



# COVID19 UPDATE REPORT

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022



# 1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information for monitoring purposes and OPCC reporting.
- 1.2 There are no recommendations made requiring a decision.

# 2. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

## 2.1 Purpose of Report

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.

## 2.2 Background

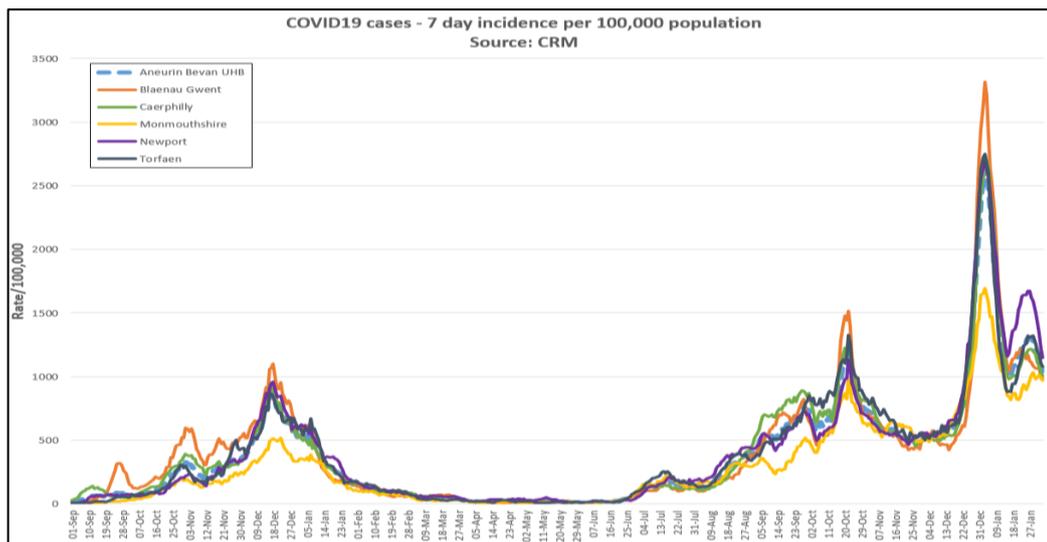
Gwent Police has had its response to the Covid Pandemic in place since April 2020 when the Gold group was created. As the different waves of infection have hit the UK there has been a correlating impact upon Gwent Police. As detailed in this report the resources dedicated to the Covid have been flexed to provide a proportionate and effective response that was commensurate with the threat at that time. The Force has developed new and innovative ways of working and of engaging with our communities, some of which will be continued beyond the pandemic as they are efficient and effective. Our staff have demonstrated incredible flexibility and dedication over the last two years despite the pressure that they have been under, not just whilst in work, but also within their personal and family lives.

The high levels of community incidence of Covid that have arisen in waves over the last two years have had a significant impact upon all sectors of the population. And the impact upon Gwent Police has been threefold. Firstly, the impact upon our ability to police our communities safely, meaning that we have had to adapt all aspects of response policing, neighbourhood policing and criminal investigation. Secondly, the direct impact upon our staff who have also faced infection and illness or had to care for family members and other dependants. And thirdly, the impact upon our public service partners in Health and Social Care, which resulted in increased demand falling on policing resources and the inability of Gwent Police to rely on support as we



normally would from partner agencies. But we have met each of these challenges head on and worked more closely than ever with our partners. Our collaboration with other Police Forces, both within Wales and across the UK, has been greater during the pandemic than at any point in the past. As the below table shows there have been huge variations in the incidence level of covid within our five local authority areas, and it has been tempting in the past to consider the threat abated. But we have maintained vigilance within the Force and planned in anticipation of future ‘waves’ and challenges.

**Figure 1: Covid Incidence within the 5 Gwent Local Authority Areas**



Whilst there has been a recent reduction in infection rates the pandemic is nowhere near over. However, the Force and policing in general is looking ahead to how we recover from Covid and learn from the experiences that we have lived through. Policing will be forever changed by this pandemic, but the determination is that these changes are for the better and that the benefits of the innovation and partnership working that flourished during Covid are realised in the longer term.

### 3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

#### 3.1 Resourcing

The Gwent Police Response to Covid was led by Chief Superintendent Mark Hobrough as the Gold Commander from the start of the pandemic up until the end of January 2022. As of the start of February 2022 that command role has been taken up

by Chief Superintendent Ian Roberts. From April 2020 to April 2021 The Force held daily Covid Gold Meetings. With the reduction in cases and resource pressure these changed to a weekly meeting.

