



WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

12th June 2020

COVID-19 – Briefing for the Police and Crime Panel

Introduction

This report is a COVID update following the paper that was discussed at the Police and Crime meeting on 24 April 2020. This report does not seek to cover information provided previously but does intend to update members on the latest COVID position from a PCC/OPCC perspective.

It will include an update on policing alongside additional partnership activity with consideration for the current situation and any anticipated scenarios that may require a change in the future.

Please be aware that this is a changing picture and will continue to be so. Updates will continue to be provided to Panel members outside of the PCP meeting structure where appropriate.

Background/Context

During week Monday 11 May the government message in England only was changed to “stay alert, control the virus, save lives”. A number of changes to the restrictions were also made including:

- Actively encouraging people who could not work at home to go back to work, avoiding public transport where possible and use of face coverings in certain situations to be considered
- Fines issued by the police increased from £60 to £100
- Unlimited outside exercise, being able to sunbathe or picnic away from home
- Travel to outdoor space in a private vehicle irrespective of distance from home
- Being able to meet outdoors 1 other person not from your household providing maintain 2m social distancing
- Reopening of garden centres and nurseries

The guidance for first responders from PHE was last updated on 18th May and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders/interim-guidance-for-first-responders-and-others-in-close-contact-with-symptomatic-people-with-potential-2019-ncov>

A number of changes are being progressed during early June and those applicable from 1 June include:

- Reopening of schools/private nurseries for some age groups
- Groups of up to 6 people being able to meet outdoors, including in gardens and private outdoor spaces

In addition to national guidance and reports from the government and PHE, we continue to receive regular guidance and advice from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and information from the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) as part of their named Operation Talla in response to Coronavirus.

Current Activity

Interim arrangements to replace standard governance structures during the Coronavirus pandemic continue to follow the below structure:

Who	What	When	Notes
PCC / CC	Daily contact to discuss exceptions	Daily call in the diary	Includes weekends (DPCC/DCC to cover when necessary)
OPCC Exec / CC or DCC	Bilateral discussion to focus on Covid19	Weekly on Thursdays aligned to follow the PCC's weekly meeting with the Policing Minister	Previously reported content to facilitate the discussion remains the same for these meetings. Internal record of the meeting and any resulting actions taken.

The Community Outcomes Meeting (COM) is an important meeting which allows the OPCC to demonstrate the transparency of public accountability on issues matter most to our communities. Therefore the PCC is looking to hold a COM "lite" meeting in June, the agenda will include: Urgent items, PCC Announcements, Chief Constable Announcements and a Public facing COVID update. The PCC will be inviting public questions in advance of the meeting via social media and email and his office are looking at the possibility of live streaming.

The PCC continues to be linked in with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Strategic Coordination Group which sits daily across West Yorkshire to ensure a coordinated response from local public services to the Covid-19 situation.

Governance of Commissioned Services

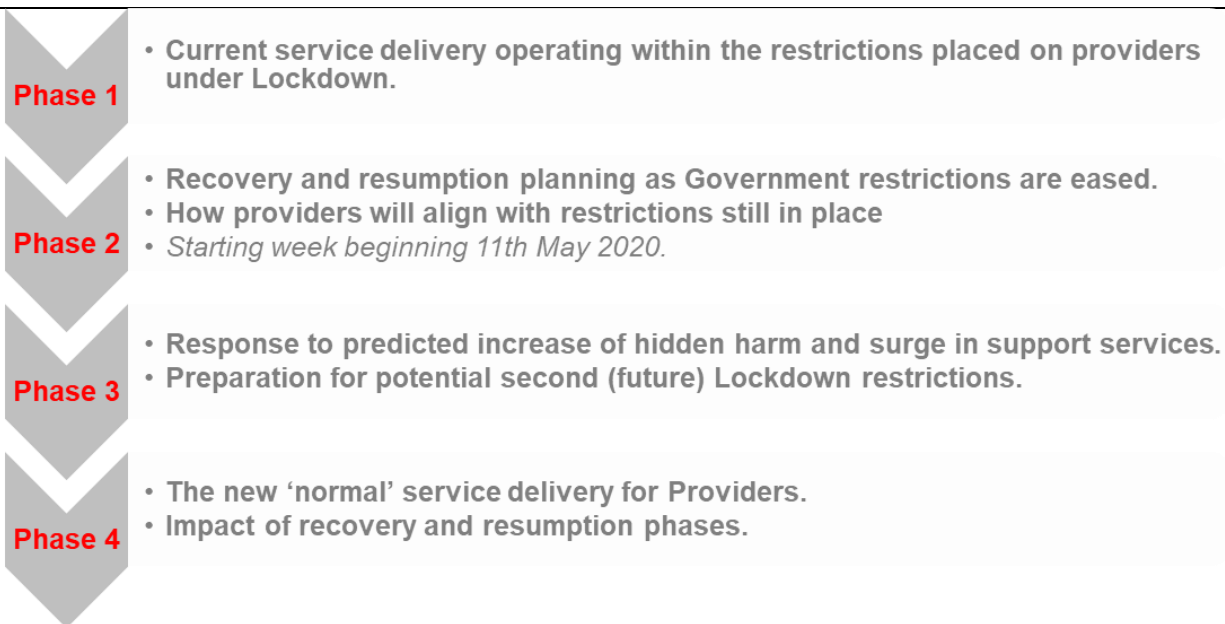
There is ongoing communication between OPCC staff and all PCC commissioned services to monitor any service disruption that may occur and to ensure services receive support that may be required.

