

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE	
OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER	
LEAD CHIEF OFFICER:	ACC Ian Roberts
TITLE:	COVID19 Update Report
DATE:	1 March 2021
TIMING:	Exceptional Report
PURPOSE:	For monitoring
1.	<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>
1.1	To note the briefing item below.
2.	<u>INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND</u>
2.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the OPCC with an update as to Force planning and activity in the recovery phase of COVID-19.
3.	<u>ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION</u>
3.1	<p><u>Lessons Learned</u></p> <p>Lessons Learned processes are in place aligned to the College of Policing Guidance and NPCC, branded as ‘Operation Talla’. There are established reporting lines in place and regular national meetings to provide a platform of discussions and regular links with police liaison in WAG to ensure those lessons from all Forces are brought together.</p> <p>Any local lessons learned are registered within Continuous Improvement and mitigating processes are put in place. Standard Operating Procedures have been developed and are embedded to cover specific areas of policing such as the response to ‘Covid Confirmed’ calls for service, Test, Trace Protect (TTP) procedures for our own staff and the correct use of Personal Protective Equipment.</p> <p>Where police staff need to return to work, each departmental area has been assessed and re-designed to cater for social distancing (2m Distance Rule)</p>

	<p>with appropriate signage and available PPE to ensure it is a 'Covid19 secure environment'. Departmental Heads have implemented localised roster systems to ensure that office capacity is never contravened. The Force has provided equipment to staff who have an exceptional need or require a reasonable adjustment.</p> <p>The Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector, Health & Safety Lead, Occupational Health Manager and other key staff regular dial in to Regional and National meetings in order to capture best practice. Alongside the Strategic Coordination Group, Incident Management Teams and Tactical Coordination Groups there are also functional meetings such as the Police (Wales) TTP & Covid Working Group and The National PPE Group.</p> <p>The team is also working closely with specific Lessons Learned Forums such as the College of Policing Operational Learning Groups. These are workshops for all Forces in England and Wales which are thematic and relate to core areas of policing and how they have been affected by the pandemic. Contributors identify best practice and what has worked well for them and share information and documentation relating to these. Gwent Police have so far this year committed to 'attending' workshops on Neighbourhood Policing, Custody, Roads Policing and Response, putting forward key individuals to attend and report back to the team. On a Regional basis the Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector is a member of the Covid19 All Wales Organisational learning group hosted by Dyfed Powys Police. This group reviews practices across the four Welsh Forces, allows members to bring forward local challenges and offers examples of good practice.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Resourcing</u></p> <p>The Force has dedicated the Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector to its Covid Response. He is supported by staff from the Continuous Improvement and Force Planning Departments and liaises with the LPA Response and Neighbourhood Leads.</p> <p>The Force undertakes weekly dedicated Covid Patrols within both LPAs and across all five Local Authority areas. These are tasked in line with local community intelligence, calls for service and information from partner agencies. The tactics employed include static vehicle checks, footpatrol of key locations and targeted patrol of locations where groups are likely to</p>

gather in breach of the regulations. The patrols are funded primarily from the Covid Surge Funding (see Section 3.10 Finance below) and utilise both Roads Policing (ASU) officers and LPA Response and NPT staff.

The Gold/Silver/Bronze command structure has embedded itself into a daily review cycle overseen by Chief Superintendent Hobrough, which has maintained command and decision-making responsibility for emerging issues 24 hours throughout the week. The daily joint Covid-19 Gold/DMM meeting provides oversight and control of all strategic and tactical issues pertaining to both the pandemic response and daily business.

In order to reduce the impact of the self-isolation of Gwent Police staff resulting from exposure to an infection risk the Force is seeking to introduce Lateral Flow Testing (also referred to as Lateral Flow Immunoassay). South Wales Police completed a pilot study in January which is being validated by Public Health Wales. This has been presented to Welsh Government and we are awaiting authorisation and detail regarding the roll out to the other three Welsh Forces. South Wales report that significant numbers of staff who would otherwise have been required to self-isolate were able to return to work as a result of receiving a rapid negative test result via LFT.

