# Isle of Man Constabulary

Independent Review into the use of social media by the Isle of Man Constabulary (IOMC).

29th April 2022

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**In 2021, INEQE Safeguarding Group was commissioned to undertake an independent review into the use of social media by the Isle of Man Constabulary (IoMC). During the onset of the global Coronavirus pandemic, the force experienced a steep increase in demand. July was the busiest period experienced in almost 10 years[1].**

Posts on the force's Facebook page demonstrated year on year increases jumping 42.5% between 2019 and 2020 and registering a monthly increase of +17% when comparing March 2021 against March 2020.

With the constant emergence of different types of digital platforms, it is important that the IoMC ensure that engagement with its communities is both effective and meaningful. It needs to keep members of the public up to date on emerging crimes and anti-social behaviour, whilst at the same time demonstrating an understanding of their needs and digital expectations.

It should be noted that the IoMC plans to roll out several innovative solutions to further enhance the digital elements of its policing including new systems to share, collect and find information.

**Monthly Increase**

# +17%

The use of drone technology or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and the ability for officers to gain full systems access via mobile devices is set to bring transformative change.



There was a demonstrably clear interest and investment in discussions around the improvement and continued digital engagement of the force. All staff who were involved in the review were active participants with a clear sense of duty and commitment. This is further evidenced by the noticeable interest in digital evolution and improvement in the constabularies' continued efforts to meet the needs of the people it serves.

The introduction of the use of social media in the Constabulary commenced in 2014, when a 'Digital Handbook' was produced covering:

- **Digital strategy;**
- **Accredited users guidelines; and**
- **Policy on personal use of social media accounts.**

This handbook defines the standard operating procedures and constabulary expectations of its social media users.

**Throughout the review, it was clear that both police, staff and members of the public had an appetite for increased social media engagement. Indeed, all those engaged demonstrated an understanding of the benefits that social media could provide to policing in the future, and a willingness to make better use of the platforms available.**

There is evidence that the IoMC currently use social media effectively and professionally to engage with members of the public.

The Review found a determination to use social media to ensure that members of the public are updated and apprised in respect of events and incidents. Indeed, the public service value of wanting to keep communities safe was apparent throughout the review.

That said, there are a number of areas for improvement. Such areas primarily concern the range of platforms utilised, aging digital resources, appropriate content and tone and the demographic each engage.

Whilst there are good social media networks with people aged 35+, there is a lack of overall engagement with young people (under 35) and potentially those over 75. This is due in large measure to the fact that younger people engage more frequently on channels not currently operated by the police e.g., Snapchat. and that many of the older generation have yet to migrate to 'silver surfer' status.

# Introduction

The constabulary's current strengths lie in its use of Facebook and Twitter. The lessons learnt and the expertise developed on these platforms need to be transferred into other new and emerging youth focused channels.

A need has been identified for specific training, refresher training and guidance in the use of social media. Such training, must be properly planned and structured so that it meets the needs of all users.

During the Review a significant number of staff alluded to the fact that training is not structured and that it is often informal and adhoc. Informal sessions are a good means of mentoring and reinforcing learning but are not a replacement for a needs assessed structured training events.

Digital platforms are critical for the future of policing and it is critically important that the Isle of Man Constabulary further develop their social media strategy to ensure it is more widely and effectively used to engage with its communities.

By doing this, the IoMC will have achieved even greater engagement with, and a contemporary understanding of the local issues that impact on what matters to the communities they serve.

**01** The review recommends that the Social Media Guidance documents ('Posting to Social Media Sites' and 'Facebook and Twitter Accounts – Do's and Don'ts') are improved and further developed. The use of clear examples of when something is 'copyright', 'offensive' or 'below the line' would be helpful for staff.

**02** The review recommends that the force develops a 'Written Style Guide' and an appropriate use of social media policy.

**03** To review and or update the digital handbook, with relevant policies and incorporated guidance that cover the professional or authorised use of social media and appropriate use of personal social media accounts.

**04** All staff should complete a mandatory 'Introduction to Police Social Media' before they are permitted to access the IoMC accounts. This should provide a video (or written) pre-brief on key aspects of the role and be followed by a face-to-face training session culminating in a scenario-based assessment. This should include, at a minimum:

**This should include, at a minimum,**
- Strategic objectives
- Roles & responsibilities
- Technical training
- The adoption and use of a password management system such as 1Password for Teams
- Style and tone of posts
- Risk management
- Data protection
- Scenario-based training, incorporating, when, what and how to post. (Scenarios should range from judging examples of post on the basis of whether they are appropriate or not and the construction of posts regarding the information they receive on a range of issues, events and response to crime).
- Upon successful completion of the course an authorised user certificate should be awarded.

**05** Refresher training should be facilitated by eLearning and completed at least once in a twenty-four-month cycle. This should incorporate a test and successful completion should result in their authorised user certificate being renewed.

**06** An electronic learning package should be devised for supervisors to ensure compliance with policies and governance.

**07** A top tips and frequently asked questions video or eLearning module should be developed and made available for authorised users to maintain their knowledge and expertise.

**08** The practice of removing posts containing personal information, photographs, or images once no longer necessary should be incorporated into the social media and missing persons' policies.

**09** Training should be provided to officers and staff on how to respond to public contacts on personal social media accounts. This should also be included in policy documents.

**10** A force wide memo or reminder at briefings should be completed to ensure this level of ambiguity is addressed.

**11** IoMC should consider appointing dedicated staff members to manage social media feeds. This should include a specialist (dedicated fulltime publisher/s) and general (routine patrol officer users). Each should have a specific remit and operate within clear guidelines.

# Recommendations

**12**    IoMC should consider reducing the number of accounts/pages hosted on Facebook – having a centralised 'main' account with updates and keeping the four neighbourhood accounts active.

**13**    IoMC should consider the implementation of a content calendar outlining some pre-planned posts from the different departments and then some organic/spontaneous posts.

**14**    IoMC should conduct a survey with young people to ascertain their preferred method of social media and as a result target relevant platforms to encourage more engagement.

**15**    The use of the RAG system should be developed with consideration given to redesigning the alerts and embedding video content.

**16**    Consideration should be given to using traditional media outlets, newspaper, television, radio and leaflets to raise awareness of the Tweet Beat RAG system.

**17**    IoMC should review their policy in respect of what posts are deemed acceptable and professional and apply more emphasis on posting articles that keep the public informed and updated.

**18** IoMC should consider dip sampling (auditing) and requesting regular feedback in terms of posts and Tweets to ensure that the social media platforms are being utilised professionally and effectively.

**19** IoMC should reflect on the good practice demonstrated by civilian users and ensure that posting in other non-police online communities is part pf their digital engagement strategy. During the review, it became apparent that there is a lack of knowledge regarding the use of copyright images which could lead to breaches of Copyright law.

**20** IoMC should consider a bank of copyright cleared images which are available for social media use. This will support consistency and protect the IoMC from becoming involved in a breach of copyright.

**21** Social media training should incorporate information around the use of images and copyright legislation, including the simply process of copyrighting an image. Images taken by authorised users on IoMC devices are automatically copyrighted to the IoMC. Other images sourced from the public domain need to be copyright cleared.

**22** IoMC revisits and updates its guidelines for crime reporting pathways via its social media and other online platforms.

**23** IoMC should revisit and reissue guidelines regarding how to receive and signpost reports of crime made via social media.

**24** Subject to the acceptance of the recommendations within this report and a decision on rationalising its social media outlets, the IoMC should:

- Ensure consistency with all sites clearly/more clearly marked '**NOT 24/7**' or '**not for reporting crimes**'.
- That every unit or station with a social media outlet identifies an individual to check messages prior to every shift commencing and that this is recorded as complete.

**25** The IoMC should consider providing face-to-face workshops with members of the community who do not yet engage via that medium. This would present an opportunity for people to learn from a trusted source, would build on community engagement and provide a platform to network into those parts of the population that do not yet access such media.

**As the use of social media and other digital engagement develops and increases, police forces have encountered both challenges and opportunities. Cyber-enabled crime and the public and private spaces facilitated by social media have required police to adapt their tactics.**

## Finding

From the research undertaken by the Review, it is clear that the IoMC has established some good practice in this regard. This includes their initial training, development of their Twitter and Facebook presence and the innovative use of a range of digital assets and signposts.

Policing in a digital world is not without its challenges and an authoritative presence on social media requires balance. Interactions can focus too much on posting generic platitudes, raising awareness about general crime and/or specific incidents but lack appropriate and timely responses when responding to and encouraging public engagement.

This may lead to members of the public becoming disillusioned and disengaged and to complaints about a lack of response.

It is therefore important to remember that whilst digital access can enable greater public participation in policing, it also facilitates unprecedented levels of real time scrutiny.

There are various factors to consider when engaging online. The key areas beyond simply getting your facts right are, the style, content, and tone of police messages. Posts need to be informative, relevant, and useful – while posts with a perceived limited purpose, can give the public a negative impression of how a police force spends their time.

**Research[1] comparing the use of digital communication by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) during the summer riots in 2011 provides a useful insight. This work captured the complexities of challenges regarding style and tone when engaging the public by digital means.**

A more formal tone limited the capacity to establish a meaningful connection with the public, but reduced the potential for negative feedback. Balance is important as is knowing your community and the context within which you are operating at any particular time is key.

Police can be viewed in a negative light when residents are exposed to real, or perceived, levels of violent or even nuisance crime. In such instances the use of digital communications can serve as a positive way to stay in touch and to be seen to both listen and respond to the community.

The proactive use of social media provides reliable post incident opportunities for police to publish their own unedited statements. This prevents parts of police statements being cut to sensationalise one aspect whilst ignoring others.

It also enables police to control what information is released to the public and when. This can be used to great effect in the aftermath of a serious incident whereby police can use their digital platforms to publish information, address misinformation and seek help.

Sharing accurate and up to date information can help to provide reassurance and mitigate community tensions. A well-managed police presence on social media can respond to public concerns in a timely and transparent fashion, not always possible via more traditional channels[23].

**Finding**

The Review saw evidence that this principle is well understood and applied by some IoMC users.

**Finding**

The Review found that there was a widespread understanding amongst IoMC officers and staff of the balance between negative and positive messaging via social media and its relationship with public sentiment.

Digital engagement in positive contexts with the police presents an immeasurable opportunity for police forces to harness the power of digital and social media to build trust with their communities. It is recognised that where forces use social media to positively engage with citizens, they are likely to see the benefit in several ways.

