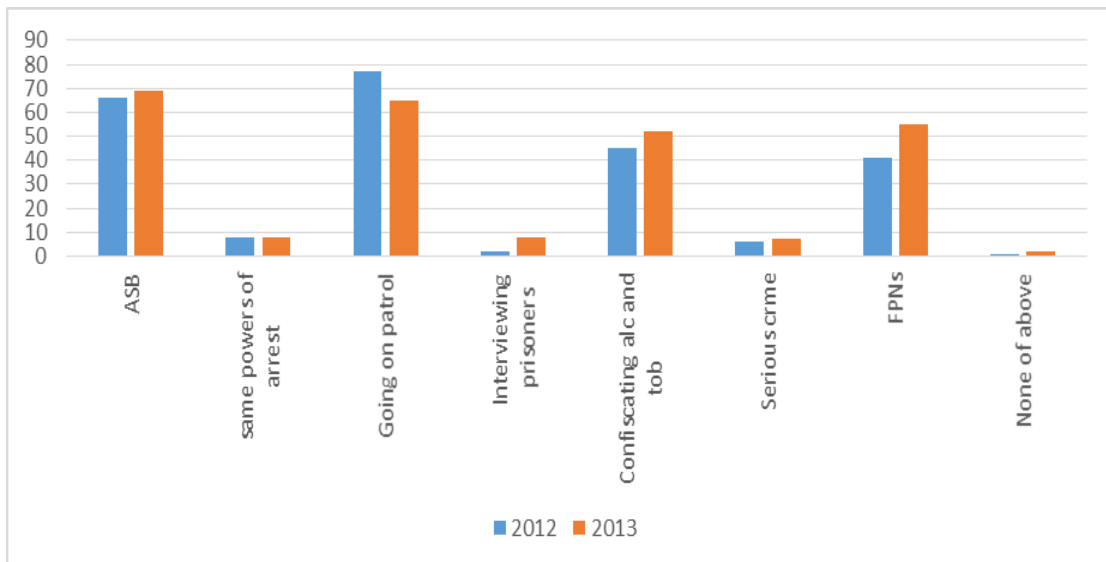
<sup>18</sup> The lowest geography data available for Gwent is at Local Policing Unit level: Blaenau Gwent (Ebbw Vale) and Newport (Newport Central).



**Figure 2.9 Percentage change in public perceptions for Wales and Gwent**

Within Gwent, change perceptions from the same survey are presented in Figure 2.10 based on what the public viewed as part of the CSO role in 2012 and 2013.

- The most endorsed aspects of the CSO role in both years of the survey were dealing with anti-social behaviour and foot patrol.
- The Gwent public became increasingly more likely to view fixed penalty notices (FPN's) and confiscating alcohol and tobacco as a CSO task in 2013 compared to the previous year.
- Only a small minority felt that tasks such as interviewing prisoners or investigating serious crime were part of the CSO portfolio. However, in both years, approximately 1 in 10 of the surveyed public in Gwent believed that CSOs had the same powers of arrest as a police officer.



**Figure 2.10 Change in public perceptions of the CSO role, Gwent**

### 2.5.2 GP surveys of public attitudes in Blaenau Gwent and Newport

Gwent police surveys focus on victims of crime or anti-social behaviour. No public perception data was available from the general public.

The data presented in this report is based on an annual telephone survey, from 2011 onwards. It is important to note the following:

- The lowest geographical area that can be discerned from the data is Local Policing Unit. Findings are therefore shown for Gwent as a whole, Blaenau Gwent LPU and Newport LPU which are larger units than the case study areas.
- Not all crime victims are represented in the survey which focuses on the following crime categories: burglary, violence, vehicle crime, racially motivated and hate crime. These categories are not comparable with the trend police recorded data on 'all crime' or the 'crime basket'.
- To provide an indicator of attitudes among the general public within Gwent, data for Newport Unitary Authority and Blaenau Gwent Unitary Authority were combined from both years of the Beaufort Omnibus Survey.

