

COVID 19

WARWICKSHIRE POLICE

Force COVID Structure – Op Readout

Command Structure established

- Gold: ACC Debbie Tedds
- Silver: Supt Mike Smith
- Bronzes identified across key business and thematic areas

- ▶ Critical Incident (Gold) meetings held weekly
- ▶ COVID cell established to coordinate force response
- ▶ Operational activity run under Operation Stay Home and Operation Stay Alert.

Absence and Demand

- ▶ Very steep rise in absence levels during February.
- ▶ Concerns at the time that services would have to be folded in
- ▶ Whilst some forces did fold in services (e.g. SNTs) or changed shift pattern, Warwickshire did not.
- ▶ Absence levels quickly reduced after first few weeks
- ▶ Demand levels began to fall in March
- ▶ Developing good COVID datasets (e.g. HR, demand) was critical and allowed the force to avoid any rash decisions.

Contingency Plans

- ▶ The COVID cell's main priority initially was to develop contingency plans in the event that absence rates continued to rise
- ▶ All departments reviewed and updated their own contingency plans
- ▶ The COVID cell then developed a range of extra-ordinary cross cutting contingency plans, to sustain resource levels in six critical areas.
- ▶ These six areas were: Patrol, OCC, Custody, Firearms, Investigations, Roads Policing
- ▶ A range of measure were identified to surge resources into these six areas, in the event that absence levels meant that departmental contingency plans were insufficient.
- ▶ In addition, plans were also developed around some smaller functions that were also critical such as Tactical Planning and Duties Management

Contingencies Plans (continued)

A wide range of options were prepared including:

- ▶ redeploying officers from units such as L&D, SNT etc
- ▶ cancelling all training
- ▶ going to 4 shifts
- ▶ cancelling leave
- ▶ deploying student officers early (through a 5 day “street ready” training course)
- ▶ use of volunteers or former officers
- ▶ demand reduction initiatives

Contingency Plans (continued)

Most contingency plans were not required in the end

Although some key decisions were taken to protect resource levels, including:

- Training cancelled
- Leave cancellations supported (nobody wanted leave!)
- Shift changes to isolated roles where resilience was an issue (e.g. shift Inspectors)

Protecting the Workforce

Throughout the pandemic, the protection of our workforce has been paramount and has brought a number of challenges

- ▶ Limiting close contact with the public
- ▶ Reducing close contact at work
- ▶ Hygiene
- ▶ PPE
- ▶ Testing
- ▶ Contact Tracing
- ▶ COVID Secure

Limiting Close Contact with the Public

Processes were changed to avoid unnecessary contact. Some of these were to comply with national policy, other's were determined in force.

- ▶ Much wider use of telephone statements
- ▶ New approach to interviews (e.g. charge without IV, video IVs)
- ▶ All diary car & station surgery appointments dealt with remotely
- ▶ Closure of front officers
- ▶ Essential arrests only
- ▶ Video Remand Hearings

Reducing Close Contact at Work

- ▶ Single crewing unless double crewing is essential
- ▶ All staff encouraged to home work where possible (although the well documented network capacity issues meant that some could not work effectively at home)
- ▶ New ICT home worker solution developed to partly overcome this
- ▶ Roll out of additional laptops
- ▶ Use of Bramcote as patrol base to reduce footfall at Bedworth
- ▶ Screens installed in OCC
- ▶ Training cancelled / gyms closed

Hygiene

- ▶ Hand washing guidance promoted by posters, intranet, blogs etc.
- ▶ Sanitisation stations at all entry points, and within buildings
- ▶ Hand sanitiser issued to officers and staff
- ▶ Washable kit bags available to all (through local volunteers)
- ▶ Desk wipes available everywhere
- ▶ Cleaning regime increased

PPE

- ▶ Some isolated supply issues in early days, but nowhere near level of other organisations / forces
- ▶ Took decision to source PPE directly ourselves, rather than rely on national supply
- ▶ As a result, when national supply failed initially, force was not affected
- ▶ All lines of PPE have been readily available throughout
- ▶ PPE guidance was well publicised
- ▶ National PPE guidance changed several times – force has always adhered to the most recent version
- ▶ Now using national supplies predominantly, as a reliable source now

Testing

- ▶ COVID cell initially arranged all testing for symptomatic employees
- ▶ Every employee who reported symptoms of COVID 19, was contacted by the COVID cell within 24 hours and offered a test
- ▶ Over time, it became quicker and easier for employees to book directly – so tests are no longer managed through COVID cell
- ▶ Very few positive tests in force (less than 30)
- ▶ Vast majority have had mild symptoms, a few more severe
- ▶ Thankfully we have had no very serious or fatal cases

Contact Tracing

- ▶ Introduced by Government in June
- ▶ COVID cell conducts own contact tracing immediately on learning of any Positive case in force
- ▶ This is normally well before any NHS contact tracing begins
- ▶ Anyone who has been in close contact is directed to self-isolate immediately
- ▶ If a positive testing officer has had close contact with a member of the public, the case is managed jointly by the force and Public Health England
- ▶ The force has had two outbreaks (i.e. 2 cases in same location). Both were contained quickly with no further infections.

