



Communications and engagement strategy 2021-24

Creating safer, resilient and connected communities



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CONTENTS

1. Vision, introduction and strategic objectives	4-5
2. Duty to seek the view of the public: the legislation	6-7
3. Engagement opportunities	8-9
4. Consultation and engagement methods	10-12
5. Supporting OPCC functions	13
6. Appendices	14-15

‘Our mission is to get the best for the public from the police and to support others to keep communities safe across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly’

Integrity Trust Independence Public voice





An Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner road safety event

Vision

Through high quality and meaningful communications and engagement we will place the public's voice at the heart of everything we do, raising public awareness of key issues affecting public safety, transparently delivering the Police and Crime Plan and keeping the public informed of our progress.

Introduction

When public service communications and engagement are at their most effective they encourage people to make decisions which create safer, happier, healthier, and more prosperous communities. They do this by providing the evidence required to deliver positive change in service delivery and by promoting public awareness of available services.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) were introduced by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to provide stronger and more transparent

accountability to police. They have a clear duty to provide services to reduce crime and its impact on communities and victims.

PCCs are elected by the public to hold Chief Constables to account, effectively making the police answerable to the communities they serve. A key role for PCCs is therefore representing and engaging communities to help ascertain and deliver their policing priorities.

The wide-ranging duty 'to seek views' leaves much to the interpretation of

commissioners and their offices and in the intervening years approaches towards engaging the public, and resources applied to this area of business, have varied considerably between police areas.

This strategy, which links to the Police and Crime Plan and annual communications delivery plans, supports an approach that is inclusive of all communities and will assist the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the police and partners with making decisions that are informed by the views of the residents and businesses in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and visitors to the force area.

It underpins our transparent approach which assists the public in understanding the remit, challenges and opportunities faced by OPCC, the police and partners, expenditure of public money and decisions made by officers and staff of those organisations.

It advocates a multi-channel approach combining traditional media, social media and face to face techniques to improve the diversity of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (OPCC's) reach and a performance driven, target orientated approach.

Strategic objectives

- To promote the role and impact of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- To aid decision making by gaining a deeper understanding of the attitudes and experiences of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly residents at both quantitative (statistically significant) and a qualitative (lived experience) levels
- To support the office's transparency objectives through regular publication of material related to office activity and decisions
- To provide data relating to public opinion on policing and commissioning of services to inform decision making
- To raise awareness of key issues affecting public safety



PCC community engagement worker Graeme Kirkup with officers at Exeter Pride

Duty to seek the views of the public: the relevant legislation

The PCC has a clear duty to seek the views of local communities and victims as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. These duties are listed in more detail in Appendix A (page 14).

Obtaining the views of local people on policing

The Police Act 1996 sets out a statutory duty to ‘consult with those in that policing area, about the policing of that area’. The Policing and Crime Act 2009 and Community Engagement and Membership Regulations 2010 add the requirement to ‘have regard to the views of people in the authority’s area about policing in that area’.



Meeting the Divas - a group for women with learning difficulties in Cornwall

Police and Crime Plan

The PCC produces a Police and Crime Plan covering their term of office which sets out the priorities for local policing for the whole force area, and how they are going to be addressed. This document sets out the PCC's objectives for policing and reducing crime and disorder in the area, how policing resources will be allocated, agreements for funding and performance reporting requirements. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act states that before the Police and Crime Plan is issued the PCC must make arrangements for obtaining the views of people in that police area on that plan.

Budget Proposals

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act states that the PCC must make arrangements for obtaining the views of the people in that police area on their proposals for expenditure in that financial year.

The legislation refers to seeking the views ‘on the proposals of the police and crime commissioner (including capital expenditure) in that financial year’, indicating that the scope of the consultation covers the entirety of policing expenditure and not only new expenditure for that year.

Obtaining the Views of Victims of Crime

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act states that the PCC must make arrangements for obtaining the views of victims of crime in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area, and the views of the victims of crime in that area, on the Police and



The PCC’s engagement team at a rural event

Crime Plan. This duty is most effectively carried out through regular communications and engagement activities but where appropriate focus groups may be established.

Equality and Diversity

As a public sector body the OPCC has to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Appendix B) which brings together all previous equality legislation and includes a new public sector equality duty. The act refers to nine different protected characteristics - **Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation**. While there is no explicit legal requirement under the act to

engage with people with different protected characteristics, it does require public authorities to have an adequate evidence base for their decision making, and engagement can assist with developing that evidence base.