**Table 2.5 Public Familiarity with local Police and PCSO patrol among ASB victims in Gwent**

<b>ASB Victims<sup>19</sup> Gwent</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
No	55%	49%
Yes, only by name	6	6
Yes, only by sight	17	22
Yes, by name and sight	22	23
Base:	644	210

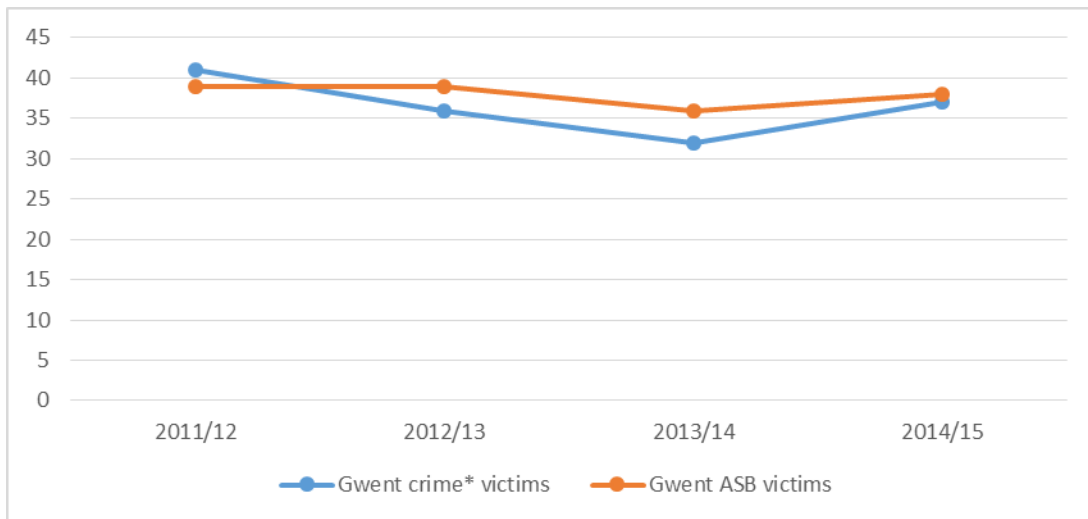
- There is a decrease in the percentage of ASB victims in Gwent who do not know any Police or PCSOs on local patrol. This can largely be attributed to more victims knowing their patrolling officer by sight only.
- The percentage who know how to contact their local patrolling officer or PCSO increased between 2011 and 2013, (from 29 percent to 37 percent), as did the percentage who knew how to report using the 101 number. However, it should be noted that this finding is based on a sample of ASB victims who have reported to the police, not the general public.

Victim's confidence that 'police are dealing with the things that matter to people' in their community decreased between 2011 to a low in 2013/14, particularly for victims of crime.

- The latest data shows that only around 4 in 10 victims of ASB or crime endorse this statement<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> This data was not available for victims of crime in Gwent.

<sup>20</sup> Note that the response categories to this question in the survey changed from 2013 onwards from satisfaction to agree/disagree and this will impact on the quality of the time series.



**Figure 2.11 Local police confidence among victims in Gwent**

*Blaenau Gwent LPU victims*

In Blaenau Gwent Policing Unit, where the case study area of Ebbw Vale is situated, there has been an increase in the percentage of ASB victims who do not know any Police or PCSOs on local patrol.

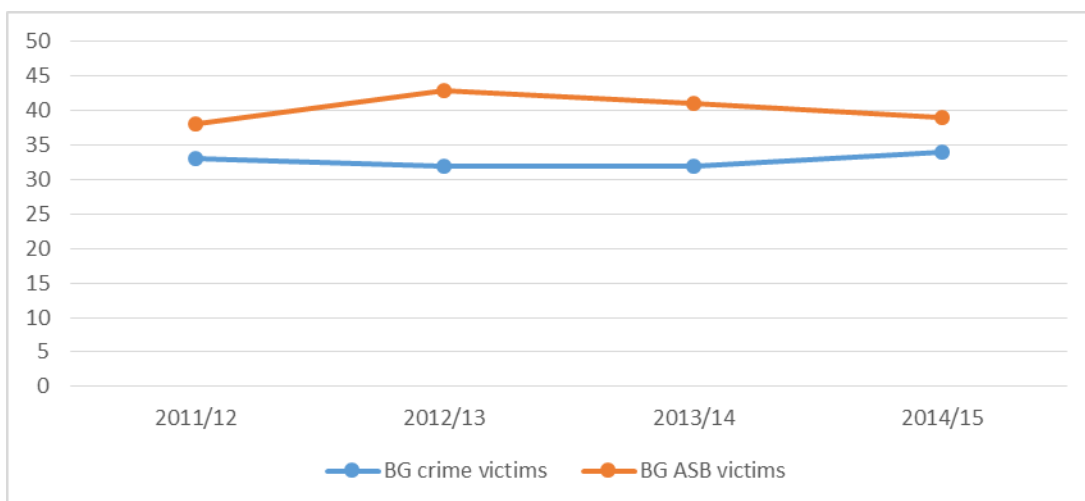
This runs contrary to the change for Gwent PFA as a whole. However, the percentage with the ‘deepest’ familiarity, by both name and sight, is unchanged at approximately 20 percent.

