



Communications and Engagement Strategy

Leading the Fight Against Crime

2022-25

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1 Executive Summary

This Communications and Engagement Strategy outlines how effective communication can support Lancashire's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Andrew Snowden's role in Leading the Fight Against Crime.

Good engagement and effective communications are essential to ensuring that the public and other stakeholders have an effective say in how their communities are policed, whilst understanding the challenges of modern policing.

This Strategy also details the key objectives for engagement and communications to be delivered over the coming years in line with the 'Fighting Crime Plan' priorities for Lancashire. These are:

- [Getting Tough on Anti-Social Behaviour](#)
- [Disrupting and Dismantling Organised Crime](#)
- [Tackling Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence](#)
- [Cracking down on Burglary and Robbery](#)
- [Targeting Dangerous Drivers](#)

These priorities provide the strategic direction for policing and crime in Lancashire until 2025, alongside the shared Constabulary vision – ‘Fighting and preventing crime. Keeping our communities and people safe.’

This Strategy is simple in its approach – with a focus on authenticity, simple language and messaging which relates to the core Fighting Crime Plan priorities and action, whilst avoiding virtue signalling on secondary political issues or social justice.

Communications and engagement activity takes account of all audiences, with a strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement to amplify messages and build relationships with local news channels.

Clear brand guidelines have been established and applied across all communication activity, with original video content prioritised, supported by quality photography.

This Strategy and its principles apply to all communication activity on behalf of the PCC.

Monitoring of this strategy will be through the production of an action plan, monthly performance meetings and an annual report.

2 Legal Framework

Communication and engagement have a key role in ensuring that both the PCC and the Chief Constable can carry out their duties as set out in legislation.

Police and Crime Commissioner

The PCC has a duty to inform people about policing, policies and activities which have an impact on them and crucially, involve them in the decision-making process.

He must engage as broadly as possible with all relevant individuals and organisations to ensure he understands the key challenges facing Lancashire and can set the right policing objectives to deal with them.

The law places a number of specific duties and responsibilities upon the PCC in relation to consultation and engagement including the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act section 14 which stipulates that the PCC must:

- obtain the views of victims of crime in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area.
- prior to publishing a police and crime plan, make arrangements to obtain the views of the people in that police area, and the views of the victims of crime in that area; and
- make arrangements for obtaining, before the first precept for a financial year is issued, the views of the people in that police area, and the relevant ratepayers’ representatives, on the proposals of the PCC for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in that financial year.

The PCC is also responsible for overseeing the extent to which the Chief Constable has fulfilled his statutory duties.

Chief Constable

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act section 34 places statutory duties on the Chief Constable to:

- obtain the views of local communities on crime and disorder in their neighbourhood.
- provide local communities with information about policing in their neighbourhood; and
- hold regular police and community meetings in local neighbourhoods.

3 Background

Andrew Snowden was elected as PCC in May 2021 and launched his statutory Police and Crime Plan, branded his 'Fighting Crime Plan' in December 2021.

As PCC, Andrew's role is to be the public voice in policing, to hold the police to account and to deliver an effective and efficient police service. He is elected by the public to set the police and crime objectives through a Police and Crime Plan and to hold the Chief Constable and the force to account, making them answerable to the communities they serve.

The PCCs role is also to ensure community needs are met as effectively as possible, and to improve local relationships through building confidence and restoring trust.

As part of the Beating Crime Plan, the Home Office is reviewing the role of PCCs to ensure they can focus more sharply on local crime fighting, with stronger accountability to those they serve. Specifically, guidance has recently been amended to reflect the role of the PCC in securing and maintaining public confidence.

The new guidance outlines the importance of the PCC's role in holding the Chief to account for their responsibility to understand and build public confidence.

Furthermore, new guidance is expected to set out how PCCs should reach out and engage diverse communities across their local area in order to help close the confidence gap.

Crime Survey of England and Wales data (Sept 22) shows overall confidence in the Lancashire Police is 71% against 69% for England and Wales.