The Devon and Cornwall OPCC has made, in its equality objectives, a public commitment ‘to widen the reach of its communications and engagement to improve our connection with diverse communities. This will be informed by engagement with under-represented groups in our communities and their experiences.’

When planning communications and engagement activity careful consideration should be given to the approach given to maximise engagement with ‘hard to reach’ groups.

Engagement opportunities

Opportunities to seek views exist on any policing and crime topic that the PCC deems relevant, particularly in relation to any national roles that they may have. However, specific communications and engagement plans proposals will be created relating to the following:

- **The Police and Crime Plan** – views may be sought on draft proposals or before proposals are drawn up to inform an emerging plan.
- **The annual policing budget** – views should be sought on specific budget proposals (in line with APACCE guidance) and may also be sought before proposals are drawn up to inform a commissioner on policing priorities.
- **The Annual Report** - the communications and engagement team will produce an annual report highlighting the work of the office to public, partners and stakeholders over the previous 12 months. This is a statutory duty under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act.
- **The Police and Crime Panel** – quarterly meetings of the Police and Crime Panel, which scrutinises decisions made by the PCC, represent an opportunity for local authority members and members of the public to ask questions of the commissioner in a public setting.
- **Scrutiny reports** – scrutinising the police is a key PCC function. Promoting this work and findings of scrutiny panels will improve the understanding of the PCC's function and aid transparency of policing.

- **Independent Custody Visitors** – the communications and engagement team will promote and support the effective provision of independent custody visiting in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The ICV scheme aids police legitimacy and is an important OPCC function.
- **Commissioner's awards** – volunteer awards and commissioner's awards give the office the opportunity to recognise publicly the efforts of residents who help to further the aims of the police and crime plan.
- **Commissioned Services** – the communications and engagement team will support communications activities of commissioned services to promote their use to potential service users.



Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer speaks to police cadets

Diverse communities

The office recognises that at times additional focus and expenditure must be made to enable equality of opportunity to engage for all residents of the Devon and Cornwall Police area. For example, Easy Read documents that enable residents with learning disabilities to understand the work of the office.

Groups of people who are typically under-represented in the communications and engagement activities of police and crime commissioner's groups and examples of methods for engaging with them include, but are not limited to:

Local Reference Groups

Local Reference Groups (LRGs) form a vital role in building trust and confidence between diverse communities and Devon and Cornwall Police.

There is an LRG for each of the force's police basic command units and their membership is varied and changing. These groups represent an opportunity to engage with people of a multitude of backgrounds and experiences and to seek their views.

Young People

Young people are often under-represented in consultations and surveys because they do not usually participate in traditional consultation methods. The PCC engages with young people through a variety of mechanisms, including visits to schools and colleges and working with Devon and Cornwall Police cadets. Further work to enhance the OPCC's engagement with young people, such as a dedicated youth engagement strategy, will be

considered as part of the Police and Crime Plan development and review.

Victims of Crime

A new strategic partnership between the OPCC and the charity Victim Support to supply services to victims of crime in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly was agreed by the PCC in early 2021. Victim Support is committed to provide feedback and assurance reports on victim satisfaction rates on a regular basis as part of this agreement. Further opportunities to seek victims' views in partnership with Victim Support will be explored.

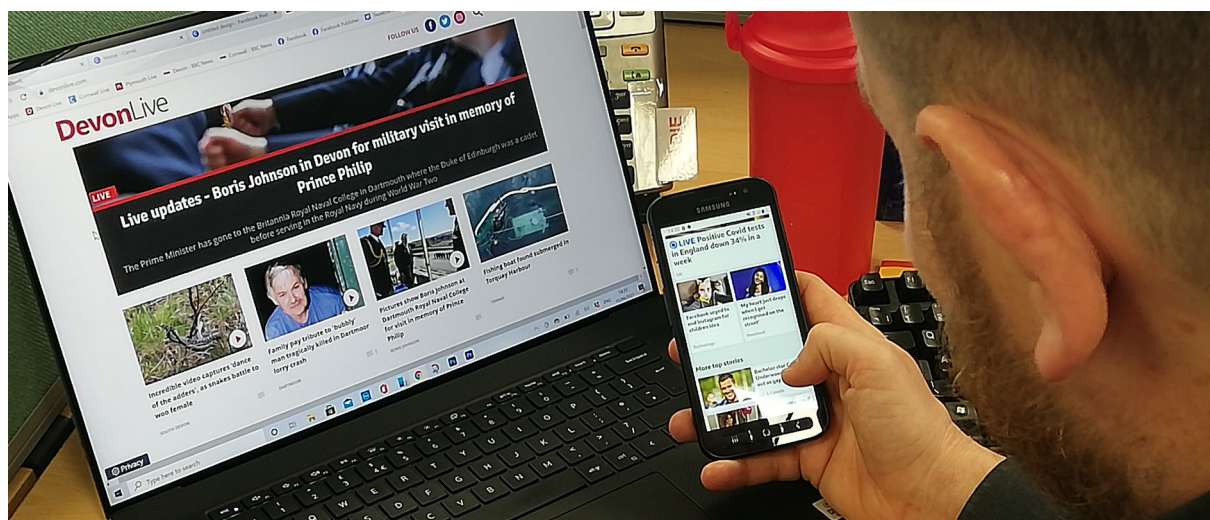
The Victim Care Unit, commissioned by the OPCC, carries out regular feedback exercises with victims of crime who are selected at random and asked for their feedback. These reports will be collected and circulated by the OPCC.

