



**Police and Crime Plan Priority:** Emergency COVID19 response

**Title:** Protect the organisational health of West Midlands Police, so it not only responds to the national emergency effectively, but recovers and returns to normality as quickly as possible

**Presented by:** ACC Vanessa Jardine

**Purpose of paper**

1. The purpose of this paper is to set out how West Midlands Police (WMP) is responding efficiently and effectively to COVID-19 and how WMP is working to provide adequate PPE, COVID19 testing and the financial impact of COVID19. The paper will include:
  - Is adequate PPE available to WMP?
  - What is the Force's approach to effective use of specials?
  - COVID19 Testing update
  - COVID19: Financial impact

**Background**

2. West Midlands Police response to coronavirus is currently the highest priority in the force. This is a global health emergency and the West Midlands region is a hotspot for this deadly disease. WMP have been planning the response to COVID19 since the beginning of February 2020 and there have been some changes in the policing priorities because of this emergency. It is paramount that WMP support the effort to

save lives and protect the NHS by stopping the infection rate and ensuring our policing response is efficient and effective to support this.

3. As the expert understanding of the coronavirus develops so too does WMP's understanding of the disease and the impacts on operational policing. As national safety advice continues to adapt WMP adapts with them because keeping WMP employees safe at work is paramount. The development of testing employees also continues to develop and WMP preparedness and planning is detailed within the paper.

#### **West Midlands Police PPE – *Is adequate PPE available to WMP?***

4. Public Health England (PHE) have recently updated the guidance around Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The best line of defence remains regular handwashing, staying two metres apart and sanitising work stations often. The revised PPE advice scales back the original guidance making it more practical and suitable for the level of risk WMP currently face, however there is still a requirement for an increased amount of PPE. Figure 1 highlights the new Guidance around PPE with the old guidance as a comparison. This detail is constantly being reviewed and updated and WMP are prepared to respond changes.

<b>New Guidance</b>	<b>Old Guidance</b>
You <b>do not</b> need to wear a fluid resistant surgical mask (IIR) if working in a police building	You should <b>wear</b> a fluid resistant surgical mask (IIR) if there are no other control measures available e.g. screens or social distancing
You <b>do not</b> need to wear disposable (non-latex) gloves if working in a police building	You should <b>risk assess</b> whether you need to wear disposable (non-latex) gloves if working in a police building
You <b>do not</b> need to wear disposable (non-latex) gloves if contact with the public is likely but social distancing is available	You should <b>risk assess</b> whether you need to wear disposable (non-latex) gloves if contact with the public is likely, but social distancing is available

You **do not** need to wear disposable aprons if contact with the public is likely but social distancing is available

You should **risk assess** whether you need to wear disposable aprons if contact with the public is likely but social distancing is available

You **do not** need to wear goggles if contact with the public is likely but social distancing is available

You should **risk assess** whether you need to wear goggles if contact with the public is likely but social distancing is available

*Figure 1 – New PPE Guidelines*

5. Providing the appropriate level of PPE to all officers and staff is a key priority for WMP.
6. WMP began planning and purchasing of PPE at an early stage and have therefore been in a strong position to respond to the changes in PHE advice. This has been evidenced in the most recent changes as highlighted in Figure 1. With the old and new guidelines that came about in quick succession WMP were prepared and ready for the changes and importantly able to respond with the appropriate PPE to all staff where necessary.
7. As part of WMP's response to COVID-19 a strong PPE capability that is responsible for sourcing, distributing and monitoring the use of usage of the PPE has been established. This function is overseen by a member of the Force Executive Team.
8. Appropriate PPE has been rolled out to all areas of the Force where there is a requirement. All PPE issued is in line with the national standard agreed for Policing. There continues to be significant operational input into the PPE that is being sourced and how it is used.
9. The Police Federation and Trade Unions have been fully engaged and consulted throughout and feedback is very good.
10. The Force has established a central store for all items of PPE. A stocktake is undertaken four times a day to assess our stock levels and take action where needed. The Force is holding enough stock for the next two weeks across all items of PPE.
11. A daily PPE update is provided to the Gold and Silver command structure for each item of PPE, this details the current stock level, expected consumption over the next

12 weeks, the quantity that is on order and when that order will arrive. Each item is then given an appropriate status: red, amber or green. This level of visibility provides ongoing assurance.