COVID Secure

- ▶ In May the Government produced it's COVID Secure guidance, with over 100 recommendations relevant to Police Forces.
- ▶ Recommendations can broadly be broken down into
 - Process (how we work)
 - Behaviours (how staff behave)
 - Infrastructure (buildings)
- ▶ The force were already achieving many, prior to the guidance
- ▶ Programme of work initiated in May to comply with the remainder

Risk Management

- ▶ Challenging as so many different activities that police forces carry out across multiple departments.
- ▶ Risk assessment framework created.
- ▶ All business leads conducted or oversaw COVID risk assessments across all their functions, following a clearly defined process
- ▶ Every single business area, department or team now has a bespoke COVID risk assessment in place (117 risk assessments across the force)
- ▶ In addition an overarching force level risk assessment is in place, covering more generic activities
- ▶ All risk assessments signed off by business leads and H&S advisor

Vulnerable Employees

Two Government categories – **vulnerable** and **extremely vulnerable**

Extremely vulnerable:

- Working from home throughout – as required to shield.
- Can return on 1st August, subject to individual risk assessment

Vulnerable

- Encouraged to work from home initially
- Can now return subject to risk assessment and strict social distancing

BAME – Risk assessments by line managers for BAME employees

Ryton alternative accommodation – for those with vulnerable household members

Policing the COVID regulations

- ▶ Operation Stay Home and Operation Stay Alert
- ▶ 4E approach
- ▶ Aim was to avoid over-zealous enforcement and retain public support
- ▶ This approach was strongly communicated from the outset
- ▶ Relatively low enforcement rate compared to most forces
- ▶ Need to manage public expectations (e.g. calls to OCC re social distance breaches)
- ▶ Legislation has changed so frequently – challenge for officers to keep up

Policing the COVID regulations (continued)

- ▶ Fixed Penalty notice process established and updated following every change in legislation
- ▶ Intranet site created, as repository for all operational guidance
- ▶ Normal demand reduced significantly during lockdown – creating capacity to police the COVID regulations
- ▶ Now that lockdown has eased, demand is back to normal and capacity to police COVID has reduced

Policing the COVID regulations (continued)

Responsibility (at different times) to police various offences

- Leaving house without lawful reason
- Gatherings (2, then 6, now 30)
- Premises offences
- Quarantine regulations
- Face Coverings
- “Bubbles”

Many exemptions within legislation making enforcement difficult at times

CATO

A CATO intelligence cell was established early on to monitor and report any emerging threats, and assess a range of plausible scenarios.

Specific concerns arose at different times, and the cell were able to monitor, assess and report the risk around areas such as

- ▶ Under reporting of domestic abuse / child abuse
- ▶ Community tensions / hate crime
- ▶ Civil unrest and disorder
- ▶ Attacks on 5G masts
- ▶ Increase in online child abuse

Supporting Partners

- ▶ Force Governance fed into wider partnerships locally and regionally
- ▶ West Midlands conurbation and Warks SCG / TCG process
- ▶ Enabled sharing of assets and responsibilities
- ▶ Sudden Death car – temporary measure to take certain tasks away from ambulance crews, doctors and paramedics
- ▶ Mortuary management – officers deployed full time to manage / support the temporary mortuary
- ▶ Nightingale Hospital – NEC
- ▶ Daily County Strategic Group focusing on Warwickshire supported by tactical groups
- ▶ Regional Police, CPS, Criminal Justice groups to name a few

Communications

- ▶ Very high volume of information coming in – and changing frequently.
- ▶ Not easy to manage organisationally; difficult for workforce to digest.
- ▶ Op Talla – daily information drops through NPPC
- ▶ Daily COVID update emailed to workforce via Postmaster
- ▶ Chief Officer video blogs
- ▶ Q & A forum
- ▶ Webinar's where whole force could ask questions of Gold & Silver
- ▶ Printed guides (COVID secure, managers guide)



▶ **QUESTIONS?**