Strategic Policing and Crime Board

19 May 2020

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Emergency Police and Crime Plan

Title: West Midlands Police responds efficiently and effectively to COVID-19, and works in partnership to protect the public of the West Midlands

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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 in partnership to protect the public. The paper will include:

   - Our assessment of how the COVID-19 crisis is affecting crime patterns
   - How we are maintaining our service to victims of domestic abuse
   - How we are continuing to protect children and vulnerable people online
   - How we are using new COVID-19 powers
   - How we are protecting NHS and essential workers
   - How we are operating effectively with partners
   - How we are deploying staff to cope with the crisis How we are supporting volunteering and community activity

Background

2. WMP continues to prioritise the response to COVID-19, maintaining a major incident response in partnership with the Strategic Coordination Group. WMP have been planning the response to COVID-19 since the beginning of February 2020. 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. The response to COVID-19 is continually assessed, we have strong partnerships across the West Midlands policing region and beyond and these partnerships are crucial in ensuring we are doing the right things for our community in response to this global crisis.

4. Our assessment of how the COVID-19 crisis is affecting crime patterns. The assessment of crime and demand during the current COVID-19 period is routinely reviewed and reports to a weekly tasking forum.

5. The weekly tasking process in response to COVID-19 enables any changes or developments in crime to be tracked and scanned at an early opportunity and ensure that force actions can be tasked outside of the daily management processes.

Volume Crime Plausibility Assessment

6. A volume crime plausibility assessment investigates the likelihood of an event occurring and whether crime or demand will increase or decrease. Key crime types have been assessed as follows: residential burglary; commercial burglary; personal robbery; theft shops and stalls; violence with injury (Non-Domestic Abuse (DA)); domestic abuse; child abuse; hate crime and vehicle crime.

7. Residential Burglary accounts for 7% of usual Total Recorded Crime (TRC). As predicted, residential burglary has significantly decreased, reducing by 42% and now reflecting 6% of TRC. Distraction and aggravated offences, however, have been low and stable and not seen an expected uplift. With a phased return to employment and schools, it is likely that offences will slowly rise when restrictions are lifted. This may cause an initial spike in a period of usual reduction.

8. Commercial burglary accounts for 2% of usual TRC. Commercial burglary has reduced by only 6.8% in the last six weeks with no significant changes to crime patterns. The hypothesis remains that burglaries will be discovered as businesses start to re-open, causing an increase in reports. These may be fewer than first expected due to the general availability of goods after the initial panic buying.

9. Personal robbery accounts for 3% of usual TRC. Personal robbery offences have seen a significant reduction of 53.6% since schools were closed and restrictions put

in place. It has emerged that the re-opening of schools, Night Time Economy (NTE) and other environments will be phased, so the expected increase in robbery will be dependent on how and when this happens. The gradual re-opening of schools and other educational facilities is likely to be soonest and is likely to have significant impact with a larger proportion of robbery victims and offenders being of school age. The targeting of key workers in robberies, potentially to take ID or equipment, has not been seen.

10. Commercial robbery accounts for 1% of usual TRC. Business robbery has remained low and stable since the beginning of February, which would be the usual seasonal pattern. It has reduced by 3% in the last six weeks. None of the predicted targeted offences have been experienced in any significant volume. Initial panic buying has eased and goods are generally available in stores or on-line so this is unlikely to change.

11. Theft Shops & Stalls (TSS) usually accounts for 6% of usual TRC. TSS has reduced by 47.4% with almost all retail premises now closed, aside from supermarkets. Initial panic buying has eased and goods are generally available in stores or on-line, so open premises have been targeted less than expected. Volume will still increase significantly as traditional hotspot locations begin to re-open and footfall increases.

12. Violence with injury (VWI) (Non-DA) accounts for 8% of usual TRC. Youth violence is 60.9% lower than it was prior to the week commencing 23 March 2020, and now contributes to just 2% of TRC. It has emerged that the re-opening of schools, NTE and other environments will be phased so the expected increase in violence will be dependent on how and when this happens. The gradual re-opening of schools and other educational facilities is likely to be soonest and will impact on violence involving young people, changing locations back to town and city centres and increased crime on public transport.