12. Strong supply lines have been developed with exiting suppliers and through developing relationships with new suppliers. The Force is also using the newly established national policing stock for PPE where it is able to meet our needs. The sourcing of PPE is far more time consuming and it is estimated it is now taking 5 times longer to source items needed by WMP. WMP have ensured there is sufficient resource assigned to meet this need.
13. Through creative thinking and a relentless focus on PPE the position of WMP is expected to remain strong position, albeit PPE stocks across the globe are reducing and should the position change this would be highlighted immediately and reported into the COVID-19 command structure.
14. Each Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) and Department have designated PPE single points of contact, who are responsible for taking receipt of PPE stock delivered from the central WMP store, distributing it appropriately and feeding back to the central function if additional supplies are needed.
15. Each NPU and Department receives a weekly supply of PPE to ensure they have what they need. If there are any shortages following this delivery these are immediately addressed.
16. WMP is engaged with the national PPE team and are a playing a proactive part in supporting other Forces across the country. As part of the national PPE programme, WMP has taken responsibility for being the regional PPE store and has setup a separate store for PPE that is sourced nationally. This stock of PPE is stored at WMP and then distributed to the Forces in the region based on their needs.

### **Specials – *What is West Midlands Police Approach for the effective use of Specials?***

17. Superintendent Martin Hurcomb leads the deployment and development of the Special Constabulary (SC). To enhance the leadership and direction and in response to the challenges of COVID19, a Specials governance team has been established that includes Chief Officer Mike Rogers, Deputy Chief Iain O'Brian and WMP People and Organisation Development Assistant Director, Chris Thurley. The team meet regularly to ensure the Special Constabulary are effectively utilised.

18. To help provide a clear operational response to COVID-19, a SC deployment strategy was agreed. The strategy is made in the absence of emergency powers, requiring SC to be available etc. The deployment of the SC falls into 3 disciplines:
- Operations
  - NPUs
  - Force Response
19. As of 7<sup>th</sup> April, there are 70 deployable officers. Currently, 47 SC officers are self-isolating and work is underway to make contact with SC officers who WMP have not recently been in contact with.
20. Across the entire SC portfolio, conversations continue to take place to understand how many SC Officers would consider increasing their hours or working with us for a set period in a paid capacity.
21. Gloucestershire currently have an approach that pays members of the SC during the COVID19 crisis. Conversations are underway to understand Gloucestershire's approach to paying members of the SC. In the absence of a more formal approach at this stage SC officers have already worked an additional 2,000 hours over the last 2 weeks. Work will also be progressed to understand if there are opportunities for SC Officers who have lost their substantive roles or have been furloughed to pick either more hours as a SC Officer or move into paid employment for the force.
22. During the past two weeks, the police team/SPOC positions have been reviewed and confirmed for NPU's, Force Response and Operations. This is providing a more efficient approach to tasking and critically, forward planning of duties that provides invaluable support to deliver core policing responsibilities, such as calls for service within Force Response and patrolling key locations within communities for Local Policing. All of this activity is co-ordinated by the Citizen in Policing Team.
23. To demonstrate the fantastic support offered by the SC during this period a Newsbeat article was published this week. The article highlights examples of individual and collective excellence, which really is making a tremendous difference to both WMP's ability protect the public from harm, and indeed extend the hand of friendship at a truly unprecedented time.

## **COVID19 Testing Update**

24. It was announced late on the evening of 9 April that the testing of police officers and staff would commence on 10 April. There have been 106 tests conducted as of 17.30 hrs on 14 April 2020.
25. The testing site is situated at Edgbaston Cricket ground and provides 50 slots per day between 14.00 and 16.30 hours for officers and staff from the region to be tested. For this purpose the region is West Midlands, West Mercia, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and British Transport Police. As the host force we are co-ordinating the regional returns and allocations.
26. The tests are conducted on site by NHS staff and the tests are administered to officers and staff whilst they sit in their vehicles. The test is a simple throat and nose swab, which is then processed with the result being obtained within 72 hours and provided directly to the officer or staff member.
27. Initially staff in key roles within the organisation such as dispatch or response, roles that required attendance at the work place, were prioritised before moving into key areas such as FCID.
28. We are now in a position to start to work towards the most recent self-isolation cases being tested within 24/48 hours. Ensuring the opportunities for staff to return to work are maximised.
29. The feedback over the bank holiday weekend has been positive in terms of the efficiency of the test centre and the support provided by the force in arranging the tests.
30. The process is now incorporating contact with officers post the test to understand the results and advise if they should return to work following a negative test. There remains some uncertainty of the action to take if the test is positive and this has been raised through Gold Command for advice to be taken nationally.
31. Officers and staff are eligible/not eligible for testing for the following reasons:
- Self-isolating because *you* (an identified key worker) are displaying symptoms then **you are eligible** to take this test yourself.
  - You are a key worker self-isolating because *someone else in your household* is displaying symptoms, and that person is over the age of 18 then **they are eligible to take the test** - not you. In this instance all adult household members are eligible for testing.