**Table 2.6 Public Familiarity with local Police and PCSO patrol among ASB victims in Blaenau Gwent**

<b>ASB Victims<sup>21</sup> BG LPU</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
No	53%	58%
Yes, only by name	8	6
Yes, only by sight	18	15
Yes, by name and sight	22	21
Base:	131	33

<sup>21</sup> This data was not available for victims of crime in Blaenau Gwent.

- Between 2011/12 and 2013/14 the survey shows an increase of 9 percent in ASB victims who know how to contact local officers, comparable with the force as a whole.
- Victim awareness of the 101 number also increased markedly over this time period in Blaenau Gwent.



**Figure 2.12 Local police confidence among victims in Blaenau Gwent LPU.**

Public confidence in local police to deal with the issues that matter to their community has decreased since 2012/13 for victims of ASB in Blaenau Gwent.

- Confidence has increased slightly over the last year for victims of crime but the latest data suggests overall victim confidence is lower in Blaenau Gwent than for Gwent as a whole in 2014/15, at 34 percent for crime victims and 39 percent for ASB victims.

The victim's survey contained a free-text question from 2013 where respondents could comment on any aspect of policing. Table 2.7 shows positive and negative responses from residents living in the Blaenau Gwent LPU that make explicit reference to community support officers.

This gives a flavour of views from this area, but it cannot be considered representative of public opinion generally or among victims.



- Positive references to CSOs in Blaenau Gwent are that they are visible and provide updates to victims.
- More negative comments in Blaenau Gwent centre on the perceived distinction between PCSOs and police officers, with the latter seen as 'real policing' among these victims.

**Table 2.7 Free text references to PCSOs in Blaenau Gwent LPU**

Positive victim views	Negative victim views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>There's a large number of CSOs in the area.</b></li> <li>• <b>I get updates about anything that's happening in the area by PCSOs.</b></li> <li>• <b>I see the Community Officers patrolling around and I actually see them walking in pairs.</b></li> <li>• <b>There's a lot of ASB behaviour. The CSO is friendly and willing to help. It is making a difference around here.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You don't see officers any more, just see two PCSOs.</li> <li>• People in this area want them [police] to clear up the drugs and burglary and want them on the streets. It's just PCSOs, no real officers.</li> <li>• You see PCSOs going about dealing with things but you never see a real officer.</li> </ul>

*Newport LPU victims*

In Newport Local Policing Unit, where the case study area of Newport Central is situated, there has been a sizeable decrease in the percentage of ASB victims who do not know any Police or PCSOs on local patrol.

- There has been a 10 percent increase in the percentage of Newport ASB victims who know their local police by name and sight.
- This finding of greater public familiarity with local police among victims in Newport runs contrary to Blaenau Gwent.

**Table 2.8 Public Familiarity with local Police and PCSO patrol among ASB victims in Newport LPU**

<b>ASB Victims<sup>22</sup> Newport LPU</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
No	54%	43%
Yes, only by name	6	4
Yes, only by sight	19	19
Yes, by name and sight	22	32
Base:	124	47

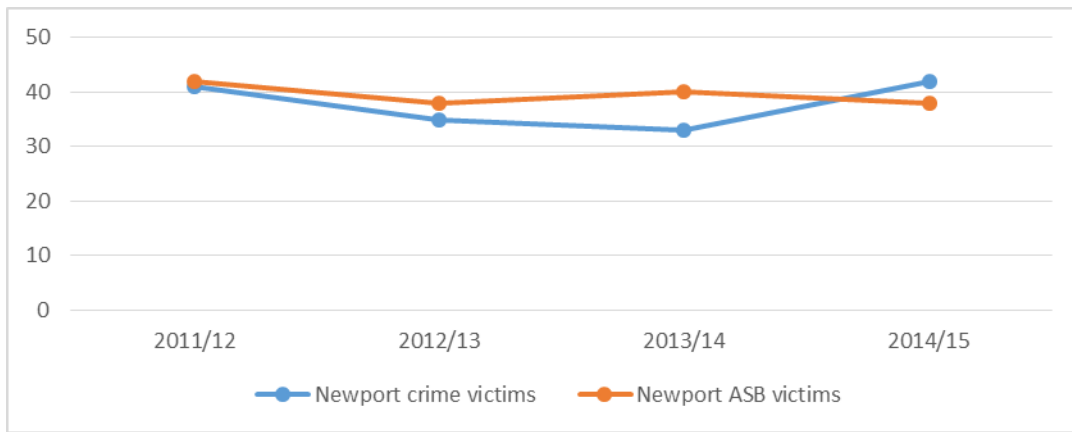
- Between 2011/12 and 2013/14 the survey shows an increase of 18 percent in ASB victims who know how to contact local officers. This increase for Newport LPU is double that found in Blaenau Gwent and the force area as a whole.
- Victim awareness of the 101 number also increased markedly over this time period in Newport LPU.