13. Domestic Abuse (DA) accounts for 17% of usual TRC. The weekly volume of DA has been stable since the beginning of March with a reduction of just 4% since restrictions in movement began. Offences would normally be in a period of seasonal reduction. After reducing considerably at the start of lockdown domestic abuse has been steadily rising on a weekly basis. Nevertheless, levels are still lower than pre-lockdown levels. There are concerns regarding children witnessing these events. With victims seeing a phased return to employment and other activities, it is almost certain that these offences will steadily rise as this happens to at least pre-lockdown levels, if not higher due to historic reporting over this period.

14. Child Abuse accounts for 5% of usual TRC. With levels of school attendance being significantly lower than normal, referrals from partner agencies, especially those from education have been lower. Therefore, recorded child abuse has reduced by 47.7%. The phased return to schools will be the driver of how and when an increase in offences is seen. There may be more complex cases that take longer to transpire due to the length of time the child has been outside of the school environment and lost trust in adult relationships. Children will also have suffered from longer periods of neglect than a usual school holiday period, and many may have been exposed to situations of domestic abuse without intervention.

15. Hate Crime accounts for 3% of usual TRC. Hate crime has reduced by 23.7% in the weeks since restricted movements began. This is a lower reduction than other violent crimes. Some key themes in offending have emerged based on the circumstances. The Chinese community are still being targeted, albeit in small numbers. Offending is predominantly in residential areas, much emerging from neighbour disputes however, a number of offences are occurring on buses. Offences against key workers have increased. The greatest threat to emerge in hate crime is around far right groups' sentiment and this is likely to continue.

16. Vehicle crime accounts for 11% of usual TRC. Vehicle crimes have reduced by 43% in the last six weeks and remain very low, most notably theft offences. The hypothesis remains that this is unlikely to change until restrictions are lifted.

17. How we are maintaining our service to victims of domestic abuse Domestic abuse remains a priority for West Midlands Police, with all officers and staff committed to delivering the highest possible service to victims. Detective Superintendent Simpson presents an overview of domestic abuse at the weekly Force tasking meetings, which ensures that immediate safeguarding and suspect management actions are prioritised. The monthly domestic abuse operational group continues to meet and has attendees from all relevant force departments and Neighbourhood Policing Units.

18. The COVID-19 pandemic control measures introduced by the government still present a risk for domestic abuse victims and crime. Whilst this needs to be in place, it reduces opportunities for victims of domestic abuse to report offences due to the presence of the abuser within the household. It also has the potential to increase the risk of tensions and abusive behaviours within the home.

Communications

19. WMP have a number of communications initiatives running to remind victims and the wider community that WMP are still very much there to support them. The latest initiative includes #NoExcuseForAbuse which is sponsored by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. There is a broader communication strategy and WMP has featured heavily on local and national media outlets citing the positve action being undertaken in domestic abuse cases (local and national news, Radio 4 World at One).

20. WMP, together with the OPCC and DA consortium, launched the #NoExcuseForAbuse media campaign which was widely shared on social media and included electronic billboards at supermarkets. This was further supported by frequent WMNow messages reminding victims that they can see help. WMP have also shared the Home Office campaign #YouAreNotAlone which links to national support and advice.

Support from External Partners

21. WMP has sought to engage victims and survivors support networks through an extraordinary DA Independent Advisory Group meeting, which was held via video/telephone link. Topics for discussion were the DA response under COVID-19 pandemic, DA demand (both WMP and attendees), communication campaign, DVPOs and WMP command structures. Further meetings will be held as West Midalnds Police progresses through the next stage of the COVID-19 pandemic and all effort will be made to engage in consultation both to gauge victim feeling and also views on any changes to our response.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

22. Referral rates into the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) continue to be monitored. Partners who are facing challenges due to staffing issues during this time are aware that the MARAC team will support them in finding ways to access the process regardless.

Emerging Threats and Opportunities

23. Interim changes to the Crown Prosecution Service charging model during COVID-19, have meant that opportunities to obtain 3-hour charge decisions in non-remand domestic abuse cases have been removed. This has led to an increase in the number of suspects on bail following arrest whist the decision is obtained within 28 days. The Public Protection Unit, alongside collegues in Criminal Justice Services, are engaged in both local and national discussions with the whole criminal justice sector to establish pathways back to the 3-hour charging window as soon as possible.

