

Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ymchwil gymdeithasol
Social research

Number: 11/2015

www.cymru.gov.uk

The work of Welsh Government funded Community Support Officers

Appendix C - North Wales Police Force Area Report

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Welsh Government Social Research, 26 February 2015

ISBN 978-1-4734-2965-9

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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 the North Wales PFA. It does this by focusing on the selected case study area of the Isle of Anglesey (IoA).

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 North Wales Police as a whole and in Anglesey 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 NWP.

This PFA Report, together with those for South Wales, Gwent, Dyfed Powys and the British Transport Police in Wales, is presented as an appendix to the appraisal's final report¹ wherein data are brought together for analysis and discussion at an All-Wales level.

¹ 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 communities². 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 police forces in Wales³.

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 North Wales, Anglesey was chosen as the single CSA on the grounds that it represents a rural community with low crime rates. Figure 1.1 shows the data structure for this report.

The data is presented at two levels of analysis: (1) Police Force Area; (2) Case Study Area.

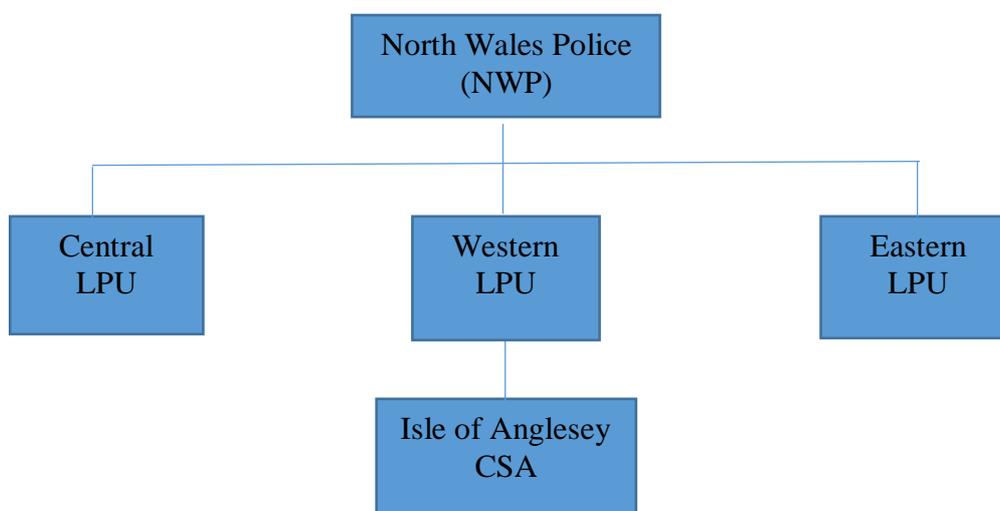


Figure 1.1 Data Structure for North Wales Police

² 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 (unpublished).

³ The research considered the work of BTP in Wales alongside the other forces and not as a stand-alone case study area.

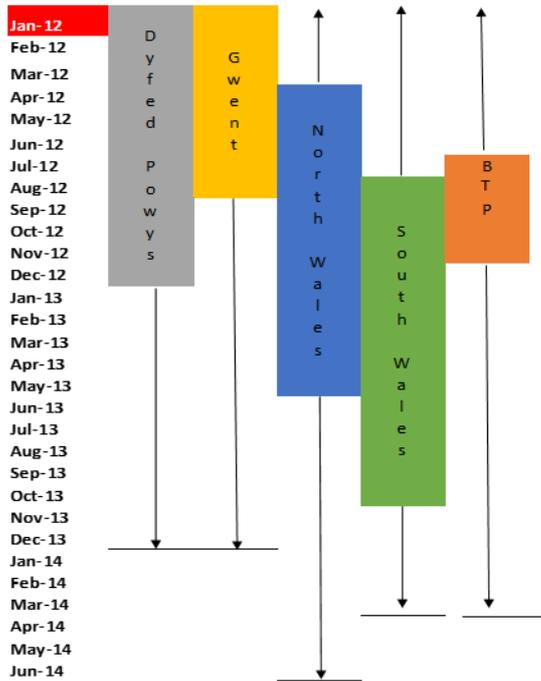


Figure 1.2 The Phased Deployment of WG-CSOs across Wales

Figure 1.2 shows that nationally deployment of the Welsh Government CSOs began in January 2012 and the full complement of 500 were recruited by October 2013. The timing of this process varied markedly between Welsh forces. North Wales was the third force to begin this process in April 2012 and it took thirteen months to complete.

The data streams for this report are grouped according to whether they primarily address questions of Implementation or Impact around the work of CSOs:

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 North Wales, these questions are addressed using administrative and HR data on recruitment, in-depth interviews, focus groups with CSOs and an analysis of local media reports.

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

To assess any change that may be attributable to the increased numbers of CSOs, the following are reported on using data provided by NWP:

- Monthly trends in police recorded crimes and non-crimes.
- CSO attendance at recorded non-crime⁴ incidents including ASB.
- 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 North Wales.

1.2 About North Wales Police Force Area

The North Wales Police force area covers an area of 6,300 square kilometres with a population of some 687,500. The area encompasses the six counties of North Wales comprised of both urban and rural areas including the cities of Bangor and St Asaph, the Snowdonia National Park, significant ports at Holyhead and Mostyn, expanding industrial regions and numerous busy towns, many of which have a large transient tourist population during the summer months.

The force has been through considerable organisational change in recent years. In May 2011, the structure moved from 3 Basic Command Units (BCUs) to a single BCU, functional model with operational response and neighbourhood policing functions managed separately. At post implementation review towards the end of that year however, it was recognised that the nature of the region did not lend itself to functional splits at a local level. Further reorganisation at the start of 2012 resulted in a hybrid model whereby crime services, operational support, business and corporate services operate functionally, whilst local policing services are organised on a geographical model. The region is ultimately divided into ten policing districts, each headed by a District Inspector with responsibility for both response and neighbourhood policing functions⁵.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales has identified four police and crime objectives for 2013-18⁶:

⁴ This data was not available for recorded crime.

⁵ <http://www.north-wales.police.uk/your-neighbourhood.aspx>

⁶ The North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.
<http://www.northwales-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Police-and-Crime-Plan.pdf>

- To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour that impacts on our communities;
- To protect people and reduce harm;
- To provide quality service that delivers confidence within our communities;
- To promote a well led, organised and skilled workforce.

Alongside these overriding objectives the plan highlights police visibility and accessibility and rural crime as areas of specific focus for the force.

1.3 About the Isle of Anglesey

The Isle of Anglesey sits off the north-west coast of Wales, connected to the mainland by two bridges spanning the Menai Strait. Formerly part of the county of Gwynedd, Anglesey, Holy Island and other smaller islands now make up the Isle of Anglesey County. As well as the large port town of Holyhead, the island has a number of other significant towns, most notably Llangefni, Benllech, Menai Bridge, and Amlwch.

As a Unitary Authority Area and constituency, the Isle of Anglesey is the largest of the case study areas selected for detailed study. According to the 2011 Census, it has a population of 69,700 but is less densely populated (per square kilometre) than Wales as a whole.

More detailed statistics⁷ show that population size of Anglesey is stable, with only a 0.4% increase between 1996 and 2006 compared to a 2.6% rise for Wales as a whole.

- Anglesey has a higher percentage of its population at retirement age than the Welsh average and a high proportion of Welsh speakers at 60 percent compared to 21 percent for Wales overall.
- The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2005) ranked 2 percent of Isle of Anglesey's areas in the 10 percent most deprived areas in Wales, but the majority of its areas were found to be more deprived than the Wales average.

Anglesey is managed as a local policing district within the NWP structure, headed by a District Inspector with responsibility for both response and neighbourhood policing. The Island is sub- divided into four quadrants, arranged around the four police stations that form officers' bases at Holyhead, Llangefni, Benllech and Amlwch.

⁷ National Assembly for Wales (2008) Key Statistics for the Isle of Anglesey. Members' Research Service: research paper: www.assembly.wales/anglesey.pdf

2 Key Findings

2.1 Who are the North Wales WG-CSOs?

This question was addressed by the analysis of police human resources and headcount data for the North Wales police force area as a whole, and qualitative data derived from focus groups and interviews with the NPT and local police management in Anglesey.

2.1.1 Recruitment

NWP were allocated 101 WG-CSO posts at the commencement of the project. Recruitment commenced in the latter half of 2011, with the first intake of 34 officers commencing their 8-week training course on 30th January 2012 and deployed on 1st April 2012. Three further courses were conducted during the course of 2012 and a total of 101 officers were deployed by the end of November. A further intake was recruited in March 2013 to backfill 2 vacancies that has arisen as a result of staff turnover.