Sir Michael Barber, who has led a review of policing, said public confidence in the police is 'falling' and is a "serious problem" amid a wave of recent national scandal, not least the high-profile murder of Sarah Everard and stories of police officer corruption.

4 Strategic Approach

The primary focus of communication activity is to increase public engagement. This will be achieved through simple, honest and consistent messaging using a conversational style which is passionate and unapologetic.

Andrew Snowden - Leading the Fight Against Crime will remain at the centre of our brand with this strapline used across all channels, content and touchpoints.

Consistency drives confidence and we will repeat our narrative with everyone, in everything as often as possible.

Brand guidelines will maintain a visual identity, look, and feel to build trust and credibility.

All communications activity seeks to help deliver the priorities as set out in the Fighting Crime Plan. Our emphasis is on original content, alongside relevant shared content that is of direct interest and relevance to our audience.

Generic crime and policing messages that do not fit this brand and ethos risk being content clutter will not be prioritised.

Style

Simple language – (reading age 9 – Hemmingway)

Less jargon, policing terms and acronyms

Short sentences

Break up text using headers

Use bullet points and lists where appropriate

Active voice, not passive voice

Use we, us – it makes people feel involved

Tone

We think about the reader every time and are aware of their reality. Imagine how they are feeling.

Voice

Proud and passionate

Approachable

Honest and fair

Confident and responsible

Professional but always human

Kind, caring and empathetic

The PCC has four strategic areas that will be the focus of on-going public engagement:

- Police and Crime Priorities
- Budget – value for money and future levels of council tax precept
- Quality of Service – ensuring police service meets public expectations
- Victims – putting victims at the heart of what we do

Where possible we will utilise research, statistics, and real-life case study examples to tell the story of how Lancashire's PCC is making a difference.

5. Audiences

Understanding the diversity of audiences is key to tailoring communication messages and channels.

Primary

Our primary audience is those people who are directly targeted by any communication or engagement activity, often decision-makers. This is typically victims of crime, offenders, or more broadly Lancashire council taxpayers.

Secondary

Communication and engagement activity will also consider secondary audiences, those who are not victims, offenders or directly impacted by crime and policing, but exert influence on the primary audience and still have an important role.

6 Stakeholders

Maintaining good relationships with key stakeholders, outlined below, both formally and informally is a priority in this Strategy to build trust and understanding and reinforce and amplify messaging.

Policing

National and local, including: Lancashire Constabulary officers and staff at all levels National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), College of Policing (COP), North West Regional Organised Crime Unit (NWROCU), Police and Crime Panel, Independent Office of Police Complaints (IOPC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies Fire Rescue Service (HMICFRS)

Political

National, regional and local including: Government, Home Office, Lancashire MPs, Government Ministers, Civil Servants, Police and Crime Commissioners, Councillors as well as relevant bodies which have a role in decision making and influencing policymakers is key including:

Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Borough Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, District Councils, Parish and Town Councils.

Public sector and private sector partners, including our Criminal Justice Partners.

Lancashire Victim Services (LVS), Violence Reduction Network (VRN), Lancashire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP), Lancashire Volunteer Partnership (LVP) Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), Lancashire Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Lancashire Landowners Association (LLA), National Farmers Union (NFU), Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), Duchy of Lancaster.

Media

National, regional, local, trade and specialist - including community radio stations. Key target media include BBC Radio Lancashire, Lancashire Post, Lancashire Telegraph and Blackpool Gazette.

Charities and third sector, voluntary organisations, community and religious groups
Crimestoppers, Lancashire Partnership Against Crime (LANPAC)

Youth organisations and schools

Lancashire Youth Councils, the Youth Parliament for Lancashire and other youth groups as appropriate.

The PCC and DPCC are keen to better understand the risk factors that lead young people to becoming involved in crime and disorder and help them to make positive choices in life.

Trade Bodies

Police Federation, Unison

Our Volunteers

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs), Stop and Search Panel volunteers

Residents and business owners

BIDs, Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

7 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this Strategy is to tell people who and what the PCC is, what he's doing and how well he's doing it.

