

Excellence Awards - 2021 Entry  
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Entry ID: 9402

### Third Party Authorization

*Are you entering on behalf of, or in association with, any third party?:* No

### Basic Information

*Category:* 29. In-House PR Team of the Year

### Entry Information

*Entrant company name:* Avon and Somerset Police

*Entry title:*

Delivering outstanding policing through transformative comms

### Entry

*Number of employees within the PR team and annual PR budget:*

20 FTE: 24/7 press office, external campaigns, internal communications, digital communications and design; responsible for communications across one of the largest force areas, serving 1.7m people. No dedicated PR budget

*Business objectives and analysis of team performance against budget over the last two years:*

Within the context of a £328.5m force budget, corporate communications has under £0.9m covering all pay and operational costs (e.g. travel, software licenses). Additional funding for 1x knife crime campaign (£150k), Lockdown 3 Covid-communications (£50k), and development of Employer Brand (£85k).

Our team plays a central role in the police's frontline response to criminality and is responsible for developing creative and forward-thinking communication strategies which help officers find missing people, identify criminals, safeguard vulnerable people and prevent crimes e.g. our media appeal following an unexplained death resulted in a key witness coming forward within hours.

On average each year, our small team handled 4,600+ media enquiries; issued 1,400+ press releases, coordinated 150 social media users; managed strategy / content across 4x corporate social media accounts; delivered 15+ proactive campaigns (e.g. around domestic abuse); and led multi-agency responses to Major Incidents including COVID-19, Extinction Rebellion and Black Lives Matter protests, and a fatal industrial explosion.

The Chief Constable is quick to reference the effectiveness and power of the team in delivering against organisational objectives and impact on public confidence – the most significant performance measure in policing: “In a world where world class leadership is all about influence, you and your team are taking communications to a new level.”

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*A brief overview of business / team strategy:*

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To deliver against our force mission to serve, protect and respect, we use insight-led, multi-channel communications to:

- build trust and confidence in the police
  - empower people to report crime
  - increase social responsibility to prevent crime
  - help employees feel valued, informed and engaged with our force mission, vision and values
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*A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:*

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Individual Performance Reviews set objectives to fulfil professional growth and we attend training spanning police communications, critical / creative thinking, wellbeing, personal development and cultural intelligence.

We're members of the Association of Police Communicators, attending their annual L&D conference.

We're launching a force Leadership Academy to ensure staff at all levels get the training and support to be better leaders / role models.

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*A summary of recent outstanding achievements:*

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- Wellbeing is the heart of our strategy and our team has grown closer and more effective as a result. A team member wrote on LinkedIn: “I'm incredibly lucky to work for an employer that [...] has put the health and wellbeing of its employees first. [...]ensured individual circumstances are taken into account and extra support is given to those who need it [...] gone above and beyond to keep the line of communication open [...] keep people motivated and feeling valued.” We've had less than 10 day's sickness across the team, high team morale and the only people who have left were on temporary contracts / a retiree following 23 years' service.
- 28x Chief Constable Commendations were awarded in 2020 – the highest accolade available in-force. We received the only commendation for work outside of operational policing
- Our communications around the policing response to Covid-19 has helped ensure that a third of our public have increased confidence in police. Activity included Facebook Live beat surgeries to replace face-to-face contact with neighbourhood police, release of Body Worn Video relating to Covid-19 breaches, positive social norming content to encourage people to follow regulations
- 94% of our staff say the Constabulary has kept them informed during the pandemic. This is a direct result of our 24/7 internal comms strategy which provides swift and easy access to information and ensures people feel connected and valued.
- The toppling of the Colston Statue was divisive and posed a significant reputational threat to our organisation. We instigated a partner-led approach with key stakeholders to increase public understanding of public order policing and build trust in the police. We took hold of the narrative via proactive media statements, interviews, a video message from the Chief Constable direct to the public via social media and responding to 135+ media enquiries. We provided guidance / support to senior officers who received social

media threats and managed a cyber-attack which flooded social media inboxes with 25k messages in 24 hours. Following the incident, 78.4% of our public trusted their police force and 90.6% felt safe in their local area

- Our pioneering approach to knife crime saw the creation of an innovative engagement / communications campaign which put young people at the heart of the debate around serious violence. The campaign has been recognised at a national level, is being considered for roll-out by other forces and is being used in lobbying efforts for sustained funding of youth services.

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*A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:*

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To support our ambition to be the most inclusive police force in England and Wales, we created our Employer Brand – which has driven internal and external perception change, and established us as an aspirational and inclusive employer of choice.

Activity included:

- Insight-driven strategy founded on research and consultation via independent external / internal focus groups, an inclusive marketing expert, staff survey, peer learning and feedback from stakeholders
- Created an Employer Value Proposition (EVP) that brings together all the qualities that make us stand out from other employers
- Established “Be the Difference” as the creative golden thread and introduced the concept of golden trilogies – three emotive reasons why people should join our force, tapping into employee-led motivations
- Encouraged our workforce to act as brand advocates, launching the campaign with our ‘inclusion video’. It uses personal stories, alongside force data, to highlight that inclusion is central to delivering outstanding policing for everyone and sheds a light on the ‘human’ side of our organisation. Staff belief in our commitment to inclusion increased by 17% to 84%, other police forces have requested to use it in their training, and we were awarded a Chief Constable’s Commendation

Since the launch:

- 21.5% increase in staff who say they would recommend us as an employer
- 5 in 6 staff and 73.5% of the public believe we’re committed to inclusion and diversity
- 12.6% increase in staff feeling valued
- 10.7% increase in members of the public who would consider working for us (83.9% total).

## **Supporting Information**

*Additional supporting information (images, artwork, clippings and other media):*

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AvonandSomersetPoliceIn-HousePRTTeamoftheYearSupportingMaterials.pdf

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*Campaign image (if entering individual/team awards, upload headshot/team photo here):*

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Provided

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*Company logo:*

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Provided

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*Please write a 30 word entry summary in the third person:*

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Our small but exceptional team plays a central role in the police's frontline response to criminality, using insight-led comms to build trust and confidence.

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