In December 2021 the decision was made to revert to daily Covid meetings that reviewed absence numbers, Community cases and allowed Departments and LPAs to respond promptly to areas of risk. These meetings were supplemented on Thursdays by a more details Covid Gold Meeting which is attended by representatives of both Local Policing areas, Crime Investigation, Business Support Functions, Legal Services, Finance and other key senior staff.

The Force has also dedicated the Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector to its Covid Response. He is supported by staff from Continuous Improvement and the Force Planning Unit and liaises with the LPA Response and Neighbourhood Leads.

From April 2020 the Force undertook weekly dedicated Covid Patrols within both LPAs and across all five Local Authority areas. With Wales' move out of Lockdown in March 2021 these patrols were replaced by less frequent but larger public order patrols focussed on weekends and then became part of business as usual with 'Covid Incidents' being tasked to Response Teams and Neighbourhood Policing Teams. This has largely remained the position within the Force, although for the month of December 2021 additional patrols were put in place in order to supplement Response Policing at a time of high demand.

From December 2020 the Force implemented a 'Covid Hub' to manage all queries on infection from Force Staff and to undertake internal Contact Tracing in order to identify and respond to workplace transmission of the virus. The Hub has consists of a Police Sergeant supervisor and 7 operators. For the majority of 2021 the Hub was open Monday to Friday only, but with the surge in cases resulting from the Omicron 'wave' in December 2021 coverage was extended to seven days a week, including bank holidays in order to meet the increased demand.

Looking ahead the resourcing of the response to and recovery from the pandemic will need to be commensurate with the pressures that policing is likely to face over the coming months or even years. Whilst the hope is that we are emerging from the worst of the effects of the pandemic we still face the following risks:

- Further 'waves' of infection arising from new variants that may exhibit characteristics that are resistant to vaccination or anti-viral treatments;



- Potentially high absences from the workplace due to infection or required isolation;
- Variances in approach between the Governments of the UK and Wales;
- Demand placed upon Occupational Health and Health & Safety teams to respond to reported cases and workplace transmission of the virus;
- Health & Safety Executive requirements and possible action resulting from any workplace transmission;
- High demand across key organisations (Police, Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST), Health & Local Authorities);
- Staff fatigue and apathy towards further control measures.

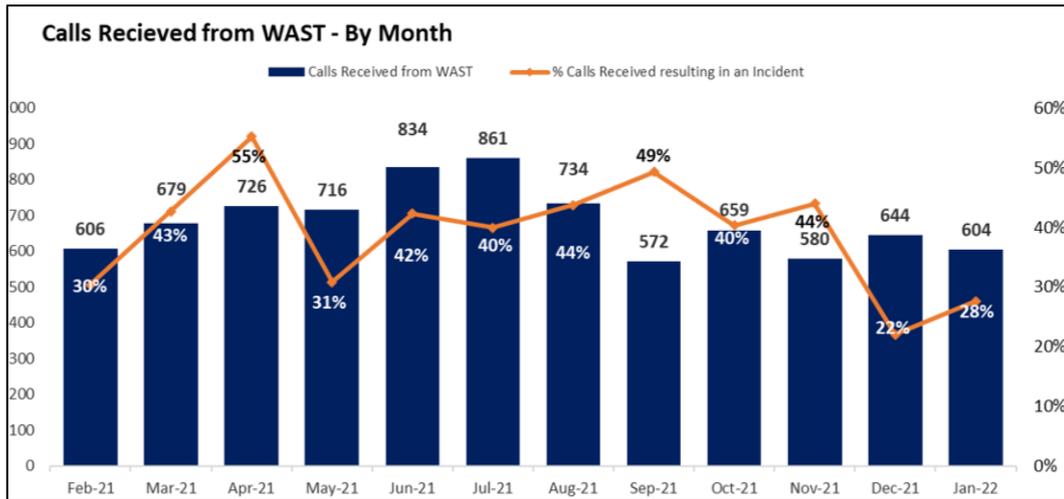
### 3.2 Covid Demand

Demand related to Covid Enforcement significantly reduced significantly following the relaxation of Covid Regulations to 'Alert Level Zero' in August 2021. With the removal of restrictions on gatherings in public, the re-opening of the Night-time Economy and the removal of the requirement to Self-Isolate for most Close Contacts of positive individuals the specific Covid related demand on policing fell away. The Force then experienced a surge in all forms of demand that had been suppressed during lockdown which lasted for several months.