Continuing throughout the period are the following:

- Weekly check in calls with Restorative Justice and Victims Support contract providers
- Daily reports of Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) provision for West Yorkshire and Weekly check in meeting with Yorkshire and The Humber (YaTH) SARC contract manager and commissioners
- Weekly check in calls with the new SARC relocation project group
- Monthly COVID-19: Alcohol & Drugs Peer Skype Calls with Public Health England
- Three weekly meeting with providers and board members to discuss Domestic and Sexual Abuse issues amid Covid 19

Using a planned approach we are currently supporting and working with our commissioned providers through a four phase recovery plan, specifically concentrating on Phase 2 of the process at present, whilst looking ahead to Phase 3 and Phase 4.

In order to capture the understanding of the pandemic and how it has affected commissioned services, the OPCC is putting together a shared learning document which documents the current crisis and the measures agreed between the OPCC and our commissioning partners, this has been met with widespread approval across the commissioning landscape.



The OPCC is currently scoping all possible Covid response funding streams across the partnership landscape that support vulnerable people, tackle crime and ASB, ensure that criminal justice works for our communities, and impact positively on the priorities set out within the Police and Crime Plan. Through our dissemination and co-ordination of funding communications and bid support, and by bringing together providers with funding from across the five districts, we are maximising the potential Covid response resources coming into the county from across central government, National Lottery, Youth Endowment Fund and other third sector funding streams.

Safeguarding Update

The OPCC have created a dedicated web page on the OPCC website for 'safeguarding young people' providing links to resources and local safeguarding information and support for both communities, and professionals.

Following reports in the media about increased calls to Childline, representatives from the OPCC have spoken to the Children's Commissioner Anne Longfield, exploring how we can best support and identify children who may be vulnerable and isolated during the coronavirus pandemic. The points raised formed part of the discussion at the May meeting of the West Yorkshire Risk and Vulnerability group.

In recent weeks the PCC has chaired both the National Modern Slavery Human Trafficking (MSHT) Network and a West Yorkshire MSHT meeting to discuss more local issues.

On 2 May 2020, the Government announced a package of £76m extra funding to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse (DA), sexual violence (SV), vulnerable children and their families, as well as victims of modern slavery, during the COVID-19 emergency pandemic. Of this £76m funding package, £25m will be administered by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The West Yorkshire indicative amount is set out in the table below and will be distributed via Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). The funding is ring-fenced for COVID-19 related emergency funding, and then ring-fenced again for spend on each of the three areas of need.

Domestic abuse services that are already commissioned by PCCs	£393,000
Sexual violence services that are already commissioned by PCCs and those that are not currently funded by PCCs	£196,500

Domestic abuse services that are not currently commissioned by PCCs	£196,500
Total	£786,000

Due to the timescales set by the MoJ, services both currently and not currently funded by the PCC have been invited to submit funding requests by no later than 5pm on Friday 5 June. These requests will then be assessed before allocations are made for delivery up to end of October 2020.

Governance with regard to Criminal Justice

Since the last report the PCC has continued to convene bi-weekly Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) meetings in attempting to understand and mitigate where possible the huge impact on Criminal Justice processes and outcomes.

Unfortunately the majority of cases have been delayed or postponed, which has a considerable detrimental impact on the lives of victims, witness and those accused of committing crime. Local justice partners are coming together via the LCJB, working together in order to get the situation moving as soon as is possible, but very much hampered by national restrictions and decision making at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) level.