The communications and engagement team will support the office's trauma-informed communications approach and will consider its recommendations whenever communications may impact upon victims of crime.

Lived experience

Accepting that compelling communication results from a combination of appropriate use of data and personal testimony the communication and engagement team will endeavour to involve people with lived experience at every opportunity. This is in line with the OPCC's Lived Experience and Service User Engagement Policy.





Consultation and Engagement methods

As a general principle a multi-channel approach is favoured when possible because it increases the likelihood of responses being representative of the communities of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Communications should be open, transparent and proactive rather than reactive to engender a greater understanding of the OPCC and Devon and Cornwall Police.

Traditional media

The digital, broadcast and print media represent a significant opportunity to enhance public understanding of the OPCC's work, to disseminate important messages for victims of crime to a mass audience and to assist the office in its transparency objectives.

Journalists will receive thorough briefings and will be assisted to obtain the information, footage or photography requested. A log of journalistic contact will be held and responses must be made in a timely fashion, accepting that

the media is a 24/7 industry and in a digital age a near immediate response will be required in some instances. Clarifications must be sought in a timely fashion when erroneous or misleading information is published by a third party in the public domain.

Video

Video has fast emerged as the most effective method of communication. As well as providing engaging content for the OPCC's channels, professionally shot video meets the audio and visual requirements of all media organisations. The OPCC will therefore adopt a 'video first' approach.

Social Media

The emergence of social media has created an additional mechanism for communicating with local communities. The PCC has dedicated Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram sites, which provide communities with key information regarding the activities of the PCC and which can be used to

consult and engage on specific issues. The use of live webcasts on these platforms enables the PCC to engage directly with people who might not participate in more traditional consultation methods.

Quarterly targets will be set to drive audience growth.

If the PCC uses personal social media accounts they are to remain separate from those operated by the OPCC. Although there will be occasions (for example, when publicising an opportunity to meet the PCC) when it will be permissible to 'tag' or 'mention' the PCC's personal account, this should not generally be done.

Surveys

Digital surveys promoted over social media have emerged as one of the most effective methods of garnering quantitative public opinion. They can be circulated to large audiences at short notice and promoted at relatively low cost. They return rich demographic data and can be tailored to engage with under-represented cohorts. Results lend

themselves to detailed analysis and representative sample sizes can be achieved. However, they should be supported by paper/telephone surveys and promoted via traditional media as there are people in society who will never be reached by digital-only methods.

Face to Face Engagement

The OPCC typically has a busy communications and engagement programme and will support engagement activities when they fit will the strategic objectives of the Communications and Engagement Strategy or the Police and Crime Plan. Face to face engagement gives communities the opportunity to find out more about the work of the office and to take part in surveys and activities. When possible resources should be shared with Devon and Cornwall Police and/or partners to maximise efficiency.

Focus Groups

When appropriate and practical to do so the communications and engagement team will engage focus groups to give



Councillor advocates attend a seminar to understand about police drones

qualitative feedback on surveys and emerging policy to inform decision-making.

Neighbourhood Alert

Regular 'Neighbourhood Alert' emails are circulated by the OPCC. These give the opportunity for regular updates to a cohort of interested parties and generally receive a high satisfaction rate. Neighbourhood Alert is a useful tool to keep communities engaged and informed with the work of the office. Messages do, however, only engage with individuals who have sought information from the OPCC and therefore responses should be considered with that in mind.

Community volunteers

The OPCC will work with community volunteers such as councillors, police volunteers and independent custody visitors. The office will explore volunteer opportunities and support volunteering programmes in recognition of the fact that they represent an opportunity to connect with communities.

Website

The OPCC website devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk is also used as a means of consulting with local communities, both through online surveys and consultations on specific policies. Members of the public can also sign up to receive the Neighbourhood Alert e-newsletter giving details of activities undertaken by the PCC and any consultation activities.

