



PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WARWICKSHIRE POLICE

Q1 2020/21

Force Response

Author:	Ch.Supt. Ben Smith
Date:	24 th July 2020
Version:	1.0
GPMS marking:	OFFICIAL
URN	N/A

1.0 This report is provided in response to the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner performance scrutiny report dated 15th July 2020. It provides commentary in relation to the specific areas raised in that scrutiny report.

1.1 The following topics have been included for specific response from the force:

1.2 Violence without Injury - *Intentions regarding the findings of the report 'Short Term Trends in Violence Against the Person and Hate Crime'*

The 'Short Term Trends in Violence Against the Person and Hate Crime' analytical report was commissioned to try and understand short term changes, impacted by the Covid lock down measures, in respect of hate and violent crime. The report considered May 2020 and provided a snapshot, notwithstanding that the situation remains highly fluid and unprecedented in terms of the type and location of crime being committed.

The report did help to drive policing activity in June and July by identifying the types and locations of offending taking place. However, it did also show, unsurprisingly during lock down, that much of the offending was taking place within dwellings and between dwellings incorporating elements such as neighbour disputes and malicious communications. Hotspot locations were also disparate and irregular in nature. This therefore did make it challenging to create a clear policing plan in response to the findings of the report.

The force will continue to monitor the impact of Covid on crime levels both in terms of hate crime and violence. Although Warwickshire has seen an increase in hate crime reporting and violence without injury, there have been significant reductions in violence with injury which is a pleasing outcome.

1.3 Violence and Possession of Weapons - *Outcome of Operation Spigot and future intentions.*

Operation Spigot was instigated in April 2020 in Rugby following an increase in violent crime offences involving the use of knives, believed to be driven by drugs supply and gang related activity. A several stranded approach has been adopted incorporating Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Local Investigations, Intelligence, Child Abuse, Trafficking and Exploitation (CATE) Team and the Operation was also incorporated into the SOCJAG (Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Group) where it continues to be discussed. A group of 10 principle nominals were identified and became subject of the Operation in order to protect the public from further harm, disrupt the group activity and to prosecute them for any offences where they were identified as suspects.

A summary of activity and outcomes to date include:-

- Overt and targeted patrols in hotspot locations where the majority of the violent offending was occurring. This has resulted in a significant reduction in offending and serious violence by the group.
- A number of drugs warrants executed.
- One of the identified nominals has received a 22 month prison sentence for a wounding offence committed in Feb 2020.
- Utilising enhanced stop search powers in target locations.

OFFICIAL

Performance Scrutiny – Warwickshire Police

- The use of criminal behaviour orders to prevent future association and offending.
- SOCJAG interventions: Fearless Crimestoppers campaign to link in with schools to offer knife crime prevention advice and confidential reporting gateway. Partner agencies to scope interventions with anti-gang charities Dare2Dream and OnTrack. Local Council Community Safety, Youth Justice and Housing engaged around the group.

Since the Operation started there have been no reported offences of serious violence in Rugby involving the identified nominals and reported criminality has seen a notable decrease.

The template used for Operation Spigot is now being considered in addressing other criminal groups operating in towns across Warwickshire.

1.4 Drug Offences - *An assessment of the current risk position and associated risk of violence in respect of drug trafficking within the county.*

The current position within Warwickshire for drug crime is that in general it appears that the main threats and risks emanate from the County lines threats.

Warwickshire is an importer of this type of criminality. The vast majority of identified county lines within Warwickshire emanate from the West Midlands force area, specifically Coventry and Birmingham. As an importer it is clear that the risks within the Warwickshire force area are that vulnerable young people are exploited, violence is used to intimidate potentially vulnerable people, and we will also suffer from the consequences of 'turf wars' between rival West Midlands gangs looking to grow their markets. The obvious consequences of this include the lowering of public trust and confidence.

We have changed our intelligence department model in order to allow us to take a threat desk based approach to intelligence. This means we have consistent scanning across the drugs / SOC arena to identify the threats and risks posed to Warwickshire.