Specifically, it sets out how effective communication will support the achievement of the PCCs key strategic objectives:

- To keep the public and key stakeholders informed about the work of the PCC and maintain positive and effective communications to ensure they understand and are engaged in his work.
- To establish a strong brand identity 'Leading the Fight Against Crime' and ensure that positive messages about the PCC are not simply communicated once, but are embedded as part of the ongoing narrative.
- To establish a strong online presence including a dynamic social media programme.
- To improve communication and engagement with key external stakeholders and particularly with local, regional and national political stakeholders through consistent communication and stakeholder briefings at all levels.
- To work collaboratively with partners to maximise coverage and reach.

- Ensure communication tools evolve to reflect best practice, address feedback and meet the future needs of the PCC.

8 Channels

Media Relations

The media landscape is ever changing and 74 per cent of people consume news via the web or TV – three times more than newspapers (Ofcom). However, maintaining good media relations remains a priority, despite the decline of local media outlets.

We already have good relationships with the local media and will continue to develop these by proactively sending timely and relevant news to local journalists, the trade press and local community publications.

As key spokesperson, the PCC has had extensive media training and experience. Where appropriate he engages directly with the media, including a monthly 'Ask the Commissioner' slot on BBC Radio Lancashire taking questions from the public.

Print newspapers are monitored daily for both PCC coverage, but also local police and crime stories, which may impact or affect the PCC's reputation providing an opportunity to issue any rebuttals if and when, appropriate.

Media relations activity can include any of the following:

- Press releases
- Media comment and response to media enquiries
- Opinion pieces
- Broadcast interviews
- Photocalls and site visits
- Integrated campaigns (earned, placed, and paid content across media and digital channels)

A joint media and communications protocol is in place between the Constabulary and the PCC's Office, with an agreement that the PCC will be offered quotes in press releases for planned and proactive activity that specifically relates to his Police and Crime Plan priorities, including convictions and sentences.

Social Media

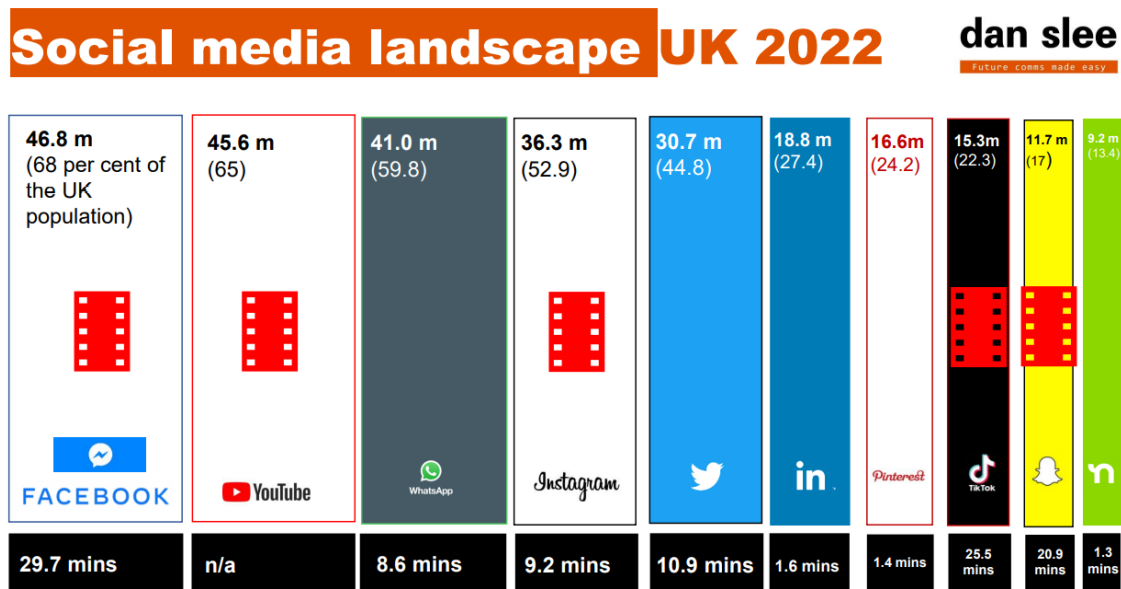
The PCC uses social media sites to engage directly with the public of Lancashire, to share information, important messages and latest news. @LancsPCC has a presence across different social media platforms, namely Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, NextDoor and In the Know.