**There are three key elements identified by established research[4] :**

**Representation**

This refers to how the police portray themselves, and how this in turn impacts on public perception. **The Review found that in the context of the Isle of Man, the Constabulary carefully considers how it represents itself online and the impact this can have on police-public relationships.**

**Engagement**

This refers to how the police communicate with the public to further their aims. **The Review found that this is a strength. There was evidence of such engagement in a range of initiatives including awareness campaigns to reduce crime and injury to the public. A good example was seen in the 'Winter Lights Campaign'.**

**Networking**

Refers to how the police use social media to facilitate information sharing to and from the public. This can aid crime prevention, detection, and public service messaging. **The Review found that the IoMC utilise their social media in each of these areas and saw evidence of positive outcomes not least when social media was used to quickly establish the location and identity of alleged perpetrators.**

# Policy Review

The review team conducted an analytical exercise with the two documents provided:

**1. Social Media Guidance (Posting to Social Media Sites)**

**2. Social Media Guidance (Facebook and Twitter Accounts – 'Do's and Don'ts'**

These documents address the basic standards and conduct expectations regarding personal and professional use of social media by officers and civilian staff. They also appropriately capture the advantages, challenges and novel nature and nuance of using social media in a policing context.

Furthermore, the documents positively explain the rationale and motivation of why and how the force deploys social media in its work and the review recognises the purposeful benefit of these documents.

In the broadest sense, the 'Posting to Social Media Sites' document provides an overview of the types of content that can be shared by staff. These explanations give helpful context and provide a foundational understanding of the purpose of sharing on social media.
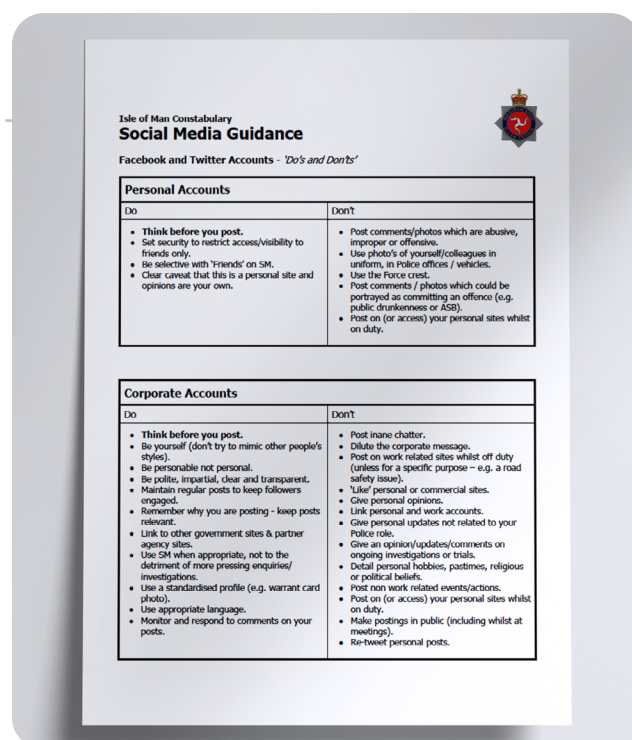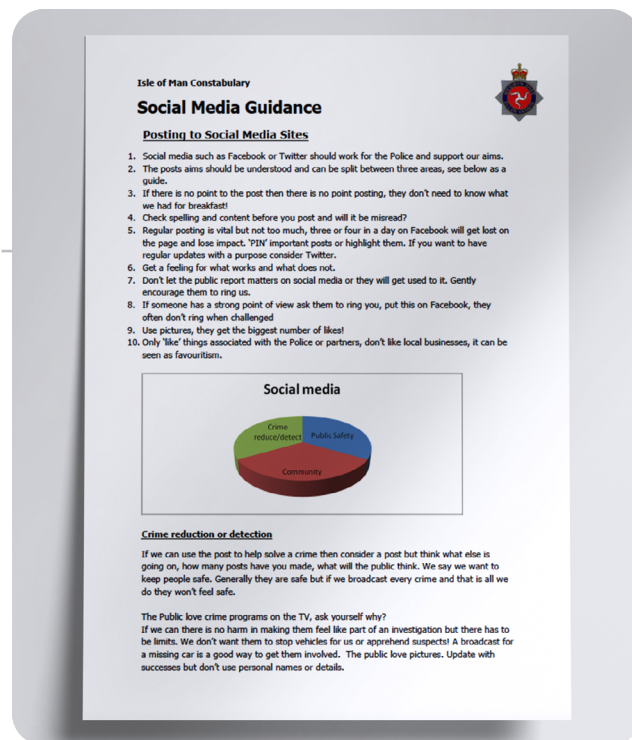
**It discusses three thematic categories:**

- Crime reduction/detection
- Public safety
- Community

**The following are examples of good practice:**

- That staff should not overshare crime posts
- How the public respond to imagery
- The use of consistent public safety messaging
- A good understanding of when to use each platform e.g., Twitter for live updates

**The following would benefit from enhanced explainers:**

- When something is not 'copyleft'[5]
- Examples of when something is offensive (but not obviously so)
- Soundbites or stock responses to difficult comments/unfair criticisms
- Positive humour vs what constitutes 'below the line'
- How to strike the balance between 'engagement' and 'playing to the audience'
- A list of sensitive subjects, which warrant a careful and considered approach

**There are limitations to these documents in that, whilst designed to be a 'crash course' in social media standards there is a notable lack of nuance.**

### Recommendation 1

The review recommends that the Social Media Guidance documents ('Posting to Social Media Sites' and 'Facebook and Twitter Accounts – Do's and Don'ts) are improved and further developed. The use of clear examples of when something is 'copyright', 'offensive' or 'below the line' would be helpful for staff.

From the review teams experience, social media standards are typically well understood by those who use them. However, in some cases subjective judgment can fail particularly when decisions on whether a post is 'funny' or 'offensive' are made in isolation. The use of clear case studies, visual examples and past lessons would greatly enhance this guidance.

### Recommendation 2

The review recommends that the force develops a 'Written style guide' and an appropriate use of social media policy.

### Recommendation 3

To review and or update the digital handbook, with relevant policies and incorporated guidance that cover the professional or authorised use of social media and appropriate use of personal social media accounts.

As a Police Service, the IoMC compares favourably with Guernsey. It is island based, and similar in terms of size and overall population.

The Isle of Man has a population of over 83,314[6] compared to Guernsey's 63,000.

Crime rates are also nearly identical. The IoM records 3.66 per hundred citizens whilst Guernsey sits at 3.65.

▶ **Social Media Engagement**
**Facebook**
The IoM boasts a good engagement on Facebook with 69,000 followers, exceeding Guernsey's 25,200 by 37%.

In relation to citizen engagement, the IoMC performs well on Facebook, potentially reaching over 82% of the population. Acknowledging that the number of followers may fluctuate during major events with an influx of visitors e.g., the TT, this number remains relatively stable, and most of their following is assessed to be local people.

# 82%

**of the population follows the IoMC Facebook page**



This is an encouraging statistic for the IoMC as it demonstrates that the use of social media appears to be an effective tactic in terms of reaching out to the community.

# IoMC in Comparison to Other Forces

## 3.6%

**of the London population follows the MPS Facebook Page**

The largest police force in the United Kingdom is the London Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) with 43,000 officers and staff. As of April 2022, the MPS had 343,000 followers on Facebook, 3.6% of London's 9,541,000 citizens. This comparator highlights just how successful the IoMC has been engaging their community via social media, in this instance Facebook.

Whilst such levels of engagement via Facebook are impressive, it is important to note that young people aged 13-17 make up the smallest number of Facebook users in the UK and Facebook is the most popular social media network for those age 35+. This reflects the need to diversify the IoMC social media presence into other platforms where they can engage a broader, younger demographic.

This is an example of a typical daily post of the IoMC. Posts may receive anywhere from 10 to 13,000 likes, with more major posts attracting comments and shares. Some posts involve restrictions on comments when in relation to sensitive topics.

The most liked and shared Facebook post in 2022 had 13,000 likes and 577 shares and importantly, it was a repost of a TikTok from their TikTok profile.

This profile has very regular content and posts, normally every day at least.
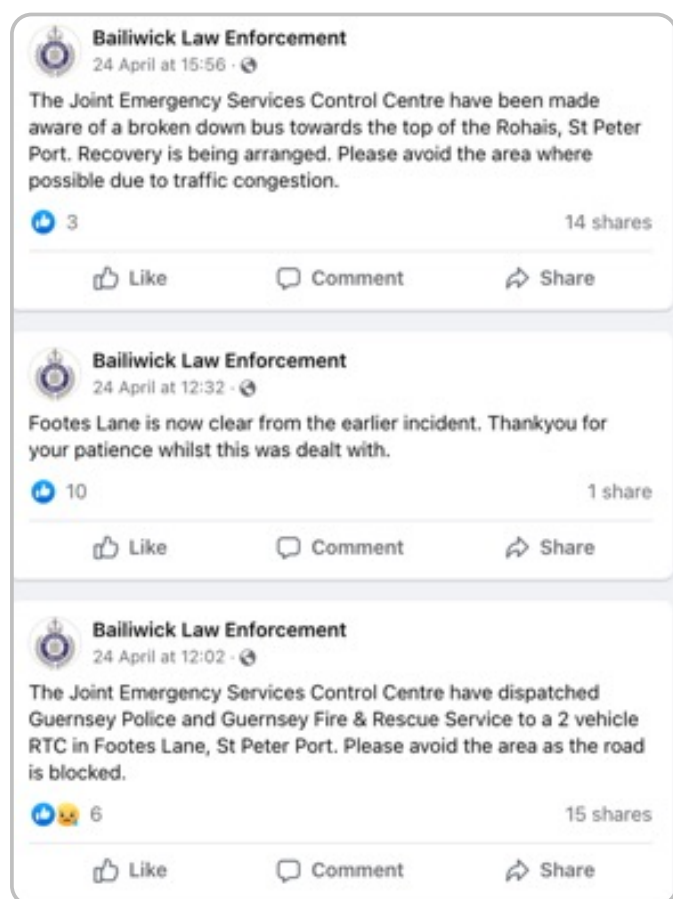


Isle of Man Constabulary Media Page
20 April at 21:52

Police have received reports of Catalytic Converters being cut from underneath vehicles on Private land in Ballaugh.
This offence only benefits the thieves if they can sell the stolen items to scrap merchants. We would ask that if any of our Island scrap dealers are approached by individuals with numerous catalytic converters that they make contact with us on 631212.
The suspects will be using a vehicle which will not limit offending to any specific area. Please be vigilant and report any suspicious activity to police.
Officers will continue to conduct patrols in rural areas and information regarding this offence has been shared with Port security in the event that persons try and leave the Island with items such as described.

**PUBLIC INFO**

Updates on socials:
- Isle of Man Constabulary
- @TweetbeatIOM
- police@gov.im

ISLE OF MAN CONSTABULARY 01624 631212 iompolice.im

110   28 comments  59 shares

Like   Comment   Share

Most of Guernsey's posts receive few comments or likes but do tend to have a number of shares. They tend to be informational posts. Posts which have the best engagement include those of a personal matter, such as a member of staff retiring.