Applications for the posts were both received from both external and internal candidates via recruitment campaigns targeted specifically at Welsh speakers living within local communities. The NWP website⁸ gives the following description of the role for prospective candidates:

“PCSOs are uniformed police staff. They work to complement and support regular police officers. Their role provides a visible and accessible uniformed presence, aimed at improving the quality of life in the community and offers greater public assurance. The role of PCSO is unique, designed purely to tackle anti-social behaviour and local issues affecting the quality of life. PCSOs are not replacement police officers but there to address many of the tasks that do not require the experience or powers held by police officers but which often take officers away from more appropriate duties”

Applicants were not required to have previous experience in a policing or allied roles, but were assessed against a number of attainments, most notable amongst which were experience dealing with the general public within a service environment. All needed to be able to speak Welsh to Level 2 on employment and commit to achieve Level 3 ability by the end of their probation period. Desired personal qualities included decision making skills, a commitment to public service delivery, openness to change, the ability to work with others and professional integrity.

⁸ North Wales Police Recruitment: Police Community Support Officers
<http://www.north-wales.police.uk/recruitment/police-community-supports-officers.aspx>

The initial recruitment plan was to conduct one campaign from which all 101 posts would be recruited to take up posts in three staged intakes. However, from a total of 440 applications received during that first campaign only 34 (7.7%) went on to be successful. This high attrition rate was a result of a number of factors, most significantly failure of individual applicants at the National Assessment Centre and on the Welsh speaking test, and was surprising to the management team, although as a senior officer explains, they recognised their expectations as a force are high;

“We have always been a force that has always sets the bar high, even years and years ago with the old fashioned police exam we, the force used to have a different mark for it. The Metropolitan always had a low mark for it , didn’t they, forces like North Wales felt always they could set a really high mark and that worked -whether that still works I am not too sure really. Having said all that, there is a lot of work in that, we have still got and are very happy with the 250+ PCSOs that we have got, in terms of that it has delivered a high calibre individual. You meet some of our PCSO’s.... you are left with the impression of highly qualified and highly motivated people that really punch above their weight, to be fair to them”

[SMT3]

2.1.2 Demographics

The table overleaf gives a snapshot of the demographic profile of the 101 individuals deployed in WG-funded CSO posts by 2013, compared with those individuals in Home Office-funded Police Community Support Officer Roles (HO-CSO) across the force⁹.

Incumbents of the Welsh Government-funded posts are almost weighted towards males, whereas for the HO-funded posts the opposite is true. Across all CSO posts within the force the gender profile is more balanced at 53.5% male, 46.5% female.

In keeping with the ethnicity profile for the area, the majority of officers describe themselves as White British.

The new cohort of WG-CSOs are generally younger than existing HO-CSOs, with over two thirds recruited being under 26 years of age. When viewed together, 42% of all CSOs in the force fall into this age bracket, 37% are aged between 26 and 40 years and the remainder are over 40.

⁹ Data provided by NWP Human Resources Department

In Anglesey, the incumbents of the twenty CSO roles are equally split between men and women and are predominantly under 30 years of age. They come from a variety of backgrounds including retail, the hotel industry and youth work. Some had previously held positions as Special Police Constables and one older HO-funded CSO had previously held a role in the Fire Service for 21 years.

Table 2.1 CSO Demographics, North Wales Police 2013

	WG Funded CSOs 2013	HO Funded CSOs 2013
Gender (%)		
Male	60.4%	46.6%
Female	39.6%	53.4%
Age Group (%)		
25 and under	67.2%	17.4%
26 to 40	24.6%	48.4%
41 to 55	4.9%	29.8%
Over 55	3.3%	4.4%
Ethnicity (%)		
White – British	98.0%	96.2%
Any other White Background	1.0%	1.9%
BME	1.0%	1.9%
TOTAL	101	161

2.1.3 Churn

The CSO role has become a recognised route into the police service more widely and the profile of the new recruits in North Wales tends to suggest that the recruitment drive particularly attracted those looking for a route into becoming a police officer. That said, there were examples of individuals with considerable experience in the police service, and at high ranks, moving into these roles as 'retirement' positions, such as one Inspector with 30 years' service who is fulfilling a position in Rhyl. The nature of the area appears to play a part in the variety of backgrounds, as one senior officer explains;

"[there is a] complete cross section of society. You get people who have really well paid senior jobs, that they just decided they have had enough of or the company is closing or changing or relocating they don't want to leave Wales, come in. There is a vast array of people, it is fascinating.

[SMT4]

In Anglesey, the first of the new WG-CSOs completed their first two years' service at the beginning of 2014 and became eligible, along with existing HO-CSOs, to go through the internal recruitment process to become regular officers and nine individuals from the 20+ on the island did so. Six were ultimately successful and whilst local management were pleased for their staff there was recognition that this movement leaves a gap in community relationships. The local management team lamented that opportunities to stay in a community as a sworn officer are now few and valuable experience is often lost as a consequence of personal progression;

"Well yes, of course they're building up relations and contacts and then they're moving on and then you lose that. Now potentially if they're based back in that district then there's scope there. I mean there's talk about CBMs being introduced, they'd be ideal to become these CBMs. And some of the CSOs that are coming through, you can see straight away they'll make far better Bobbies than a lot of Bobbies out there. They're keen and efficient and very, very good"

[LMT5]

The senior management team recognise that lack of a career structure could impact upon relationship building over the longer term and keep an open mind about the potential for CSO supervisory positions in the future given that some incumbents have a wealth of managerial experience that is not currently being fully utilised.

The CSOs themselves also see limitations to the role – for some, predominantly the older individuals, this does not appear to be a significant issue in that they are content in the localised, community role they are doing. The younger ones, however, are somewhat frustrated by the lack of opportunities to experience other aspects of ‘the job’. Whilst two of the Anglesey CSOs had had the opportunity for short secondments to CID and Crime, these are few and far between and they see moving to a PC role as the only real option for progression. That said, in contrast to many in other force areas, the CSOs in Anglesey seem much more content in their roles, possibly because of the desire to stay local.

2.2 Where are the North Wales WG-CSOs?

This question was addressed by the analysis of monthly monitoring returns to the WG and qualitative data derived from in depth interviews with senior management, local management and a CSO focus group in Anglesey.

2.2.1 Deployment Strategy, North Wales

At force level, NWP initially approached the deployment of the new WG-CSOs on their tried and tested allocation model that takes into account local demand as well as deprivation and rurality factors. Input was then obtained from the 10 District Inspectors on how many new posts they would find useful, how they would deploy and what they would use the extra resource for within their Districts. In some areas the new posts simply represented additionality on existing resource whilst in others new initiatives, such as deployment to specific locations and community safety were taken into account. As a member of the senior management team explained;

“It was about need really, about filling gaps and some areas were perhaps a bit light, in terms of community engagement in some of those areas.... Some of the community first areas we might have had one or two PCSO’s anyway but you know, beneficial to have put another one in there. Allocation like that, some PCSO and we have a new shopping centre opening in Broughton, we can have a PCSO just for that now, because now we have the luxury of being able to do that, rather than sending people here, there and everywhere, all the time travelling back and forwards”

[SMT4]

Ultimately the new posts were divided between policing district/local authority areas and parliamentary constituencies as outlined in Table 4 overleaf¹⁰. A little over half (53) of these localities incorporate one or more Communities First areas.

Table 2.2 North Wales Police CSO Deployment

Local Authority Area	CSO Deployment	Parliamentary Constituencies	CSO Deployment
Ynys Mon	10	Ynys Mon	10
Gwynedd North	10	Arfon	10
Gwynedd South	9	Dwyfor Meirionnydd	10
Conwy Coastal	9	Aberconwy	5
Conwy/Denbighshire Rural	8	Clwyd West	9
Denbighshire Coastal	14	Vale of Clwyd	20
Flintshire North	9	Delyn	4
Flintshire South	8	Alyn & Deeside	9
Wrexham Town	10	Wrexham	11
Wrexham Rural	10	Clwyd South	13
Community Safety	4		
Total	101		101

2.2.2 Deployment Strategy, Anglesey

In the case study area of Anglesey, 10 WG-CSOs joined a team of around 6 existing HO-CSOs, significantly increasing resources. Whilst individual CSOs have nominal responsibility for individual wards, to ensure shift coverage the team are organised into four 'quadrant' areas of north, south, east and west working out of five police station locations in Holyhead, Llangefni, Amlwch, Benllech and Menai Bridge as detailed in Figure 2.1.

The most recent WG monitoring reports show that the original 10 WG-funded posts remain in the team, although the integration with original HO-funded posts is so complete that it is difficult now to determine which is which – indeed neither the local management team or the CSOs themselves were clear who is funded by whom. On the basis of time in post, of the 11 CSOs who took part in our focus group, seven were in WG-CSO posts.

