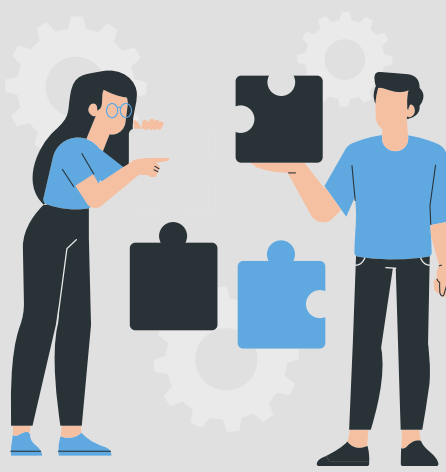


SHAPING SOUTH WALES POLICE CULTURE

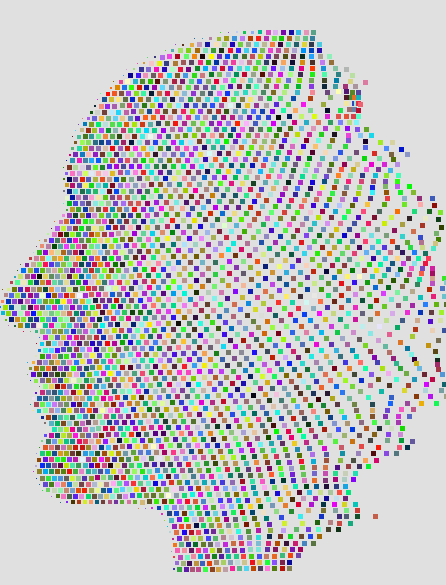
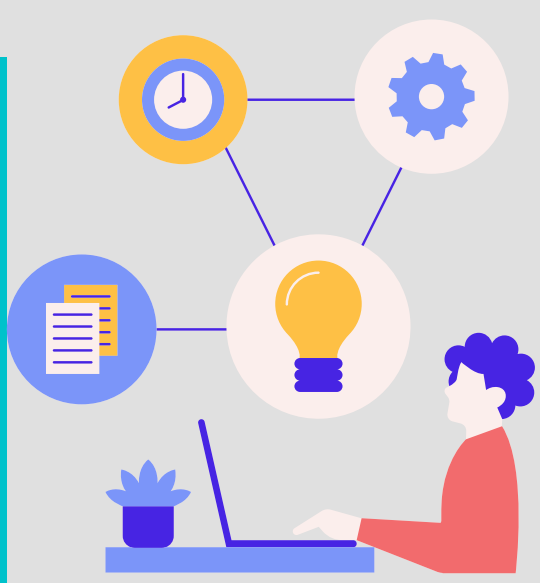


Importance of culture

South Wales Police (SWP) is the largest police force in Wales. SWP has a workforce of around 6,500 consisting of police officers and police staff. SWP aim is to keep South Wales safe, by providing an effective service to the communities it serves (SWP, no date). Culture can complex to distinguish and within organisations it relates to the collective views, values, and behaviours of the workforce. A positive culture aligns both the workforce and the organisations vision (Wang, 2023). HR will play a role in how culture is shaped and implementation of practises to support this (Young, 2023). Koskiniemi et al, (2024) highlighted the impact of poor culture within social care on client’s safety. If not aligned correctly this can have a detrimental impact on the workforce and communities of SWP. Baroness Caseys (2023) review highlighted this impact on the Metropolitan police force and London. The force was failing women and children, as well as having institutional racism and sexism. Both the chief constables (CC) delivery plan (SWP, 2021a) and SWP HR people strategy (SWP, 2021b) highlight the commitment by the force to building a strong culture within SWP.