There is a potential resource demand on the horizon relating to NPCC Police Quarantine Referrals. These are triggered when an individual returns to the UK after visiting a country where quarantine requirements apply. At present Gwent Police only receives a small number of these. For each an intelligence check is carried out and then officers are despatched via the Force Control Room to attend and ensure that the individual is at that time adhering to the quarantine direction. There is an anticipated transition to an 'enhanced' approach to such referrals being required by Welsh Government. This would involve a proactive approach to monitoring these returnees. The All Wales (Covid) Gold Group have met and discussed this and it is the considered view of the Group that such an enhanced approach would require a public health surveillance and enforcement system for international travel. This would require: a coordinating/information management function to receive and disseminate passenger travel referrals; a surveillance component to assess population compliance; and a proportionate enforcement capability. On behalf of the four Welsh Forces

Chief Superintendent Valentine (SWP) has written to Welsh Government to express these concerns over the resourcing demand that this would place upon Forces, particularly when international travel increases as restrictions begin to be relaxed.

On a Gwent-wide basis all partner agencies have been requested to provide members of staff to assist in the operation of the Mass Vaccination Centres (MVCs). These staff would then be 'employed' by ABUHB for the duration of the operation of the MVCs before returning to their originating organisation. Health, Leisure and Local Authority staff are currently performing these roles. At present Gwent Police are not providing staff to these MVCs due to demand within the Force and concerns regarding the legal exposure of Gwent Police. The Joint Legal Services team are currently examining the details of this request on behalf of both Gwent Police and South Wales Police, who have adopted a similar position. We continue to support the security of these sites through the deployment of local officers to provide reassurance and security.

Gwent Police plans to manage vaccinations of our own staff are well advanced pending any decision to roll out a police immunisation programme. Force Planning and Occupational Health have worked together to identify a suitable venue, an efficient and effective process and suitable resources to facilitate the programme. At present Vantage Point has been identified as the preferred option, following an assessment and consultation process. The venue affords an opportunity to run a similar system to that of the public Mass Vaccination Centres. It is possible to resource the vaccination programme with Gwent Police staff in the form of OHU Nurses, Custody Nurses and PSU Medics. Occupational Health are arranging appropriate upskill training to enable these staff to be used for clinical duties, under the supervision of WAST. Other support staff necessary for the programme can be resourced from within the establishment at short notice, with minimal impact on core business. Advance orders have been placed for consumable clinical items, which may prove difficult to purchase at short notice due to national demand. These plans will be continually reviewed and amended until such time as they are required to be put into operation.

3.3	<p><u>Health and Safety- Covid Personal Protective Equipment</u></p> <p>The National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) has taken control of national PPE supplies for policing since the last report and Gwent Police submits monthly stock figures and orders to the approved service supplier for PPE: Blue Light Services. As a result we have suspended local efforts to source PPE which previously presented quality and supply chain issues. Blue Light services take the order from Gwent Police and forward this into Operation Talla at Upper Heyford for monthly deliveries.</p> <p>Our biggest challenge has been in securing sufficient Face Fit masks (FFP3) which are required for the more significant exposures to Covid-19. In order to wear such a mask the individual must undergo a short training and testing course to ensure a effective and safe fit. A problem arises if NPoCC changes the manufacturer of the masks supplied to the Force. When this occurs the staff must all be re-tested with the new FFP3 mask. A small cohort of Operational Support staff have been undertaking this training and testing and 150 officers are currently trained and equipped with these masks. But in order to get more staff equipped our TTP Hub staff have now been trained externally to deliver this Face Fit Testing within Force.</p> <p>New national (Op Talla) guidelines on the wearing of the different forms of PPE have been issued and provide clarity for front line staff and their supervisors on which items of equipment to wear in specific scenarios. In line with other Welsh Forces this will be rolled out to staff as an aide memoire and with a clear Corporate Communications message.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Working from Home</u></p> <p>The Force remains committed to Welsh Government guidance which is that staff should work at home unless it is not practicable to do so. As detailed in earlier reports, the Force was well placed to implement agile working as a result of its existing mobile IT capabilities. Line Managers are expected to check in regularly with staff and to request DSE assessments where the appropriateness of the workplace may be in question. HR Managers are assisting supervisors with the support that staff working from home require.</p>