¹⁰ Monthly CSO Monitoring Reports to the Welsh Government, 2011-2014

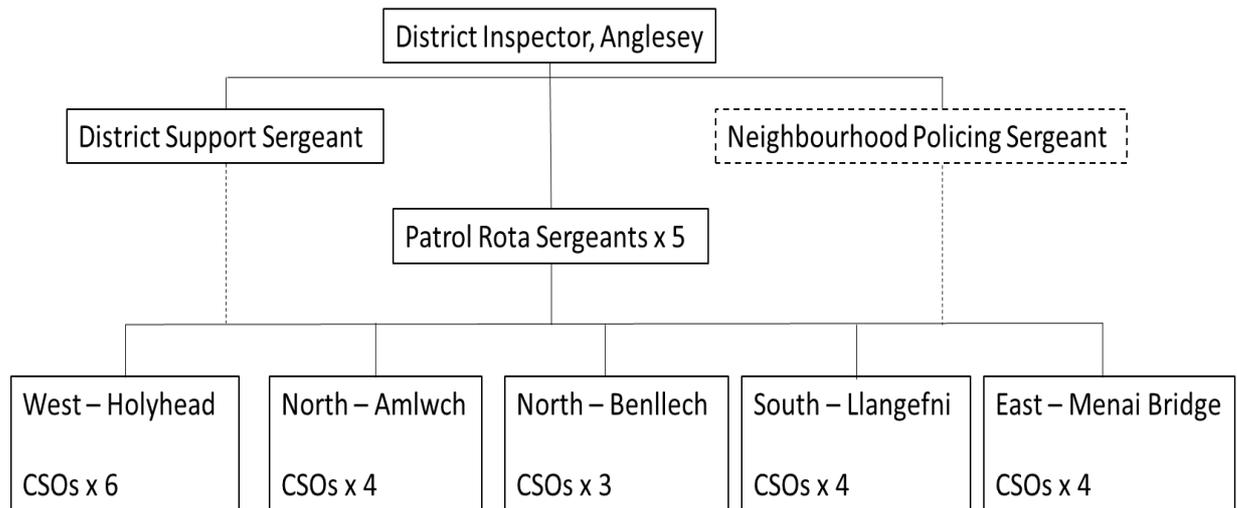


Figure 2.1 Neighbourhood Policing Team Structure, Anglesey

The move from a functional to a geographical model at local level simultaneously resulted in some change in the way the neighbourhood policing function is resourced on the island, with the specialist Community Beat Manager (CBM) role being discarded in favour of increased patrol response PCs. As a member of the local management team explained;

“before we got the additional [CSO] resources, when we first started off, I think I had one, two, three... we had six on the island. Increase significantly to where we are now, and a little bit more, and like I say I just lost some through natural recruitment which is positive for them. But... the Community Beat Managers had gone in return. So they’ve seen the investment in CSOs but in return to that they decided to find that there’s no necessity for Community Beat Managers”
[LMT4]

At the time they were first deployed, CSOs were managed operationally by two dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Sergeants but those resources too were re-invested into patrol functions as a result of demand for crime investigation. At the time of fieldwork in the area (July 2014), 21 CSOs were being managed on a day-to-day basis by five rota patrol sergeants, with one District Support Sergeant who was also covering a Neighbourhood Policing overview function. It was planned that, on return from maternity leave in September, another Sergeant would pick up this role.

2.3 What are the North Wales WG-CSOs doing?

This section uses qualitative data derived from in depth interviews and a focus group on the Isle of Anglesey, together with a content analysis of local media reports of CSO activity during the evaluation period.

2.3.1 CSO activity on Anglesey

As the only police personnel with a specialised neighbourhood focus the team actively seek opportunities to be visible and engage with all sectors of the community. Much of their work involves working with young people on proactive initiatives aimed at diverting them away from anti-social and criminal behaviours and engendering a sense of civic responsibility. Notably the team aim to include all young people in these activities to encourage cohesion and mimetic behaviours, as this officer explains;

‘Community Pride in Anglesey. So it’s basically working with kids, we try and do a mix of, not naughty but maybe misbehaving kids that come to our attention and good ones. Because I’ve quite thing about not rewarding bad behaviour and leaving the good ones alone, so we do it as a mix with the hope that the naughty ones will see that the good ones are behaving and think ‘oh they’re getting the same as us’. And then basically they do community work, voluntary work... at the end we like to give them a trip, so it’s a carrot to dangle’

[CSO6]

Other engagement work with young people includes: partnership working with the county council on their Red Cross Outreach Youth Bus initiative; Teen Total, an alcohol awareness programme for teenagers; and an active school engagement plan which includes arranging trips for school children to local police stations to engender trust and confidence in the police.

For adults, formal engagement meetings have had mixed success and relationships with Town and Community Councils have at times been a little strained. The increased resource has enabled a more consistent and regular attendance at these meetings, enabling the CSOs to establish credibility with those who would prefer to see more senior police officers in attendance. However, the tactical direction for local engagement with adults appears to be more informal in nature, based on engagement patrols at key locations such as supermarkets, Street-Meets and conveniently located drop-in surgeries. The latter have proved to be more successful than formally convened meetings in some parts of the island as the following example illuminates;

'[CSO] up in Holyhead, she runs a public meeting in a café in Valley now. She did have it in a community hall but nobody was turning up and just to keep them engaged she suggested (it was her idea), 'can I move it to the coffee shop? Because then people will be coming in and it will give us the chance'. So we made sure that we weren't prejudicing the other shops in the area by doing that and discussed it with them, they were happy enough and then she's run it there and she's had increasing numbers'

[LMT5]

Community-focussed crime prevention initiatives also make up a big part of the CSOs' roles and there are examples of good partnership working in this regard, most notably with Trading Standards in an initiative to set up 'No Calling Zones' to tackle doorstep trading and distraction burglary in various locations around the island.

Increased resources have also enabled individuals to take on specialised island-wide responsibilities in relation to police-community watch schemes aimed at residents and tourists alike, with active Caravan-Watch, Marine-Watch and Forecourt-Watch all in place. Most significantly there has been the opportunity to provide a dedicated Rural/Farm-Watch post. Currently filled by an experienced HO-CSO, the position is a clear focus on rural crime, a key priority from the PFA's Police and Crime plan. Having a dedicated CSO has proved popular with parts of the farming community who have hitherto felt neglected by the police. However, the size the 'beat' and the incorporation of more and more crime investigation responsibilities into the role has led to the incumbent being spread a little too thin to fully achieve objectives as far as visibility and familiarity are concerned, highlighting the particular challenges with policing rural communities;

'... there was bridges to build back between the farming community and the police, you know. [It's] gradually working although not 100% yet, but working on it and there's enough work for two of us, my workload is tremendous, I'm snowballed sometimes... I do a role of crime, I do investigation with crime, I've got crimes on me collar and quite unprotected... you know, it's so time-consuming. And because I cover all Anglesey the distance is there as well. And the big problem I've got is a vehicle...I was promised one in the beginning but it never materialised...[If I do get one] I go there in an unmarked car most of the time and people don't know me from Adam. It would be nice to have, if I had a vehicle with a magnetic Farm Watch or whatever on it... Because I'm losing that bit of communication, people seeing me around... the farming community don't actually see me'

[CSO8]

It is not only the rural CSO who is finding an increasing amount of their time is spent on crime-related tasks. As well as their community work all of the Anglesey CSOs have increasing responsibility for a number of investigational activities, most notably house-to-house investigations, CCTV review and target hardening activities such as security surveys and cocooning. A recent force pilot to train CSOs to create their own crime/ASB occurrences on force systems ('crime-ing') is another particularly worrying development potentially resulting from declining police staff levels. Much of this work has a community focus which may justifiably put it into the remit of the CSO role. But a force level strategy for CSOs to take responsibility for some low level crime investigations has resulted in longer serving CSOs seeing a shift in the balance of what they see as community projects and police related tasks and created some frustration for the local management team who feel it is inappropriate;

'At the moment the direction of the force is that community support officers will investigate low level crimes, including criminal damage and matters like that, antisocial crime for want of a better term. [Why] I deem that to be policing on the cheap is that they do not get the same level of training to understand what is a crime, what isn't a crime and different types of crimes, and investigative skills and scene preservation and requirements as well, as what a regular police officer does. So I think it's a little bit unfair on them, plus when they're so committed that they're investigating their own individual occurrences and crimes they're not then being able to pay the same attention [to the community] because half of the time they're stuck in front of a computer screen writing the reports. So in that respect I think we got it wrong'

[LMT4]

That said, the discreet geography of the island has also engendered a strong sense of belonging and teamwork with sworn and civilian officers working well together to cover the needs of the island's community from a number of different angles and the introduction of the additional CSO posts have enabled a sharing of workload to ensure there is island-wide coverage for the community cohesion-building activities that still form much of the CSOs' day-to-day role;

'As soon as they got rid of the CBMs definitely. Given us more responsibility. There was a stage before where the Welsh Assembly PCSOs came in, we were getting a lot more tasks...then once they came in that was just... made things a lot better'

[CSO11]

2.3.2 CSO activity in the local media

A different perspective on CSO activity in Anglesey over the evaluation period can be gauged from an analysis of how they are reported to the public via the local media. An analysis of the local paper, the 'Daily Post'¹¹ was carried out for all CSO-related news items reported between 2011 and 2014 using the search term "PCSO" for online content. This found a total of 34 news items where CSOs are specifically mentioned for Anglesey, including the funding of additional resource by the WG.

