

## Annex A

### Police and Crime Panel Update Report on COVID-19 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the South Wales Police response to policing the COVID-19 pandemic, in-line with changes to the Welsh Government's restrictions.

#### States of Policing

As outlined in the 'Extraordinary Report on COVID-19' submitted initially to the Commissioner's Strategic Board on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, a policy has been agreed which sets out five states of potential impact COVID-19 may have on the workforce abstraction rate and the potential action which could be taken at each stage to ensure the force continues to fulfil its strategic obligations.

Since the COVID-19 challenge began the force has remained, and continues to remain, in a steady 'Green' state. The highest abstraction rate for officers has been 15.68%, which occurred on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and the highest abstraction rate for staff has been 18.61%, which occurred on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020. As of 1100 hours on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020, the abstraction rate was 4.76% for officers and 5.91% for staff, giving an overall force abstraction rate of 5.27%.

#### Call Demand

The number of calls at the Public Service Centre remains lower than when compared to the same period in 2019, with 23% less emergency calls and 2.5% less non-emergency calls being received. Over the last month there has been a shift in the hourly profile for calls that are now concentrated in afternoons and evenings.

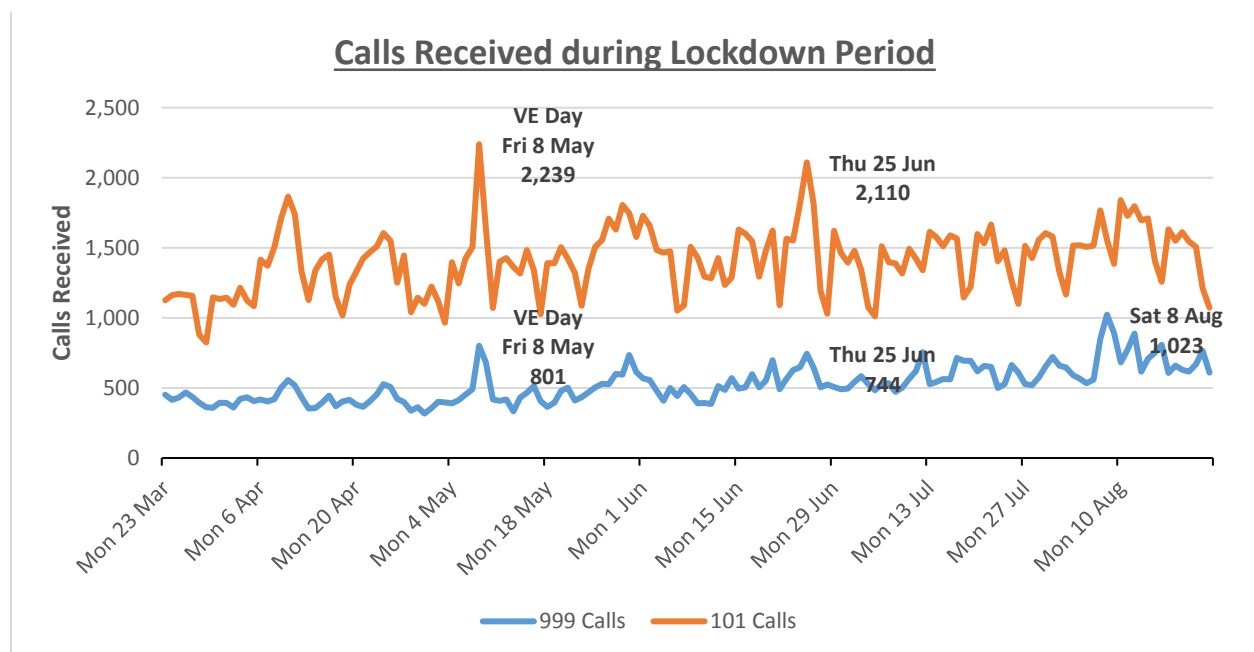


Figure 1

The above graph at Figure 1 illustrates the peak demand days for calls in the last 3 months, including VE Day, the mass gathering at Ogmores by Sea on 25th June and spikes in demand during the warmer weather over the weekends.

Further information regarding performance in the Public Service Centre has been provided in the Chief Constable’s main report.

**COVID -19 Related Occurrences (23<sup>rd</sup> March – 16<sup>th</sup> August)**

Under Home Office recording rules, any incidents which related to a potential breach of the COVID1-19 Regulations were categorised as Environmental ASB.