	<p>Generally, the expectation remains that the job of a police officer cannot be undertaken from home and there has been a greater expectation that attested staff come in to work. However, where staff have been exposed to an infection risk agile working processes are employed to allow those staff to contribute meaningfully to the Force from home.</p> <p>The Force Recovery Group implemented recovery tactics such as a mix of working from home, agile working and office working on a rota basis. In areas of business where staff cannot work from home (such as the Force Communications Suite), Perspex screens were installed to help prevent spread of the virus and other secure working tactics have been developed to ensure separation and social distancing is achieved. These are now fully embedded within the Force. Since that time the Recovery Group has been stood down as clearly the Force was not in a Recovery phase. The Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector is continuing to build resilience towards recovery, linking in with identified Departmental Heads and sitting on the All Gwent Recovery Group.</p> <p>However, these agile working tactics continue to be developed and improved. As an ongoing piece of work the Force Agile Working lead is reviewing the estates provision to review working arrangements and office space across the organisation.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Wellbeing</u></p> <p>The Force is conscious of the demands placed upon staff working from home for extended periods, particularly for those who have needed to shield. It has adopted an all Wales risk assessment tool to ensure it provides the right level of support and advice to those who may be vulnerable.</p> <p>The Force has improved it's wellbeing offer to staff through COVID by approving a new staffing model with a dedicated Wellbeing Specialist and we are currently recruiting a Wellbeing Lead.</p> <p>When 'Shielding' requirements for vulnerable individuals were re-introduced on the 22nd of December the Occupational Health Unit renewed and reviewed the Risk Assessments for all Shielded Gwent Police Staff to</p>

	<p>ensure that they were receiving the correct support and information. To complement this an advisory leaflet for isolators was been created with practical hints and tips on keeping physically and emotionally well during imposed isolation. A Manager’s Guide has also been produced and will be uploaded to The Beat in due course.</p> <p>Gwent Police now has a dedicated Wellbeing section on The Beat. There is also a weekly Wellbeing Teams call at 10am each Friday, which discusses a specific wellbeing topic for the first half of the meeting, followed by a period of peer support. The Force has also signposted advice to staff about pressures that are particular to lockdown such as childcare, managing alcohol intake and physical fitness hints and tips.</p> <p>The Wellbeing agenda continues to be supported and has adapted to the constraints of the pandemic. The Choir continues remotely to lift the spirits of all its members and is well attended via Teams. Online exercise classes developed at the request of a significant number of staff are planned to start over the next few weeks. Weekly Wellbeing dial-ins are continuing and remain popular with staff providing valuable information and support.</p> <p>We now have two Force Counsellors who are busy reviewing and expanding the Counselling provision whilst linking in with the development of the Wellbeing Strategy. A new Bereavement Support Group is due to start on the 9th February which will be a six-week programme to support those who have suffered loss, whether that is a family member, friend, colleague or beloved family pet.</p> <p>The internal Gwent Police TTP Hub went live in December. With staff relocated from other departments which have reduced demand due to the pandemic. The Hub, based in HQ, manages all the internal track and trace process for our staff and liaises with the Local Authority TTP Teams for Covid test results of both staff and detainees in custody to prevent unnecessary isolations and limit infection contacts. The Hub also provides valuable information to our staff on how they should self-isolate if necessary and ensures that their line managers are fully aware.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Transparency.</u></p> <p>Under the coronavirus regulations, organisations are required to provide information to those entering or working at premises about how to minimise</p>