A secondary demand related to Covid arose at the latter end of 2021 resulting from pressures within Health. Resource pressures in Primary and Secondary care impacted upon the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) who experienced significant delays in their ability to transfer patients from Ambulances into Hospitals due to a lack of A&E and bed capacity. This in turn was detrimental to WAST's ability to respond to medical emergencies or requests for medical assistance to policing. Gwent Police experienced a surge in demand that was predominately of a medical nature as WAST referred incidents that they were unable to resource to the Force. Figure 2 (below) shows the high volume of demand generated for Gwent Police resulting from resourcing issues within the Ambulance Trust which reached unmanageable levels towards the middle of 2021.

**Figure 2: Calls for Received into Gwent Police from WAST by Month over last 12 months**





In order to address the pressures within the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board the Chief Constable initiated a Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) of all relevant partner organisations to examine blockages in the system and to identify effective and efficient partnership processes. This SCG has been meeting since October 2021 chaired by a senior member of Gwent Police and has already resulted in a number of process improvements. In order to address communication and tasking issues between emergency service partners Gwent Police also set up a 'Bluelight Professionals' Group where specific issues and themes that resulted in resourcing issues could be raised and resolved between Gwent Police, WAST and South Wales Fire and rescue Service. This group meets fortnightly and has already significantly reduced unnecessary demand and improved services for the public of Gwent. Other areas of Wales are now adopting similar processes.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 the Welsh Government introduced a Covid Pass scheme for entry into specified venues and premises. There was concern within policing across Wales that this would place undue pressure on resources at a time of unprecedented demand. The Covid Recovery Leads for the four Welsh forces met and agreed a joint position which was then presented to Chief Officers, who in turn presented this to ministers and who agreed the policing response to Covid Passes. This placed the responsibility for initial monitoring and enforcement with Local Authority Licensing teams, with policing providing support and response to any immediate issues. Policing in Wales has held this position since in relation to passes and other regulations to prevent the abstraction of resources from key areas of threat, risk and harm to meet this Covid enforcement demand.



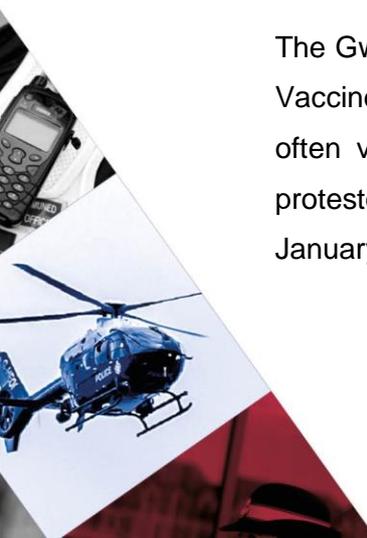
### 3.3 Covid Enforcement

Gwent Police remains committed to the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Covid strategy and the sequential and proportionate approach to Engage, Explain and Encourage public cooperation with Covid Regulations, with Enforcement being the last resort. As mentioned above, specific 'Covid Patrols' have been stood down as regulations restricting gatherings etc. have been relaxed.

But changes to the Welsh Government Regulations over the last few months have been rapid and often with little prior notice given to Policing. The Covid team in Force have worked closely with Joint Legal Services to quickly understand the new Regulations and provide clear guidance to staff on enforcement. Since the last report all international travel regulations were first removed, and then reinstated in response to the Omicron wave. Whilst primary ownership of enquiries with individuals and provision of advice and information lies with the Local Authorities and Public Health, enforcement of any breaches of these regulations are the responsibility of Policing. This similarly applies to those who have tested positive for Covid and fail to Self-Isolate as directed, as these are also referred to Gwent Police via our internal Covid Hub. The Hub reviews the referral, provides initial intelligence checks and identifies any risk issues prior to forwarding the task to the Force Control Room (FCR) for allocation to an officer.

Probably the most challenging aspect of Covid Enforcement for Gwent Police has been these fast-paced changes in legislation coupled with the fact that as a Wales/England Border Force we have had to deal with public confusion or misunderstanding about which Regulations apply at a particular time and in particular geographic locations. There has often been an identifiable lag between what the Governments have said, what the police understood and what the public believed, was permissible. Gwent Police often found itself in the position of not only upholding the law that applied at that time, but also, through social media and communication channels, explaining the regulations to the public.