Figure 2 below maps the volume of COVID-19 incidents across the 20 week period, providing a breakdown of incidents across Basic Command Unit (BCU) geographic areas, and details of the nature of the incidents categorised as breaches, incidents and advice given.

During the 20 week period from the start of the lock down on 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 16<sup>th</sup> August, the force recorded 16,259 occurrences relating to COVID-19 with the majority being related to potential breaches of the regulations of which 13,744 were categorised as Environmental ASB. The highest number of these occurrences (28.7%) have been reported in Eastern BCU, while Central BCU has seen the least (20.2%). The peak occurred in week 15, which corresponds with the Easter Bank Holiday weekend.

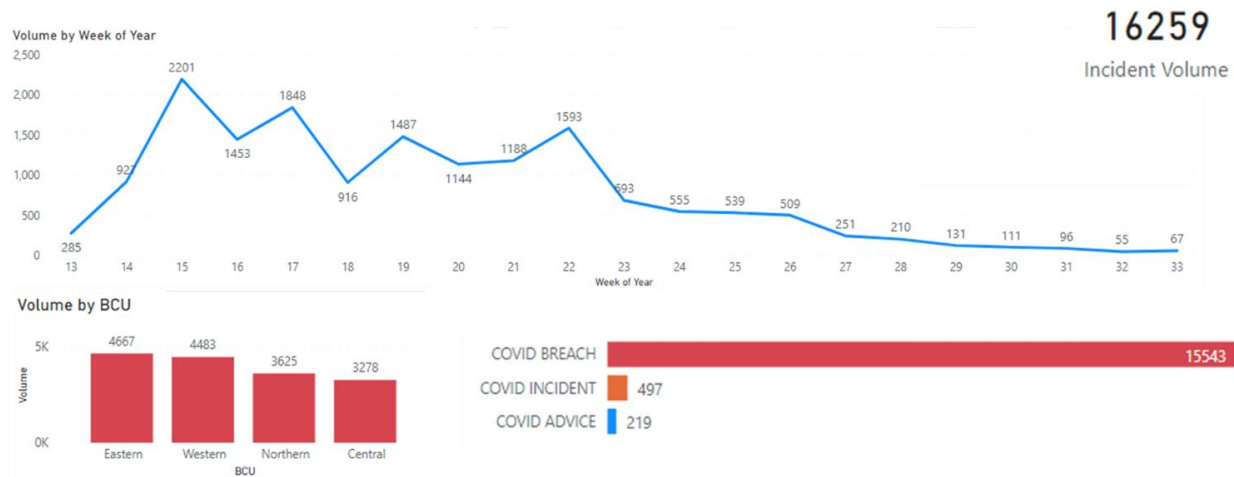


Figure 2

The following analysis illustrates the impact of changes to the Government restrictions on COVID-19 Occurrence Demand.

**Lockdown – 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Analysis of the initial lockdown period shows a steep increase in COVID-19 occurrences during week 15 (comm. 6 April) which included the Bank Holiday weekend, and is the week where the highest number of occurrences were recorded. This reaches a peak on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April with 416 occurrences being recorded.

The next peak, of 403 occurrences, happened two weeks later on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April, and on 8<sup>th</sup> May (VE Day) there was another peak of 379. During this 7 week period, there was an average of 186 COVID-19 related occurrences every day. Incidents tended to be reported between 3pm and 7pm, although this extended slightly on Friday and Saturdays.

The top 5 sectors by occurrences at this time were Merthyr (505), Bridgend (499), Neath & Pontardawe (487), Maesteg (429) and Barry (415).

### **UK Government Restrictions Changed - 11<sup>th</sup> May to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

On 11<sup>th</sup> May the Prime Minister in his national address advised the public of a change in messaging on Coronavirus. The message of “Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives” changed to one of “Stay Alert, Control the Virus, Save Lives” along with associated guidance on the Government’s recovery strategy. This messaging is believed to have caused some confusion in parts of wider Government, especially the devolved administrations and policing, as well as importantly leaving parts of the community confused.

This messaging was followed by the introduction of the UK Government’s Coronavirus Alert System, a traffic light system which indicates what the posture of Government is and the response being taken, which was modelled on the JTAC threat levels used to describe the Government’s response to terrorist threats.

It is important to note that there was no change in the Welsh Government’s advice at this point.