The website provides a valuable resource to anyone wishing to find out more about the office and an opportunity to aid transparency through the publication of documents such as decision sheets. The communications

and engagement team will support efforts to maintain the website's transparency mark after an annual assessment by CoPaCC.

Quarterly targets to drive website audience growth will be set.

Strategic partnerships and civic events

Whenever possible the team will provide an appropriate presence at strategic partnership and civic events to assist in brand recognition and to raise awareness of the office.

Branding opportunities

The team will maintain a brand that is imbued with the values of the office and take responsibility for maintaining brand consistency across the office and partners.

The team will work with partners and commissioned services to promote this brand on signage etc where a funding relationship is in place.

Feedback

It is essential that we "close the loop" to complete the consultation process through building in systematic feedback. This includes not only to the people who have participated, but also to the public. If people perceive that consultation is worthwhile, then we hope that the number of respondents will increase.

In particular, the PCC will use available media to promote positive messages highlighting what has changed as a result of consultation. This will enhance trust and a willingness to participate. A means of providing such feedback may be through information provided through the PCCs monthly newsletter, social media or information in local authority publications.

Supporting OPCC functions

Communications and engagement will be used to support the functions of the OPCC. This can be through media engagement, community consultation and survey and might be used to explain decisions, spending and work of the office, or to recruit community representatives to participate in projects.

Functions supported by the communications and engagement team include, but are not limited to:

- **Commissioned services** - the team will use communications and engagement to direct victims of crime to support services commissioned by the office and promote prevention initiatives commissioned by the office.
- **Westminster engagement** – the team will support the work of the office to campaign in Central Government for greater awareness of the challenges and opportunities facing communities in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- **Estates** - the team will use communications and engagement to explain changes to the police estate to communities, police officers and police staff.



The launch of a joint public/private sector road safety partnership involving the OPCC

Appendices and acknowledgements

Appendix A

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act

PCC Consultation Duties

Part 1 – Police Reform

Chapter 3 – Functions of elected local policing bodies

14 Arrangements for obtaining the views of the community on policing

(1) Section 96 of the Police Act 1996 (arrangements for obtaining the views of the community on policing) is amended in accordance with this section. (2) In subsection (1), after paragraph (b) insert “; and for obtaining the views of victims of crime in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area.”. (3) After subsection (1) insert— “(1A) Those arrangements must include, in the case of— (a) a police area listed in Schedule 1, or (b) the metropolitan police district, arrangements for obtaining, before a police and crime plan is issued under section 5 or 6 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the views of the people in that police area, and the views of the victims of crime in that area, on that plan. (1B) Those arrangements must include, in the case of a police area listed in Schedule 1, arrangements for obtaining, before the first precept for a financial year is issued by the police and crime commissioner under section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the views of— (a) the people in that police area, and (b) the relevant ratepayers’ representatives, on the proposals of the police and crime commissioner for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in that financial year.

Appendix B

Equality Act 2010 – Engagement and the Equality Duty¹

The Equality Act 2010 brings together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act includes a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty) which replaces the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The equality duty came into force on 5 April 2011.

The Equality Act refers to nine different protected characteristics, as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race

- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

While there is no explicit legal requirement under the Act to engage with people with different protected characteristics, the Act does require public authorities to have an adequate evidence base for their decision making, and engagement can assist with developing that evidence base.

It is recommended that public authorities publish information about who they have engaged with. This will help in being transparent and clear to stakeholders about how their contribution has informed work.

The key areas where engagement can assist in fulfilling the duties of the Act are:

Improving Services

The key reason public authorities engage is to help them understand how their policies affect, or will affect, people who use their services. Engagement can be used to improve decision making, both in policy and service development and in identifying priorities for action.

Improving Equality Information

Robust equality information is necessary to enable public authorities to design and deliver effective and efficient policies. Where there are gaps in the information base engagement can help to fill these gaps, and also to interpret existing information.

¹ Taken from the Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance, ‘Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities

Assessing the Impact on Equality

Engagement can help to assess the impact of policies on people with protected characteristics. It can help to gather the views, experiences and ideas of those who are, or will be, affected by an authority’s decisions.

Setting Objectives

Public authorities covered by the Act must prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the general equality duty. Engagement can help to determine and prioritise these objectives, by helping to make clearer which are most likely to make the biggest difference to tackling inequality.

Fostering Good Relations

Engagement with people with protected characteristics and other stakeholders can be useful in fostering good relations with the public and local communities in general.

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