Whilst the use of new technology platforms have been progressed, the backlog in court cases continues to build daily and any move back to 'normal business' is a fast growing challenge. Some test Jury trials are being held, however, these are minimal in number and not being conducted in currently in West Yorkshire due mainly to estates restrictions. It is important to acknowledge that police colleagues are still dealing robustly with offenders where appropriate, supporting victims and keeping our streets safe. The overall situation though does make it harder to support victims without being able to assure them that justice will be done "swiftly".

The PCC has written to the Lord Chancellor setting out the concerns and continues to lobby the Government to support Her Majesty Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to enable them locally to help transform their business model in responding to the local needs amidst the pandemic crisis.

The Reducing Reoffending board and the Females at Risk of Offending Board have both met virtually in recent weeks, and despite the current difficulties, workstreams are being progressed where possible. In the case of the Reducing Reoffending Board, the actions from the recent HMICFRS Inspection around Integrated Offender Management (IOM) were discussed, with the relevant agencies i.e. Police, Probation and CRC providing useful summaries of work underway.

Police Response to COVID-19

West Yorkshire Police continue to respond to Covid-19 through Operation Jinmen, with the focus and approach outlined in the paper to Panel on 24 April 2020.

The full webpage on the internal WYP intranet to keep all officers/staff updated as well as the public facing pages on the WYP webpage which is available here <https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/coronavirus> continue to be updated where appropriate.

Policing within new legislation parameters

It is expected that the Health Protection Regulations will remain in place, however there will be likely alterations made to reflect changes in current restrictions.

The WYP response continues to follow a four-step escalation process that adheres to NPCC guidance regarding the four E's of 'Engage', 'Explain', 'Encourage' and finally 'Enforce'. With an emphasis on the first three 'E's', enforcement action should be predominantly utilised for blatant breaches that endanger public safety through the spread of the virus such as through large public gatherings of more people than is currently permitted.

To maintain the ability to police with the consent of our communities, the PCC has worked with the Chief Constable to ensure that WYP use these powers correctly, fairly and only when absolutely necessary.

As previously discussed, the policing of the legislation is scrutinised by the Gold group of Op Jinmen on a daily basis.

On 15th May the NPCC released updated provisional data from all police forces in the UK which included the numbers of fines given to persons breaching the new legislation up to 11 May 2020.

The press release states that fines for breaches of government public health regulations issued by police officers in England and Wales equate to less than 0.02 per cent of the eligible population in England and Wales – with 13,445 fines issued in England between March 27 and the April 11.

West Yorkshire has issued 758 fines between 27 March to 11 May in this time period and this compares well with other areas such as North Yorkshire (843) although the NPCC does note that *this data is provided in quick time and needs to be viewed with caution.*

The latest press release and associated data can be accessed via the NPCC website here: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/npcc-issues-update-on-fines-given-during-covid-lockdown>

Public Engagement

The OPCC continues to work to the new Engagement and Communications plan that has been produced in response to Covid-19. This plan sets out how we continue to communicate and engage with our communities and to reassure and stay in touch with people during this global pandemic. The PCC and his office continue to engagement with the public and partners through a variety of ways including email, online through the website/social media, press releases, video and audio messages.

Some work to highlight to date:

Extra Ordinary SCF Grant Round ‘Keeping our Communities Safe’ – When the fund closed on 20 May the OPCC had received 144 applications requesting a total of £747,448.36. Following a speedy but robust evaluation process, the PCC awarded grants to 32 projects across West Yorkshire totalling £174,304.93. A number of the successful projects cover multiple priorities with Mental health, Domestic and Sexual Abuse, Child Sexual Abuse/Child Exploitation featuring more significantly. Those who will be supported by the projects include women and girls, young people, children and all vulnerable people. We are working quickly to pay monies out by the end of this month and I look forward to engaging with as many projects as possible to learn more about their delivery. Details of the successful projects are published on the PCC’s website: <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/safer-communities-fund/successful-applications/extra-ordinary-grant-round-covid-19>

Current SCF projects – a review has been conducted on the 77 currently funded SCF projects and through this process 47 have been granted an extension to the delivery timescales and 20 have amended the use to allow for continued delivery in some capacity. The other 10 are either continuing to deliver as intended, have already completed or we are still agreeing how the project will progress.

Listening to you – Using an online facilities, a qualitative survey has been launched in the first week of June which will pick up on the policing of Covid to date and take a reading on how individuals and communities are coping.

Engagement with the Third Sector – The Third Sector Advisory Group continue to meet via skype and regular inputs being received and shared to support our communities on my website (COVID-19 information page). Our Head of Commissioning and Engagement Manager will also be working with third sector to support groups to build third sector engagement with the VRU.