Many of news stories pertain to CSOs' positive involvement in local events that can be characterised as 'community' type activities. This includes individual CSOs leading, and working with other agencies on a number of initiatives:

- Farm Watch: a two-way mobile text service between police and farmers
- Valley Summer Football Academy: with children and young adults
- School community garden (with a parent co-ordinator)
- Purse-dipping bells: handed out by youths to pensioners to prevent pick-pocketing (North Wales PACT funded)
- Distributing free dog mess bags and environmental crime postcards (multi agency)

In addition, CSO involvement with a number of 'police' crime prevention and enforcement activities was also reported as being well received, including:

- A successful burglary 'hit squad' resulting in arrests and charges
- A dangerous driving in Llangefni: police and CSOs targeting a number of local schools with additional patrols, deployment of roads policing officers and the police CCTV van
- CSO led Operation Hawaea (Summer 2012) to reduce shoplifting in Holyhead

Whilst the building of the new police response hub in Llangefni was generally reported positively, the local impact of austerity-related cuts and re-structuring by NWP has, perhaps unsurprisingly, received a negative press over the last 3 years. Most notable among the changes causing concern has been the closure of custody cells in Holyhead and the resulting need for all detained persons to be transported to Caernarfon. The limited powers of CSOs in this regard have not escaped comment:

¹¹ <http://www.dailypost.co.uk/>

‘A PCSO can only hold someone for 30 minutes before a real officer has to make the arrest. How can they do that if they have to take the offender all the way to Caernarfon?’

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 North Wales relative to other Welsh forces. Monthly trends for crime and non-crime, including anti-social behaviour, are presented for North Wales PFA and for the Isle of Anglesey. 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.

North Wales police force had a 12 percent decrease in total recorded crime offences over this time period, more than twice the national decrease of 5 percent. The force had an offence rate of 53, second only to Dyfed Powys out of all the Welsh forces (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 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 2013¹².

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.

There has been little change in recorded crime occurrences in North Wales over the last three years relative to January 2012 with a very modest uplift over the last two years.

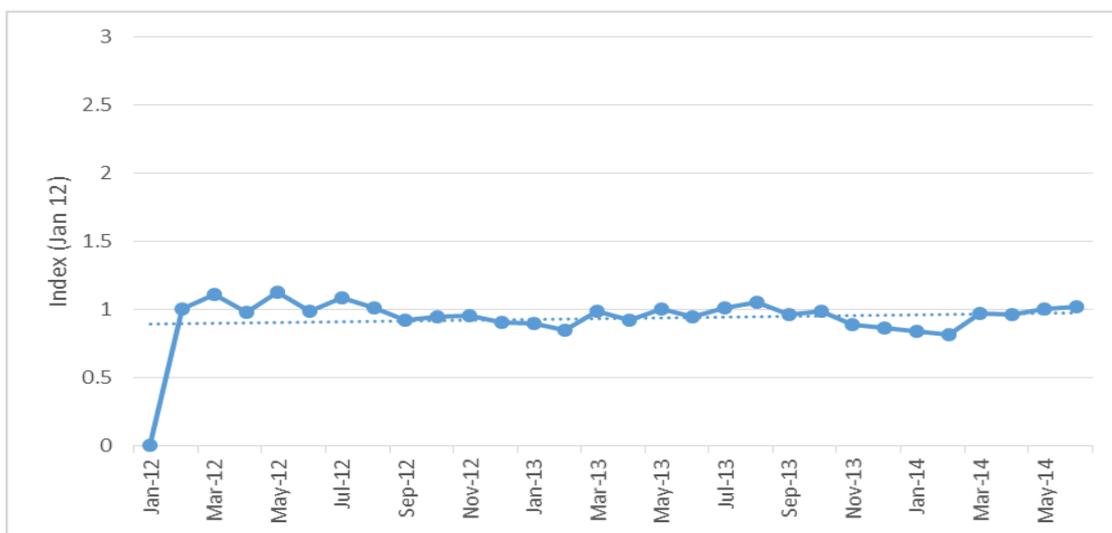


Figure 2.2 Indexed trend in police recorded crime occurrences in NWP PFA

¹² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-326518>

The same data presented for the Isle of Anglesey also shows a slight rise in recorded crime over the same time period.

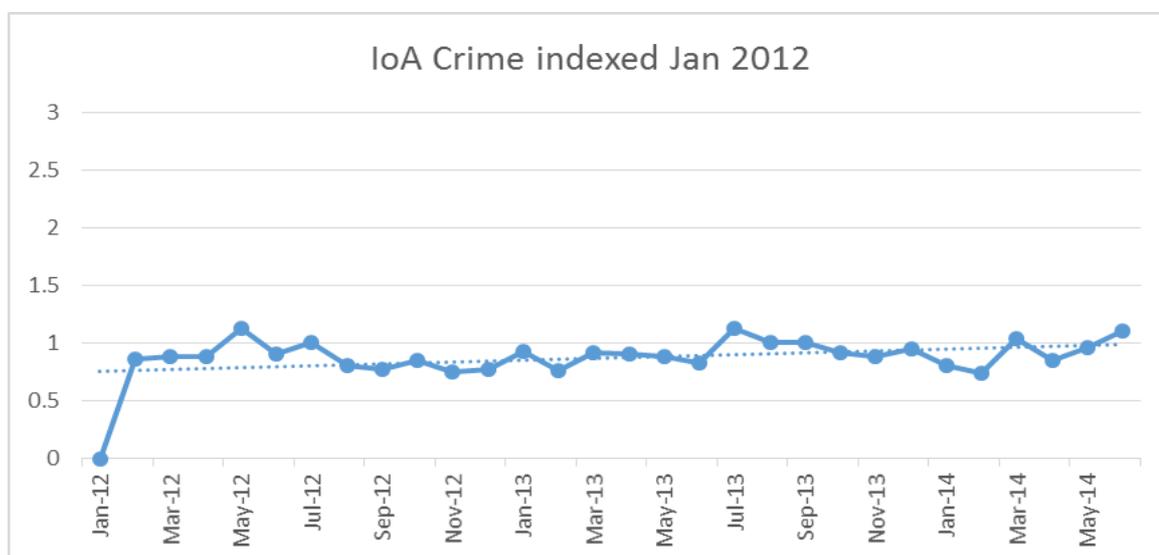


Figure 2.3 Indexed trend in police recorded crime for Anglesey

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 2.2). 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 not directly comparable and it is probable that these changes in recording have had an impact on the incident rate¹³.

North Wales had an incident rate per 1,000 of the population of 37 for anti-social behaviour in 2012/13, second only to South Wales and representing a sizeable reduction on previous years.

¹³ 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.

Table 2.2 Police recorded incident rate* for ASB in Wales, 2007-2013

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

Source: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime.../rft---police-force-area.xls

* calculated per 1,000 of the population.

Based on an indexed trend of non-crime incidents in North Wales, there has been no change relative to January 2012 for all incidents and for incidents of anti-social behavior only, although the latter peak in the summer months.

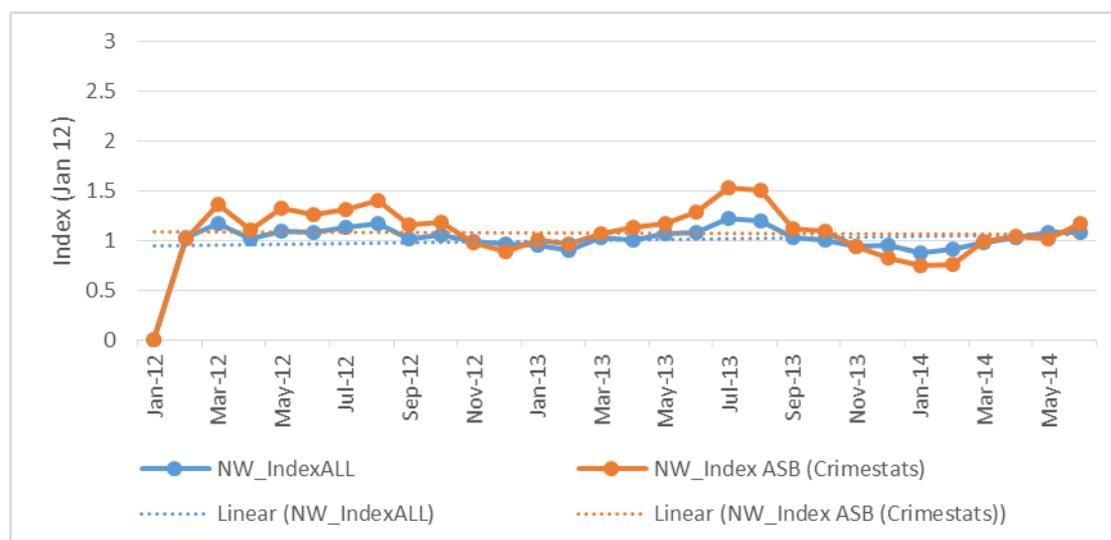


Figure 2.4 Indexed trend police recorded non crime incidents in NWP PFA

The same data for Anglesey also shows no change relative to January 2012. Again the data suggests that incidents of anti-social behaviour follow a more seasonal trend with peaks in the summer months and dips during winter.