The Gwent Police area has seen very few protests against Covid Regulations or the Vaccine Rollout during the course of the pandemic and those that did take place were often very poorly attended. However, as part of a nationwide call to action five protestors attended the Cwmbran Stadium Mass Vaccination Centre on the 19th of January 2022 and disrupted the vaccination activity taking place there. All five were



arrested for Aggravated Trespass and held in custody. Only one of this group was from the Gwent area, the others were all from the Swansea Valley and well known to South Wales Police due to their anti-government and anti-vaccine activities. Gwent Police has standing response and security plans for each vaccination site and these were activated and executed well in response to this incident.

### 3.4 **Health and Safety**

Over the last quarter the Health and Safety team have responded to Welsh Government Alert Level changes by updating relevant risk assessments, with particular emphasis on the implications of holding training and events both externally and internally. The team has provided guidance on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements taking cognisance of National Police Coordination Centre (NPCC) recommendations and local case rates.

A review of planned COVID secure arrangements within the recently completed Headquarter building has been completed to ensure appropriate measures are introduced to accommodate people safely as they transition from their current work environment and advice provided regarding specific areas of risk such as Force Control and Communications. The team continue to undertake sampling of workplaces across the Force, reporting as necessary into Covid Gold on levels of compliance. In addition, and where necessary, follow up reviews are undertaken to determine any necessary remedial measures should workplace transmission have been identified with a requirement to report to the Health and Safety Executive as a RIDDOR report. Thankfully, and probably, as a result of the combined measures taken in force to address the transmission risk, numbers have been limited in this regard over this period, with only 45 RIDDOR reports submitted over the course of the pandemic. Ongoing efforts to ensure that workplaces are subject to review, assessment and monitoring have continued, engaging with all areas across the Force Health and Safety management organisation. The team continues to liaise with Regional force Health and Safety departments to benchmark arrangements and secure best practice on a weekly basis.

In December 2021 the Force commenced a three-month trial of new reusable face coverings for staff. These compliment the disposable Type IIR face coverings that we currently provide to all staff. The 'Hunter Ultra Plus' masks are designed to meet relevant UK standards for face coverings, is reusable (advertised as a 100 wash cycle



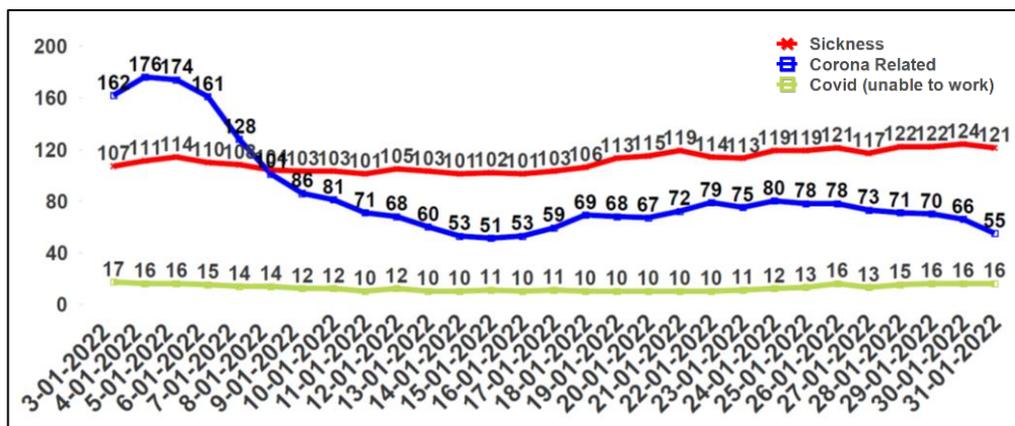
lifespan), comes in two sizes and in informal testing appears to be more comfortable and user friendly. The covering also incorporates a nose bridge feature to assist in control of glasses misting up, which has been a common complaint regarding the standard surgical type masks. Our expectation is that we will see equivalence or improvements in these areas of performance with potential to also reduce environmental impact and costs in the long term. The intent is to now roll this trial out to other front-line areas of the Force, such as Roads Policing, Response Policing and Criminal Investigation.

### 3.5 Workforce Resilience

The last couple of months have been challenging for Gwent Police as Covid related absence reached levels much above any other time during the pandemic. This was a position common across not just policing, but within all public services during this period. The much higher transmissibility of the Omicron variant of Covid compared to previous variants had a huge impact on resource levels.