24. Furthermore, due to the closure of regional Magistrates and Crown Courts there is a growing backlog of domestic abuse cases awaiting a court hearing. Detective Superintendent Simpson is part of the national working group currently exploring the opportunities for virtual magistrates courts trials, where victims may be able to give evidence via video link. West Midlands Police is also working closely with Staffordshire Police who hold the criminal justice subject matter expert lead for this project. Careful attention is being paid to the element of victim choice, alongside the legalities of virtual 'v' physical attendance at court. We have already commenced engagment with our local court IDVA provision to ensure that there are suitable specialist victim support measures if virtual trials are implemented. At the moment this is still in the scoping phase, however, we are meeting weekly with a view to progress this as an option as soon as possible.

Domestic Abuse Demand

25. Daily Domestic Abuse reporting levels remain stable, with a peak of 146 offences recorded on 25 April 2020. Ordinarily, offences range between 105 and 129 crimes per day. Demand is monitored on a daily basis which allows for any demand criticality to be seen and responded to. Table 1 illustrates reporting levels from 20 April 2020 to 30 April 2020.

YTD Average	Range	20-Apr	21-Apr	22-Apr	23-Apr	24-Apr	25-Apr	26-Apr	27-Apr	28-Apr	29-Apr	30-Apr
114	**105 - 129**	132	120	100	113	119	146	117	120	125	130	118

Table 1. Domestic Abuse Total Recorded Crime from 20 April 2020 - 30 April 2020

Positive Outcomes

26. Year to date DA postive outcomes continue to show an increase which is currently at 11.9%. During April we have seen average weekly postive outcomes at 111 crimes per week, compared with April 2019 which was at an average of 71 per week. If the April trajectory continues, 5000 postive outcomes in 2020/21 can be expected which is an increase of over 1000 on the previous year. Table 2 highlights the DA positive outcomes YTD.

2019/2020			2020/2021		
TRC	Positive Outcomes	Rate	TRC	Positive Outcomes	Rate
41542	3996	9.6%	3565	423	11.9%

Table 2. DA positive outcome and percentage rates YTD comparison

Domestic Abuse Summary

27. During the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic abuse will continue to be a priority for West Midlands Police. The service to victims has not been reduced and we will continue to align the appropriate level of trained resources into adult investigation and safeguarding to ensure we are able to protect and safeguard victims.

How we are continuing to protect children and vulnerable people online

28. Child sexual exploitation is a priority for West Midlands Police, with all officers and staff committed to delivering the highest possible service to victims. The Force has a dedicated and specialist team whose primary purpose is to work in partnership with other agencies to safeguard vulnerable children at risk of being sexually exploited. The Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team (OCSET) is the Force's specific point of contact (SPOC) for the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) now part of the National Crime Agency (NCA). OCSET is a specialism within child abuse investigation and falls under the command of the Detective Chief Superintendent of the Public Protection Unit.

29. OCSET's dedicated intelligence resource receives referrals relating to online child sexual exploitation offences from CEP and the NCA who are the UK

gatekeepers. CEOP liaise with law enforcement agencies world-wide where a UK suspect is believed to have committed a criminal offence within international jurisdiction. Upon receipt, CEOP view and grade indecent images according to UK Sentencing Council guidelines, before disseminating to the relevant home force. Upon receipt of a NCA referral, OCSET Intelligence develops the information before the completed profile is allocated for investigation and offender apprehension activities.

Current Threat

30. In March 2020, in response to the UK government's introduction of measures to slow the spread of COVID-19, the National Crime Agency (NCA) conducted an initial review of the popular methods used by offenders to access indecent images of children (IIOC) online. This review indicated that offenders were seeking to utilise the unique circumstances to abuse children.

31. The NCA's assessment is that it is highly likely that restriction of movement, reduction of work and limited social interaction will see offenders act on their drivers for offending.

32. Due to social distancing measures, many children will be unable to engage face to face with their peers, turning towards online messaging and video chat platforms as a means to remain connected. The NCA report that livestreaming functions on platforms such at YouTube and Facebook saw their usage increase by 66% in countries where citizens were abiding by similar societal restrictions.

Current Demand

33. Locally, OCSET have experienced increased demand to develop intelligence to allow the nationally approved risk assessment and prioritisation toolkit, to identify those offenders who pose the most risk to children. OCSET has been utilising this tool kit to prioritise activity to effectively manage increasing demand, since its inception in 2012.

