



Strategic Policing and Crime Board

18 August 2020

Police and Crime Plan Priority: Regular Item

Title: Emergency Chapter Report – by exception

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PURPOSE OF PAPER

1. Provide an update on the efficiency and effectiveness of the West Midlands Police (WMP) response to the COVID-19 national emergency.
2. To update regarding the organisational health of West Midlands Police in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 national emergency.

BACKGROUND

3. West Midlands Police continues to prioritise the response to COVID-19, maintaining a major incident response in partnership with the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG). WMP continues to support the effort to '*Stay alert, control the virus and save lives*'.
4. This paper provides an update on a previous [paper](#) presented at the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on 21 July 2020.

COVID-19 RECOVERY – CRIME PATTERNS

5. The COVID-19 recovery phase is not causing any new or unexpected patterns of crime.
6. In regards to crime and demand during the period of COVID-19 and as we move further into the recovery phase, WMP's position remains the same as in the last update on 21 July 2020. Restrictions have been largely as predicted by WMP. A significant and immediate reduction in all crime types, slowly rising, driven by increased domestic abuse, hate crime and other violence.

Predicted Three-Month Demand Pattern

7. Crime has returned to normal levels, so normal seasonal demand and crime patterns are expected. For instance, there has been a slight increase in robbery which is consistent with the usual seasonal pattern.
8. Large public gatherings continue while nights remain lighter, driven by restricted access to other entertainment. Since 1 May 2020, over 3000 outdoor parties and unlicensed music events have been reported to the Force, and they continue to create tensions for local communities. Broadly speaking, communities support effective enforcement to close down or prevent these events. A move to proactive policing has managed to address some of the incidents and the Force's response to such events will be driven from strategic, tactical and operational levels.

Predicted Six-Month Demand Pattern

9. This position remains the same as reported in the last [paper](#) which was presented at the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on 21 July 2020.

Predicted Twelve-Month Demand Pattern

10. This position remains the same as reported in the last [paper](#) which was presented at the Strategic Policing and Crime Board on 21 July 2020.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF COVID-19 REGULATIONS

11. Directions to leave have a number of outcomes including: dispersal, fixed penalty notice (FPN), summons and arrest.
12. There have been a total of 3,730 directions to leave from March 2020 to 23 July 2020 as can be seen in figure 1 below. After seeing significant reductions in the number of directions to leave since May, the mandatory wearing of face masks on public transport has seen again daily numbers increase with almost 800 given out in first 23 days of July by the Safer Travel Team.

13. Of the 3730 directions to leave given 73.7% were dispersed and 13.2% were for fixed penalty notices, 0.8% resulted in summons and 0.6% resulted in arrest.

