Two police forces save £4 million annually through collaborative finance and HR strategy

South Wales Police and Gwent Police

South Wales Police and Gwent Police are collaborating on a shared Unit4 enterprise resource planning (ERP) strategy which is saving the two forces up to £4 million, improving policing outcomes, and keeping the citizens of southern Wales safer.

A single, golden record of finance and HR data in each force is driving process automation, ease of use, and improved resource allocation.

Key benefits include:

- Better outcomes: the right police resource can be deployed to the right location, at the right time, with the right skills
- Increased efficiency: Saved £4 million annually via process automation
- Faster time-to-value: South Wales Police went live in 19 months; Gwent Police in just nine months

Protecting the people of southern Wales

South Wales Police is the largest police force in Wales, providing service to 1.3 million people — equivalent to 41% of the Welsh population. Neighbouring Gwent Police provides service to 570,000 people, and, together, the two forces cover 60% of the population of Wales.

When Umar Hussain, MBE, joined South Wales Police in 2007 as Chief Financial Officer, his vision was to transform finance and HR in support of modern, more adaptive policing. Back then, the force was faced with multiple fragmented and overlapping systems, ranging from duty management, HR and payroll, to performance recording, training, and asset management. With data locked in silos, this disjointed approach was a barrier to change.

"Our technology goal was to standardize on fewer, more integrated systems," Umar explains. "That way we could more easily target the right police resource to the right location, at the right time, with the right skills."

Neighboring Gwent Police faced similar challenges. "We shared certain joint teams with South Wales Police, but mainly separate systems. Our goal was to collaborate with South Wales, using the ERP blueprint model to achieve similar finance and HR transformation," says Nigel Stephens, Chief Officer (Resources), Gwent Police.

Industry
Public Service - Police

Location
Bridgend & Cwmbran, Wales

Size
Collectively 7,000 staff

Product
Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Challenges

Overcome multiple fragmented and overlapping systems, ranging from duty management, HR and payroll, to performance recording, training, and asset management. With data locked in silos, the disjointed data delayed decision making and inhibited change.

Key metrics

£4 million

Annual savings through back-office automation

Hourly refresh of daily data updates

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"Armed with this rich, evidence-based insight, we can connect our workforce to demand and achieve better outcomes for citizens across southern Wales."

Umar Hussain
MBE, Chief Financial Officer, South Wales Police

South Wales Police spearheaded the launch of a fully integrated Unit4 ERP platform comprising Finance, Procurement, Payroll and HR. It also interfaces with the Global Rostering Solution (or GRS — Rostering, Sickness Management, Absence Management, and Time Management) and Kallidus (Courses, Skills, and Performance Development Reviews). In due course, Gwent Police followed suit, implementing a separate instance of the ERP platform, but with a shared interface of operational systems alongside South Wales Police.

The ERP system comprises a single golden record of people resources and feeds the information to GRS, along with training skills data for each force, seamlessly connected with a Command and Control System (CCS), a mobile data system, and a person/vehicle location system.

GRS is transforming how both forces deploy resources. Now, when a 999 call arrives in a control room, the agent has a single view of the incident via the CCS, the resources via the GRS, and the location of those resources/vehicles. This enables them to immediately deploy the appropriately-skilled officer resources to attend the incident scene, for example, an officer trained in dealing with domestic abuse or civil unrest.

Likewise, if a burglary occurs, an officer with skilled knowledge of the local neighborhood and community can be re-routed instantly to the scene to provide reassurance, maybe advising familiar homeowners in the area to lock their windows.

"For the first time, we have a single, complete, timely picture of demand, the skills, and resources available to meet that demand, and the nature of the incident," says Umar. Armed with this rich, evidence-based insight, we can connect our workforce to demand and achieve better outcomes for citizens across southern Wales. This enables us to realize our vision of the right person at the right place at the right time with the right technology and skills."

Meet the demand for services more effectively

The unified view of resources also supports improved people planning. "We can see all the current skills we have today and their profile, such as their age, experience, leave allocation, and training. This enables both forces to proactively plan future skills strategy, filling gaps, managing retirement plans, and more effectively meeting the demand for services," says Nigel.

South Wales Police deployed their comprehensive ERP platform — comprising everything from finance and payroll, to HR and all integrations — in 19 months. Rachel Lonergan, FIRMS System Manager, was among the team of 12 involved. She explains, "We collaborated closely with Unit4 Professional Services throughout and they were excellent. The team provided specialist advice, understood our goals, were professional, and always looked to the future."

Using the lessons learned from this first implementation, Gwent Police deployed their Unit4 instance in just nine months, developing the system

with South Wales police to achieve a best practice ERP model and process flow. "The shared model makes a huge difference, minimizing complexity, streamlining updates, and ensuring one common way of working," says Rachel.

By transforming finance and resources management at both South Wales Police and Gwent Police, it is estimated that the two Unit4 implementations are releasing as much as £4 million to front-line services.

"Where in the past, for example, we had 40 data fields to complete, we now have one golden record. This complete, accurate data is also updated as often as 30 times a day. All of this is resulting in smarter, more flexible policing," says Umar.

Nigel adds, "Previously, up to 92% of our AP invoices arrived without a purchase order. In just 12 months, 72% now include a PO number — and that number is set to increase in the coming months. Process automation like this contributes to significant savings across Gwent Police."

The joint systems team is currently implementing the electronic time management system and increased mobile functionality, all underpinned by Unit4. They will also tie training closer to demand, understanding where upcoming specialist training skills are needed — such as public order training — and develop the appropriate courses. "The ERP operating model is also open to other forces. The design can be replicated quickly both locally and nationally for even more efficient and effective policing," says Umar.

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