	<p>exposure to coronavirus. Welsh Government have encouraged all organisations to demonstrate to their workers and service users that they have properly assessed their risk and taken appropriate mitigating measures.</p> <p>The Force's Health & Safety advisor has overseen all work conducted to date and is satisfied that the Force estate is Covid secure and that there is sufficient information available through the Force website and signage throughout. Staff Associations have been involved throughout this process.</p> <p>The Force Corporate Communications Department issues bi-weekly updates to staff and hosts a dedicated Coronavirus web page on the Force internet site. It has kept the public up to date through social and traditional media in partnership with the Local Resilience Forum and has received positive feedback from members of the public and local politicians.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Recruitment and Promotion</u></p> <p>The Force has become adept at undertaking socially distanced recruitment and promotion processes and there are identified benefits to this process that will be considered for permanent adoption post-recovery.</p>
3.8	<p><u>International Travel by Staff</u></p> <p>The Force has developed a policy to enable staff to have an understanding of travel corridors and a comprehension of the risks associated with travel abroad and the potential of such corridors to be removed at short notice. If staff find themselves in a position where the travel corridor registers as a risk the well established Working From Home procedures are implemented.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Community Cohesion</u></p> <p>EU transition arrangements at the end of December Community have not seen significant cohesion challenges arise for Gwent Police, presumably due to the predominance of Covid issues for our communities. However, the Force Diversion and Inclusion Lead is continuing to work with communities to gauge tension and community need post-Brexit. The D&I Lead now chairs the weekly Covid Community Dial-In with representatives of Faith groups, Cultural Organisations, Support Workers, and other representatives of Gwent's diverse communities. This provides an opportunity for these disparate groups to ask questions about policing and health issues during</p>

	<p>the pandemic and for Gwent Police to allay concerns and to understand the views of our communities. The Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector now takes part in these meetings and is able to gain a first-hand understanding of the impact of Covid Enforcement and messaging on the communities of Gwent.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>The Covid19 lockdown has already had a significant effect on the phasing of expenditure in Q1, Q2 and Q3 and this will continue to impact to the financial year end.</p> <p>Most variances in non-pay expenditure categories are due in some part to the delay or cancellation of spend as a result of officers and staff working more agilely and safely since March 2020. Given the ongoing Covid19 working patterns, it is still uncertain whether some of this expenditure will materialise later in the year.</p> <p>The capital programme has also been impacted by Covid19 with a number of projects within the programme delayed. However, the new HQ build has continued throughout the lockdown period.</p> <p>The total costs identified to date as arising specifically from the Covid19 situation are £742k, of which £393k relates to medical and non-medical grade PPE equipment for officers and staff. Additional funds have been received from the UK government for all PPE costs. In addition, the UK government is also reimbursing organisations for income lost as a result of Covid19. We have identified potential lost income of £78k, of which the UK Government has already reimbursed £44k. The net cost to the Force from Covid19 therefore stands at £290k.</p> <p>From November 2020 PPE has been purchased and distributed by a National Centre established by the Department of Health & Social Care so further local costs are expected. In addition, we have received £308k of additional funding from the UK Government's Surge Enforcement Fund and a further £20k from the Welsh Government to cover the costs of proactive policing within communities and roads policing during the latest round of local and national lockdowns.</p>