34. The additional intelligence work activity alongside the OCSET and COVID-19 staffing resilience measures have been managed through robust supervision and decision making; prioritising activity and taking into account clear risk factors through tested

means. This has allowed OCSET to maintain an efficient and effective intelligence led function to ensure it can respond rapidly to protect vulnerable children.

Operating Principles

35. West Midlands Police maintains a 24/7 contact centre to receive and assess calls for service, where incidents will be risk assessed and a response will be provided. Police officers will respond based on risk and ensure necessary action to safeguard individuals is taken where appropriate. The safeguarding of children and vulnerable people is the responsibility of all staff across the organisation and this area of work should not be undertaken in isolation. Specialist officers who progress child victim investigations sit within the Public Protection Unit. Service delivery of child abuse investigations during this period has been reviewed. PPU maintains an unchanged, dedicated investigative response to apprehend and prosecute perpetrators of crimes against children.

36. The OCSET intelligence function continues to monitor and triage daily intelligence disseminated by the NCA. OCSET's dedicated investigative team is continuing to take enforcement action to apprehend and prosecute perpetrators of online child sexual exploitation. West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) have maintained their online capability working at regional and national level to respond to the threat of online CSE and to proactively target high risk offenders.

Performance

37. Between1 April 2020 and 1 May 2020 OCSET has executed 14 Section 8 PACE warrants on high harm individuals. OCSET's current operating principles in response to COVID-19 has enabled business as usual to be maintained. Due to the complexity of online offending, enquiries are ongoing for referrals received during period lockdown period.

38. Child abuse reporting has decreased. This is unlikely to be because offending has reduced, it is more likely to be because abuse is normally reported by teachers, youth workers and other members of the community outside the home.

39. West Midlands Police and partners are supporting a social media campaign to raise awareness and provide preventative education to equip parents, children and young people with the skills they need to make safe and healthy choices to avoid situations

which put them at risk of online CSE. Useful links to informative websites and support agencies have been pushed out via WMP's social media platforms.

40. The See Me Hear Me campaign has been utilised. The campaign was established by the West Midlands Metropolitan Partnership (Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Borough Council, Sandwell Borough Council, Solihull Borough Council, Walsall Borough Council, Wolverhampton City Council and West Midlands Police) in June 2014.

41. Internally, messaging and guidance has been published for all officers to encourage the continuation of speaking to children at every opportunity, but in particular where police have responded to reports of a domestic disturbance or incidents of domestic abuse. 'The voice of the child' methodology illuminates the importance of speaking with children and maintaining contact with the vulnerable to ensure they are safe.

42. The NCA shared a professional online safety toolkit as part of their 'Thinkuknow' campaign. This has been incorporated into the suite of West Midlands Police's messaging campaign.

43. The ROCU and OCSET will support the West Midlands Police campaign by ensuring suitable proactive arrests or prosecutions are sent to corporate communications for consideration of a proactive media release. This will demonstrate to communities that West Midlands Police remains committed and dedicated to prevent and robustly target offenders who commit sexual exploitation against vulnerable children.

Children and Vulnerable People Online Summary

44. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online child sexual exploitation will continue to be a priority for West Midlands Police. The service to victims has not been reduced and relentless pursuit of high harm individuals who commit offences against vulnerable children will continue. The appropriate level of trained resources within OCSET intelligence and investigation will be maintained. OCSET will continue working jointly with other PPU, Force departments and partner agencies to ensure we are able to protect and safeguard victims.

How we are using new COVID-19 powers

45. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force on 26 March 2020. Included in these regulations are specific powers in

relation to restrictions on movement and gatherings. The specific powers state that if an officer believes someone is outside of the place where they are living without reasonable excuse they can:

- direct that a person return to the place where they are living
- give the person concerned any reasonable instructions the officer considers to be necessary
- use reasonable force in the exercise of the power to remove the person to the place where they are living

46. WMP have reinforced that these regulations have been introduced to respond to a public health emergency. It is important that we keep the public's trust throughout this anxious time. Officers have been using a four-step escalation approach when dealing with these situations:

- Engage – approach individuals with a neutral mind-set. Talk to people first
- Remember the majority of people will be complying with the restrictions
- Explain – using your professional judgement, if that person is in breach of the guidelines or does not understand, explain it to them. Make an effort to understand their situation. Ask individuals, groups or businesses whether they have heard about the new guidance, and how quickly they can comply with it. This should be done by stressing the risks to public health and the NHS
- Encourage – Emphasise the benefits of staying at home and how this will protect the NHS, save lives and help the most vulnerable in society
- Enforce – as a last resort use your powers to stop any activity which goes against the restrictions. Any enforcement must be necessary and proportionate and should be considered as a last resort

47. The Force's approach has been in line with the NPCC guidance to use the 4E's and only go to enforcement when absolutely required. We found that initially there was a quite a bit of difference between the NPUs, and departments despite conducting a number of briefing sessions with front line supervisors. As a result, the Force developed further guidance which has been briefed out to officers to provide greater consistency.

When and what should be recorded?

48. The advice from Force is that police officers and PCSOs only complete a direction to leave form using the Direction to Leave Application, when a requirement to enforce the power is required and individual(s) are non-compliant.

Body Worn Video

49. In line with other policies, such as use of force and stop and search, officers are advised to use their body worn video cameras for all direction to leave enforcements/recordings.

Juveniles

50. The direction to leave can only be issued to over 18's only. Under 18's can be dispersed but cannot be given Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). Some parents have been given FPNs.

Public Consultation

51. We have conducted a force-wide virtual scrutiny panel via the OPCC on the 23 April 2020. Feedback was generally positive and the OPCC have been sent a draft policy to review.

When to record names?

52. Where it is practicable to take full details this is preferred option, but if not due to large numbers or other factors, then names do not have to be recorded if it is not reasonably practicable.

Custody

53. Any substantive offences identified for example; shoplifting, burglary, dangerous driving etc. should be dealt with as normal and the public should be advised about any associated breaches of the Coronavirus Regulations which is in line with the College of Policing guidance. Formal action should not be taken against any breaches of the Coronavirus Regulations where a substantive offence can be pursued. The advice given is "If, after arresting for a substantive offence and at the conclusion of the investigation there is insufficient evidence to pursue the substantive

offence, then, if after consideration of the overall circumstances with a supervisor, it is believed that the breach of the coronavirus regulations was a significant part of the offending circumstances, and the points to prove are made out, then a FPN may be issued. This should be an exception."

Applications

54. A Direction to Leave (DTL) application has been designed and produced by WMP. This went live on 2 April 2020 and is the platform to record dispersals. WMP have developed this and are the first force in the country to automate this so officers don't need to email ACRO separately. This should negate any disparity between WMP data and ACRO data. There has been a significant reduction in the gap between the data but this should give 100% accuracy. WMP have also launched the Business Insights application which gives NPUs detailed information on who is being dispersed and where. All officers have access to the Go-to-app which is updated with all COVID-19 legislation and facts and questions. The use of force app has been updated to include force used in relation to COVID-19 enforcement.

Complaints

55. Up until 24 April 2020 we have received the following COVID-19 related complaints:

- 22 were for police not responding to reports of breaches
- 17 were for other (in the main, other crimes that have been filed due to COVID-19 and complaint over the investigation)
- 17 were for the way they were treated when enforcement was being carried out
- 14 were for officers not adhering to guidelines and/or not appearing to have correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or coming into contact with public and putting them at risk
- 5 were for social media releases

Data

56. The current total on our app is 1755 directions to leave. One individual has received five dispersals and a further eight people have been dispersed four times. A very

brief overview of how we compare from ACRO data as of 1 May 2020 is shown in table 3 below.

Force	Total	Last 2 weeks
West Midlands	322	163
Greater Manchester	171	129
Metropolitan	634	203
South Yorkshire	258	131
West Yorkshire	460	279
Warwickshire	22	11
West Mercia	87	52
Staffordshire	28	12
Lancashire	630	164
Thames valley	619	389
Devon and Cornwall	510	300

Table 3. Acro Data comparison across force areas – 1 May 2020

How we are protecting NHS and essential workers

57. Our initial response to the COVID-19 major incident involved a tiered response to identify locations. Initial objectives were to protect key locations and to bring structure and rigour to that patrolling activity. A total of three tiers were established.