Summary

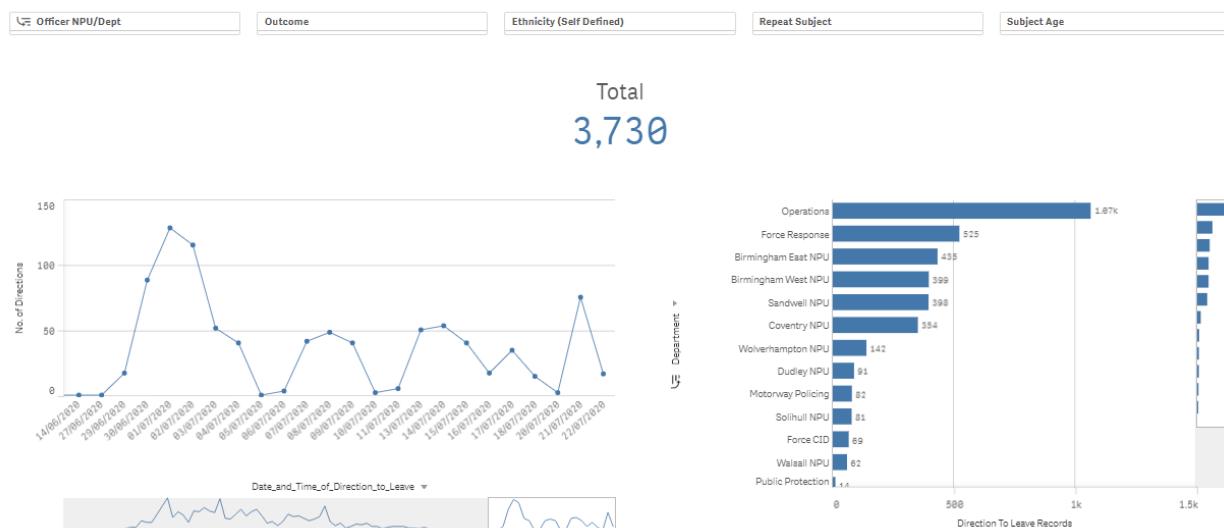


Figure 1. Directions to leave, 14 June 2020 to 22 July 2020

14. The use of face coverings became compulsory on all public transport journeys on 15 June 2020.
15. Due to non-compliance and raised concerns from the public and partners, the Safer Travel Team adopted a stricter approach. Passengers that refuse to wear a face covering without good reason, after being asked, are directed to leave the transport or risk being issued a FPN, where the 4E approach does not result in an alternative resolution.
16. The new approach began on 29 June 2020 and since then the team has directed 886 passengers to leave the bus, train or metro. Of those, three FPNs have been issued, and one passenger has been arrested.
17. The Safer Travel teams receive daily information from a variety of sources including transport operators, CCTV Control Rooms and Transport for West Midlands. The information includes details such as locations, routes, stops or stations that are receiving the lowest compliance in the use of face coverings.
18. Our baseline for assessing disproportionality is the 2011 census. We base ratios on the rate of an activity rate against the people the census says make up that ethnic group. Whilst the census has been updated with estimates since it was carried out, it is some years old. It is acknowledged that more recent estimates show that the demographics and population of the West Midlands is far more diverse than in 2011. The data also

shows that 29% of people were aged 18 to 39 years, 27% were aged 40 to 59 years and 22% were aged 60 years and over.

19. During this period there were 886 directions to leave were given, an estimated 750 were level 1, where no details were recorded¹. Of the recorded proportion 54% of directions to leave have been given to white people, 22% to Asian people and 14% to black people. This means within the West Midlands policing area, Asian people are 1.5 times more likely to be directed to leave than white people, and black people are 3 times more likely to be directed to leave than white people. The levels of disproportionality tend to decrease when looking at neighbourhood ward levels.
20. The data also shows that direction to leave are disproportionately used by age. 25-39 year olds have received 40% of directions to leave and 18-24 year olds have received 27% of directions to leave. If this is compared to the census data the two age categories would need to be combined showing 18 to 39 years olds have received 67% of directions to leave, which is 37% above the 2011 census data.
21. FPN data shows a similar trend to the direction to leave and as the lockdown relaxed the number of FPNs has decreased, which is in line with Force expectations.
22. There have been 516 fixed penalty notices issued as a direction to leave. 51.5% have been issued to white people, 27% have been issued to Asian people and 8.9% have been issued to black people. This shows that Asian people are 2.0 times more likely to be given a fixed penalty notice than white people, and black people are 2.0 times more likely to be given a fixed penalty notice than white people.
23. The age data for fixed penalty data is disproportionate against 25-39 year olds at 47% and 18-24 year olds at 27%. This is significantly higher than the census data.

WORKING AND OPERATING EFFECTIVELY WITH PARTNERS

Strategic Co-ordination Group and Tactical Co-ordination Group

24. Since last reporting on the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements we have seen a change in frequency and focus. The Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) is currently meeting weekly, as is the Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG); and the careful and steady transition to a recovery framework has commenced.
25. It is recognised that the transition to recovery is likely to be significantly longer than in other emergencies or major incidents. Both response and recovery are likely to operate

¹ Simple request made and compliance gained, voluntarily disperse – no recording required.

in parallel for some time. It is also recognised that the potential to stand back up command and control functions either in response to a localised outbreak or a wider infection event, such as a second wave, will remain for a considerable period of time. The partnership arrangements in place are aimed at achieving this dual, evolving position and is fully supported by partners.