> **Bailiwick Law Enforcement**
> 24 April at 15:56 · 🌐
>
> The Joint Emergency Services Control Centre have been made aware of a broken down bus towards the top of the Rohais, St Peter Port. Recovery is being arranged. Please avoid the area where possible due to traffic congestion.
>
> 👍 3                                                    14 shares
>
> 👍 Like          💬 Comment          ➦ Share

> **Bailiwick Law Enforcement**
> 24 April at 12:32 · 🌐
>
> Footes Lane is now clear from the earlier incident. Thankyou for your patience whilst this was dealt with.
>
> 👍 10                                                     1 share
>
> 👍 Like          💬 Comment          ➦ Share

> **Bailiwick Law Enforcement**
> 24 April at 12:02 · 🌐
>
> The Joint Emergency Services Control Centre have dispatched Guernsey Police and Guernsey Fire & Rescue Service to a 2 vehicle RTC in Footes Lane, St Peter Port. Please avoid the area as the road is blocked.
>
> 👍😢 6                                                  15 shares
>
> 👍 Like          💬 Comment          ➦ Share

▶ **Twitter**

The IoM's Twitter is less impactful than their Facebook following, at 17,200. The Constabulary only holds 600 more followers than Guernsey Police, despite being a slightly larger police force with a larger population. That said, the IoM engages circa 20% of their population via Twitter. This is impressive when compared to the MPS whose 1.3 million followers on Twitter, represent 13.6% of the area's population.

# 21%

**of the population follows the IoMC Twitter account**

## Other Platforms

### ▶ Instagram

The IoM has engaged 12,900 followers on Instagram. If most followers are local people, which posts imply, this equates to about 15% of the population. Despite much smaller numbers when compared to their Facebook following, the IoM is performing well on this platform and exceeding the community engagement of other forces.

Investing in resources that increase its Instagram use will help the IoMC target a key demographic, as most Instagram users in 2022 were 25–34-year-olds.[11]

# 15%

**of the population follows the IoMC Instagram account**

### ▶ TikTok

The potential that can be accrued from pivoting to other platforms is perhaps best demonstrated in the IoMC's recent foray into TikTok. TikTok has 1.2 billion monthly active users  and figures estimate nearly a quarter of TikTok users are aged between 15-25.  TikTok therefore offers a unique opportunity to capture the younger demographic, since they are less likely to engage on Facebook. Only 5.6% of Facebook users worldwide are between the ages of 13-17 .

The IoM TikTok page is as yet unverified but has captured 16.3k followers and a total of 208.3k likes. Their most liked video has 1.2 million views and 93.8k likes. This exceeds their estimated population and shows the extent to which TikTok may target a demographic not otherwise reached via Facebook, Twitter, or even Instagram.

The IoM Constabulary is currently outperforming the MPS TikTok account, which is verified, yet has no content and only 893 followers.

Consistent use of this platform alongside companion profiles, such as the IoMC Dog and wildlife units could be key in capturing the interest and engagement of a younger demographic. The potential reach of TikTok could be critical in the IoMC's social media journey.

▶ **Snapchat**

Snapchat is not currently deployed by the force. Over half of internet users who engage via Snapchat in the UK are between the ages of 15 and 25.  This is an important social network for teenagers, reaching over 75% of the millennial and Gen Z population.

Snapchat enables businesses and other organisations to create public profiles, encouraging others to follow them to view their stories and keep in touch.

Given that Snapchat is used so frequently by young people, it may require less friction than TikTok to engage with content. This is because instead of a 'feed' of videos, young people only need to search their friends or other pages' stories to view the Constabulary's content.

Snapchat could be a key pathway to engage with this younger demographic. It could provide friction-free access for the millions of daily users who turn to it every day to message their peers.

The IoMC have mastered the basics of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and more recently TikTok. By pivoting to Snapchat, they can apply many of the lessons they have learnt regarding content and tone.
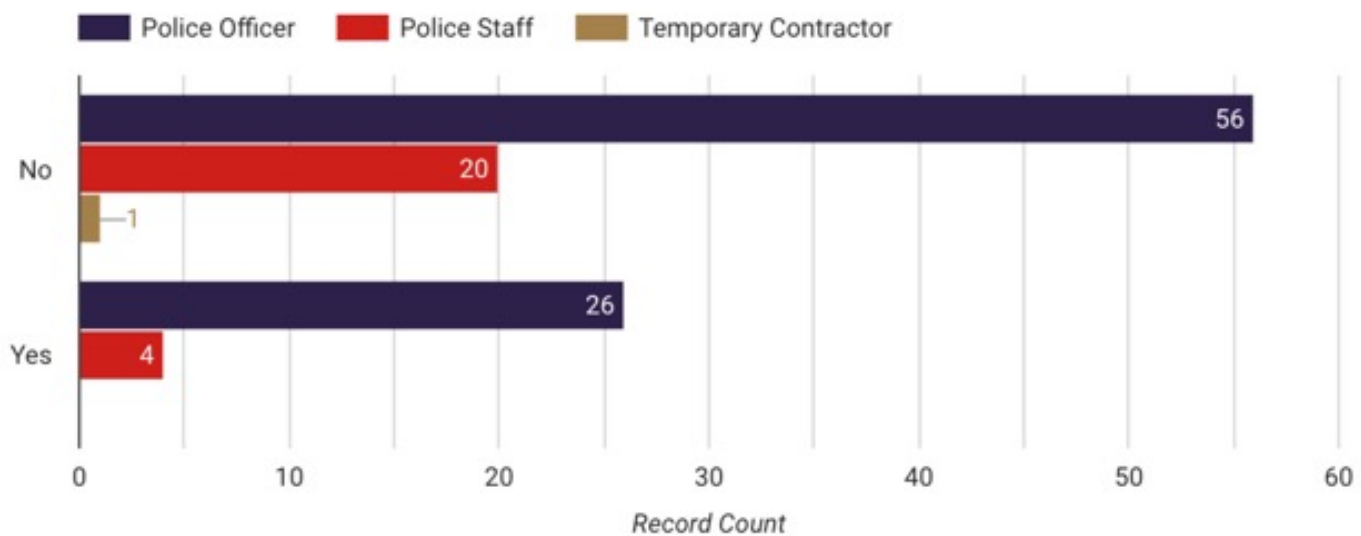
# 75%
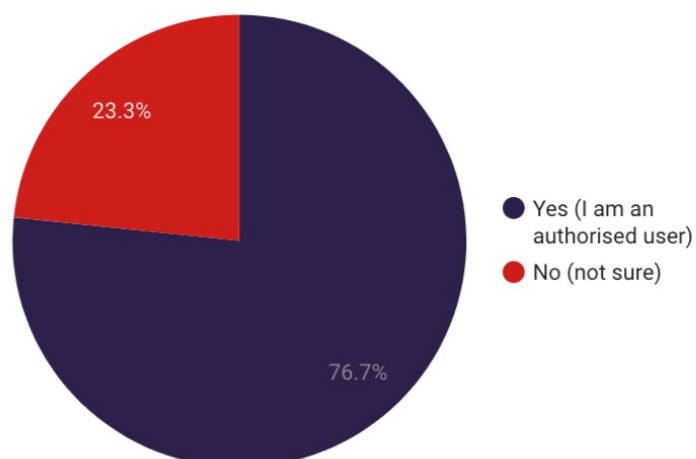
**of millenials and Gen Z use Snapchat**
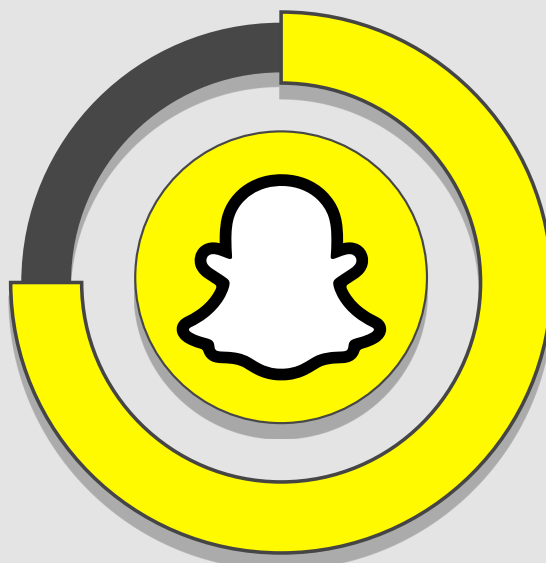
## Training & Practice

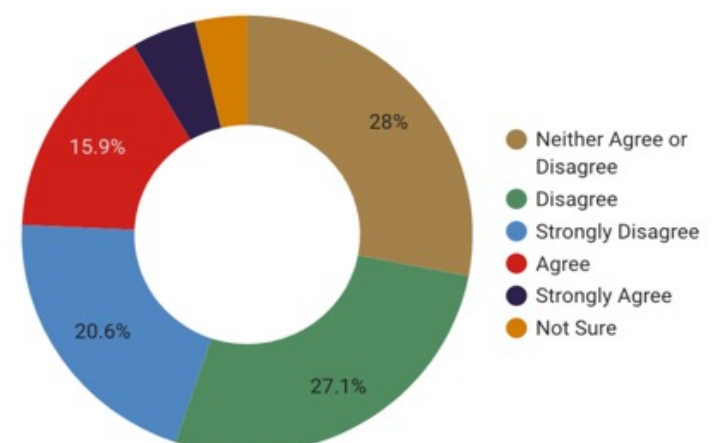**Do you use social media as part of your role in the IoMC?**



28% percent of the workforce responded to the survey that they used social media as part of their role within the police service.

**Have you received the appropriate training?**



**I've had sufficient training to post on social media as part of work**

# Training & Practice

Almost a quarter of respondents(23.3%), indicated that they were not sure if they had received training for this role and 47.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the training was sufficient.

The overall findings from interviews indicated that staff training on the use of social media to communicate with the public was inadequate. Feedback to the review suggested that it amounted to informal conversations, ad-hoc support, and a guidance document rather than any formal training.

"...our only training is a 15-minute chat... and asking them to read that book and tell us that they have read [it]."

"We just get...a list of rules and do's and don'ts and things like that, but it's largely common sense, really"

## 23.3%
**Not sure they had received training**

## 47.7%
**Thought training was insufficient**

Evidence would suggest that training is an area with significant opportunity for improvement, other comment s included:

> **"...I think if we add an online training... like a training video...where it's mandatory for the officer to view... we are lucky at the minute because...we're getting away with it every day and should something really bad happen. And then we have to justify ourselves in a court of law. And they say, well, what training did you have? That's when that's when we're going to get bitten ...?"**

Despite the perceived lack of formal training, over 60% of the staff who responded to the survey were aware of who they could speak to if they had a concerns about using social media in their professional role.