	<p>A 'Surge Fund' for Covid activities has been established (Code: OPS0004) with a grant advance of £308,000, to date the expenditure against this is £24,808. This is directly funding Forcewide Covid enforcement activity on a daily basis.</p>
<p>3.11</p>	<p><u>Performance</u></p> <p>The Force has redesigned its approach to performance monitoring during the Covid crisis and is now more focussed on crime prevention, reduction and on achieving positive outcomes for victims. This is reflected in the performance reports it produces internally and for partners.</p> <p>With the introduction of the second lockdown in Wales there has been more focus on enforcement tactics within the NPCC guidelines. The 4E approach continues to be applied, but as the Health crisis has developed it has become clear that at times engagement, explanation and encouragement is not sufficient and an enforcement approach is often necessary.</p> <p>This second lockdown (commencing December 2020) saw a more robust approach to breaches of the regulations, with a greater emphasis on Enforcement. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for breaches of the Covid Regulations. Since the start of the pandemic (up until the end of January 2021) 873 Covid Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued by Gwent Police. The most frequently identified offences relate to: Persons contravening a restriction of movement across Health Protection Areas (223); people gathering in private dwellings (147); people gathering in public (325) and; people being away from their home without a reasonable excuse (126). Of the 873 FPNs issued 751 (86%) were given to people identifying as 'White', the remaining 122 FPNs (14%) were issued to either members of BAME communities or where ethnicity was not stated.</p> <p>During January dedicated Covid Enforcement patrols stopped 1,174 vehicles and 357 people on foot. They made 38 arrests and dealt with a further 517 offences which were reported for process. In addition 51 vehicles were seized under Section 165 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 when found to be being driven without a valid licence or insurance cover.</p>

	<p>Reporting of Covid related incidents remains lower than it was during the first lockdown in March 2020. Reporting however, did increase during December 2020 and particularly spiked on the 31st December to 1st January 2021 due mainly to a high number of group gatherings being reported, which is most likely due to people breaking restrictions for New Year's Eve celebrations.</p> <p>The number of reports daily is beginning to slowly increase since the commencement of the Tier 4 lockdown, however reporting numbers are still much lower than they were in April 2020. Reporting tends to increase of the weekends, with more reports being made between Friday and Sunday.</p> <p>Internally work continues to ensure that effective Infection Prevention Controls are in place. The Force is currently showing low levels of infection/contact with only 11 staff self-isolating due to close contacts and a further 8 either positive or recovering from Covid. This is against a total workforce of 2,311 (an affected level of 0.8%). This has significantly reduced since a peak at the start of January when we had 69 members of staff either self-isolating or positive (2.9%). Nationally, according to Operation Talla, the affected figure is 7%.</p> <p>Absence, including Covid19 related absence, remains low and is tracked each day at the Force Daily Management Meeting. Ongoing processes with public health wales have evolved to ensure testing can take place for all staff at testing centres, with 400 places reserved across blue light services for prioritised testing should it be required. In Force, specifically for officers on front line duties, if they come into contact with a suspected or diagnosed case of COVID 19, an information sharing agreement has been established with Public Health Wales to allow occupational health and medical staff in custody to access medical records for the person who is infected, to establish authenticity regarding that persons status. This has been a positive inclusion in our working practices providing reductions in time where staff and officers are potentially absent.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Logistical Oversight</u></p> <p>The Force continues to review the logistical elements of delivering policing throughout Gwent with the additional demand arising from both the</p>

pandemic and the European Union Exit. Processes are in place to ensure that supply chains are maintained for PPE, fuel and parts supply.

Fuel Supplies/Vehicles

There is a comprehensive plan in place driven by national guidelines to ensure fuel supply chains for blue light organisations can be maintained. There are specific processes in built via the Local Resilience Forum to ensure fuel bases are mapped throughout Gwent should the supply chains become disrupted. Gwent Police currently have 'bunkered' fuel supplies in Force that can support 80% of our diesel vehicles for a period of seven days for essential police business (but which would not allow for proactive patrols, only incident response). This is currently being reviewed to ensure the fuel supplies reach the maximum storage levels of 14,000 litres, and the stock has been surveyed to ensure that the quality is sufficient.

Maintenance of the fleet within Gwent utilising stocks of sundries to repair and upkeep the vehicles has been reviewed and there is adequate provision in place to ensure fast part supply chains can be delivered and prioritised. Tyres for vehicles have also been stockpiled and arrangements with suppliers such as Goodyear have reassured fleet services that there is sufficient stock to support Gwent Police, should the need arise.

By the end of March there are plans to swap out older fleet vehicles for new. In total 50 Ford and Vauxhall vehicles will be added to the fleet. At this stage there are no anticipated delivery delays. Although the vast majority of our current marked vehicle fleet are of French origin, many of the fast-moving parts can be used across several manufacturers. Should there be a defect that requires repair fleet services are confident the stock we have will allow rapid repair.