Victim's confidence that 'police are dealing with the things that matter to people' in their community consistently decreased between 2011/12 and 2013/14 for victims of crime in Newport.

- The data suggests that confidence has increased over the last year for crime victims, but not ASB victims in this area.
- However, the data shows that no more than 4 in 10 victims of ASB or crime endorse the work of local police in dealing with community issues, comparable with Blaenau Gwent<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Data on crime victims was not available for Newport LPU

<sup>23</sup> Note that the response categories to this question in the survey changed from 2013 onwards from satisfaction to agree/disagree and this will impact on the quality of the time series.



**Figure 2.13 Local police confidence among victims in Newport LPU**

The victim's survey contained a free-text question from 2013 where respondents could comment on any aspect of policing. Table 2.9 shows positive and negative responses from residents living in the Newport LPU that make explicit reference to community support officers.

This gives a flavour of views from this area, but it cannot be considered representative of public opinion generally or among victims.

- Positive references to CSOs in Newport allude to the 'deep familiarity' they have with the public and ASB offenders.
- More negative comments in Newport refer to the damage done when the public do not perceive that they are listened to when reporting a crime.

**Table 2.9 Free text references to PCSOs in Newport LPU**

<b>Positive victim views</b>	<b>Negative victim views</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>As far as the Community Bobbies are concerned, they know the undesirables in the city centre and they are keeping in touch with the general public as well.</b></li> <li>• <b>They are doing a lot with ASB.</b></li> <li>• <b>I find the police officers don't seem to do much but the CSOs seem to do more.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youngsters don't have respect for the CSOs so nothing gets done.</li> <li>• There are an awful lot of drugs and things, there are open dealings up here. I reported it to a PCSO and they were very blasé.</li> </ul>

Many comments from residents of Newport who had been victims of crime or ASB made reference to the high visibility of CSOs. It suggest that inter-personal contact is valued, as well as updates on what they are doing in the local area.

**Table 2.10 Free text references to PCSO Visibility in Newport LPU**

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always a police presence in street now, along with the PCSOs.</li> <li>• I do see police and PCSOs around the estate. They stop and talk to people sometimes.</li> <li>• I do get updates from the CSO. I get emails saying what they are doing in my area.</li> <li>• I see PCSOs on the beat and sometimes they have the time to knock on doors to see if there are any issues in the area.</li> <li>• I live in Newport. It's quite a rough place. You see the PCSOs across the street patrolling on a regular basis.</li> <li>• On Friday and Saturday night there is an increased presence. PCSOs are around to ensure people are not parking in permit holder only areas.</li> <li>• There are more CSOs about in my area compared to three years ago when I moved here.</li> </ul> |
|--|

- A couple of the comments suggest that victims in Newport have noticed a positive change in CSO presence over recent years.
- Some suggest that this presence is greatest at night. This is significant as it relates to the deployment strategy of the force to use their additional CSOs to target the night-time economy and addresses some of the concerns identified below.

A 2014 citizen's panel of Newport City Centre residents found that 6 out of 10 feel the police and council are dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour but that 42 percent felt unsafe in the centre at night<sup>24</sup> Other data from the same year reported that nearly half (47 percent) of residents felt that the city centre became a 'no-go' area after dark because of public drinking and associated anti-social behaviour<sup>25</sup>. This behaviour is currently being targeted by Gwent police and Newport City Council through the addition of dispersal order powers for CSOs until January 2015.