The combination of Covid Positive cases within Gwent Police alongside those who were required to self-isolate or work from home as ‘Close Contacts’ of positive cases impacted upon our staffing levels across the Force and challenged our business continuity plans. Gwent Police took advantage of epidemiological and medical advice and adapted its policies on staff attendance in the workplace accordingly. But December 2021 still saw high rates of absence, which has eased in the new year

Figure 3: Gwent Police Sickness & Covid Absence Trend

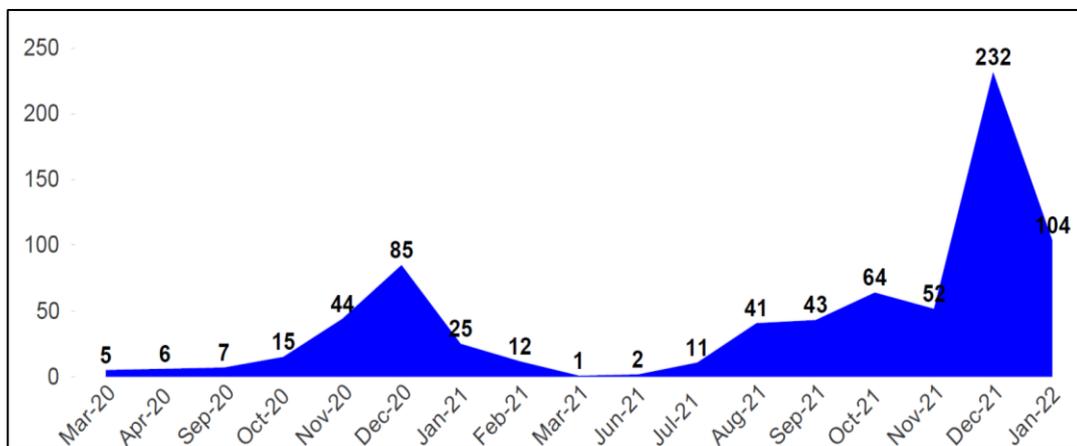


Despite these high absence figures Gwent Police has continued to perform better in this area in comparison to the other Welsh Forces and is tracked each day at the

Force Daily Management Meeting. As a Force have remained well below the National staff absence averages for the duration of the pandemic and officers and staff have exhibited a clear determination to continue working even when their wellbeing and health was deemed to be at risk.

The actual number of Gwent Police staff that tested positive for Covid over the course of the pandemic is shown on the chart below (see Figure 4: 'Number of Gwent Police Staff Covid Infections by Month'). Delta variant infections peaked in December 2020, but this was far exceeded by the infections resulting from the Omicron Wave at the end of 2021.

**Figure 4: Number of Gwent Police Staff Covid Infections by Month**



Ongoing processes operating alongside Public Health Wales have evolved to ensure that testing can take place for all Gwent Police staff at testing centres. Within Gwent the Covid team negotiated access to Rapid PCR testing for all Gwent Police staff via a dedicated Frontline Testing service within ABUHB which significantly reduced the period of isolation required when staff were awaiting results to clear them to return to the workplace. If officers come into contact with a suspected or diagnosed case of Covid an information sharing agreement has been established with Public Health Wales to allow Covid Hub staff to access medical records for the person who is infected, to establish their medical status and inform the contact tracing for that officer. This has been a positive inclusion in our working practices providing reductions in time where staff and officers are potentially absent from work.

The Covid Hub was put into operation in December 2020 in response to demand being placed upon the Occupational Health Unit and other Force resources to respond effectively to Covid-19 infections and workplace transmission. It quickly became



established as an effective team and continues to respond swiftly to outbreaks and isolated infections within the Force.

Since April 2021 Gwent Police have provided Covid Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) kits to all staff to allow home/self-testing for antibodies of the virus. This is a purely voluntary process (in line with legal advice and Public Health guidance). The numbers of staff undertaking this testing each week was for a long time disappointingly low despite internal communications campaigns and encouragement from senior management. But with the emergence of the Omicron Variant staff have been much more motivated to test regularly in order to protect themselves and their colleagues. In January 2022 the Force took advantage of a UK Health Security Agency scheme to provide public services with the capability to test critical workers daily. The Force Communications Suite was deemed to be the most critical and vulnerable area of the Force to workplace transmission of the virus. So the Force's First Point of Contact Department has been supplied with new Rapid Lateral Flow testing kits which are provided to every member of their staff to allow them to self-test prior to attending work each day, thereby protecting them and their colleagues from infection and the Force from significant absences.