Local Resilience Forum

26. The West Midlands Conurbation Local Resilience Forum (WMCLRF) and its working group have met in this last period to ensure focus continues on both the preparedness for a second wave or local outbreaks of COVID-19. A number of debriefs have already been held and a 'local outbreak' focused table top workshop is planned this month in addition to internal planning. Attendance and contribution has been excellent across all agencies.

Recovery Co-ordination Group

27. The Recovery Co-ordination Group (RCG) has West Midlands Police representation at all levels and links into the Force's internal recovery and gold response structures.

28. All the partnership arrangements continue to work well with on-going commitment from all relevant agencies, sending consistent and appropriately senior or skilled attendees. A number of the sub-groups have reduced as expected but are all in a position to step back up as required.

SPECIAL CONSTABLE BONUS ALLOWANCE

29. Since March 2020, 140 Special Constables have claimed the bonus allowance.

PERSONAL PROTECTICE EQUIPMENT PROVISION

30. WMP continue to have adequate stocks of PPE available to officers and staff. The Force keeps supply chains are kept under continual review and ensured that face-coverings are made available to staff who are required to enter locations where government legislation means they are now necessary.

FORCE OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Impact of sickness and self-isolation

31. At the outbreak of the pandemic, the Force saw combined self-isolation and sickness levels rise significantly from pre-COVID-19 normal levels. The peak of the abstraction from the Force was on 27 March 2020 where 16.8% of the workforce were absent due to self-isolation or sickness.
32. Since the peak, we have seen a rapid and sustained reduction in abstractions. Encouragingly, colleague sickness has remained steady, with a gradual reduction during this period. The most significant change has been in self-isolations. We have sought to manage the impact of self-isolation or potential symptoms for colleagues in a proactive way, ensuring we are responding rapidly to colleagues' needs.
33. As a result of the pandemic and government advice, there have been a number of colleagues working from home during this period. In the main these have been colleagues who are not in operational roles, however in some cases, for example for operational colleagues who are shielding or vulnerable, the Force has responded creatively to adjust the service offer to allow more to be delivered virtually. An example being colleagues from Force Response using laptops to deal with incidents reported by members of the public.

Colleague Counselling and Support Services

34. The Force has invested significantly in its wellbeing and welfare offering during the period of the pandemic; developing, scaling up and adapting the existing offer for the current context.
35. The wellbeing offer is provided under the headings of connectedness, health and trauma and has included:
 - Support around working remotely
 - Mental and physical health advice, materials, signposting, etc.
 - Podcasts
 - Training and development for colleagues to support the current context
 - Policy advice and guidance for managers and colleagues
 - A bespoke trauma offering for colleagues in roles with a higher exposure to COVID-19 risk
 - Colleague helplines and contact plans
 - A simplified trauma response

- Ongoing support through occupational health and the Force's employee assistance programme
36. In terms of the specific counselling support, the Force's provision through occupational health and through the employee assistance programme is, and continues to be, available. This provision is scalable where needed, and is available to all colleagues.
37. Assessment of the offering has been through regular feedback opportunities from colleagues. Feedback has been positive about the wellbeing support offered by the Force. The ongoing provision is monitored through a weekly wellbeing advisory group and regular meetings with staff associations and staff networks. These reviews ensure the support provided is relevant and timely to the current context.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the COVID-19 testing regime for officers and staff

38. The test and trace regime for colleagues is an ongoing provision. Colleagues in People and Organisational Development (POD) provide a test and trace service seven days a week. As colleagues are recorded as self-isolating on MyTime, they are referred for testing as soon as possible to one of the official test sites in the region by the team. In addition, the POD team run an internal tracing regime to identify the close contacts of colleagues who test positive or to identify operational colleagues who have been in contact with members of the public who have tested positive.