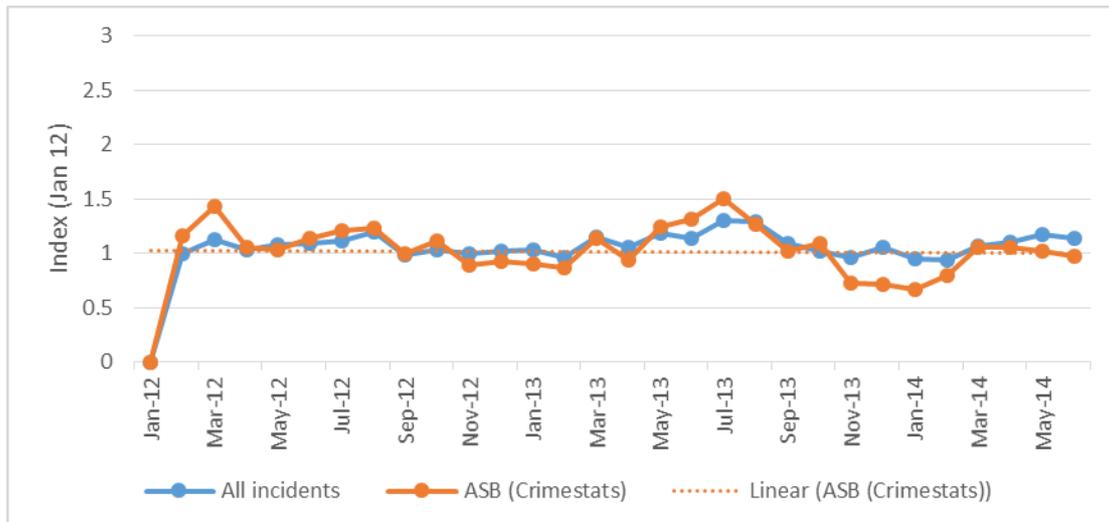


Figure 2.5 Indexed trend in police recorded non crime incidents in Anglesey.

2.4.3 Time trends in CSOs at the scene

To explore the impact of the additional CSOs further we have examined trends in police recorded non-crime occurrences where ‘any CSO’¹⁴ (whether WG or HO-funded) was recorded as being both deployed and in attendance at the scene.

Figure 2.6 shows a modest increase in any CSO attendance for all non-crime recorded incidents, from a very low baseline in January 2012 up to around 10 percent during the first half of 2014. However, when incidents of anti-social behavior are singled out, this increase is substantial from November 2013 onwards – six months following the full deployment of WG CSOs for this force.

- Since the end of 2013, CSOs have been recorded at the scene for around 30 percent of ASB incidents recorded each month in North Wales.

¹⁴ Any CSO’ can include single or multiple CSO response or a CSO in combination with any number of warranted officers.

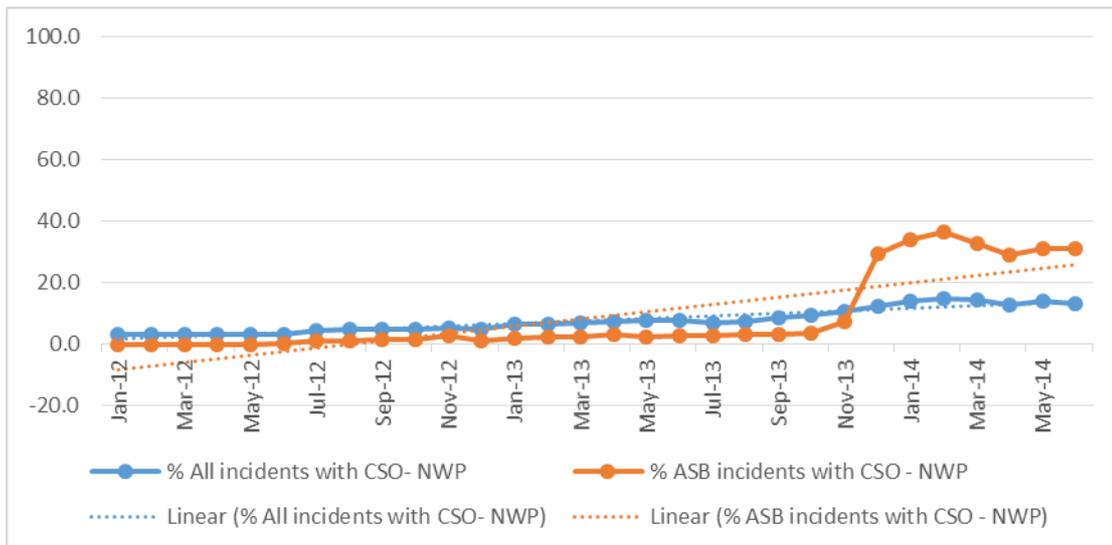


Figure 2.6 Any CSO attendance at the scene of non-crime incidents including ASB, NWP

Figure 2.7 maps changes in CSO attendance at the scene for each ward of North Wales using geographical co-ordinates linked to recorded ASB.

- The figures compare CSOs at the scene before and after the introduction of WG-CSOs, therefore reflecting a time period when the absolute number of CSOs in this police force increased. As might be expected from the nature of CSO activity so far documented in this report, an increase over time in CSO attended incidents is evident for anti-social behaviour.

Change in Percentage of ASB Occurrences Attended by a PCSO

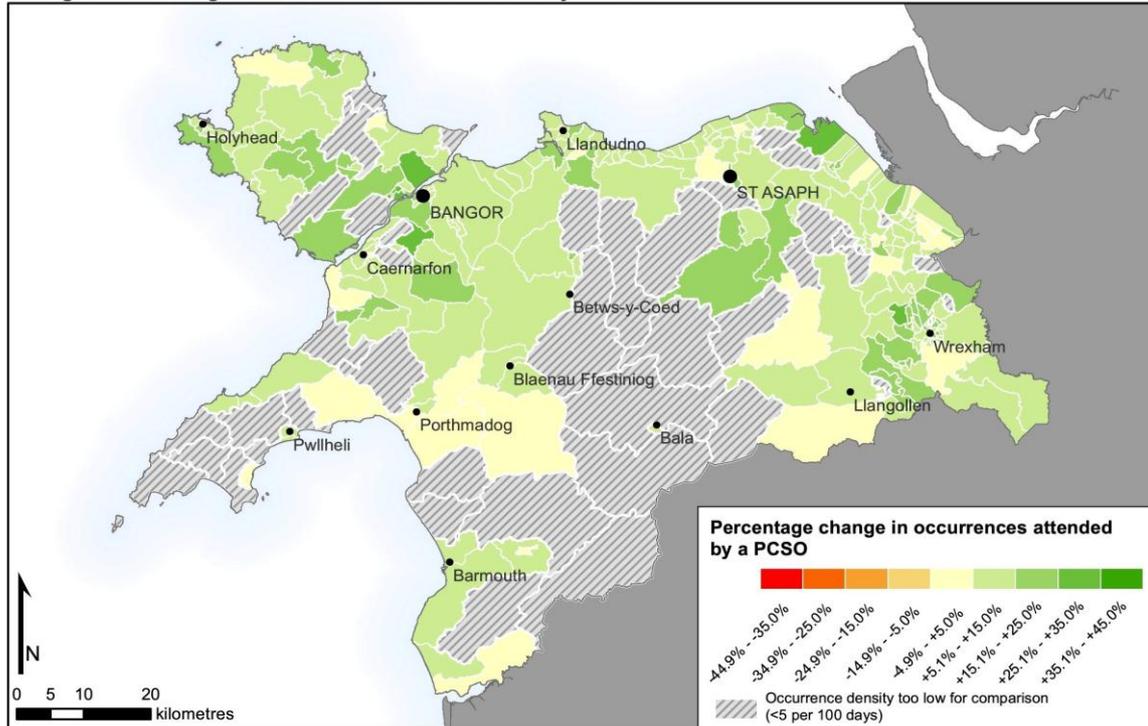


Figure 2.7 Ward level change in CSO attendance at ASB occurrences – North Wales

It shows:

- The degree of change in any CSO attendance was not uniformly spread across all wards within the NW police force area. Change was greatest around the city of Bangor and the Menai Bridge.
- The majority of change, whilst positive, was modest in intensity.
- No ward saw a large negative change in CSO attendance, but a number of wards were excluded because the base number of crimes or ASB occurrences was too small to calculate change in a robust way.