The Force is benefiting from the offer of free fuel for emergency service vehicles which is being provided by BP to support essential services through the pandemic. Under the programme emergency service vehicles issued with a BP Fuelcard are able to fill up without charge at BP retail sites. This applies equally to NHS, police, fire emergency services, blood transportation

and NHS Trust non-emergency vehicles. This initiative is expected to be in place from 25 January and run until 31 March 2021.

Civil Unrest

Across the region, Gwent Police have established plans to provide Mutual Aid to areas that are affected by civil unrest. The current cohort of officers means that 4 full Police Support Units (PSUs) can be deployed across the region (these each consist of 1 Inspector, 3 Sergeants and 21 PCs). There are 14 PSU carriers on fleet to support deployment of teams both on a pre-planned or dynamic arrangement. Officers skills are currently being refreshed which will provide resilience should they be required.

There are currently a number of anticipated deployments on Mutual Aid for Gwent staff. We are supplying officers to Kent during February, with the requirement being for a Sergeant and 9 PCs, plus three Motorcyclists. Devon & Cornwall Police are hosting a G7 Leaders Conference in June 2021 which is anticipated will draw Mutual Aid in the form of PSUs and other specialist officers.

We are in a strong position in that we managed to complete PSU refresher training during 2020, so all our PSU staff are 'in-licence' for internal and Mutual Aid deployment. There are also further courses planned for 2021 to increase the capacity of Level 2 PSU officers.

Locally protest activity during the most recent lockdown is significantly lower than the first. Traditionally most protest activity takes place in Spring/Summer and that seems to have remained the case during the pandemic. When intelligence regarding potential protests has been identified the Gold/DMM meeting has swiftly assessed the information and tasked resources to identify and contact any identified organiser. Our experience in dealing with larger protests during the pandemic, such as the 'Black Lives Matter' demonstration in 2020, have allowed Gwent Police to develop a sound, defensible position on such events that balances the public's right to protest against the needs of the Public Health Emergency.

3.16 **Inspection**

	<p>Gwent Police was selected by HMICFRS in December 2020 to take part in a Covid-19 inspection which examined: how policing is responding to the Covid-19 crisis; what is working well and what is being learnt; how the sector is dealing with the problems it faces and; opportunities to make sustainable improvements to the service. The inspection examined three distinct themes: Preparedness, Partnerships and Strategic Leadership; Policing Themes (Vulnerability, Investigations, Reporting, Enforcement and Wellbeing and; Police Custody. Gwent were one of several Forces which were selected for inspection activity concerning these policing themes.</p> <p>Findings from the inspection fieldwork, together with the national document review and self-assessment were used to inform a report by the Joint Criminal Justice Chief Inspectors into the response of the Criminal Justice Service to the COVID-19 Pandemic, which was published on 19th January 2021. The final report from HMICFRS regarding the policing response is due to be published in February 2021.</p>
4.	<u>NEXT STEPS</u>
4.1	For consideration
5.	<u>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</u>
5.1	To consider the financial implication of combined COVID, D20 and operational logistics
6.	<u>PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS</u>
6.1	None
7.	<u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</u>
7.1	None
8.	<u>EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS</u>
8.1	<p>This project/proposal has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 5 ECHR - Right to Liberty and Security • Article 6 ECHR - Right to a Fair Trial • Article 7 ECHR - No Punishment without Law • Article 8 ECHR - Right to respect for private and family life

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 13 ECHR - Right to an effective remedy • Data Protection Act 1998 • Investigatory Powers Act 2016
9.	<u>RISK</u>
9.1	Potential reputational risk to the Force and to public confidence if activity is not managed effectively.
10.	<u>PUBLIC INTEREST</u>
10.1	For review
11.	<u>CONTACT OFFICER</u>
11.1	Chief Inspector Daniel Taylor
12.	<u>ANNEXES</u>
12.1	