*General Public*

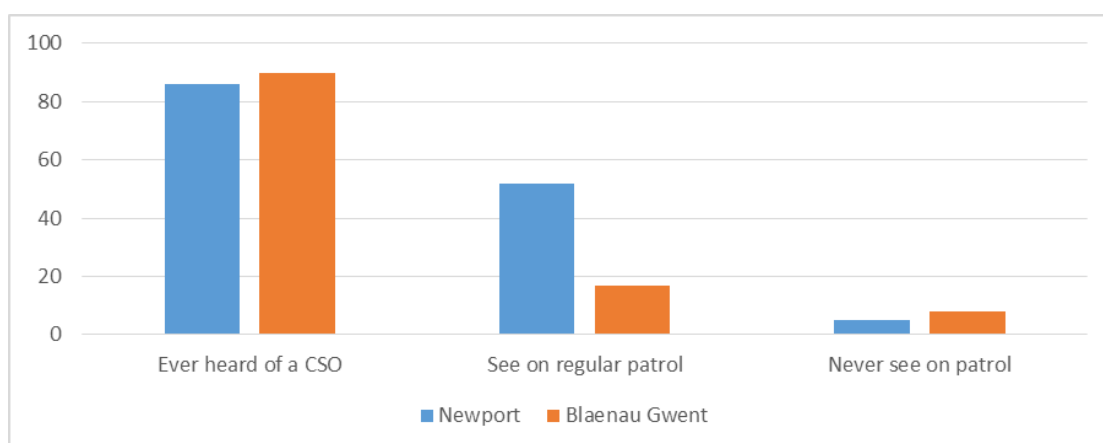
<sup>24</sup> Based on 1,000 residents who participated in the citizen's panel 'One Newport' in April 2014.

<sup>25</sup> 500 Newport City Centre residents were surveyed by Alcohol Concern Cymru in 2014. [http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/NEWS/11465303.Booze\\_makes\\_Newport\\_a\\_no\\_go\\_area\\_a\\_study/?action=complain&cid=13169668](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/NEWS/11465303.Booze_makes_Newport_a_no_go_area_a_study/?action=complain&cid=13169668)

In the absence of any force data from the general public, data from the Beaufort Omnibus Survey for 2012 and 2013 was combined into a single sample for Blaenau Gwent and Newport Unitary Authority Areas (UAA's).

This gives an overall view of public opinion towards CSOs for the last two years although it cannot give any indication of attitude change and is based on a small sample size<sup>26</sup>.

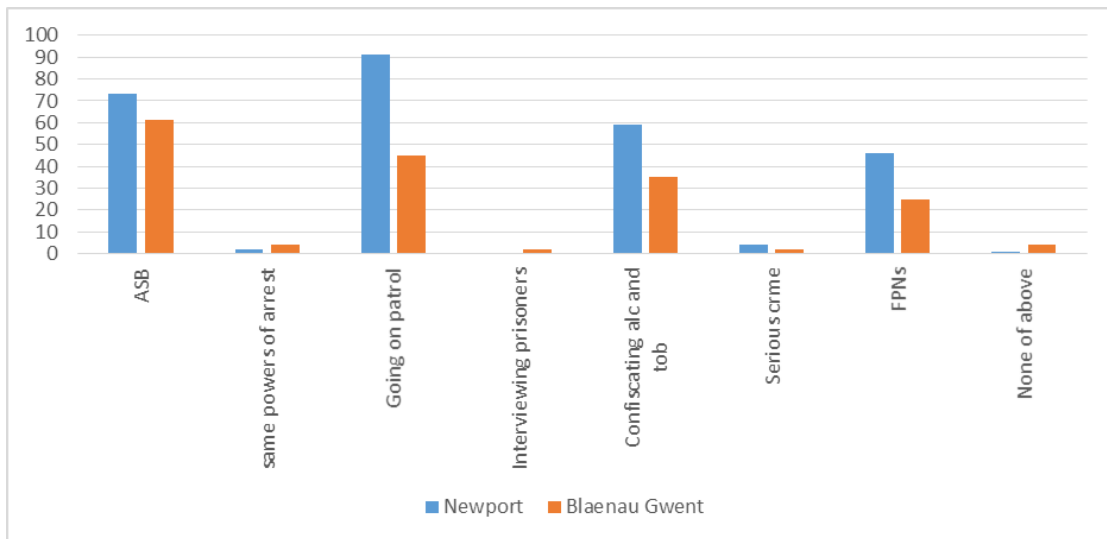
- Public familiarity with a CSO is high in both areas and only a small percentage report never seeing a CSO on patrol.
- Newport residents are much more likely than those in Blaenau Gwent (and Gwent as a whole) to report seeing CSOs regularly on foot patrol. This supports data from the victims' survey that visibility in Newport is high.