Within the case study area of Anglesey, the trend in CSO attendance at non-crime incidents since January 2012 was very similar to North Wales as a whole.

- There was a general increase in the attendance of CSOs at non-crime incidents in Anglesey from November 2013 onwards, but this was much more pronounced for incidents of ASB.

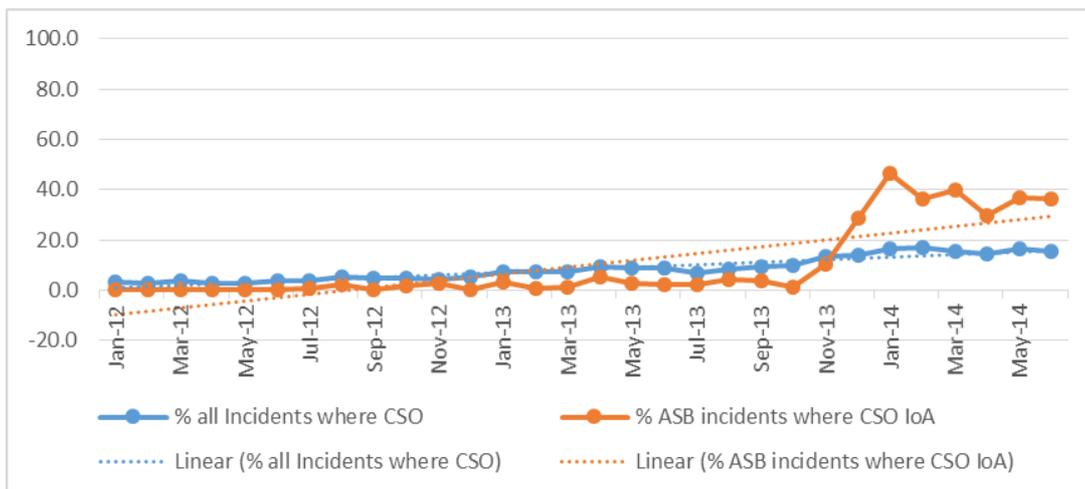


Figure 2.8 Percentage of non-crime incidents where any CSO is at the scene, Anglesey

Together these findings suggest that, following the full deployment of additional CSOs in North Wales, it became more likely that a CSO would attend reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. This change is evident for the force area as a whole and for Anglesey in particular.

2.5 Impact on Public perceptions

This section uses survey data available from the Wales Omnibus and North Wales 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 Anglesey during this time.

2.5.1 The Wales and North Wales 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 North Wales in particular.

- In North Wales, there was no change in public familiarity with CSOs between these two years at 92 percent.
- There was a marked positive change in the percentage of the North Wales public who reported ‘regular’ sightings of foot patrol and fewer reported that they never see any patrol in 2013 compared to the previous year.

- The North Wales public who had seen foot patrol became more likely in 2013 to say it made them feel ‘a lot’ safer and there was a 10 percent decrease in those who felt patrol ‘no difference’ to safety compared to 2012.

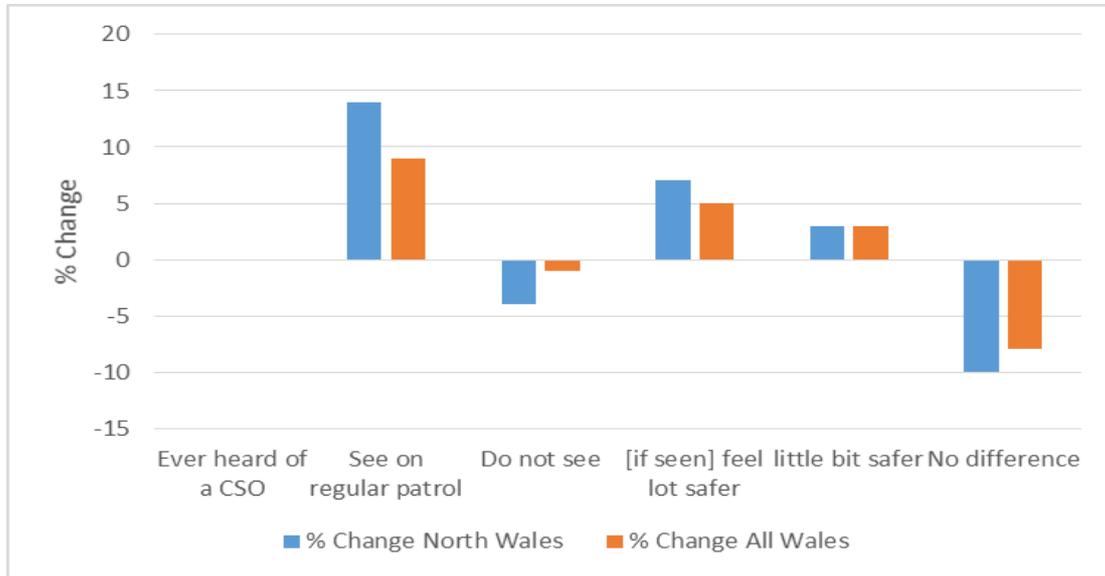


Figure 2.9 Percentage change in public perceptions for Wales and North Wales

Within North Wales, 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 ASB and foot patrol.
- The North Wales public became increasingly more likely to view fixed penalty notices (FPN’s) as part of the CSO role 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 2013, there were small increases in the percentage of the North Wales who felt that CSOs had the same powers of arrest as a police officer or could investigate serious crimes.



Figure 2.10 Change in public perceptions of the CSO role, North Wales

2.5.2 NWP surveys of public attitudes in the Isle of Anglesey

Public perception data is examined for residents of Isle of Anglesey to get a more localised picture of how people living in these areas view their policing.

The data available for 2010, 2011 and 2014 are from telephone interviews with North Wales residents in each local policing area. In 2014, 500 interviews were conducted in Anglesey¹⁵ and the sample was representative in terms of the age (16 and above) and sex of respondents. The 2011 survey contained different questions but was similar in design and included 500 interviews with Anglesey residents. Pre-tabulated data from this survey was comparable with 434 Anglesey interviews in a 2010 survey¹⁶ but lengthier time comparisons are limited by the changes to the questions over continuous years.

¹⁵ Safer North Wales Survey conducted by Swift Research

¹⁶ Public Confidence Survey conducted by Swift Research in 2011 and 2010.

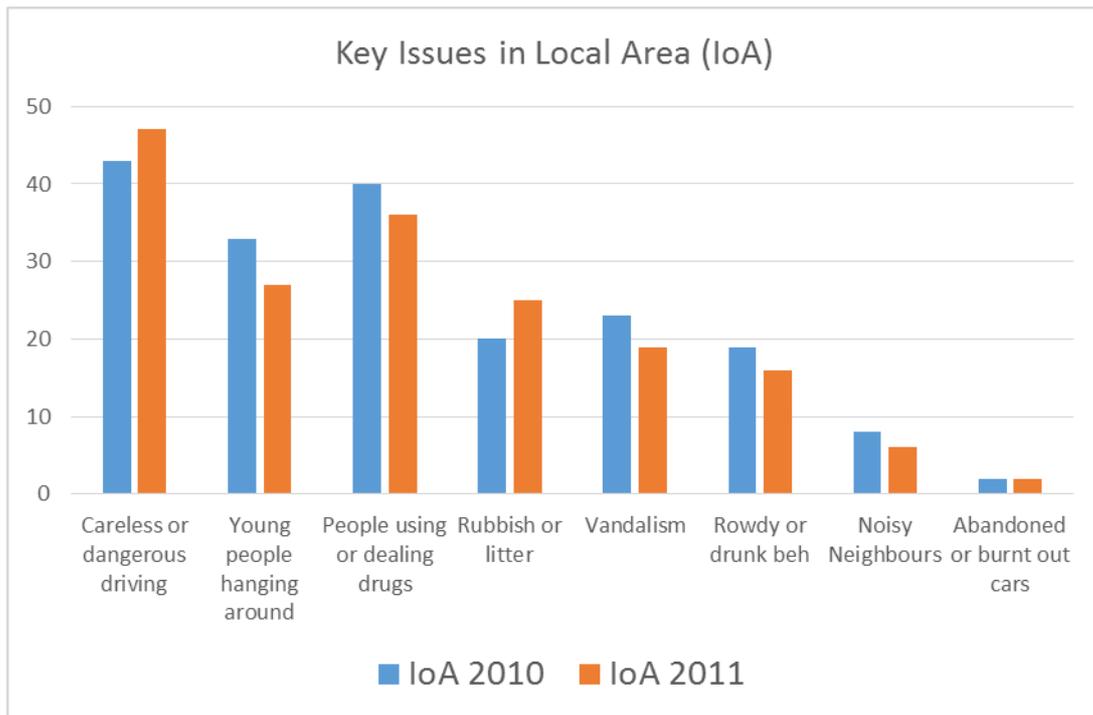


Figure 2.11 Public perceptions of key issues in their local area, Anglesey 2010 and 2011.