58. Tier 1 sites were initially those hospitals responsible for critical healthcare provision across the West Midlands (the testing sites and Local Authority hubs have since been added). Over the first five weeks of WMP's response the patrol plan saw officers permanently based on these sites from 0700 to 2200, with regular visits from officers on nights. In addition to this, senior officers made contact with security managers in our hospitals to brief them on our plans and to reassure the frontline NHS staff. All patrol activity by WMP staff was captured on the Force's tasking and briefing system (Corvus) and was reported on each day in the Op Colonel Situation Report.

59. Tier 2 sites included iconic retail locations, including larger supermarkets. It is well known that the early days of the pandemic saw panic buying of certain items and there were fears that as certain items became scarcer, public fear may manifest itself as anger and violence towards other customers or retail workers. As such, Tier 2 sites received regular patrols and Neighbourhood Teams (NHTs) engaged with staff

and management at these stores to ensure that appropriate security systems and personnel were in place. This allowed these stores to manage the public's expectations and ensure their staff were able to operate in a safe environment.

60. Tier 3 locations were the smaller shops and local supermarkets who also received local support but on a less intensive basis. Again, all the operational activity was captured on Corvus, and analysis of this system has allowed WMP to deduce that there have been no more incidents of violence or aggressive behaviour to staff in these locations than happened before this crisis.

61. Given that these sites have become safe places for retail and NHS staff, a pattern was initially identified in Birmingham City Centre. The closing of the main shopping outlets meant footfall significantly decreased. This meant that a number of the street community who would beg from passers-by became more aggressive towards those who were still in the centre, and this was especially marked around the Children's Hospital and the Public Health England offices. The local NHT used the 4E approach (see paragraph 46) with the street community, securing alternative accommodation for the homeless with Birmingham City Council, and diverting many away from the area. Contact was made with the hospital and Public Health England staff who had felt vulnerable, and the police presence was increased at key times to reassure NHS staff on the major shift change times.

62. The final group of essential workers to mention is the WMP workforce. The PHE guidance around protecting our most vulnerable has been robustly implemented, and the Force has ensured that appropriate Personal Protective Equipment is always available for WMP frontline staff to maximise their safety as they play their part in protecting our communities.

63. The enforcement part of the 4E approach will at times place our officers in confrontational solutions and sometimes results in them being assaulted. During this pandemic a number of officers have been spat at, or deliberately coughed on by people who say they are infected with the virus. Even with their PPE, this can be distressing for our officers. To reflect these circumstances the Chief Constable has prepared an Impact Statement which describes the impact this aggravated assault has on our officers. The Chief Constable's statement is included as part of the prosecution case for a relevant offence.

How we are operating effectively with partners

64. West Midlands Police have a Command, Control and Co-ordination (C3) arrangement which is shared with Warwickshire and works across the West Midlands and Warwickshire conurbation. This arrangement remains in place and continues to adapt and evolve as necessary in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

65. **Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG):** SCG teleconferences now take place three times per week (as seen in table 5 below) as do the TCG teleconferences. This ensures swift tactical translation and delivery of actions. The battle rhythm for SCGs during the response period has continued to adapt to local need and activity.

66. **Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG**): The TCG mirrors the battle rhythm of the SCG. The TCG liaises closely with the Local Health Resilience Partnership. Both groups having cross-over membership to ensure consistency and good information sharing. The TCG has three core sub-groups:

    - Multi-Agency Information Cell
    - Media & Communications Cell
    - Excess Death Working Group

67. The TCG also retains the ability to use its existing sub-group structure to expedite priority work areas when required.

68. The Multi-Agency Information Cell leads the partnership on reporting into central government.

69. Table 5 demonstrates the infrastructure of the partnership arrangements and how this has grown significantly. This reflects the early investment by the region in planning for the response phase, and the start of the recovery phase.