**Figure 2.14 CSO familiarity and visibility in Newport and Blaenau Gwent UAA's, 2012 & 2013.**

- In both areas, patrol and anti-social behaviour are most endorsed by the general public as part of the CSO role. However, the percentages are much higher in Newport than in Blaenau Gwent.
- In Newport in particular, foot patrol is strongly associated with CSOs (90 percent), again supporting the finding of high foot patrol visibility among CSOs in this area.

<sup>26</sup> Sample size, 2012 and 13 combined: Newport UA = 98: Blaenau Gwent UA=51.



**Figure 2.15 Public perceptions of the CSO role in Newport and Blaenau Gwent UAAs, 2012 & 2013.**

### 3 Conclusions

This appendix to the final report on our appraisal of the work of Welsh Government funded Community Support Officers has focused on just one of the four Welsh police forces, Gwent Police and, in particular, the chosen Case Study Areas of Ebbw Vale and Newport Central.

Using a variety of quantitative, qualitative and administrative data sources, we have been able to paint an integrated picture of the implementation and impact of the introduction of additional CSO resource within the force area from which a number of key themes emerge:

- **Implementation - Integration and Differentiation:** Gwent are the only Welsh force in which there has been some differentiation between the new cohort and existing CSOs in terms of their day-to-day work. Whilst full time officers fulfil a role identical to that of CSOs funded by other sources, the part-time positions created for weekend peak demand times are, by their very nature, quite distinct with the visibility and ASB response functions of the CSO role predominating. As such, individuals appear not to be as fully integrated with the rest of the teams in which they work, a situation frustrating for both them and their full time colleagues. Many have, or are looking to increase their hours in order to gain experience with other aspects of the CSO function, particularly in relation to community cohesion activities and there is a significant movement of CSOs to warranted police officer roles both within and outwith the force.
- **Implementation – Activities and Function:** There are some contrasts in what is being achieved by CSOs in the two Case Study Areas studied in the Gwent PFA. In Newport, where part-time Welsh Government CSOs are engaged in high visibility, reassurance patrol in the City Centre, dealing with a transient population, ASB and night-time economy issues there is a strong emphasis on ‘police support’ tasks. Although there is also considerable engagement activity with businesses, there are limited opportunities to proactively develop local resident engagement and there is some frustration about the drift towards a reactive policing tasks when CSOs have only limited powers. In Ebbw Vale, both ‘community support’ and ‘police support’ functions are evident. Local officers report a significant increase in office-based administration work and peak-time high visibility patrol duties suggesting a drift towards a ‘police-support’ function, although the initial reactive ASB response vehicle manned by the part-time

CSOs at peak times has since been withdrawn. At the same time it is evident that a considerable amount of 'community support' work is being conducted, although this looks quite different in different parts of the area. In the less deprived neighbourhoods, CSOs are performing more traditional community engagement activities including: working with young people in local schools and colleges; events co-hosted with third sector partners; surgeries and public meetings; and regular community clubs. In more deprived areas, where traditionally relationships with the police have not been good, CSOs are engaged in a rather different form of subtle community engagement focused of 'building bridges', gaining community intelligence and promoting cohesion.

- **Impact – Crime:** the available data on recorded crime for Gwent shows no overall change at police force level but divergent trends in the case study areas based on predominantly acquisitive crime offences. There is no evidence to suggest that WG CSO deployment had an impact on the longer term trajectory of these trends and no data is available to investigate any changes in how CSOs are deployed in response to these types of crime.
- **Impact – ASB:** trends in anti-social behavior suggest an increase relative to January 2012 at force and case study area level, particularly in Newport Central where other data highlights problems associated with the night-time economy in this area. There is no evidence to suggest that WG CSO deployment had an impact on the longer term trajectory of these trends and no data is available to investigate any changes in how CSOs are deployed in response to these incidents.
- **Impact - Public Perceptions of Safety, Trust and Confidence in Policing:** the Beaufort Omnibus surveys show that public sightings of regular CSO patrol have risen markedly for Gwent and that visibility is increasingly associated with positive perceptions of safety. The police data cannot capture geographical units smaller than the Local Policing Unit and the sample is based on victims of ASB and selected crimes rather than the general public. (It is probable that public perceptions will differ for non-victims relative to victims who have recently reported to the police). Available data from the general public in the Beaufort Omnibus surveys suggest marked differences between Newport and Blaenau Gwent authorities, with much higher visibility in the former.



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