- In 2010-11, the Anglesey public were most concerned about careless or dangerous driving, people using or dealing drugs and young people hanging around. Of the issues identified, careless or dangerous driving became increasingly important over the two years of the survey, as did rubbish or litter.
- Surveyed in 2014, 8 out of 10 of the public expected police and CSOs to focus their time in town centres, both in Anglesey and in North Wales generally. A majority of the public also expected them to focus on: responding to crime; dangerous roads and local neighbourhoods. The pattern of results for Anglesey closely mirror those for North Wales as a whole.

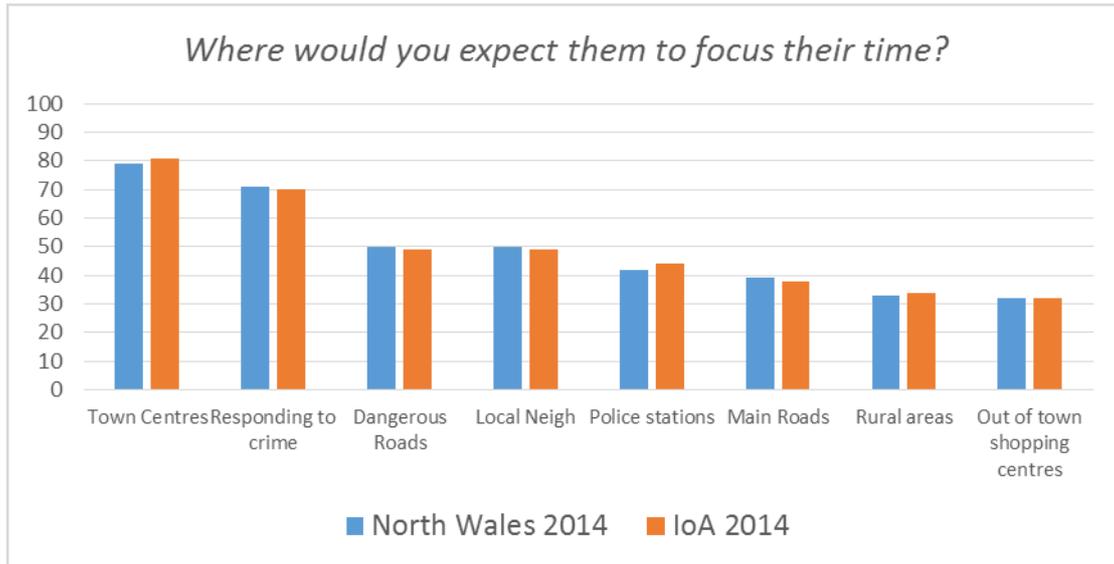


Figure 2.12 Public priorities for police and CSOs, North Wales and Anglesey, 2014

Public confidence in North Wales police was high at 80 percent in 2010 and 2011 and Anglesey was no different to the North Wales as a whole. Approximately 60 percent in the same surveys agreed that the local police were doing a good or excellent job with Anglesey mirroring the North Wales total.

Figure 2.13 shows that around half of the North Wales and Anglesey public had confidence that the police were dealing with what matters to their community in 2010 and 2011. Surveyed in 2014, confidence on this measure had risen to 59 percent for all of North Wales and 55 percent for Anglesey residents.

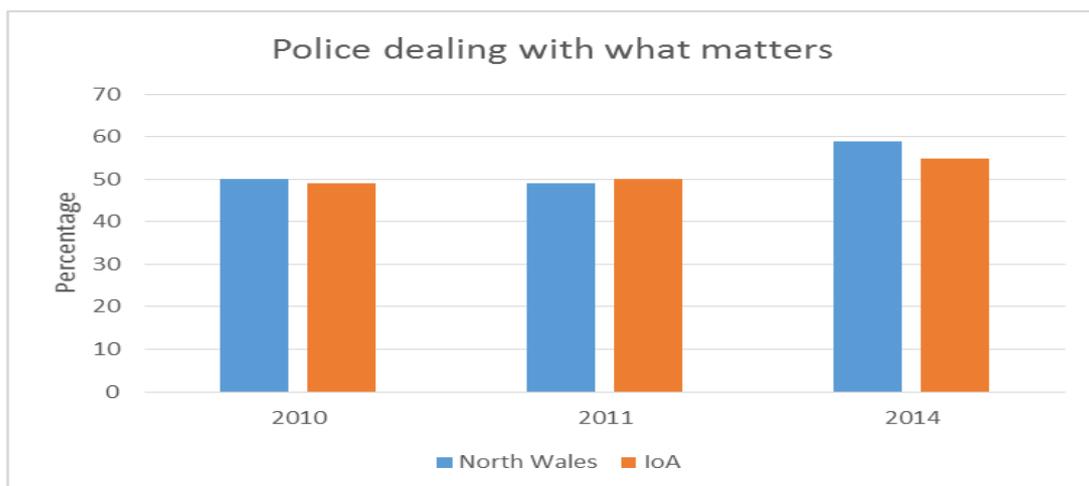


Figure 2.13 Percentage who agree 'police are dealing with what matters to the community', 2010-11 and 2014.

Questions concerning CSO and police officer visibility were asked in 2010 and 2014 although the different question wordings should be noted here as they will explain the difference in response¹⁷.

- In 2010, over half of North Wales residents reported that they had seen a police officer in their local area in the last three months. This was lower for sightings of CSOs.
- Four years later, reported visibility had increased substantially in North Wales based on ‘any visibility’ during the course of a normal week either on foot patrol or in vehicles.
- Reported visibility is very similar in Anglesey as it is for North Wales as a whole in 2014 and is greater for police officers than for CSOs.
- In Anglesey, 17 percent of those surveyed said that they never see a CSO compared with 5 percent for a police officer.

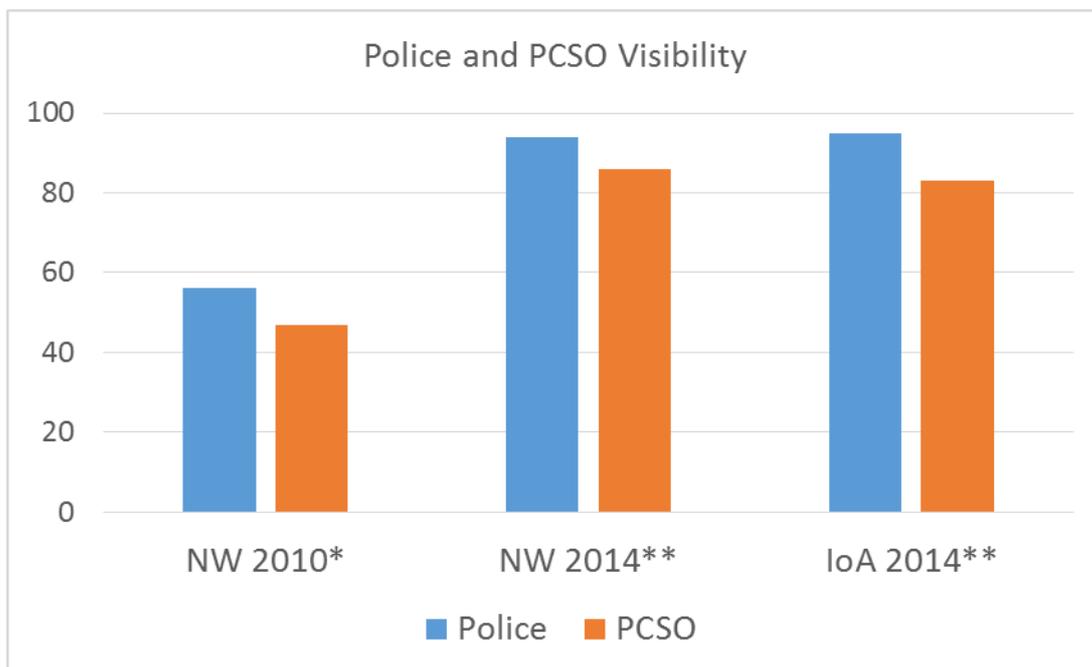


Figure 2.14 Police and CSO visibility in North Wales and Anglesey.

¹⁷ In 2010: % who respond ‘yes’ to “seen in the local area in the last three months”: In 2014: % who report any visibility “in the course of a normal week on foot or in vehicles”

In Anglesey, Figure 2.15 shows that reports of never seeing a CSO were most common among oldest age group surveyed in 2014. No visibility was also relatively high among 16-24 year olds at 17 percent but one quarter in this age group reported that they saw CSOs 'often', suggesting divergent experiences among young adults.