In order to reduce the risk of Work-place Transmission of the virus (which remains reportable to the Health & Safety Executive) Gwent Police has introduced procedures for staff which involve Risk Based Assessments of all Close Contacts in order to safely return staff to work wherever possible and to limit infection spreading within the Force and increasing absences (see *Appendix 13.1: 'Covid Internal TTP Aug 2021 v8'*). These procedures provide clear guidelines for the Covid Hub staff to gather all relevant information to pass to 'Decision Makers' at the rank of Inspector or Chief Inspector who have devolved responsibility to make policy decisions on individual cases on behalf of the Covid Gold Commander. If it is deemed too high a risk that the individual has or will be infected with Covid (for instance, where the member of staff is living in the same house as a covid positive relative) then they are directed to work from home and to undergo additional testing for a defined period. Where the member of staff is in a critical role within the Force and need to be in the workplace additional controls (enhanced PPE, enhanced testing, physical barriers etc.) can be applied to allow them to return to work. This approach has been deemed best practice within Wales and adopted by the other three Forces.

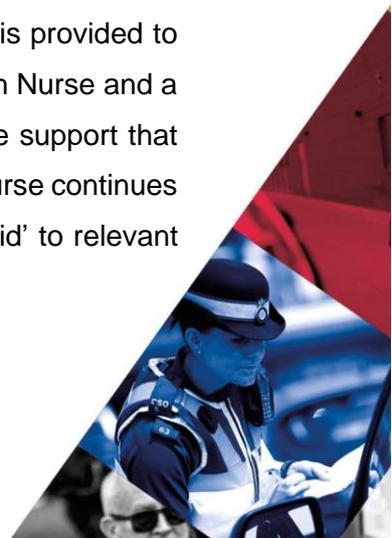


Earlier in the pandemic all training courses delivered both within Force and externally were suspended. Gradually more essential courses were reintroduced and now all courses are again being delivered, albeit often with reduced numbers of students and with strict social distancing in place. Gwent Police is in a good position with regard to compulsory development training compared to Forces nationally. Of note is the fact that we have been able to maintain our national commitment to Public Order capacity and capability through maintaining the refresher training of PSU Officers. Many Forces across the country have been unable to meet their commitments in this area.

### 3.6 **Wellbeing**

The Wellbeing provision for Gwent Police has continued to develop and adapt to the changing demands and restrictions placed upon us by the Covid Pandemic. The team are working closely with Corporate Communications to ensure that the Covid specific support and guidance provided by 'Care First' is promoted through the appropriate channels. The All-Wales Risk Assessment Tool is still being utilised to ensure that Occupational Health provides the right level of support to all of our staff. Gwent Police has invested in two new 'Wellbeing Specialists' who are implementing new initiatives and increasing the support available to protect the Force. The weekly Wellbeing Teams Call will recommence once again on the 1st of February. This session can be used by all staff to allow them to make wellbeing queries and to seek support. It can be used by those self-isolating or who have worries about Covid to dial-in and interact with their colleagues, with the aim of protecting their health and wellbeing. An Online Wellbeing Event focusing on Mindfulness and overcoming challenges took place in November 2021. All the sessions were recorded to give shift workers and front-line officers who were not able to take part the opportunity to view sessions at a later date. Furthermore, the team are implementing a new 'Wellbeing Ambassadors' structure, in line with National Wellbeing Service Oscar Kilo initiative, that will provide more consistent support and dissemination of information to all staff throughout the force.

The Occupational Health Unit continues to refer individuals to external Counsellors where appropriate, ensuring that a high level of psychological support is provided to staff when they need it. The OHU will be investing in new Mental Health Nurse and a Senior Occupational Health Nurse posts in order to expand further the support that can be offered by the Gwent Police. Our current Occupational Health Nurse continues to sign-post individuals who may be suffering the effects of 'Long Covid' to relevant



support, although this remains a difficult and not well understood aspect of Covid for policing nationally.

### 3.7 **Community Cohesion**

The Gwent Police Diversity and Inclusion Lead continues to chair a 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 on policing and health issues during the pandemic and for Gwent Police to allay concerns and to understand the views of our communities. The Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector 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 and to assess emerging community tensions.

### 3.8 **Lessons Learned**

Lessons Learned processes are in place aligned to the College of Policing and NPCC Guidance and branded as 'Operation Talla'. There are established reporting lines in place and regular national meetings to provide a platform for discussion and regular links with police liaison in the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that lessons from all Forces are brought together.

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.

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. The Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector is also a member of the 'Covid19 All Wales Organisational Learning Group' hosted by Dyfed Powys Police. This group reviews



practices across the four Welsh Forces and allows members to bring forward local challenges and offers examples of good practice.

### 3.9 Inspection

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 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.

