



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Report

Police, Fire and Crime Panel - 26th October 2020

Covid Update - Staffordshire Police

Purpose

This report is designed to provide an update on the force response to Covid 19 and follows the paper in July 2020

Update

Staffordshire Police's approach to policing COVID 19 has been governed by a Gold structure (Op Jafar) which at its height was meeting 3 times a week; more recently fortnightly. The Gold Strategy set out the core components of the forces approach including strategic aims and objectives, policing style to be adopted, policing powers together with the relevant governance. Regular engagement has also taken place regionally and nationally across NPCC.

In addition the Gold commander has been a member of the Staffordshire LRF SCG from the outset of its establishment.

The force also engages in the LRF Recovery Coordinating Group (DCC Barnett) and is the Regional rep on the national recovery and learning group.

Since August the Gold commander for OP Jafar has been ACC Bibby and with the rise again of infections and the imposition of further changes to Covid legislation and restrictions, the Gold group has stepped up its frequency once again to weekly. Silver commander has also changed to C/Supt Mattinson.

Assurance is provided to the PFCC through their office being in attendance at all Gold meetings and with direct briefings within existing governance arrangements.

The main focus of the response to Covid 19 is as follows:

Compliance and Enforcement

Changing legislation and guidance has characterised this period, often with delayed accompanying guidance which has proved challenging. The force approach has continued with the 4 Es and very low levels of enforcement required (FPNs). Strong use of communications both by the force and also by partners has focused on securing compliance by communities. Different policing operations have taken place over the summer including our response to a range of protests including Black Lives Matter (Op Santalina) and the disruption of a number of illegal raves (Op Vicus) in addition to the impact on policing as restrictions were lifted through July.

With the recent change in legislation including the 'rule of 6' and curfews, additional resources have been patrolling in support of normal policing such as Safer Nights. Working with other enforcement agencies including licensing there are processes in place to deal appropriately with breaches as reported.

The force has experienced a rise in calls for service regarding breaches typically concerning house parties, concerns over not wearing masks, pubs and restaurants not closing at curfew times, Rule 6 breaches.

A multiagency group chaired by Supt Chisholm has now been established under the SCG to focus on compliance and enforcement and ensure a joined up approach including the management of events across the county. Additional government money has just been received for which an enforcement plan will be implemented. There is strong emphasis on working closely together across all agencies who can contribute to enforcement as well as continuing with the joint approach to communications and messaging. The general sense through feedback (community, IAG, elected members etc) is that the force has effectively managed compliance though the style, tone and approach adopted.

Crime is returning to pre-Covid levels but suppressed levels remain for some crime types such as acquisitive crime. Total crime is down 16% (to end of September). 999 calls are around the seasonal average with calls to 101 significantly below average but with a large rise in online reporting experienced. The current trend regarding ASB shows an increase in the last 3 weeks, when compared to last year albeit current total levels are similar to 2019 volumes, with a projected stable to reducing trend.

Workforce

Nationally absence rates for all sickness are showing a slight increase. Within Staffordshire total sickness absence remains just over 5%. Covid sickness is currently around 1.35% and has not been above 2% since mid June.

Robust supply lines are in place for PPE with clear guidance adopted in its use, both in the operational and organisational environments.

Guidance which has changed over the course of the pandemic is easily accessible through the Force Intranet and covers all aspects regarding attendance, risk assessment, health, safety and wellbeing, contact, testing and self-isolation as well as practical advice on school closures, working from home, health and wellbeing.

Workplace - COVID secure

Work has been undertaken to ensure our estate is safe and secure. Each building has a nominated 'responsible officer' who coordinates the approach and ensures that each building is compliant with Covid secure. This includes signage, one way systems, social distancing work stations, room assessments, introduction of screens where required, and ensuring all PPE is available with an ability to replenish stocks on the same day of reporting.

Refreshed business continuity plans and full guidance on operating in a Covid secure environment is published.

Other related matters

In addition it is worth noting that the force has also stood back up **Operation Affinity** which is the operation to address the impact of the EU Exit.

The Gold commander is ACC Green with Supt Brereton as Silver and again the PFCC's office attends all Gold meetings. Early planning is vital to prepare for whatever the outcome of the government negotiations and any impact within the community or on our ability to deliver policing.

Emma Barnett
Deputy Chief Constable