The force started to experience a reduction in reported COVID-19 occurrences at this point with much lower daily averages of occurrences. Peaks however still occurred with the Sunday and Monday of the bank holiday weekend at the end of May seeing 343 and 337 occurrences respectively. 31.1% of occurrences were reported in Eastern BCU, while Northern had the least with 20.3%. There was an average of 181 covid related occurrences every day, with the highest number of occurrences reported between 5-6pm on a Wednesday.

There was a shift in the top 5 sectors as well - Fairwater [150], Gower [165], Bridgend [163], Neath & Pontardawe [163] and Barry [163].

### **Welsh Government Regulations Changes - 29<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> June**

This period saw the first significant changes in the approach to the Coronavirus pandemic in Wales with changes to the stay local messaging, with people now permitted to travel beyond 5 miles, two households being allowed to meet outdoors and non-essential retail, childcare facilities, places of worship and the housing market re-opening.

In England the restrictions eased at a much quicker pace with groups from multiple households being allowed to meet outdoors, being allowed to travel unlimited distances and bars, restaurants and hairdressers re-opening.

This different pace of the easing of restrictions may have caused further confusion in the communities of Wales given how news is transmitted with national (UK wide) and regional (Wales) news programming consumed by the community despite the best efforts of the Welsh Government to communicate clearly.

Despite an initial peak of 286 occurrences on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May after the Welsh lockdown was eased, numbers spiked at weekends but generally decreased to around 30 by the end of June. While coastal locations such as the Gower did not feature in the Top 5 at the start of lockdown, during this period it saw the most occurrences which suggests that people were travelling more than 5 miles to access these areas. The highest number of occurrences tended to be reported between 4pm and 12pm on a Saturday, and the daily average was 92 occurrences.

Again the high volumes sectors shifted: Gower [196], Fairwater [182], Neath& Pontardawe [164], Swansea City centre [151], Barry [143] and Bridgend [143].

### **The Welsh Night-time Economy Returns - 1<sup>st</sup> July – 16<sup>th</sup> August**

The start of July saw some of the most significant easings of restrictions with the lifting of stay local requirements, the opening of outdoors visitor attractions, self-contained holiday accommodation re-opening and most significantly the re-opening of the night time economy in a phased approach with outdoors venues opening in week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> July and indoor venues re-opening in the week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

Initial analysis indicates that there was no sudden spike in violence or COVID-19 related incidents as a result of the night-time economy. The issues around the Cardiff Bay area and public drinking appeared to be no more than well-publicised concerns of the media with analysis indicating that the area was substantially safer than usual periods. Nonetheless the local BCU, along with partners, put in place a proportionate response to reassure the community.

Peaks in this period tended to align with weekends, with the largest occurring on the Saturday when self-contained accommodation opened. As perhaps expected, occurrences seemed to mainly relate to the night-time economy given the time of day they were being reported. The daily average has reduced to 18 COVID-19 related occurrences a day during this timeframe.

The top 5 sectors also changed with Barry receiving the most occurrences driven by the large amount of visitors to the area during periods of good weather. The demand in the top sectors were Barry [50], Bridgend [47], Cathays [45], Cardiff Bay [43] and Gower [43].

### **COVID-19 Regulation Enforcement**

Since the beginning of lockdown, the force recorded 299 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and 50 COVID-19 arrests Western BCU saw the least (12.7%). The peak for FPNs being issued occurred in the week of 4<sup>th</sup> May, which corresponds with the week of VE Day. However only 2 FPNs were recorded on this particular day which suggests that officers took a proportionate approach to enforcement.

The top sectors for the issuing of FPNs are shown below:

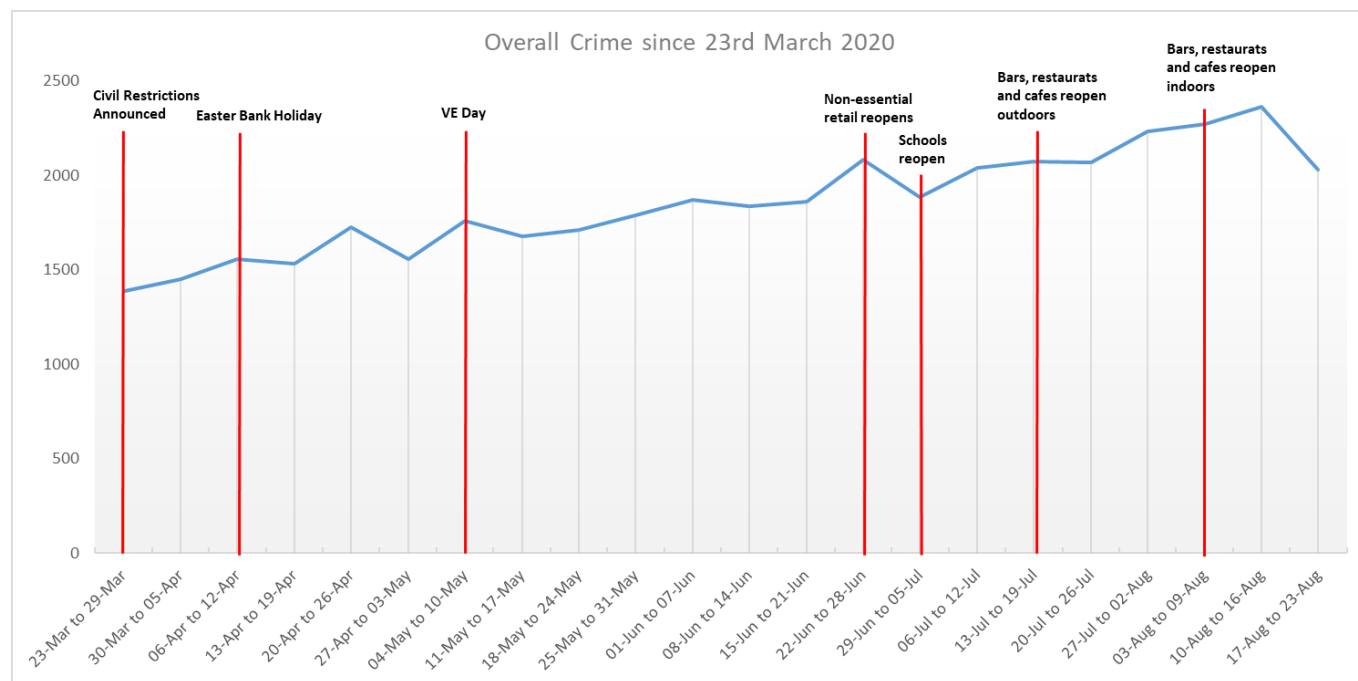
Bridgend	[30]
Cathays	[27]
Fairwater	[27]
City Centre	[15]
Ely	[15]
Roath	[15]

Nationally, there has been a focus on whether COVID-19 regulation enforcement has disproportionately focussed on Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) communities. In June 2020, South Wales Police scrutinised the issuing of FPNs within the force area and in doing so, compared how many persons who identified as BAME were issued FPNs, with those issued to those who did not identify as BAME, and then further examined that by age group.

That scrutiny found that approximately 85% of FPNs were issued to persons under the age of 45 years. When applying the same scrutiny to FPN recipients in age bracket 16 to 24 years, it was found that 15% of persons issued FPNs identified as BAME. Persons aged 16 to 24 years, who identified as BAME, were found to make up 14% of the population during the 2011 Census.

In age bracket 25 to 44 years, 13% of persons issued FPNs identified as BAME. Persons aged 25 to 44 years, who identified as BAME, were found to make up 11% of the population during the 2011 Census.

### Crime Level



### Violent Crime

During this 20 week period since the beginning of lockdown, the force recorded 4,198 and 4,487 crimes of violence with injury and without injury respectively. The highest number of violence with injury (29.8%) crimes were reported in Western BCU, while the highest violence without injury crimes were in Eastern (30.5%). The trend appears to be on the increase, as levels return to 'normal', following the significant easing of restrictions.

Levels of violent crime have remained relatively low for the period, primarily due to the protracted closure of the night-time economy. For the period of lockdown to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020, saw a decrease of 22% on the same period last year and recorded an average of 27 crimes per week. The domestic abuse subset of this crime category however was largely unchanged by lockdown

conditions (up 3% on prior year) and we did see spikes in reported crimes around the Easter and May bank holidays as good weather fuelled pockets of alcohol related violence.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Overall levels of domestic abuse are down 11% for the 20 week period compared to the previous year. Levels were as much as 30% lower in the early days of lockdown and there is a serious concern that a number of crimes will have gone unreported due to the nature of the fact that victims and their aggressors are confined to the same location. The hot bank holiday conditions did see spikes in domestic violence. Recorded levels did pick up through May and June to bring them in line with the previous year.