This inspection resulted in the report: 'Policing in the Pandemic: The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020' which was published in April 2021 (see *Annex 13.2: Policing in the Pandemic HMICFRS Report*). The report made five recommendations for forces. These recommendations are as follows:

- 1. Managing Registered Sex Offenders: Forces must immediately make sure that officers understand and correctly implement the guidance for managing registered sex offenders during the pandemic.*
- 2. Legislation and Guidance: Forces must immediately make sure they can manage their responses to changes in coronavirus-related legislation. They must ensure frontline officers and staff are clear about the difference between legislation and guidance.*
- 3. Test, Track and Trace: Forces must immediately put in place a policy to make sure that they follow the guidance and self-isolation directions when members of the workforce come into contact with someone with coronavirus symptoms.*
- 4. Custody Records: Forces must immediately make sure that they clearly and consistently record on custody records information about how/when/if detainees are informed of the temporary changes to how they can exercise their rights to legal advice and representation. The record must make clear how any consents are obtained about the way in which legal advice and representation are provided.*



*5. Overall Scale and Impact of Changes: Within six months, forces must assess the sustainability of any temporary measures introduced during the pandemic that change the way they work. They must understand positive, negative and unintended consequences of the scale and impact of the changes before determining if any of these new ways of working should continue.*

Each of these recommendations had a Force owner allocated who was responsible for implementing the necessary change. Additionally, the Report also identified learning points for all Forces to consider and implement where relevant to their circumstances. These are in the areas of: Demand & Pressures; Technology; Training; Workforce Wellbeing; Data and; Learning. The Force is reviewing these areas through its Assurance Officers. The only outstanding recommendation was number 5 relating to an assessment of the changes made to the Force during the pandemic. This is a key recovery factor and discussed further below.

### 3.10 **Recovery**

The Force is in the process of moving from Incident Management of the Pandemic to Recovery. Within the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) the Strategic Coordination Group chaired by Chief Superintendent McLain was stood down in April 2021. A related SCG was then implemented in November 2021 focused upon pressures in Health & Social Care in Gwent. There is an LRF Recovery Group chaired by the Chief Executive of Newport City Council, but this is not currently sitting.

Within Force the Covid Gold Group still sits weekly, chaired by Chief Superintendent Mark Hobrough. A proposal has been made to Chief Officers that a Recovery Structure is established with a Chief Officer Team lead overseeing a Recovery Board. Board representation would be drawn from senior members of critical departments and policing teams across the Force and would manage the recovery from the pandemic and the identification of practices developed during Covid that have long term benefits for the Force. This would mirror the structures in place within the other three Welsh Forces which each have Covid Recovery Boards in place. This implementation of this Board is critical to the Force's ability to return to a 'new normal' and to identify those activities and policies commenced in response to Covid that provide long term benefit to the Force and should be continued. It is also necessary to meet the requirements of the HMIC Inspection referred to above and to put the



Force in a strong Business Continuity position to meet the challenges of any future pandemics.

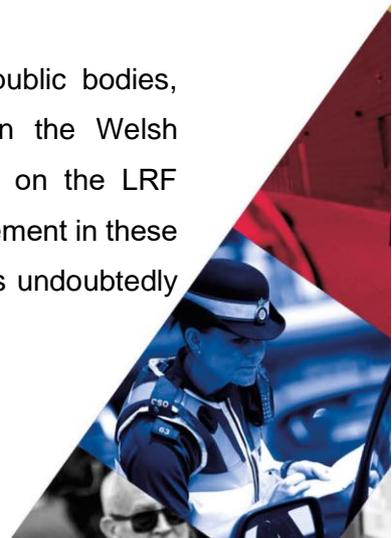
Public Health Wales and Public Health England remain concerned about 'new' and emerging variants of Coronavirus, or 'Variants of Concern' (VOCs). As each variant is identified they are assessed for relative infection rates, severity of illness and resistance to the current vaccination programme. It is strongly believed that these VOCs will result in increased transmission within our communities and therefore, within policing.

## 4. COLLABORATION

Throughout the initial 12 months of the pandemic the four Welsh Forces held Weekly 'All Wales Gold' Meetings between the Four Organisational Gold Commanders (represented by Chief Superintendent Mark Hobrough for Gwent) and the Police Liaison Unit at the Welsh Assembly Government. This allowed the Forces to provide consistency of response across Wales and to identify and promulgate best practice. This mirrored the approach taken by Chief Officers across Wales and ensured that the particular structure of policing in Wales under a devolved Governmental system was considered alongside UK wide approaches to policing the pandemic. This meeting was initially stood down in May 2021 as Forces moved towards a Recovery position.