Messaging through social media is instant and can be wide reaching, with short form video growing quickly. Reels already make up more than 20 per cent of the time that people spend on Instagram. Video overall makes up fifty per cent of the time that people spend on Facebook, and Reels is growing quickly there as well. (*Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Meta, April 2022*)

With a well-established social media presence, sustaining steady growth, the focus for future social media development for @LancsPCC is on video content to grow engagement. This includes short video with plenty of edits, music and content and professional video content showcasing the work of the PCC, telling stories about investment and bringing to life the Fighting Crime Plan.

Video content, whether that's in the form of a short interview on camera, social reel or story or short film is now widely regarded as being the most engaging content and therefore the PCC will prioritise this content both in-house and professionally using a videographer.

Alongside video content, stock photography is commissioned with the PCC, alongside police officers and members of the public, to ensure a range of high-quality images for available for use in both the media and across Lancashire PCC channels.



Source: Ofcom, 2022

Twitter

Twitter enables @LancsPCC to share news, views and information to over 7,000 followers, within a 280-character limit. The platform increases brand awareness, enables us to communicate and engage with key stakeholders and the wider public, as well as keeping up with important trends and developments through followers.

Twitter is a great tool for guiding users to the website, particularly news stories and for thought leadership, starting conversations and sharing views and opinions.

As with all channels, @LancsPCC strive to maintain a balance between police messaging, campaigns and re-tweets, alongside strategic messages about our core work.

Facebook

Despite changing algorithms and the reducing ability for pages to gain organic growth, Facebook remains a core channel and focus where @LancsPCC continue to see good engagement and we remain the leading PCC account in the country with 15,000+ followers.

Whilst we will continue to grow and develop our Facebook page following and make use of the analytics in Facebook to maximise reach, our focus is on increasing engagement. To help achieve this at a time when organic reach is falling, we will regularly boost posts with quality content, announcements, those with call to action and high performing posts to maximise reach.

Boosted posts is part of our long-term strategy for showing value, keeping our audience engaged and building our brand.

We have also mapped out and joined key community Facebook pages across Lancashire to inform, consult and engage where people are having conversations.

Feedback provided by the public and stakeholders through social media channels informs the broader work of the Office.

Instagram

Instagram remains a popular social networking app following the introduction of new features including Instagram Stories and Instagram Reels.

Instagram has transformed from a simple photo sharing app to a full marketing channel which is continuing to prioritise video content.

@LancsPCC account continues to grow with over 1,000 followers and is a great way to bring content to life, to showcase the work of Lancashire's PCC.

Unlike brands who use social media to increase sales, fans and loyalty, @LancsPCC uses social media to communicate policy, celebrate police and crime plan progress, keep users informed about improvements to policing services, and where relevant as a channel for campaigns, if audience insight suggests it fits the target audience.

In The Know

Lancashire PCC has the ability to reach in excess of 80,000 highly engaged Lancashire residents registered through the Community Messaging system In the Know.

Marketing in other areas as 'Neighbourhood alerts', users sign up primary to find out what's happening in their area, to receive crime updates, information on road closures, information about fires and other emergencies and learn about what their local neighbourhood policing team is doing.

This system enables messages to be targeted by both area and interest, and enables recipients to both rate and respond to the message.

This platform is utilised for countywide news where there is a call for action, such as a survey, campaigns, information about changes to service, or updates about police and crime priorities or investments in specific areas.

With the decline in organic reach across social media, this channel is becoming increasingly important.