It should be noted that this type of criminality is fluid and the threats and risks are dynamic and extremely volatile (thus the violence). There is a plan to tackle the issue of County lines. Within the plan is the idea of including the management of County Lines within our OCG management process. We are also very successful in some areas of the force (SNT) with utilising problem solving. It is our aim to utilise the problem solving model to tackle the county lines issue which will allow us to integrate the problem solving ethos deeper into our culture.

We have quite an exciting approach to an evolving Serious Organised Crime Joint Agency Group (SOGJAG) process which is slowly developing into a three stranded process, SOCJAG main meeting, SOCJAG Tactical meetings and we are moving towards SOCGJAG interventions. Our partnership approach will be further enhanced once the plans for tackling County Lines have been signed off.

We have very good relationships with the region. Home Office funding of the Regional County Lines Task Force is very welcome and it allows us to develop our regional working and ensure that we utilise a variety of tactics to tackle the issues. It has also allowed us to employ a dedicated analyst, once again allowing for a better understanding of threat and risk.

1.5 ASB and Public Order - *Action proposed to meet demand for calls for service.*

The Operations Communications Centre (OCC) is now back to normal staffing levels following the implementation of Covid secure measures. Covid has created divergence from the norm in terms of demand but this is now returning to normal levels including the seasonal rise in demand moving through the summer months. ASB calls for service were higher during the COVID period and put pressure on staffing but the force was able to resource these incidents as other demand was lower and Patrol staffing levels were high due to recent recruitment.

ASB can now be reported online via SOH and the force is actively promoting this. The demand is still there (just shifted online) but it allows the force to manage it in a more controlled way. All calls for service are risk assessed using THRIVE and a proportionate response is deployed where necessary. Longer term problems around ASB are incorporated into problem solving plans managed by the SNT.

Wider public order incidents saw increases during the first weekend post lockdown when the pubs reopened but we have now seen this return to normal levels.

1.6 OCC - *Covid secure arrangements and its impact on call handling capacity under BAU*

The OCC is now COVID secure and has been for some time, this has allowed us to bring staff in in greater numbers as all the desks are now in use and protective screens in place. There is no longer reduced capacity for call handling. There are still a small number of staff in the clinically vulnerable category who will be returning to work in August.

1.7 Hate Crime - *Intentions regarding the findings of the report 'Short Term Trends in Violence Against the Person and Hate Crime'.*

We have seen increases in reporting of notifiable crimes through April and May 2020. 94% of hate crime relates to Section 4A Public Order – malicious communications, harassment and assault without injury. Despite the recorded increases the volumes remain numerically low with the largest increases seen in Nuneaton and Bedworth and Warwick Districts. Race and sexual orientation are showing higher increases within the reporting period March to May 2020 with the majority of offences relating to neighbour disputes within urban areas.

Further work is being undertaken under the Force Legitimacy Board to understand this in more detail. Representatives on the board, chaired by the Police, is made up of key police stakeholders and IAG chairs from around the county who act as a strategic scrutiny panel.

We are aware that there are increased tensions within communities particularly through the 'lock down' period as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. We continue to closely monitor this situation including hate crime reporting.

Over the past 12 months, through the governance of the Legitimacy Board, there has been a significant amount of work commissioned in order to understand hate crime in more detail. We did experience a dip in hate crime satisfaction in the Autumn last year with the rolling 12 months satisfaction level dropping to 70%. Following an amount of interventions within our newly formed Harm Hub the rolling 12 months satisfaction figure has increased to 75% with the 6 months figure increasing to 83.3%. Due to the low number of recorded offences and the 12 month rolling figure this does take some time to translate into sustained performance but the early signs are promising.

In addition a theme of the Legitimacy Board is to conduct a deep dive into the different strands of hate crime. Over the past 12 months activity has been undertaken around LGBT hate crime, disability hate crime, religious and race hate crime and age and gender related incidents and crimes. It is planned to conduct a deep dive around CoVID hate crime in the next board.