Staff responses to whether they would know how to respond to negative comments from the public online varied. 29.9% agreed to the statement, however, 28.1% disagreed and 33.6% remained neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. This may be perceived as the majority (61.7%) staff either not knowing how to respond or neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

**I understand the expectations set out by the Constabulary around personal social media use.**
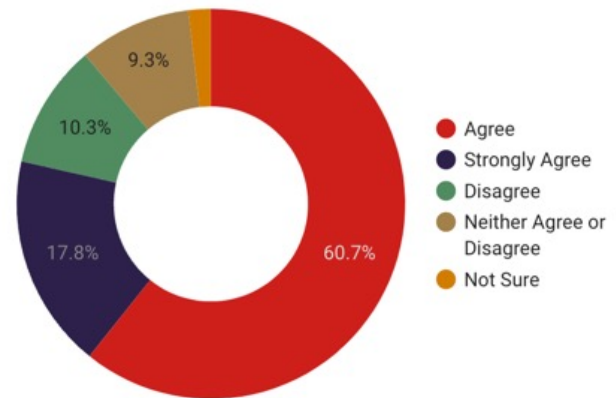


When asked if they understood the expectations regarding their personal use of social media, over 78% agreed or strongly agreed that they understood expectations concerning staff conduct whilst using personal social media accounts. This is contextually reinforced by the fact that 86% of staff agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that social media is a public place/space and the same guidelines apply to online and offline conduct.

This was further evidenced by a number of comments during interview.  One supervisor commented that:

> **"[We] give them a talk about what it means to have a police social media account, what we expect from them, what we don't expect from them, and also about their own personal accounts when they're police officers as well."**

The review noted that a significant number of staff indicated a preference for a dedicated e-learning module/s.

> **"We do a lot of electronic learning packages… I don't know if something could be put on there."**

Staff should receive specific training that covers an introduction to the use of social media for police officers, and e-learning updates and refresher courses linked to continued accreditation as an authorised user.  The review makes the following recommendations in this regard:

**Recommendation 4**

All staff should complete a mandatory Introduction to Police Social Media before they are permitted to access the IoMC accounts. This should provide a video (or written) pre-brief on key aspects of the role and be followed by a face-to-face training session culminating in a scenario based assessment. This should include, at a minimum:

- Strategic objectives
- Roles & responsibilities
- Technical training
- The adoption and use of a password management system such as 1Passow
- Style and tone of posts
- Risk management
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- Scenario based training, incorporating, when, what and how to post. (Scenarios should range from judging examples of post on the basis of whether they are appropriate or not and the construction of posts regarding the information they receive on a range of issues, events and response to crime.
- Upon successful completion of course an authorised user certificate should be

## Recommendation 5

Refresher training should be facilitated by e-learning and completed at least once in a twenty-four month cycle. This should incorporate a test and successful completion should result in their authorised user certificate being renewed.

## Recommendation 6

An electronic learning package should be devised for supervisors to ensure compliance with policies and governance.

## Recommendation 7

A top tips and frequently asked questions video or eLearning module should be developed and made available for authorised users to maintain their knowledge and expertise.

## Expertise and Incident Management

The Review examined how the IoMC responded to emergencies and live or critical incidents via social media. During interviews, several staff members discussed training they had undertaken to prepare themselves with responses to terrorist incidents and threats to the public. Training included strategic communications courses which were attended in England which enhanced their responses to managing critical incidents and other crisis.

> **"They sent me on the initial police communicators course... I went back to \*\*\* to do the strategic police communicators course...Something like the Novichok, or, or the Essex lorry deaths that occurred, how we would manage that and how we would manage our commanders and put our commanders in front of TV cameras, but also how we manage social media and how we take control of being the... credible source of information at the start of an incident."**

During interviews the IoMC evidenced high levels of expertise, dedication, and competence when debriefing how they had dealt with significant incidents.

An example of the practical application of training and the use of social media in practice was reflected in the response to a bomb scare at a local primary school.

> **"...a couple of weeks ago, we had a bomb threat at the local primary school... And we used Facebook ... to get some information out there. ...I interrupted the radio broadcasts to get a message to parents to go to a rendezvous point and collect children...And we slowly put out the information that we could in relation to the incident... there were hundreds and hundreds of comments being put on that... so my day job stopped, and the media became my day job that day. And I had to personally just keep monitoring the social media and taking comments off hiding comments, or even balancing the comments by replying and explaining why we couldn't give our specific information at that specific time."**

In the opinion of the review this example demonstrates good use of social media to communicate with the public, mitigate concern and confusion via timely messaging, as well as moderating inappropriate comments and speculation.

It also evidenced the recognition of the need to prioritise this function over other tasks as a means of gathering intelligence and monitoring sentiment.

It is apparent that there is real dedication and a sense of public service from members of staff who are responding to and managing incidents.  The comments articulated by a member of staff during interview sums up the will to provide a professional service to their community as follows:

> **"We do this job, because… we love the job that we do. And we're police officers, the whole point of keeping people safe. And it's our community… I personally want to do the best job that I can do… for the remainder of my career. And so, I give my time to do that, because I can't just say, well, I'm going home now."**

**Finding**
The use of social media to respond and co-ordinate information in emergencies is something the force has done well.

Social media is an excellent means of circulating information quickly and to a large number of people. To this end, it is used effectively to locate missing persons by uploading photographs or images that the public can view and respond to.

The Isle of Man Constabulary now ensure that posts including personal details, photographs and images are removed as soon as a person has been located. This evidences that they are mindful of an individual's rights to privacy and compliant with data protection principles. The introduction of this practice is welcomed by the review team.

One staff member commented:

> **"…we were using social media when a child went missing, or…person went missing… to get photographs and put it out there…And then we would do an update and say, Thank you very much, we found them safe and well, and then we'd leave it on our social media page… there's a right to be forgotten, we've changed the way we do that."**
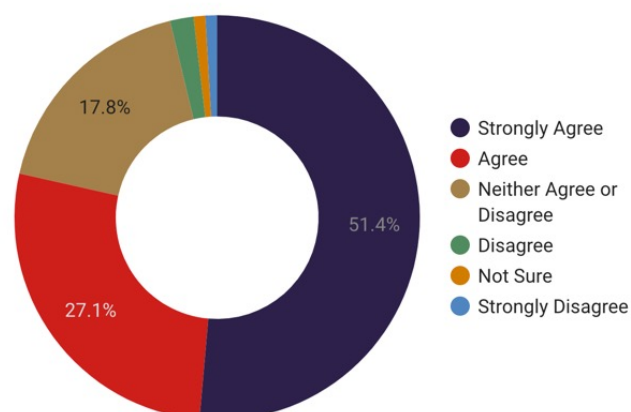
This approach demonstrates high levels of integrity in the force's use of social media and interviews with staff members evidenced good understanding of how to use social media appropriately.

**Recommendation 8**
The practice of removing posts containing personal information, photographs or images once no longer necessary should be incorporated into the social media and missing persons' policies.

**Friend Requests**

**I never accept 'friend requests' from members of the public I've worked with**



Strongly Agree — 51.4%
Agree — 27.1%
Neither Agree or Disagree — 17.8%
Disagree
Not Sure
Strongly Disagree

The workforce survey touched on how the IoMC responded to 'friend requests' from members of the public engaged in the line of duty.

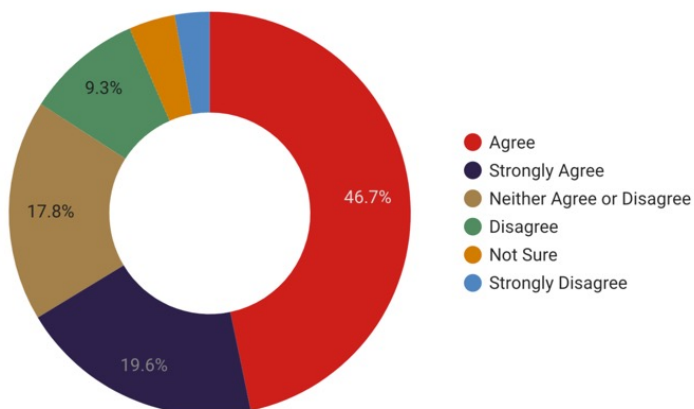Staff members were clear that they never accept friend requests from members of the public they've worked with (78.5% agreed or strongly agreed) and most reported that they actively consider who they accept friend requests from (88.8% agreed or strongly agreed).

**If a member of the public contacts me on a personal account about a policing issue, I know how to respond**



- Agree — 46.7%
- Strongly Agree — 19.6%
- Neither Agree or Disagree — 17.8%
- Disagree — 9.3%
- Not Sure
- Strongly Disagree

Survey responses indicate a good understanding (88.8% ) that social media does not guarantee privacy regardless of how restrictive privacy settings are.

When asked what they would do in response to a member of the public reaching out to them via a personal account, 66.3% of workforce survey respondents reported that they knew how to respond.

Whilst this is an encouraging statistic, it is concerning that almost one third of respondents are not clear how to respond. This should be addressed as part of social media training and written into policy documents. In the short term a memo or reminder at briefings should be completed to ensure this level of ambiguity is addressed.

### Recommendation 9
Training should be provided to officers and staff on how to respond to public contacts on personal social media accounts. This should also be included in policy documents.

### Recommendation 10
A force wide memo or reminder at briefings should be completed to ensure this level of ambiguity is addressed.

An important aspect of how to measure the effectiveness and use of social media is by examining who has access to social media accounts, how and when posts are made and the capacity for officers and staff to incorporate social media into their daily duties.  The review found that various staff members have access to social media and are 'authorised users' with responsibilities across several social media pages and accounts.

There did not appear to be any consistent approach to using social media and this ranged  from informal, ad-hoc use to everyday use of social media. This is not unique to IoMC and is consistent with research showing that social media use in police forces is often absorbed into daily duties of officers and communication departments in addition to their other day to day police duties and responsibilities.

While some found this an 'added benefit' to their role, some other staff members spoke about how it sometimes became 'just another thing on the list'.

> **"it's quite random, given the times that we aim for on our social media page, and I'm not going to lie to you, we don't always adhere to it. It's just another thing on the list…"**

> **"…I do think that you'd need someone that could have the time [and]capacity to actually give it what it needs. Rather than people trying to, you know, fit it in at half three before they go home because they haven't posted… it's because they've had a busy day."**

Social media has become an integrated part of how the public engage with and respond to the force and its policing activities. With this in mind, it is important that the IoMC examines its current practices and considers appointing dedicated staff members to professionalise and make better use of social media platforms.  Better streamlining of accounts, consistent messaging and use of engaging features will build on the early success the force has achieved and accelerate growth whilst increasing efficiency.