Next Door

NextDoor is a hyperlocal social networking service for neighbourhoods and @LancsPCC joined in May 2022 to utilise the dedicated Public Service Platform to reach out and communicate with residents. Unlike all other social media platforms, there is no requirement to build and grow a following, NextDoor provides instant access to 581+ neighbourhoods, over 159K+ claimed households and 197K+ members.

Similar to In the Know, this platform is used to inform, consult and engage with residents, with the ability to geo-target. With such a huge reach, this platform can be utilised for polls to find out from residents what they want efforts focused on, and to share good news stories with residents. A friendly and neighbourly tone is important for engagement.

Website

Lancashire-pcc.gov.uk was redesigned and re-launched in June 2020, using the latest responsive design principles making it easier to access information on tablet and mobile device as well as desktop computers. The Lancashire PCC website remains an important communications tool, alongside ensuring we have a platform to publish information required under the Specified information Order 2011.

We actively send people to the website by making the best use of search engines, links and referrals from other sites. We update and refresh the content regularly to encourage repeat visits and ensure the content is relevant and informative.

Digital Newsletter

A stakeholder bulletin is circulated every fortnight with a narrative from the PCC, alongside links to recent press releases and news articles.

Council Tax Leaflet

The setting of the council tax precept provides an annual opportunity to send out communication about investment in policing to households across Lancashire, explaining how the police is funded and how the policing precept is being spent. This is circulated in conjunction with Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Councils, with support from district councils.

Annual Report

An annual report is a statutory requirement and produced to document the PCC's achievements and future plans. This is published on the PCC website and shared amongst partners.

Vodcast

A quarterly video podcast is produced between the PCC and Chief Constable following the Accountability Board in which they summarise the key issues discussed in the meeting and where the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account over areas of public concern. This is shared across the PCC website and social media.

Campaigns

Working together with the Constabulary and partners, an agreed calendar of campaigns is delivered annually, in line with the Police and Crime Plan priorities, to promote key messages or major initiatives.

Printed Materials

Outside of campaigns, a range of information leaflets, posters and marketing materials are produced which are widely distributed to promote services, invite feedback, or explain ways in which people can get involved.

Events

Both the PCC and his deputy dedicate a significant amount of their time to face-to-face communication with the police, stakeholders and the public through engagement meetings, formal partnership meetings, presentations to community groups and attending relevant local public events.

Public Consultation

Regular public consultation is carried out to ensure the PCC is representing the views of the public. One of the main and most effective methods that used to gather feedback is through independent surveys and questionnaires both online and over the phone. These have, and will continue to seek support from community organisations to help ensure that responses are representative of our local population.

The PCC also has a monthly slot 'Call the Commissioner' on BBC Radio Lancashire where he answers questions from the public.

Lobbying

The PCC's priorities require public affairs and lobbying activity. This includes providing local perspectives on national policies and reforms, highlighting potential challenges, opportunities and variations at the local level.

Developing relationships with key stakeholders, as well as relevant bodies which have a role in decision making and influencing policymakers is key.

9 Monitoring, Measurement and Evaluation

All communication and engagement activity is recorded on PR Management platform 'Onclusive'. This tracks online news coverage, with newspaper coverage collated separately and uploaded. PCC channels are monitored on daily basis in line with the social media policy.

A range of measures have been identified which provide an indication of the extent to which communications and engagement activity is helping to deliver the objectives of this plan, whilst improving victim satisfaction and increasing trust and confidence in policing. These include:

Reporting

A monthly activity report is produced tracking engagement across all Lancashire PCC channels alongside web statistics, social media growth, reach and stakeholder engagement. Specifically:

Media Coverage

- The amount of media coverage achieved for the PCC is tracked on a monthly basis, alongside the number of proactive media releases which achieve positive coverage on social media, radio, television and in print to ensure content reaches as wide an audience as possible.

Social Media Growth

- As well as measuring the growth of PCC social media channels, data is also available to show the impact of each posting. Increasing the numbers of views, shares, likes and the overall engagement of content on social media is the key objective.