Increased engagement with Young People – Our most recent skype meeting with the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) was on 29 May 2020, as well as contributing towards National Volunteers week the group received an update from WYP on their policing of Covid. They also informed PCC support messages for other young people including safeguarding support and advice regarding mental health and online bullying.

VRU Engagement – we are continuing to support the VRU and reviewing the current Communications and Engagement strategy to review activity over the coming months. Details of past and upcoming work have been submitted as part of the current Home Office bid and include the online recruitment of a Community Advisory Group to support community feedback and inform decision making.

Communications, Press Releases, Website and Social Media – the dedicated Coronavirus Support Page on the PCC's website continues to be updated regularly. Recent additions include bereavement support and guidance on making and wearing a face mask. Recent press releases include recognising volunteers as part of National Volunteer Week, highlighting Mental Health Awareness Week and support for the National Police Chief Council's speeding awareness operation.

All communication methods are under constant review in terms of any further emerging issues or advice from the Government and NHS.

Impact on Crime and Community Safety

As highlighted in the 'Current Activity' section on above, in order to inform on the policing priorities, WYP has instigated a daily reporting mechanism, which records call volume and crimes / incidents linked to COVID-19. Daily investigation by WYP supports early identification of changing trends, supporting a prompt response.

The daily data, as at 1 June identifies:

- Daily 999 calls are moving back to usual volumes for this time of year at around 1200-1300 per day
- Stabilised volume of 101 calls (around 2100 per day) but consistently higher number of incidents attended (around 400 more incidents a day now attended, bringing the daily incident attended figure to around 1400)
- Arrest levels have remained consistent but recorded crime has reduced considerably albeit recent daily recorded crime figures have moved back towards usual levels for this time of year (approaching 800 a day)
- Domestic abuse incidents have moved up from around 169 per day to over 200 per day
- As lockdown restrictions ease, there has been a steady increase in ASB incidents to around 200 a day in the last 7 days
- There continues to be a lower volume of missing person reports

The NPCC bulletin on 21st May looked at the changes in crime across the country and the below figures looks at the percentage changes from this bulletin and how this compares in West Yorkshire. The data was for the 4 weeks prior to the 10th May compared with the same time last year.

Provisional data from police forces in England and Wales shows that the reduction in crime during Coronavirus outbreak was continuing and that the vast majority of the public were following government regulations enacted in response to the crisis.

For the period in question:

- Total Crime has reduced in West Yorkshire by 23.1% in comparison to the national reduction of 25%
- Assaults and Personal Robbery has shown a reduction of 30% which is the same as the national reduction. Rape has fallen by 23.8% in comparison to a larger national fall of 28%.
- Falls have also been seen in residential burglary (45.2% compared to 36% nationally) and vehicle crime – Theft From and Of Vehicle (down 43.9% in comparison to a 41% drop nationally) and shoplifting (down 58.6% in comparison to 53% nationally)
- Calls to 999 are down by 20.7% in comparison to a 23% drop nationally and there has been a 6.7% drop in 101 calls, although nationally the percentage was higher at 25%.
- There are some new National indicators included in this bulletin which include trends in Safeguarding Incidents and they are as follows:
- Domestic Abuse Incidents – nationally the number of incidents has increased by 4% - in West Yorkshire this figure is 6.2%
- Missing person related incidents – nationally this has reduced by 37% - in West Yorkshire by-37.2%

To understand the context of this data – please see the following note from the NPCC:

The data reported here is based on a new ad hoc NPCC collection instituted to inform Operation Talla. The purpose was to provide a mechanism for monitoring and tracking demands on the police during the Covid-19 outbreak to inform operational decisions. A small number of key indicators have been collated from the 43 territorial forces in England and Wales by the NPCC team. We are aware that not all forces have been able to supply consistent returns across all indicators. The data should be viewed as provisional, having been gathered at speed, and as only indicative of recent trends. In this release, we have restricted our reporting to those indicators that we have confidence are sufficiently robust to provide a reliable picture.

The above data was taken before the changes to the lockdown at the end of May. Early indicators from West Yorkshire are that the number of calls to the 999 system are beginning to rise, and total crime is also rising – but still below that seen at this time last year.

These are very early indicators and are being tracked on a weekly basis as part of the PCC's bilateral meeting with the Chief Constable.

Organisational Impact and Staff Welfare

Ploughland House remains closed and all staff based at this office are working from home. Work has now commenced on recovery planning and how the office will operate in the future. Ongoing meetings continue to be arranged in priority order, with some being cancelled where appropriate.

Contact with staff continues to occur on a weekly basis, through staff meetings, email, individual calls and via a weekly internal bulletin.