Since May 2021 an 'All Wales Recovery Golds' Meeting has been held formally fortnightly but has also operated as a support group for the four Forces, meeting as required less formally and ensuring a consistent approach to policing. Representation from the other three Welsh Forces is through their Recovery Superintendents. Whilst the Head of the Police Liaison Unit at the Welsh Government also sits on this group. Gwent Police is currently represented by the Civil Contingencies Chief Inspector. In December 2021, in response to the Omicron wave, the All-Wales Gold Commanders meeting was reintroduced.

Gwent Police is fully collaborative with partner organisations and public bodies, holding the chair for the Strategic Coordination Group, sitting on the Welsh Government 'SCG/RCG Chairs Meeting' and having representation on the LRF Incident Management Team within Gwent. Gwent's position and involvement in these partnership groups exceeds that of our neighbouring forces which has undoubtedly



meant that we are better position to influence and implement partnership policies and procedures that impact upon the Force.

On a more tactical level the Civil Contingencies Leads of the Four Welsh Forces and the BTP Operational Lead for Wales, also meet fortnightly. This group is entitled 'The Police (Wales) TTP & Covid Working Group'. The group allowed those dealing with the policies and procedures concerning Covid Demand, Covid Enforcement and Infection Prevention Control to learn from each other and provide practical support where appropriate.

## **5. NEXT STEPS**

As detailed above an effective Recovery Programme is required in order to return Gwent Police to a new state of normality, to embrace innovative and new ways of working developed during the pandemic and to position the Force to enable it to effectively respond to similar future challenges. The establishment of a Recovery Board is seen as essential to manage the move to the 'new normal' and to meet the requirements of national inspection processes and to fall in line with other Welsh and UK Forces.

## **6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Covid19 lockdown continues to affect the phasing of expenditure in 2021/22 but to a lesser extent than in the previous financial year. Some variances in non-pay expenditure categories are still expected due to the uncertain timing of some expenditure such as external training and estates maintenance costs, and as officers and staff continue to work agilely in line with Force and Government Covid guidance. Funding in 2020/21 and 2021/22 from the UK Government, Welsh Government and Local Government partners totalling approximately £1.45m has been matched with specific Covid related expenditure of £1.30m, leaving approximately £153k of funding remaining as of 31st December 2021. No further funding for 2022/23 has been identified. Going forward the Force will continue to procure PPE kit through the NHS framework, and elements of the non-ringfenced funding may be required for covid related general revenue and capital expenditure in 2022/23. The capital programme has been affected to varying degrees from Covid restrictions, partly due to global



supply chain issues, which affected the timetable for the handover of the new Gwent Police Headquarters build and delivery times for key assets such as replacement vehicles, mobile phones and laptops.

## 7. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

See sections 3.5 and 3.6 above.

## 8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

See section 3.3 above.

## 9. EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Joint Strategic Equality Plan and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.

In preparing this report, consideration has been given to requirements of the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## 10. RISK

As documented in the Force Risk Register. The Civil Contingences Chief Inspector reviews and updates this regularly on behalf of the Gold Commander.

## 11. PUBLIC INTEREST

- 11.1 In producing this report, has consideration been given to 'public confidence'? **Yes**
- 11.2 Are the contents of this report, observations and appendices necessary and suitable for the public domain? **Yes**
- 11.3 If you consider this report to be exempt from the public domain, please state the reasons: **N/A**

## 12. LEAD CHIEF OFFICER

- 12.1 T/ACC Mark Hobrough



## 13. ANNEXES

### 13.1 Covid Internal TTP Aug 2021 v8



Covid19 - Internal  
TTP Dec 2021 v8.ppt

### 13.2 Policing in the Pandemic HMICFRS Report



Policing the  
Pandemic HMICFRS

### 13.3 Covid Funding Summary December 2021



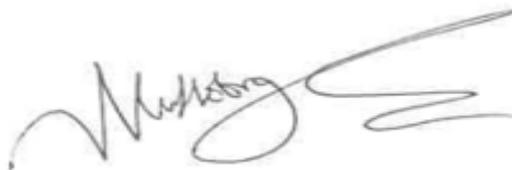
Covid Funding  
Summary December

## 14. CHIEF OFFICER APPROVAL

14.1 I confirm this report has been discussed and approved at a formal Chief Officers' meeting.

14.2 I confirm this report is suitable for the public domain.

Signature:



Date: 18.02.2022