Website Growth

- The PCC website is the 'shop window' for the work of the PCC and a range of metrics are available to track progress. Increasing the number of unique visitors and the number of pages each user visits will be a priority, as well as improving accessibility and ensuring that the site's design continues to evolve with the user journey.

Direct Engagement

Levels of direct engagement with the PCC and the public are measured monthly. This includes correspondence to the Office and monitoring of monthly engagement opportunities, including the number of meetings and events, their locations, the types of communities present, the questions and issues raised, and subsequent action taken.

Cross reference also needs to be made to the [Joint Diversity, Equality and Inclusion strategy 2021-2026](#) to ensure regular engagement with all of the groups highlighted.

Grants Scheme

The PCC's Safer Lancashire Neighbourhood Fund enables a wide range of services to be delivered by community, statutory and third sector providers. The number of grant recipients, the outcomes of the individual grants and the impact the services have for the users is monitored annually to ensure the delivery of key outcomes. Performance against these measures will be monitored through the grant scheme agreements to ensure they positively affect the Police and Crime Plan priorities.

Consultations and Surveys

Lancashire Talking survey data provides quarterly information on public confidence, helping to guide decision making for improvements in service delivery and to track public perceptions of policing in Lancashire.

Crime and confidence data from national surveys such as the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) carried out by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) will also be examined.

Engagement Board

An Engagement Board has been established by the Constabulary for the purpose of driving and measuring improvements in public confidence and legitimacy. The Board meets on a bi-monthly basis and will track the delivery of both this strategy and how it contributes and supports the delivery of the Constabulary's Public Engagement Strategy.

Annual Report

The PCC also has a statutory duty to produce an annual report where communication and engagement activity throughout the year is detailed.

Furthermore, the delivery of this strategy will also be scrutinised by the Police and Crime Panel, where its progress is reported.

Audit

The internal audit programme includes a review of methods used to publicise the work of the PCC, including an assessment on the different forms of engagement.

Awards

Entries are also being submitted for industry awards to recognise achievements within communications and engagement.

In addition to the above, each project should have its own communications and engagement plan that sits under this overarching strategy.

This strategy will be reviewed annually in order to take into account new developments and to ensure that it continues to be fit-for-purpose.

10 Budget and Resources

There is an in-house dedicated team of four people delivering communications and engagement: Head of Communications and Engagement, Communications and Engagement Manager, Press and Digital Media Officer and a newly appointed Communications and Engagement Officer.

The team also has support from the wider Constabulary Media and Engagement team, subject to the agreed protocol, alongside specialist agencies for creative design, campaigns, video, photography and public consultation.

The annual communications and engagement budget is £120k which includes systems, licences, printing and events.

11 Dependencies and Risks

The success of this communications and engagement strategy is dependent on the direction and activities of the PCC. With such close alignment to Lancashire Constabulary, it also relies on maintaining good relationships at Chief Officer level and with the Head of Media and Engagement.

For maximum success, it is dependent on the cooperation and engagement of Lancashire residents to participate in consultations and engage with us across our channels. It is also essential that we consider:

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

GDPR is vital in our engagement work, as we are collecting personal information and private opinions on a regular basis, and we must ensure that we seek permission from those who wish to share this information with us.

Accessibility

It is increasingly important that our communication outputs are accessible. Public sector organisations have a legal duty to make websites and mobiles apps accessible. Accessible content also allows the widest range of people possible to engage with information. This requires responding to the fact people have different communication needs, and developing products and materials accordingly.

Parental / Guardian Permission

When working with young people, it is important that we obtain parental / guardian consent.

Risk Assessments

These will be undertaken in order to identify hazards and risk factors related to our engagement work which have the potential to cause harm. The risks associated with each hazard need to be analysed, and appropriate control measures may need to be put into place. This includes the consideration of personal safety and lone working.

Pre-election Rules

As a public sector body, the OPCC must observe publicity restrictions during a pre-election period in line with national guidance. This is often for a six-week period and limits the type of news that can be published on OPCC channels.

-Ends-