Wellbeing Network

The wellbeing of the workforce is a key priority as per the CC delivery plan (SWP, 2021a). Suff (2023) outlined promoting good wellbeing can have benefits for individuals and the organisation, which can create positive working environments and improve organisational performance. McIntyre (2021) supported this and highlighted how positive wellbeing can support attracting and retaining talent as well as supporting the existing workforce. Wellbeing covers a wide range of factors such as physical, emotional, financial, and social (Palav, 2023). The SWP wellbeing strategy outlines the aim of creating a positive and healthy workplace environment. With a key objective being providing impactive wellbeing support through a collaborative approach (SWP, 2022). SWP has wellbeing support established however to further reinforce that commitment, a wellbeing network consisting of officers and staff at all levels of the organisation will increase awareness of all the support which is available such as wellbeing champions, flexible working, employee discount schemes and careers toolkits. The network can increase employee engagement, individuals who are part of the network can be volunteers and will have a vested interest in ensuring they want the best wellbeing support shared and available to the workforce. SWP has10 staff associations and networks who aim to support individuals and the organisation in their given area such as the Gender Equality Network which aims to ensure SWP provides a positive working environment for all genders by encouraging fair representation at all ranks and roles (SWP, 2024a).



Bluelight Champions

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2023a) reported that the number of days lost through sickness within in the UK during 2022 was at a record high since 1996. Mental health related absence continues to be one of largest cause for sickness within the UK and stood at 7.9%. ONS (2023b) further highlighted since 2019 to 2023 individuals unable to work because of long-term sickness due to depression, bad nerves or anxiety rose by 40%. ACAS (2023) detailed, the earlier an employer is aware of a mental health concern, the sooner they can provide help and support. Employers also have a duty of care to their workforce to support their mental health. Mental health related absence is also a cause for concern within the police services. Specifically, in SWP mental health related absences have increased over the past year from 1.9% to 2.3%, which equates to 5,084 weeks (SWP, 2024b). This means that there are less officers and staff present which will affect the ability to provide an effective service. Stevelink et al, (2020) studied the challenges police officers and staff face and the impact on their mental health as a result. The study highlighted, trauma exposure through work activities meant individuals were likely to report with mental health concerns. All the above demonstrate the importance of early intervention and support being available to the workforce. Bluelight champions can provide early vital support and be a link between individuals and the force. The current support packages available through the bluelight initiative are extensive but often overlooked with little engagement. Just over 800 hits in 6 years on the internal page (SWP, 2024c). A re-launch will give a vital push across all channels, increase engagement, and support available. This can be achieved by inviting Mind Cymru to a force event to promote the Blue Light Programme and bluelight Champions. There are many benefits to improving mental health within the organisations such as reduced levels of absence and increase employee satisfaction. Baker and Kim (2023) found that employees whose mental health was stronger meant these employees performed better and were less sceptical to pressures from customers.

Development Hub Awareness Day

Within the CC delivery plan supportive leadership and supervision is a key objective within the people strand. Highlighting the commitment to equipping leaders with the right skills to develop confidence within their teams (SWP, 2021a). This is further re-enforced within the HR people strategy with key commitments to developing supportive career pathways and a supportive leadership culture (SWP, 2021b). Quilliam (2023) highlights effective leaders who understand their teams’ motivations, can help them achieve their objectives and ensure positive results for the organisation. Individuals can be promoted to managerial roles because of their practical competences alone. Often newly promoted constables or sergeants may not have leadership skills and need support to build them. Within the force the Development hub can provide this through development programmes, webinars or coaching and mentoring. Rockwood (2022) outlines that learning and development programmes within organisations can improve the culture within the organisation and help improve retention and attraction of talent. The above works show the benefits of promoting effective career development and opportunities for the workforce. SWP has invested into the Development Hub and HR team which support this. The police officer promotions pass percentages have not seen a significant change in pass percentages between 2019-2020 up 3% (SWP, 2023). Increasing awareness for this programme through an awareness day will raise engagement and highlight to future leaders around the support which is available to them. Hayden (2023) discussed there are various methods for delivering development support. Highlighted that development and training is moving to more interaction based rather than instruction based. SWP can utilise this approach through awareness sessions on MS teams and the force intranet.