**Recommendation 11**

The Isle of Man Constabulary should consider appointing dedicated staff members to manage social media feeds. This should include a specialist (dedicated fulltime publisher/s) and general (routine patrol officer users). Each should have a specific remit and operate within clear guidelines.

The specialist role would:

- Be fulltime, manage an editorial calendar (planning ahead), prepping digital resources and co-ordinating digital media output for pre-planned events.
- Be the SPOC for critical incident responses.
- Be responsible for mentoring and supporting other authorised users.
- Respond to online complaints.
- Routinely audit and feedback on the use of authorised accounts.

The General (patrol/officer) authorised user would:

Have a specific remit and operate within clear guidelines. For example, providing:

- Updates on their whereabouts and patrol activity.
- Engagement with members of the public.
- Occasional promotional images that highlight the context of their role and or the natural beauty of the island.
- Respond to incidents by indicating their presence at scenes or locations. (In line with guidelines and directions from the specialist social media post holder)

# Content

**Overview of Social Media Channels**

An analysis of the IoMC's social media presence revealed that the IoMC has a variety of accounts across Facebook, Twitter, as well as an Instagram Account.

The largest presence can be found on Facebook. They have 10 separate accounts. Each account has a varied number of followers and engagement differs from account to account.

| Platform | Page | Likes | Follows |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Facebook** | IOMC Media Page Facebook | - | 69,000 |
| **Facebook** | Roads Policing Unit Facebook | 30,828 | 32,280 |
| **Facebook** | IOMC Dog Unit Facebook | - | 10,000 |
| **Facebook** | Neighbourhood Policing Team (East) | - | 10,411 |
| **Facebook** | Neighbourhood Policing Team (South) | - | 9,311 |
| **Facebook** | Neighbourhood Policing Team (North) | - | 7,714 |
| **Facebook** | Neighbourhood Policing Team (West) | - | 7,788 |
| **Facebook** | IOMC Police Early Action Team (PEAT) | - | 3,600 |
| **Facebook** | IOMC Wildlife Crime Page | 2,750 | 2,947 |
| **Facebook** | IOMC Alcohol UNIT | 1,629 | 1,790 |
| **Twitter** | Roads Policing Unit | - | 8,564 |
| **Twitter** | Isle of Man Police (not active) | - | 20,600 |
| **Twitter** | TweetbeatIOM | - | 17,200 |
| **Twitter** | IOMC Dog Unit | - | 6,367 |
| **Instagram** | Isle of Man Police | - | 12,900 |
| **TikTok** | iompolice | 208,400 | 16,300 |

Data correct as of 26/04/2022

In the Social Media survey conducted with the IOM public, most responses came from Facebook users. Survey responses came largely from over 35s which would indicate that Facebook would seem to be the social media platform of choice for this particular age group. Out of 731 total public responses, 664 respondents reported that they use Facebook.

Usage levels for Twitter were reportedly low, despite IoMC Tweetbeat account having more than 17,000 followers.

### Number of Social Media Accounts

Results of the survey indicated that members of the public believe that there are too many different accounts/pages relating to the force on social media. Given the number of different accounts, this may be a reason for low numbers of followers in some accounts and may ultimately lead to some members of the public unfollowing IoMC accounts. This is commented on as follows:

> **"[the force could] have less accounts - Streamline to one, reliable account per platform. And update it in a timely manner."**

> **"There was too much duplication of posts across accounts – feed got clogged with the same post on multiple pages"**

> **"most of them just spam the same messages without any real value"**

Despite this, the review identified that having the four separate neighbourhood accounts on Facebook was good. While having 11 accounts was considered too much in some cases, having this regional separation was useful. One individual commented:

> **"I would never want to lose the northern Neighbourhood Policing page, because it is so focused on what's going on in the area...I would be arguing to keep Neighbourhood Policing pages."**

### Recommendation 12

The Isle of Man Constabulary should consider reducing the number of accounts/pages hosted on Facebook – having a centralised 'main' account with updates and keeping the four neighbourhood accounts

Keeping a main account active with general updates like road closures, alerts or general photos will reduce the number of accounts that need updated and reduce the number of duplicate posts that the public see. **Feedback from the public included:**

> **"do the dogs and do the roads policing unit need their own pages? Or should that go out on the constabulary main page? That I'm not sure. Maybe if somebody was drawing up a calendar, it would be easier to manage if they were brought together under the constabulary page"**
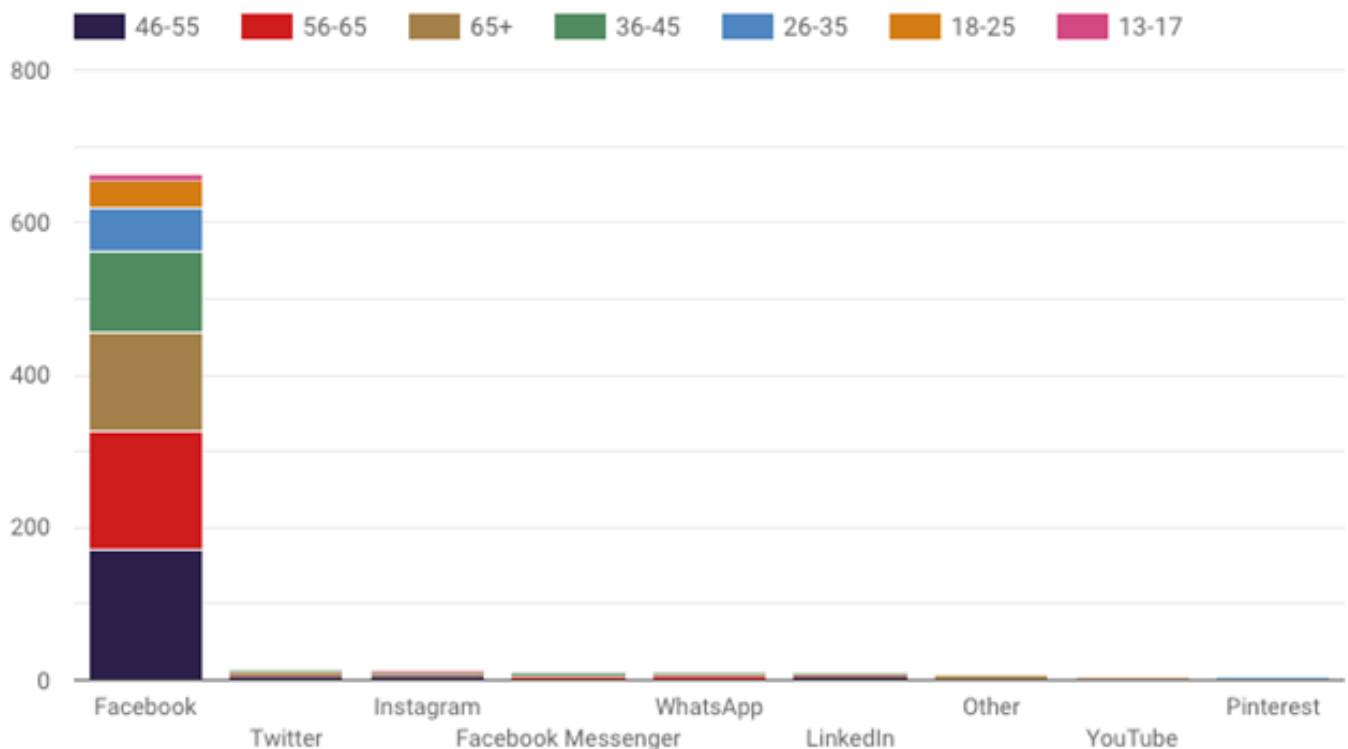
**Recommendation 13**

IoMC should consider the implementation of a content calendar outlining some pre-planned posts from the different departments and then some organic/ spontaneous posts.

## Which platforms do you use?



Similarly, the IoMC staff survey showed that Facebook and Twitter are the most popular platforms among staff members which indicates that staff social media experiences are aligned to the platforms currently utilised by the IoMC in a professional capacity. This means that staff have a baseline of experience as a personal user that will provide a foundation upon which to build an understanding of the differing requirements for professional use  utilising these particular social media tools.

This means that staff have a baseline of experience as a personal user that will provide a foundation upon which to build an understanding of the differing requirements for professional use  utilising these particular social media tools.

**Which platforms do you use for work?**



- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram

8.5%
23.4%
68.1%
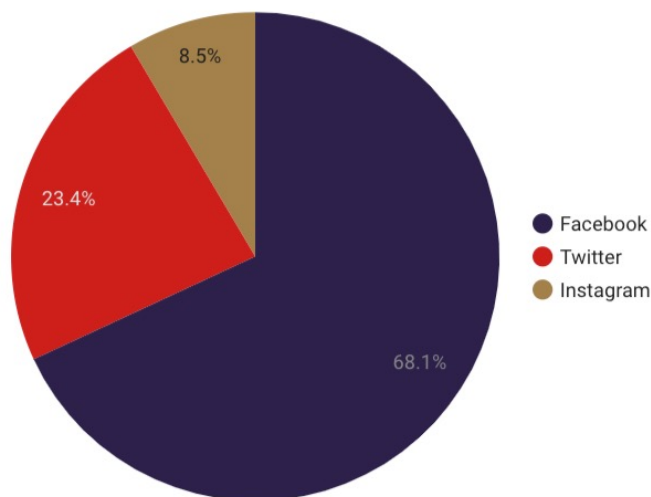
The low levels of reported Twitter and Instagram usage and the high volume of respondents that use Facebook could be explained by the age ranges in respondents. Nearly half of respondents of the survey (48.9%) reported being over 46-years of age. A further 19.9% of respondents were over 65-years old. Only 14.7% of respondents were under 35-years of age.

Facebook demographic figures from November 2021 for the Isle of Man show that while users between the ages of 25 to 34 make up the largest portion of Facebook users on the island, rates remain high for UK users over the ages of 35 on Facebook and decrease sharply for users aged below 25 . This shows that survey responses align with overall Facebook usage rate on the Isle of Man – despite lower response rates from 26 to 34-years of age.

# 15%

**of the respondants were under the age of 35**

From the evidence collected around the age or respondents, it is clear that there is a gap in the amount of social media engagement conducted with younger people i.e., 13 – 35 year olds.  Given that it is younger people who are more likely to use social media as their primary means of communication, it is imperative that IoMC reach out to individuals in this age group to identify what social media platforms they use and take steps to introduce coverage as appropriate.