Group	Frequency	Geography	Administration
SCG	Mon, Weds, Fri	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	WMP
TCG	Mon, Weds, Fri	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	Warwickshire Police
Multi-agency information Cell	7 days a week – office hours	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	Daily reporting to central government
Media & Communications Cell	7 days a week with out of hours arrangements	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	LRF sub-group
Vulnerable People Cell WG	Daily	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	SCG/TCG
Testing Group	**Weekly**	**West Midlands Region**	**Health**
PPE Sub group	**Monday & Thursday**	**West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire**	**SCG/TCG**
Mortality Planning Group	Weekly	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	Coronial Office and Leanne Deathridge (Walsall CC)
Nightingale WG	In hibernation	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	
Transport Group	Weekly – this has now become a recovery transport group	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	
Voluntary sector group	Activated as required.	West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire	
Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG)	**Weekly (first met 7th May 2020)**	**West Midlands conurbation & Warwickshire**	

Table 5. Infrastructure of WMP partnership arrangements

70. The partnership arrangements continue to work well with ongoing commitment from all relevant agencies to send consistent and appropriately senior or skilled attendees. The sub-groups have grown and adapted to suit the evolving crisis and continue to be an effective means of resolving issues at pace. The frequency of the SCG and TCG has reduced to three times a week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday but with a commitment from all agencies that the chair can convene a meeting at any time should it be required.

71. The priorities of the SCG continue to be PPE, Care Homes, and Testing and more recently there has been focus on establishing a suitable recovery structure, led by the Local Authorities. The police will be involved in this at various levels (Chief Constable, SCG Chair and Chief Superintendent Mike O'Hara) and there is a clear understanding that the 'response' structure under the SCG is likely to continue for some time and, therefore, in tandem with the Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG). The Recovery Coordinating Group met for the first time on 7 May 2020.

How we are deploying staff to cope with the crisis

72. All departments and NPUs review their service level on a weekly basis in line with their resources and feed into the Silver Command Resourcing Cell, which allows for a force picture of the status of each area and the ability to identify any vulnerabilities

quickly. This can be escalated to Gold Command as necessary. All areas are currently delivering the majority of their core business.

73. The number of self-isolation and sickness have been below 500 staff over the past few weeks.

74. There is now a home working team who are managing staff that will be at home due to self-isolation, and staff who are vulnerable. They have been provided with IT and will provide support to the wider force.

75. Since the last SPCB, the Force has developed plans for partial and full restrictions being lifted. These are being led by the resourcing cell and have four key objectives:

- Understand the current landscape, using data to develop our knowledge of the current and previous demand levels
- Identify opportunities to further reduce legacy work and outstanding suspects
- Maximise resilience across the force, in departments/NPUs, during this period, particularly critical skills/roles
- Develop principles that can be adopted to manage demand during the post/part lifting of restrictions, including surge options

Deliverables

76. This work stream will provide WMP with a clear understanding of the current demand levels and develop key tipping points to support the enacting of any principles that will manage an increase in demand. Working alongside key stakeholders will ensure that opportunities are taken to continue reducing legacy work, for example outstanding suspects. By understanding annual leave, training requirements and other abstractions that have been developed, we can identify where the most appropriate resources are to support the force.

How we are supporting volunteering and community activity

77. 533 members of the public registered interest to support local communities as a volunteer following proactive external engagement by the WMP and OPCC communication teams. The WMP Citizen in Policing Team co-ordinated the initial contact and response, completing an assessment of skills and experience for each of the volunteers, before filtering volunteers to NPU Partnership Teams.

78. In support of Local Authority (LA) and Voluntary Sector (VS) lead role for community volunteering, each of the volunteers who contacted WMP were referred into their respective LA/VS partnership for assessment, vetting and potential deployment.

79. There are many fantastic examples provided of proactive deployment of volunteers who contacted WMP by LA and/or VS as part of extensive local plans to support the public, and indeed some of the vulnerable members of society. Much of the voluntary support has been utilised within food hubs or delivering food parcels to the vulnerable.

80. NPU Partnership Teams are now in the process of contacting each of the 533 volunteers to discuss future volunteering opportunities, both within local Active Citizen Groups or indeed within WMP.

81. There has been a focused approach by NPU Partnership Teams to maintain and uplift communication with current and well established Active Citizen Groups. This has helped provide a strong and continuous engagement forum that has helped NPUs: communicate key messages concerning crime and CoVID-19 information, and also deploy (where safe and appropriate) recognised community volunteers.

82. COVID-19 lead for Volunteering, Superintendent Hurcomb, is now developing, with People & Organisational Development, a force volunteering strategy that will maximise volunteering opportunities as a consequence of COVID-19. The strategy will consider opportunities to identify and deploy volunteers from this process and future volunteering offers of support into the Force, in line with workforce planning, policing and OPCC priorities.

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