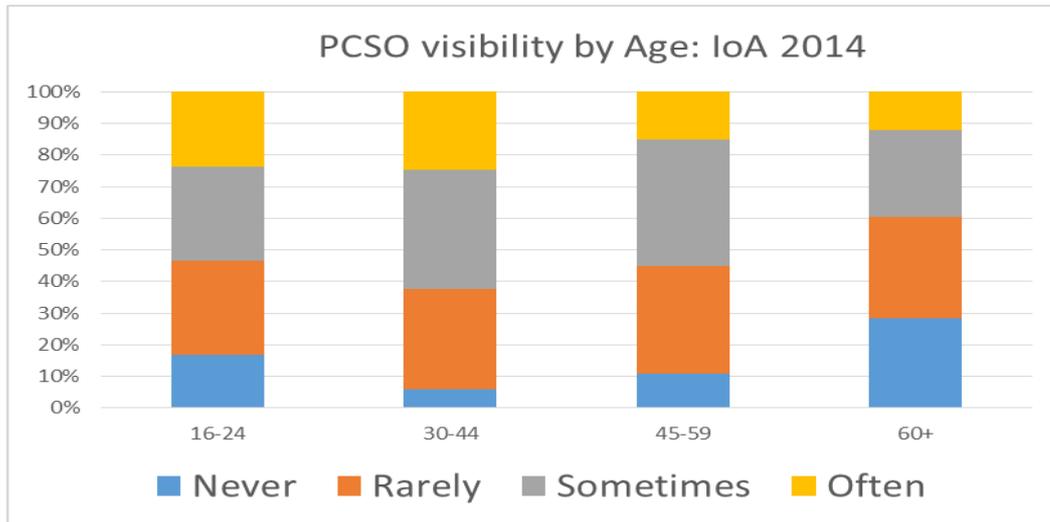


Figure 2.15 CSO Visibility by Age, Anglesey 2014

The vast majority of the public in Anglesey reported feeling safe, at home, during the day and in North Wales generally. A lower percentage felt safe in a local street at night (approximately 70 percent) but night safety was slightly greater in Anglesey than for North Wales as a whole.



Figure 2.16 Safety Perceptions, North Wales and Anglesey, 2014

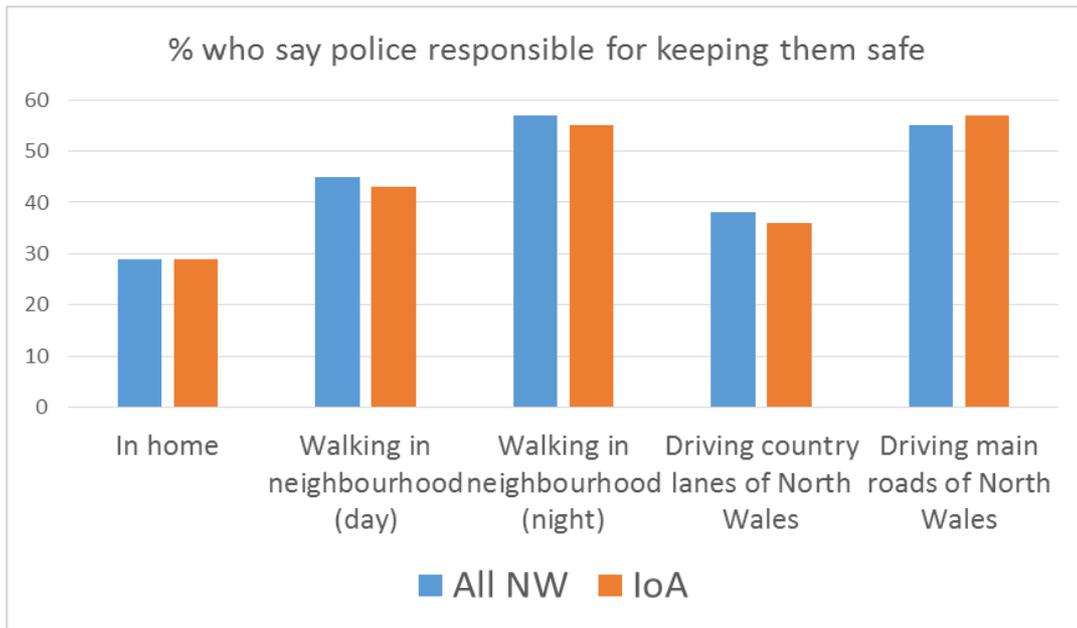


Figure 2.17 Perceived police responsibility for public safety, North Wales and Anglesey, 2014

Asked in what circumstances the police were responsible for keeping them safe, more than half of the Anglesey public felt that the police had a role when they were walking at night in their neighbourhood or were driving along main roads in North Wales. Fewer felt that the police had a responsibility during the day or when driving along country lanes in North Wales. Only 1 in 3 felt that the police were responsible for keeping them safe at home. The pattern of results for Anglesey were very similar to North Wales as a whole.

Survey respondents who felt unsafe were asked to expand on the underlying reasons for this in free-text responses. These responses for Anglesey residents are shown in Table 2.3.

- A sizeable number of responses mention police visibility in relation to feelings of compromised safety. This underlines the value the public place on a visible local policing presence. However, one respondent distinguishes between the presence of police and CSOs, with only the former found lacking. Another respondent makes specific mention of 'police officers' with regard to safety.
- The data suggests that some anti-social behaviours compromise public safety in Anglesey, amongst them youths hanging around and speeding cars.

- Not all of the reasons given by the public for feeling unsafe are within the gift of the police, for example, the fragility of older age, the rurality of an area or the dark.

Table 2.3 Public perceptions of safety: themes from free-text survey responses, Anglesey residents in 2014

Police based (Visibility)	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lack of police presence except PCSOs” • “We very rarely see police around here”. • “Because we don’t see police officers, we need more of them”. • “Never see a police car”. • “Lack of police and response times of them”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s the area where we live actually. We know what goes on, on the council estate” • Youths and gangs (hanging around, drinking alcohol, drugs). • Speeding cars • Victim of crime (burglary) • Darkness; age (fall risk); rural area; partner works away.

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, North Wales Police and, in particular, the chosen Case Study Area of Anglesey.

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:** Within the Case Study Area of Anglesey the new CSOs have been fully integrated into the existing team, with no operational differentiation based on funding stream. The 'surge' of resource arrived at a time of force level re-organisations and an associated loss of warranted Community Beat Managers, resulting in some lack of direction for CSOs who are now the only neighbourhood policing specialists on the island. That said, the island's rural nature and discreet geography has engendered a strong sense of belonging and teamwork, with sworn and civilian officers are working well together to cover the needs of the island's communities.
- **Implementation – Activities and Function:** The emphasis of the CSO role on Anglesey is very much upon 'community support' and engagement activities including: a dedicated rural policing post; a number of police watch schemes; engagement with schools and young people; Street-Meets and Community Council Meetings. CSOs do, however, have increasing responsibility for 'police-support' tasks such as CCTV reviews, house-to-house enquiries and creating crime/ASB occurrences, suggesting the balance between the two CSO functions may be shifting.
- **Impact – Crime:** there is no change in recorded crime occurrences at a force level when monthly data is indexed from January 2012 although the crime rate in North Wales decreased markedly in September 2013 on the previous year. For Anglesey, the indexed trend for police recorded crime shows a slight increase relative to January 2012.

- **Impact – ASB and Attendance at the Scene:** There was little to suggest change in the monthly volume of non-crime incidents in North Wales and Anglesey which tended to increase in the summer months owing to antisocial behaviour. However, force level and case study data shows that CSOs are increasingly part of the CSO response to reported non-crime and this is clearly evident for anti-social behaviour. It is possible to conclude, on the balance of probabilities, that the enhanced numbers of CSOs have had an impact upon the ways and means of the police to respond to such incidents.
- **Impact - Public Perceptions of Safety, Trust and Confidence in Policing:** The Beaufort Omnibus surveys shows a large positive change in CSO visibility between 2012 and 2013 based on regular sightings of patrol in North Wales. Visibility is associated with positive change on public perceptions of safety for this force area. Public survey data suggests that confidence in the police continues to be high in both North Wales and Anglesey. In Anglesey, reported visibility is lower for CSOs than it is for police officers and varies by age. Overall safety is very high and, if compromised in any way, Anglesey residents make reference to police visibility, some anti-social behaviours but also a number of other factors that are outside the remit of the police.

Acknowledgements

With grateful thanks to:

- The Chief Constable of North Wales for providing access to police recorded data, strategy documents and approval to interview members of his staff at all levels.
- Helen Smith and Christine Rose of North Wales Police for acting as force gatekeepers and for providing bespoke crime, ASB and Public Perception survey datasets.
- The Office of the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner for allowing access to Public Perception survey data.
- Welsh Government CSOs for permitting us to accompany them on local patrols around Anglesey.
- Chris Timmins of Beaufort Research for access to data from Beaufort Omnibus Survey