**What age group do you belong to?**



- 46 - 55
- 36 - 45
- 26 - 35
- 18 - 25
- 56 - 65

37.4%
36.4%
16.8%
4.7%
4.7%
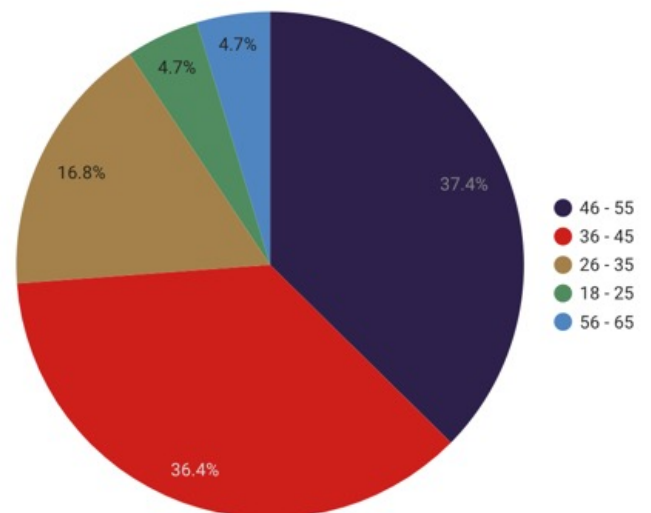
**Recommendation 14**

IOMC should conduct a survey with young people to ascertain their preferred method of social media and as a result, target relevant platforms to encourage more engagement

The review team compared activity on the Isle of Man Constabulary Media Page Facebook page and the TweetbeatIOM Twitter page as they are the two largest pages on each platform.

Between September and November 2021, the IoMC Media Page on Facebook published 100 posts. Posts with photo and text content received the most engagement. The widest reaching post occurred on the 11th of November and featured a community-based and human-interest story related to the police raising money for charity. The photo featured various officers and members of the public, some of who were children.

Between August 2021 and November 2021, the @TweetbeatIOM account reached 124K impressions. The highest engagement with a post occurred on the 9th of October – reaching a total of 15,003 impressions and 820 engagements. This tweet was related to the upcoming Isle of Man TT racing event and reached 126 likes (which is significant compared to the rest of the tweets) that proved popular with motorsport enthusiasts.
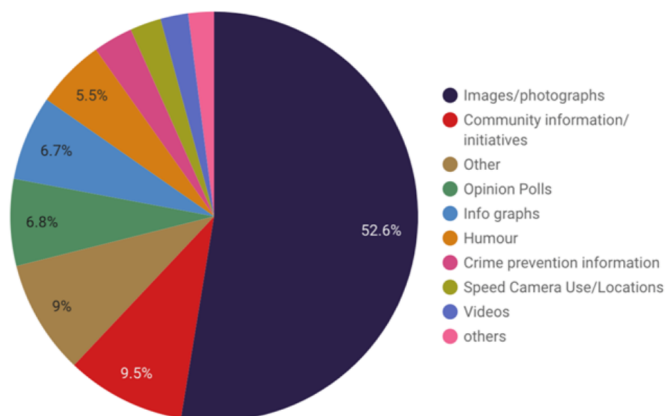
# Content

As highlighted in the pie chart, an overwhelming 62.1% of respondents indicated that they would like to see more images and photographs as well as community information and initiatives on social media.  This was consistent with interviews with IoMC staff members who understood the power of photographs, and informal public interactions that enabled them to provide a better service to the public.   Whilst posts such as these will go some way to encourage the number of followers on social media, it is important not to lose sight of the opportunity to deliver police advice and warnings to a wide ranging audience as and when required.

**What should the IoMC post more of?**



Pie chart legend:
- Images/photographs — 52.6%
- Community information/initiatives — 9.5%
- Other — 9%
- Opinion Polls — 6.8%
- Info graphs — 6.7%
- Humour — 5.5%
- Crime prevention information
- Speed Camera Use/Locations
- Videos
- others

### Content analysis

One of the key indicators of the effectiveness of the use of social media platforms is by examining the type of content being posted. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the main types of posts.

### Multi-agency cooperation

Posts that show photos related to multi-agency cooperation tend to perform well. A post on Twitter on the 20th of November highlighted the cooperation between the Police, Fire Department, Ambulance, Coastguard, RNLI, Harbours, crane operators and vehicle recovery agents. It received more (above average) likes and a good level of engagement.

Similarly, a post published on the 12th of November on Facebook highlighting a parking problem stopping emergency service access to areas received a high level of engagement and comments from the public recognising this as an "island-wide" issue.

These types of posts contribute to a greater sense of perceived public safety as visible examples of active collaboration between agencies.

Ultimately this should lead to a greater sense of agencies working together to keep people safe on the island. agencies. Ultimately this should lead to a greater sense of agencies working together to keep people safe on the island.

### Colour coded updates/announcements

Tweetbeat pages on Twitter offer the public a traffic light system using Digital Toolkit images that have been designed to alert the public to a message and indicate its relevance. This is done by means of using a traffic light system; green, amber and red as outlined below: outlined below:



The green banner indicates that the message is 'information'. This can relate to crime prevention, traffic diversions or public safety messages.

The yellow banner indicates an alert. This is used when police need to pass information about an ongoing incident, a 'here and now' issue.

The red banner highlights a warning which should be used for critical incidents, emergencies and potentially life-threatening situations and their presence on social media should indicate a 'must read' message for followers.

The RAG system is beneficial in terms of drawing the public's attention to important information in an easy to understand eye-catching manner. These images were introduced in 2014 and as such, there is merit in redesigning the images to produce more contemporary graphics that maintain the early principles applied by the original approach. The use of short informative video clips combined with the RAG system is likely to improve performance and increase accessibility.

### Recommendation 15
The use of the RAG system should be developed with consideration given to redesigning the alerts in line with current graphics.

### Recommendation 16
Consideration should be given to using traditional media outlets, such as newspapers, television, radio and leaflets to raise awareness of the tweet beat RAG system.

It is disappointing that these posts don't receive high levels of engagement or interaction across both platforms. This may be partly due to the fact that the reported events are time-limited or region specific. However, the public make various references to the need for clearer updates and more information on road closures therefore it is important that the RAG system is developed and utilised in a more effective and regular way to keep members of the public informed and updated about local issues.

The pie chart below emphasises that an overwhelming 96.1% of respondents have indicated that their main reason for following IoMC social media accounts is in order to be kept informed and updated.

### Why do you choose to follow the IoMC accounts?



- To stay updated
- To be made aware of road closures
- Other
- To engage and interact with the IOMC
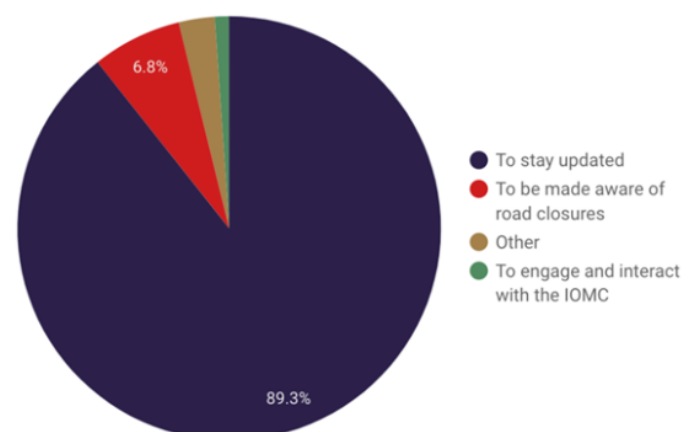
**Updates on emergencies or investigations**

Posts that provide updates regarding ongoing emergency events or investigations tend to perform well with the public. One post, published on the 6th September 2021 in relation to reports of a dangerous driver received positive interactions on Twitter. This afforded police the opportunity to reassure members of the public that they were aware of and dealing with the incident, as well as enabling them to seek further information.

A further of example of this was published on the 22nd of March 2022 in relation to an arrest made for a death caused by dangerous driving. The Twitter threads initial update had 87 likes, 11 retweets and 5 quote tweets, this does not include the many who will have simply seen and read the post without interacting further with it. They were able to follow up this tweet with several other updates, including a quote from an inspector involved, requests to contact them if you needed information and an update on a vehicle being seized. Similarly, there was an increase in Facebook activity on the 28th September concerning a hoax bomb threat at Willaston Primary School.

The post made by the IoMC on Facebook alerting the public to the ongoing events received high public engagement and interactions.

Use of Facebook and other social media platforms demonstrate the effectiveness of IoMC in posting information to the public in emergency situations and will serve only to build on confidence in policing.

As part of the survey to members of the public, respondents were asked to provide their views and recommendations on what they would like to see on IoMC social media sites. Some of the comments are as follows:

> **"Keep up to date and consistent - for example missing people sometimes you hear they were found but not that they were missing or vice versa"**

> **"More info on Crime Information, like looking for missing person or property, Scam Alerts, Road and Traffic Information like RTCs Road Closures and Diversions etc."**

> **"24/7 timely updates of only relevant info. e.g. road closures/openings"**

"More updates on road closures"

## Use of Images

Whilst there were a range of opinions concerning the use of images by the IoMC, a theme emerged concerning some being overused. One particular example of this was in reference to the set of images used to denote road closures, accidents, updates, and alerts. As a result, it is recommended that improvements could be made to the existing image bank to build on engagement and the style of the posts. This aligns with recommendation 10. A balance needs to be achieved between users being able to immediately judge the importance of the message and becoming disengaged by what they see as the same message repeated.

One staff member explained that:

**"Our images are boring, because [the public] are saying they're boring"**

Whilst utilising appropriate humour, humanising officers, demonstrating their engagement with the public and local spaces and places is important, balance is key.

Feedback indicates that on occasions such balance is not achieved.Other staff feedback included the following observations:occasions such balance is not achieved.Other staff feedback included the following observations:

**"Less humour, officers eating ice creams, sitting on museum pieces. The only feedback I hear from people on this is 'Don't they have anything better to do', 'they couldn't solve / catch this person but they have time for a walk on the beach etc."**

**"We seem to use it enough for humour and general engagement but we don't put enough information out about the serious issues we have to deal with and therefore i think the public have a very skewed idea about what we have to deal with regularly and they think it is all pink and fluffy being an Officer on the IOM"**

The public survey responses echoed similar feelings:

**"[I unfollowed because] here were too many cringeworthy posts"**

> **"Less pictures of police officers eating ice cream - keep the accounts concise and update based"**

Balance concerning tone and content is important. The review team was particularly impressed with the ability of some civilian staff members to deploy social media in their roles, and how they interacted and engaged with the public in a non-crime context.

The examples they gave were of providing a service to the public, one staff member used social media to arrange appointments and events and another used it to interact with local community groups. Providing updates and support for people trying to locate missing items.

> **"If I've been doing it mainly around the award ceremony, so I'll take some pictures, I'll share those on there. Or if we had, you know, little events, like I say, like bake sales and things I'll share it just assume like a bit of community, but I'm not kind of being asked to push out any messages or anything like that."**

> **"I also sometimes don't post to our Facebook page, but I use other people's groups... we have a nice group called the Ramsey community pin board to find it stuff like lost property, I'll put it out on the community pen boards, because I don't think our Facebook page is the place where we should be telling people about Lost and Found property."**

These interactions were an excellent example of how the force uses social media to network with its audience and to project its presence online. These types of interactions are likely to build trust and improve good relations with the force. The review team assessed this as good example of how the force uses social media to engage the public in its wider work.