### **Child Protection**

From 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 23<sup>rd</sup> August, there were 2,254 crimes against children reported. Crimes have seen a steady increase during this time; 770 were reported during the first ten weeks and 1,484 during the last ten weeks, an increase of 93%. The majority of these were violent crimes, sexual offences and theft and handling. Despite the increase July 2020 still records 34% fewer crimes against children than July 2019.

The awareness raising campaign Operation Brake with taxis and licensed premises to prevent CSE has been conducted successfully in Central and Western BCUs. The operation is to be expanded once lockdown eases as a coordinated force-wide operation involving the MOSOVO and CSE teams to reduce the number of violent and sexual offences committed against children.

Child Abuse Investigation Units across the force are currently operating as usual and have continued to respond to demand and concern with the MASH and Partnership working continuing via Daily Discussions, Strategy Discussions, CSE and Missing MASM's and Child Protection Conferences. The CSE and Missing Person teams continue to manage the cohort of young people currently known to them who are vulnerable to these crimes

### **South Wales Local Resilience Forum**

The South Wales Local Resilience Forum and Recovery Coordination Group have considered the phased approach to COVID-19 'Response to Recovery' and how that will be implemented. The agreed strategic aim of the Recovery Coordination Group is:

*'To promote the effective rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community as far as reasonably possible from the Covid-19 outbreak, taking into consideration the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the wider community'.*

As well as ensuring that partners are able to respond effectively to the potential re-emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic. To achieve this, the Recovery Coordination Group has 5 agreed strategic recovery themes which focus on health & wellbeing, communities, businesses, economy/infrastructure, learning and environmental factors.

Emphasis will be placed on reviewing opportunities for sustainable change for our organisations and communities, and planning effectively for the reopening of our services, buildings and public spaces. The effects of COVID-19 on our communities are well documented and partners are particularly cognisant of the impending reopening of schools and the increased vulnerability for children over this period, as well as the effect on their learning. Adaptability of workplaces to ensure COVID -19 Workplace Measures have also been considered. The Recovery Coordination Group will also continue to focus on community cohesion, crime and disorder. Anti-social behaviour issues continue to drive media messages, particularly with the reopening of public spaces. The members of the Recovery Coordination Group are committed to increasing community engagement and improving community partnership arrangements. Regular dialogue is in place between partners and South Wales Police at a strategic and an operational level, to share intelligence and to assess the current situation to inform future actions and plans. A proportionate response is already being taken by the Force towards enforcement of relevant legislation, providing confidence and reassurance to our communities as lockdown eases. The emphasis remains on the '4 E model' - engage, explain, encourage, enforce.

Further to this, prevention and response plans have been submitted to Public Health Wales, and test, track and trace processes are well established in our communities. Transmission rates in Wales (R) are currently around 1.0 but with COVID-19 restrictions easing and international travel increasing, further border control measures were introduced on 8th August 2020. Public Health Wales continue to proactively write to all persons arriving in the UK who are required to self-isolate and have provided an isolation address in Wales.

The need for due cognisance for excess death resilience is being reviewed by the Recovery Coordination Group as well as testing worst-case scenario models and addressing issues of funding and contract end dates. This is being considered by Welsh Government, ensuring there is sufficient storage provision available to the South Wales Local Resilience Forum, if required.

The Recovery Coordination Group will meet regularly to monitor progression through this transition phase, and a tactical group will be established. The Strategic Coordination Group will be reactivated if required. A weekly situation reporting process is in place to inform the Recovery Coordination Group of emerging demand within the context of COVID-19, ensuring that the group can react quickly and plan accordingly.

The South Wales Local Resilience Forum is planning a resilience testing exercise based on a range of scenarios, for example concurrent risks of regional flooding, flu season and EU Exit. This will help identify any issues for Policing or our partners in the Strategic Coordination Group. Any transition risks in any organisation are presented at the Recovery Coordination Group meetings, to provide a timely consideration and response to any emerging threat. The BRAG status of each agency will be continually assessed to ensure risk can be foreseen and addressed promptly by partner agencies. As the transition period continues, a Strategic Coordination Group workshop will be organised for partners to meet to share learning and best practice and a Wales GOLD course is being planned.

Ultimately the success of this transition phase and arrangements established through the Recovery Coordination Group will be borne out and assessed in the coming weeks and months. The Group is well established and maturing and South Wales Police is a valued and key partner in this process.