- If you are a key worker self-isolating because an under 18 year old in your household is displaying symptoms then **you are not eligible** – this is because this test centre cannot currently test minors. Please contact your employer who will be able to advise on this.
- If you are self-isolating but neither a member of your household or you are displaying symptoms then **you are not eligible**

32. Work is underway for tests to be available for children over the coming days.

### Financial Impact of Covid-19

33. Within WMP the finance department set up a code to record all Covid-19 expenditure in February 2020. Initially all expenditure was held against the force contingency budget. However, once the governance boards were established it became apparent that expenditure on Covid-19 related activities would take place across the force, so for 2020-21 budgets have been established to provide £250,000 for Gold Command and £250,000 for force contingency. There is an expectation that with the pace at which the force is rightly responding to the pandemic these budgets may need to be increased when required. Table 1 below shows expenditure on Covid-19 up to the 31 March 2020:

	March 2019-20				comments
	budget £000's	actual costs £000's	commitments £000's	period total £000's	
staff overtime	4	0	4	4	<i>overtime by IT to configure first 600 laptops</i>
Total of pay related expenditure	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	
Property related expenditure	0	0	15	15	<i>work at Wolverhampton cell block to augment book in desk, and cleaning materials</i>
Transport related expenditure	0	0	0	0	
Supplies and Services	996	1,029	20	1,049	<i>actual costs are receipted orders. Commitments are credit card and CHAPS payments</i>
Total non pay related expenditure	<b>996</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1,064</b>	
Total of all expenditure	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1,068</b>	

Table 1 COVID 19 Expenditure

34. The table demonstrates that the vast majority of expenditure in March 2020 was Supplies and Services which consisted of the purchase and dissemination of PPE. In addition the force needed to make some minor alterations to the cell block at

Wolverhampton to protect officers, staff and prisoners in that facility, and configure 600 laptop machines and mobile devices at pace for colleagues to be able to work effectively from home per Government guidelines.

35. In April 2020, as we have started a new financial year we have set up a budget of £250,000 each for Gold Command and Force Contingency to determine where expenditure needs to take place and track that effectively. However, it is recognised that this will need to be flexed at pace to maintain the momentum at which the force must operate in relation to its response to the pandemic.

36. To provide an understanding of expected cost challenges in the next few weeks the areas where significant expenditure is expected to take place have been summarised as follows:

- Shared Services will continue to purchase PPE given the changes in Public Health England guidance around self-distancing.
- Multi Agency Response Team (MART) will commenced on 10 April 2020. Whilst most officers in this team have volunteered for these roles from elsewhere in the force some have come from externally funded roles and will be a direct cost to the force. The marginal cost of this team is expected to be in the region of £25,000 for April.
- Overtime in custody is expected to increase as minimum staffing levels must be maintained. This is prevalent at Wolverhampton where prisoners with suspected Covid-19 are detained.
- Information Technology and Design (IT&D) have provided laptops to 600 members of staff to enable them to work from home. The purchase of a further 1,000 laptops has been accelerated to be issued in April 2020. The purchase cost of these 1,600 laptops is £1,427,000. In addition, the 1,600 machines incorporate a 4G SIM card with data access costing a further £211,000. Furthermore, there is a cost to configure and distribute these machines and given the pace at which WMP are moving to greater remote working there is an expected requirement for additional server and other hardware capacity which is estimated to cost a further £250,000.
- Facilities teams have experienced additional costs for regular cleaning, decontamination and removal of clinical waste estimated to be £30,000 per month.

- Police officers and staff may be moved during this time from their substantive roles to support the force in its response to the pandemic. Some of these roles will be externally funded, examples being Commonwealth Games Planning and Safer Travel. Where these post holders move roles there will be a direct cost to the force. It is estimated from posts filled at the time of writing that these roles will cost around £70,000 per month.
- WMP will expect to lose income from activities which are not currently being completed during the lockdown period. Example include officers deployed to Birmingham Airport, loss of income from training and from police led prosecutions and traffic investigation. It is estimated that the loss of income for April will be £480,000.

37. There is no provision for the above costs in the overall 2020/21 budget of the Force. It is expected that the government will provide additional funding to Forces to cover the costs of PPE required in relation to COVID-19. However, it is unclear whether the government will provide additional funding to Forces to cover all other costs of COVID-19. The Home Office asked all forces to provide the indicative costs estimates of dealing with the crisis. Also representation has been made to government to allow increased flexibility in relation to specific grants and the front loading of grants to assist with cashflows.

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