**Recommendation 17**
IoMC should review their policy in respect of what posts are deemed acceptable and professional and apply more emphasis on posting articles that keep the public informed and updated.

**Recommendation 18**

IoMC should consider dip sampling (auditing) and requesting regular feedback in terms of posts and Tweets to ensure that the social media platforms are being utilised professionally and effectively.

**Recommendation 19**

The IoMC should reflect on the good practice demonstrated by civilian users and ensure that posting in other non-police online communities is part pf their digital engagement strategy. During the review, it became apparent that there is a lack of knowledge regarding the use of copyright images, which could lead to breaches of Copyright law.

> **"Sometimes what we put out is pretty dire... another jurisdiction with a greater budget than us would be able to produce much more professional, short videos of things...Some of the early ones, were just awful... I don't think there's any shame in borrowing things that are really, really good."**

**Recommendation 20**

IoMC should consider a bank of copyright cleared images which are available for social media use. This will support consistency and protect the IoMC from becoming involved in a breach of copyright.

**Recommendation 21**

Social media training should incorporate information around the use of images and copyright legislation, including the simply process of copyrighting an image. Images taken by authorised users on IoMC devices are automatically copyrighted to the IoMC. Other images sourced from the public domain need to be copyright cleared. Public Interaction and Engagement

The review considered how they public interacted with the force when viewing crime related posts, providing information, and reporting crimes via social media.

## Crime Reporting

It was clear from the review that there is no consistent approach to online crime reporting. Some pages are open for the public to send messages and others are not. This appeared to be dependent on the respective department.

> "People are more willing to report stuff online. So when we just had landlines you know, people would have time to go away and have a think about stuff... That immediacy of being able to do stuff is useful, but also a bit of a nightmare that there's a million different ways to report stuff to the to the police now, and we have to be cognizant of that... people report things on email, people report things on Instagram and Twitter. And we must accept that. I think it's important going forwards."

> "there is an automated method with an automated message on that, that says, you know, if you're going to report a crime, and it's urgent when 999, and we will get back to it. And I think if people get that message, that's fine. But they still expect to notice a response within a day or something. And sometimes they'll wait for a few days for someone to come on, do he is willing to answer them. So you know, it's, it's, it's almost it's to be a part of your part, your role is to do this."
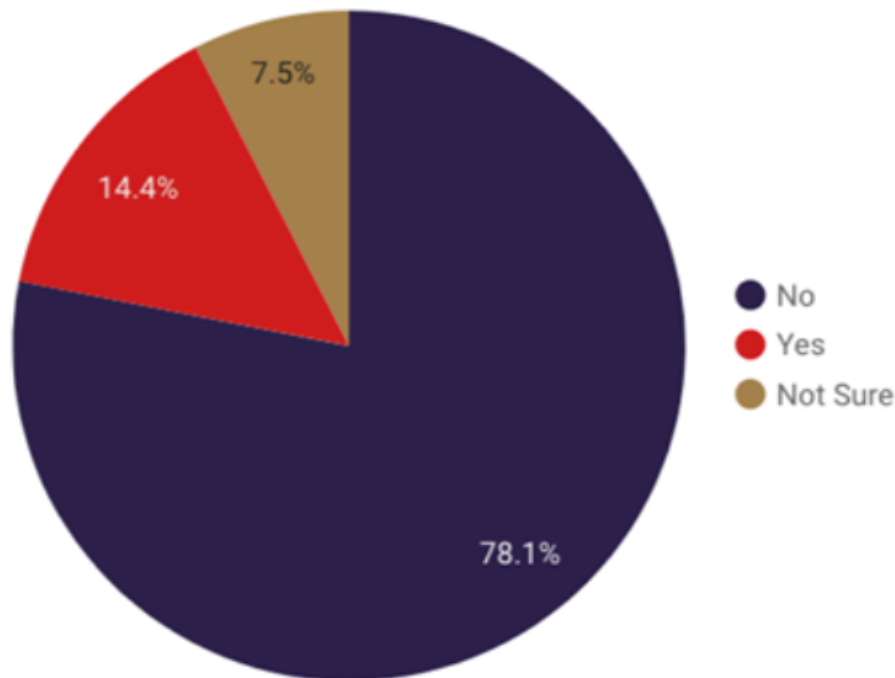
**Would you ever or have you ever reported a crime to the police via social media?**



- No — 78.1%
- Yes — 14.4%
- Not Sure — 7.5%

The public survey responses showed that the majority (78.1%) of the public reported that they had never or would never report a crime via social media.

Concerns were raised in respect of the capacity of the force to respond to online reporting from members of the public. The review understands the sensitivities of soliciting crime reports from the public online via social media. While this appeared appropriate for 'lower level' issues, there would likely be significant logistical implications for reporting crime via social media and for how this would work in an operational context.

> **"...they should have an online ability where they can [report]...online, or they can do it via social media. But the trouble is behind that somebody has to take that [report] and put that onto our crime recording system. And, and that's where the problem lies, because that requires somebody to do that."**
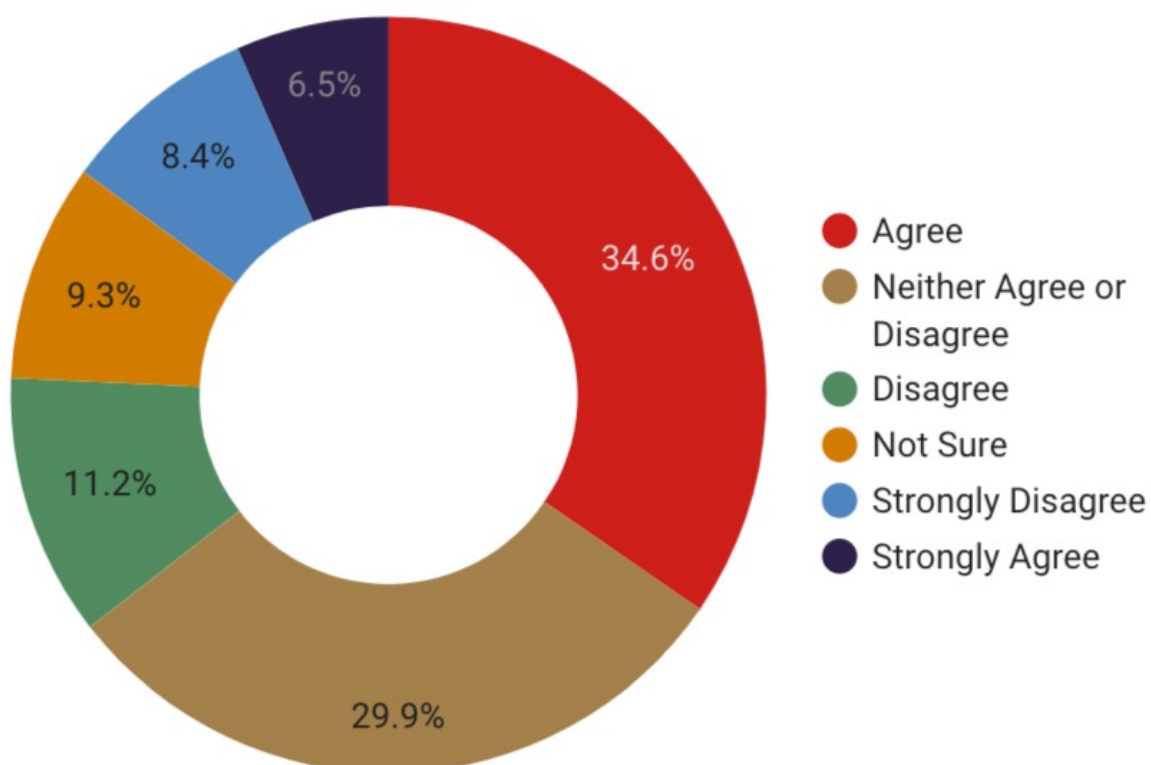
However, the public included the ability to report crime online as a recommendation for the future:

> **"Allow crime reporting/dash cam submission online"**

> **"Ability for users to report crime or suspicious activity - impossible to do this readily using police HQ numbers so I just give up"**

Despite the lack of a dedicated reporting service online, 34.6% of staff provided a positive response for whether they would know how to respond if a member of the public reported a crime online and whilst the figure appears low, it is encouraging that one in three would know what was required.

**I know how to respond if a member of the public reports a crime on social media**



Legend:
- Agree — 34.6%
- Neither Agree or Disagree — 29.9%
- Disagree — 11.2%
- Not Sure — 9.3%
- Strongly Disagree — 8.4%
- Strongly Agree — 6.5%

The Isle of Man was a Police force innovator when they first introduced the @Tweetbeat Twitter account. It differentiated itself from others, insofar as it was meant to replicate a police patrol, i.e. when appropriate it would let people know where it was, what it was doing, and provide an initial point of contact for members of the public to engage about issues ranging from nuisance behaviour to crime.

The processes initially in place provided guidance to authorised officers/users on how to respond to an online report by a member of the public. The simplified approach included the following options:

- **Asking the user to call a landline.**
- **Providing the user with an email address.**
- **Following the user to facilitate direct messaging (out of public line of sight).**
- **And, or responding to the relevant area.**

### Recommendation 22

IoMC revisits and updates its guidelines for crime reporting pathways via its social media and other online platforms.

**Recommendation 23**

IoMC should revisit and reissue guidelines regarding how to receive and signpost reports of crime made via social media.

On the other hand, officers expressed concern over saturating the page with reports of crime, as this could give the public an inflated sense of danger:

> **"And obviously, they don't report on half of what actually goes on because I think that would cause more harm than good, because people would then start thinking... that it's increased. So sometimes, if you were putting out you know, there's been this burglary, there's been this stabbing there's been this murder and people are just going to be petrified."**

**Contact from the Public**

Given the advances in digital communications, there is an understanding that the public are less likely to use the phone to contact the police. The preferred choice would now appear to be to send messages via social media. One staff member commented:

> **"I've had people contact say they would like to make an appointment to see the Chief Constable. So, you know, I pick up things through that. That's, that's rare, but it does happen. So, I do check it, not on a daily basis [but] a weekly basis and pick up appointments, sometimes through that... the phone hardly rings."**

As previously outlined, staff survey responses indicated that staff were concerned about the amount of time available to dedicate to responding to public social media messages:

"The messaging tool is misleading to the general public as they believe someone is monitoring it 24/7. Whereas in reality unless an officer cares to check the messages sent to Neighbourhood teams it can be days before anyone responds. This need to be better. The future is messaging and not calling to give information or ask for advice."