Impact of COVID-19 testing on operational effectiveness

39. These services have had a positive effect on the organisation, both in terms of taking early and positive action to ensure colleagues receive the appropriate intervention and support to get treatment or return to work, and in terms of the visible demonstration of care and support. Again, this positive intervention has been well received by colleagues who felt the organisation valued them and was doing what it could to support them.

Impact of any redeployment of officers and staff in response to the COVID-19 emergency

40. Whilst the work of several teams was paused, all officers and staff have returned to their original departments and no issues have been identified.
41. All training has now been resumed and measures are in place to be COVID-19 secure.

OPERATIONAL AND ORGANISTATIONAL LEARNING

Organisational Learning

42. To date the project team have collated 400 learnings and insights, which have all been triaged, distilled and assessed for value to the Force. A significant proportion of the learnings came through the major incident command structure. Encouragingly, 70% of the learnings captured have already been shared with the relevant parts of the organisation.
43. Over 80% of learnings captured came from internal sources. External sources included other forces and agencies as well as Operation Talla and the national response to capturing COVID-19 learning, led by the College of Policing (CoP).

Remotely In Control

44. WMP partnered with Accenture and Cognician to run a 20-Day Challenge with officers and staff. The challenge aimed to support staff and officers working away from their usual place of work, to become “*Remotely in Control*”. The challenge involved 20 bite size daily activities to activate new behaviours, build confidence, and provide support.
45. The results are displayed in figure 1 below:

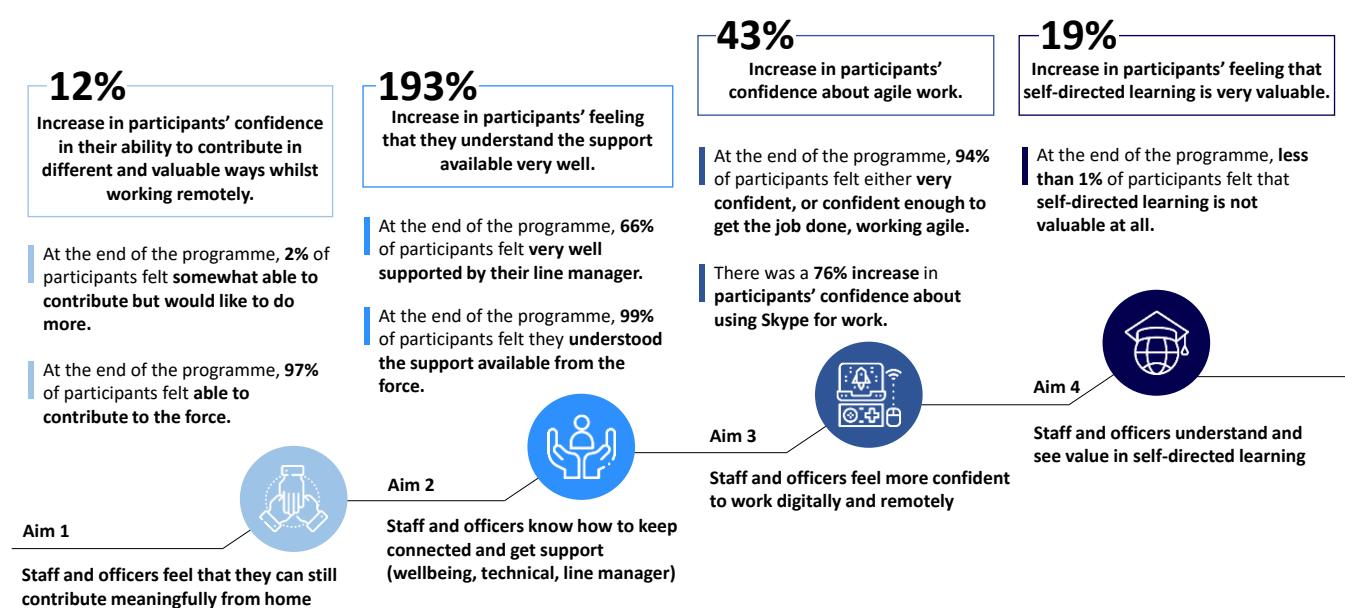


Figure 1. Remote capability and agility – Public Protection Unit

46. Prior to COVID-19, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings along with all other partnership meetings were held in police stations across the region where there would be physical attendance by all partners.
47. During the COVID-19 response these meetings were held virtually using video conferencing. Precautions were put in place to ensure a secure environment to share sensitive information as required.
48. The volume of MARAC referrals remained the same and using video conferencing has delivered time efficiencies for the Force and partner agencies.

Criminal Justice

49. The criminal justice field has been impacted significantly during the COVID-19 response on a national scale.
50. A change project has now been established to implement any learning to improve services.
51. In preparation for resilience issues within the Custody area (due to potential self-isolation and other absence), a cadre of police staff from across the organisation volunteered to work within this area on a temporary basis.

Previously trained custody sergeants and staff were provided with top-up training, ready to be deployed should the need arise. At the time of writing, staffing levels have fallen below critical levels and the Force is managing the consequences to ensure an adequate custody provision is available.

Citizens and Community

52. A mental health triage system is in place across the Force area, which sees police partnering with local agencies to ensure mental health cases are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner.
53. On the Western area (Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall) of the Force, the NHS withdrew their support and a decision was made to disband the triage team and repost the officers as mental health tactical advisors.
54. The new approach is working effectively with no known issues.

55. A full review of mental health triage practice has been sponsored by the PCC, and is due to report in September 2020.

Organisational Learning and Change – Benefits

56. As changes start to embed and the Force builds upon the new ways of working, work is progressing to define tangible benefits realised throughout this period.

Organisational Learning and Change – Next steps

57. As the Force moves into recovery phase, insights and learning have lessened but continue to be gathered.

58. The project will continue to identify opportunities, improvements and changes to inform the continuous improvement agenda, as well as inform the organisations path to recovery.

59. The process employed to capture learning will also start to be integrated in the already established learning framework internally to ensure the organisation's ability to be a dynamic learning organisation.

Operational Learning

60. Members of both the Resilience Silver Group and Tactical Silver Group have undergone two structured debrief sessions with accompanying individual questionnaires.

61. A debrief report has been produced and consulted on. This report identified ten key measures that should be implemented in readiness for a potential second peak or local lockdown incident:

- Resilience to key roles to be built into the response
- The same people should return to the key roles if possible and be able to draw on for their expertise
- Adhere strictly to Gold command structure
- Use existing pertinent plans that have been identified as effective
- Decision making to be recorded by a single means accessible to all commanders
- Bronze commanders & project leaders to attend meetings to provide SME advice and assist Silver in making informed tactical decisions
- Empower silver commanders to make decisions at the earliest opportunity

- Provide clarity on roles & responsibilities
- Provision of Planning Support and Resourcing Cell should be considered early in the process
- Agree early Communications strategy

62. Ongoing activity for this recovery strand includes Business Continuity (BC) questionnaires that have been distributed to all heads of departments to understand their use of the plans during the outbreak; and any feedback or changes/reviews needed to carry out to improve the business continuity response to future disruption.
63. A report with recommendations is currently being written in readiness should a local outbreak and lockdown in the West Midlands area occur.
64. WMP are taking learning from the Leicester local lockdown via the Local Resilience Forum.