**Recommendation 24:**
Subject to the acceptance of the recommendations within this report and a decision on rationalising its social media outlets, the IoMC should:

- **Ensure consistency with all sites clearly/more clearly marked 'NOT 24/7' or for reporting crimes.**

- **That every unit or station with a social media outlet identifies an individual to check messages prior to every shift commencing and that this is recorded as complete.**

## Information Gathering

It is clear that staff fully understand the benefits of using social media as a tool to gather information and inform the police on local concerns. It was apparent to the review team that this is a hallmark feature of how the force effectively uses social media to keep itself and the public informed about minor crimes and crime trends which can lead to the gathering of information to detect crimes.

In order to maximise its approach to both intelligence and information gathering and sharing the IoMC should consider the adoption of an automated tool to interrogate, capture and assist in the analysis of relevant online opensource discussion. An example of such is Cosain.19 Such systems are now routinely used by most UK police forces.

## Digital Access

Whilst the use of social media is widespread, there are significant gaps in some demographics regarding access and use. This is acknowledged by the IoMC who are alive to the fact that the use of social media is but one tactic in their communication and public engagement strategy. **This feedback encapsulates the issue:**

"You know if we can manage all our communication via social media on Facebook Then we're doing very well to pat yourself on the back. But... we have still a community here who do not use social media and there has to be other routes, we cannot forget the person over 75 or 85..."

There is little doubt that traditional media remains a key pathway to engaging, informing, and building relationships with communities. That said, there are opportunities to increase digital engagement by helping those who are not users to become familiar with and confident in their use of technology. Indeed, empowering the silver surfer generation to engage with new technology present an opportunity to engage and support them.

The workforce survey showed that staff members agreed or strongly agreed that social media is a valuable tool to gather feedback (48.6%) and connect with the portion of the public that uses social media (82.2%). Moreover, the public survey responses showed that 81.9% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they liked having the IOMC on social media.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the proportion of people age 75+ using the internet has doubled in the last 7 years in the UK[20] and it now appears that nearly four in ten over 65s are online[21]. In the opinion of the review it is reasonable to suggest that there will be a similar upward trajectory within the IOM.

Notwithstanding the continued use and promotion of more traditional types of communication  such as Television, radio, newspapers, posters and other digital and non-digital signage, the review makes the following recommendation:

**Recommendation 20**
The IoMC should consider providing face-to-face workshops with members of the community who do not yet engage via that medium.  This would present an opportunity for people to learn from a trusted source, would build on community engagement and provide a platform to network into those parts of the population that do not yet access such media.

**01** The review recommends that the Social Media Guidance documents ('Posting to Social Media Sites' and 'Facebook and Twitter Accounts – Do's and Don'ts') are improved and further developed. The use of clear examples of when something is 'copyright', 'offensive' or 'below the line' would be helpful for staff.

**02** The review recommends that the force develops a 'Written Style Guide' and an appropriate use of social media policy.

**03** To review and or update the digital handbook, with relevant policies and incorporated guidance that cover the professional or authorised use of social media and appropriate use of personal social media accounts.

**04** All staff should complete a mandatory 'Introduction to Police Social Media' before they are permitted to access the IoMC accounts. This should provide a video (or written) pre-brief on key aspects of the role and be followed by a face-to-face training session culminating in a scenario-based assessment. This should include, at a minimum:

**This should include, at a minimum,**
- Strategic objectives
- Roles & responsibilities
- Technical training
- The adoption and use of a password management system such as 1Password for Teams
- Style and tone of posts
- Risk management
- Data protection
- Scenario-based training, incorporating, when, what and how to post. (Scenarios should range from judging examples of post on the basis of whether they are appropriate or not and the construction of posts regarding the information they receive on a range of issues, events and response to crime).
- Upon successful completion of the course an authorised user certificate should be awarded.

**05** Refresher training should be facilitated by eLearning and completed at least once in a twenty-four-month cycle. This should incorporate a test and successful completion should result in their authorised user certificate being renewed.

**06** An electronic learning package should be devised for supervisors to ensure compliance with policies and governance.

**07** A top tips and frequently asked questions video or eLearning module should be developed and made available for authorised users to maintain their knowledge and expertise.

**08** The practice of removing posts containing personal information, photographs, or images once no longer necessary should be incorporated into the social media and missing persons' policies.

**09** Training should be provided to officers and staff on how to respond to public contacts on personal social media accounts. This should also be included in policy documents.

**10** A force wide memo or reminder at briefings should be completed to ensure this level of ambiguity is addressed.

**11** IoMC should consider appointing dedicated staff members to manage social media feeds. This should include a specialist (dedicated fulltime publisher/s) and general (routine patrol officer users). Each should have a specific remit and operate within clear guidelines.

**12**    IoMC should consider reducing the number of accounts/pages hosted on Facebook – having a centralised 'main' account with updates and keeping the four neighbourhood accounts active.

**13**    IoMC should consider the implementation of a content calendar outlining some pre-planned posts from the different departments and then some organic/ spontaneous posts.

**14**    IoMC should conduct a survey with young people to ascertain their preferred method of social media and as a result target relevant platforms to encourage more engagement.

**15**    The use of the RAG system should be developed with consideration given to redesigning the alerts and embedding video content.

**16**    Consideration should be given to using traditional media outlets, newspaper, television, radio and leaflets to raise awareness of the Tweet Beat RAG system.

**17**    IoMC should review their policy in respect of what posts are deemed acceptable and professional and apply more emphasis on posting articles that keep the public informed and updated.

**18** IoMC should consider dip sampling (auditing) and requesting regular feedback in terms of posts and Tweets to ensure that the social media platforms are being utilised professionally and effectively.

**19** IoMC should reflect on the good practice demonstrated by civilian users and ensure that posting in other non-police online communities is part pf their digital engagement strategy. During the review, it became apparent that there is a lack of knowledge regarding the use of copyright images which could lead to breaches of Copyright law.

**20** IoMC should consider a bank of copyright cleared images which are available for social media use. This will support consistency and protect the IoMC from becoming involved in a breach of copyright.

**21** Social media training should incorporate information around the use of images and copyright legislation, including the simply process of copyrighting an image. Images taken by authorised users on IoMC devices are automatically copyrighted to the IoMC. Other images sourced from the public domain need to be copyright cleared.

**22** IoMC revisits and updates its guidelines for crime reporting pathways via its social media and other online platforms.

**23** IoMC should revisit and reissue guidelines regarding how to receive and signpost reports of crime made via social media.

**24** Subject to the acceptance of the recommendations within this report and a decision on rationalising its social media outlets, the IoMC should:

- Ensure consistency with all sites clearly/more clearly marked '**NOT 24/7**' or '**not for reporting crimes**'.
- That every unit or station with a social media outlet identifies an individual to check messages prior to every shift commencing and that this is recorded as complete.

**25** The IoMC should consider providing face-to-face workshops with members of the community who do not yet engage via that medium. This would present an opportunity for people to learn from a trusted source, would build on community engagement and provide a platform to network into those parts of the population that do not yet access such media.

**Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference for the independent review are as follows:

- **To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Isle of Man Constabulary's use of social media;**

- **To identify areas to improve and enhance their social media engagement of the force;**

- **To assess which social media platforms the Isle of Man Constabulary should use to best meet their objectives and develop its social media policing vision for the future; and**

- **Based on the findings, to make recommendations on the policy and practice regarding the use of social media within the Isle of Man Constabulary operating procedure.**

**Approach and Methodology:**

The review team incorporated a number of distinct stages during the review.

**Stage 1**

Involved testing whether the current social media policies and procedures are fit for purpose. All relevant documentation was analysed in detail in order to provide assurance or make recommendations regarding policy, practice, compliance and governance of social media arrangements within the IoMC. The list of documents reviewed include the following:

- **The Digital Strategy**
- **Accredited Users Policy**
- **Personal Appropriate Use of Social Media**
- **Publication Calendar**
- **Digital Toolbox materials**

## Stage 2

This was to test whether strategies and policies are consistently applied throughout the organisation at all levels. This included:

Scenario based testing via surveying and interviews with staff.

- **Audit and analysis of IOM Constabulary's Digital footprint (over agreed historic period)**

## Stage 3

Testing whether social media training adequately reflects policy, procedures and evidence of positive impact.

- **Review of Social Media Training Strategy.**

- **Analysis of the training material (both offline and online) to ensure it is contemporary, credible and relevant.**

- **Observation of training sessions delivered by the Constabulary and completion of online training by the review team (subject to COVID 19 restrictions).**

- **Engaging a sample group of trainees to establish the impact of training and evidence of its influence.**

- **The review team to analyse any existing reports detailing the evaluation of the impact of training.**

## Stage 4

To test whether the Constabulary effectively manage and respond to any concerns, complaints or allegations raised via social media channels. This involved:

- **A review of recent cases and how these have been managed by the Constabulary.**

- **Scenario based testing via surveying and interviews with staff.**

**Methodology used to inform the review included staff and public engagement surveys, staff interviews and a desktop review of the IoMC's digital and social media platforms.**

The review team also used its social listening activities to measure, review and analyse the current processes, themes and styles of content delivered on all digital and social media channels. Recommendations are provided on what works well, what could work better and how the force can capitalise on its own best practice in its continued dedication to digital engagement.

Research was conducted into best practice from a number of police forces across the UK. In addition, the review team considered the platforms the force currently uses in comparison with new and emerging video-based platforms to ascertain whether the force should evolve past its current use of Twitter and Facebook and Instagram.

Formal recommendations have been proposed as a result of evidence collected from staff and members of the public in relation to what works, what could be improved and how this could reasonably be achieved.

## Measuring Engagement

Traditional research methods have been used as part of the review in order to capture data on how police staff and the public understand and engage with the force via digital means.

Two separate surveys were designed to ascertain the views of members of the public and the police officers and staff working in IoMC. The surveys were designed to ascertain the views and understanding of how the IoMC uses social media to engage with the public. The workforce survey was completed by 107 respondents including police officers, constabulary staff, and temporary staff. The public survey was completed by 730 members of the IoM population.

The findings arising from the surveys were then used to inform and design a series of semi-structured interviews with five Constabulary staff. The purpose of these interviews was used to test the validity and understanding of the survey findings and were subsequently used to formulate the recommendations from the review. In essence, 80 pages of interview transcripts were reviewed and data analysed in order to inform the findings.

**Desktop Review**

In addition to surveys, several desktop activities were undertaken to understand the training provided, engagement levels and how IoMC compares with other similar forces.  This included:

- **a policy review of the training materials provided;**

- **monitoring the force's social media channels over a series of months to establish its reach and engagement levels; and**

- **a comparative analysis to benchmark and understand the context of how the force works in relation to its size, budget, and population.**