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Impact of COVID-19 on the 2020-21 budget

65. The finance department has identified and reported actual and planned costs associated with COVID-19 across the Force since March 2020.
66. Table 1 below shows expenditure on COVID-19 since March 2020 and was presented to the Force's Recovery Board in the week commencing 13 July 2020:

Category	2019-20 actuals (£'000s)	2020-21 actuals (Apr-Jun) (£'000's)	2020-21 est. for July 2020 (£'000's)	Total expenditure incl. estimates (£'000's)	Comments
PPE equipment	939	1,083	27	2,049	This PPE is net of orders via National Procurement. All PPE costs will be reclaimed from the Home Office
Officer and Staff pay costs	0	109	382	491	Officers and staff moved from posts including CWG planning, creation of MART team and work by Guardian team on COVID-19
Overtime pressures	65	239	77	381	Actuals on custody, intelligence cell, IT and D contingency, MART team,

					NPU PHLs and planning teams. Future costs from support the reopening of the hospitality sector due in July and August
Temporary staff	0	293	42	335	25 additional staff for Force Contact from Redsnapper and Randstad. PPU extension of temp staff contract to 30 Dec to clear backlog of DA cases
Other non-pay	25	390	294	709	Costs include decontamination, clinical waste, screens for contact staff, and amendments/reinstatement of police buildings to make them COVID-19 secure
Loss of income	107	1,314	438	1,859	Loss of income at Airport and other force Operations, Police led prosecutions and traffic investigations, vehicle recovery and DBS. Airport income to be reviewed in July as some operations recommence
Home working (laptops and devices)	533	179	0	712	3,650 machines purchased between March and May of which approx. 420 were directly related to Force COVID-19 response. Cost includes mobile devices and SIM cards for mobile data in laptops
Budget savings	0	(373)	(75)	(448)	Savings in fuel (per BP fuel offer which ended on 8 th July) business travel and accommodation
Total	1,669	3,234	1,185	6,088	

Table 1. Force expenditure on COVID-19 since March 2020

67. The overall cost of COVID-19 to the Force was £4.90m at the end of June and is expected to reach £6.09m by 31 July 2020.

68. It should be noted that we have previously reported the costs of laptops and devices as £3.43m since the start of the pandemic, resulting to total costs of £8.5m.

69. Table 1 and this report recognises only the proportion of those devices that were purchased as a direct consequence of the force's response to COVID-19, rather than the overall purchase of machines – most of which were accelerated purchases of machines which, now that the force has entered a recovery phase, will be used as replacement machines for those which are at the end of their life. So, the net cost of laptops and devices purchased directly as a result of the Force response to COVID-19 is £0.712m.
70. Expenditure on PPE is now £2.05m. This is a reduction in spend since the last report due to some items being refunded where the order could not be completed by the supplier. After placing a national order for over £4m it is expected that this will provide for 98% of the force's PPE requirements. Further PPE expenditure will be required to satisfy requirements for officers to wear face covering in retail and restaurant premises. The Home Office have made part of the Police Uplift Programme grant from April to September 2020 available for COVID-19 related costs. In addition, the Home Office have recently confirmed that forces will be re-imbursed in full for all medical grade PPE purchased from March 2020, including the national order. This will significantly reduce the financial impact of COVID-19 on the Force.
71. The net cost of laptops, mobile devices and data supplied to colleagues as a result of the pandemic, purchased in addition to replacement machines is £0.71m.
72. In July 2020, Birmingham Airport resumed some flights and officers are returning to duties. We will be reviewing income for the airport over the summer period and expect to report a reduction in income loss in the next report.
73. Following BP's offer of free fuel for police vehicles during the pandemic the Force has saved £0.2m on fuel costs for police vehicles. Savings have also been noted in business travel and accommodation where savings of £0.25m have been identified from April to July 2020.
74. There is no provision for the above costs in the overall 2020/21 budget of the Force. It is pleasing to note that the government will provide additional funding to forces to cover the costs of medical grade PPE required in relation to COVID-19. However, it is not yet clear whether the government will provide additional funding to forces to cover all other costs associated with COVID-19. The Home Office continue to ask forces to collate and report their actual and estimated costs estimates of dealing with the crisis on a monthly basis.

NEXT STEPS

The board is asked to consider this paper.

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