In relation to engagement with communities and wider groups we work closely with our IAG's (Independent Advisory Boards) and Equip who flag any specific concerns or issues directly to the Chair of the Legitimacy Board. At a tactical level, our neighbourhood teams continue to have good links into communities and work with local partners and community groups on any emerging issues. The recent Black Lives Matter protests across Warwickshire and subsequent surge in community activism has given us a number of opportunities to build on existing relationships and encourage further support into our IAG's or other scrutiny groups. As an example one of the BLM organisers for the Rugby event will now become an IAG member in order to develop and support our work further.

1.8 DA Repeat Victimisation - *The nature of this increase and what action can be taken to reduce the extent of genuine repeat DA victimisation.*

A repeat DA victim is defined as an individual recorded as a DA victim in the current reporting month that has had at least one other DA offence in the preceding 12 months. It is felt that the most significant contributory factor that has led to the increase in DA repeat victimisation concerns the way that repeat victim data is collated.

Within the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) a number of exceptions have been made to the general rules that has led to the increase in recording of more DA related crime. For most recordable crime the general rules state that the police should record one crime per victim and if the sequence of crimes in an incident, or a complex crime, contains more than one type of crime, then police should only count the most serious crime.

There are exceptions to these rules for DA. For example, if a victim of DA were to report to the police that they had been the victim of an assault occasioning actual bodily harm (ABH) but then went on to describe a course of conduct that amounts to stalking then the police would have to record two crimes, a crime of ABH and a crime of stalking. If, for example, the victim had a restraining order, injunction or non-molestation order in place any breach would require a crime to be recorded, if the breach came about as a result of a course of conduct that amounts to harassment, coercive and controlling behaviour, stalking or an assault a further crime may need to be recorded. In effect there are a number of scenarios where one incident being reported to the police by one victim could result in more than one crime being recorded, these incidents clearly contribute to the total number of DA crimes that are recorded.

There are several ways that DA incidents are identified within Athena, the records can be identified by a Primary Classification, Included Classification or via a keyword. In essence this means that one DA related crime could be identified in three different ways, the system is set up to only count a specific crime number on one occasion so although a crime has been identified in three different ways it would only be counted on one occasion. In most crime types this process would eliminate any double counting of figures. Unfortunately this process fails when the police record, for example, a crime of ABH and stalking that was reported at the same time by the same victim as there are two different crime numbers. In effect there is one incident involving one victim that has been counted twice and that victim would then

OFFICIAL

Performance Scrutiny – Warwickshire Police

be flagged as a repeat victim where in reality they are not. This issue has been raised with the Analysis and Service Improvement team to see if suitable changes can be made to way that the data is collated.

Data collection aside Warwickshire Police have invested heavily in DA Matters training which has led to increased awareness of harassment, coercive and controlling behaviour and stalking. A positive consequence of this is that front line staff are more likely to recognise, record and investigate offences of this type that may have previously gone unreported. The significant increase in the police resources has probably allowed for officers to spend more time with the victim which is also likely to have contributed to an increase in DA crime being identified and recorded. In recent months additional awareness raising has taken place concerning stalking by use of the FOUR mnemonic (Fixated, Obsessive, Unwanted, Repeated) which may have also contributed to an increase in the number of stalking offences being recorded.

All repeat victim data is analysed by the Harm Hub to identify vulnerabilities that may sit behind each of the incidents recorded. There is a process in place where the Harm Hub flag with the Domestic Abuse Unit any DA repeat victims who may require additional support, for example by referring these cases to MARAC. The DAU have also created 3 Domestic Abuse Risk Officers, these are police officer posts (1 officer in post, 2 further officers to be identified), the aim of the role is to provide greater support to victims of DA where the offence has been graded as MEDIUM and to ensure that we look to make better use of civil orders and Risk Management Plans (RMPs). It is hoped that these measures will also impact positively on those DA repeat victims.

In summary it is likely that overall the number of DA offences have increased compared to last year but it is difficult to unpick the true increase for the reasons outlined above. It seems most likely to me that the main cause of the increase in reported repeat victimisation is due to the way that the data is being collated and recorded albeit within the figures there could be a small increase of repeat victimisation.

Ben Smith
Ch.Supt
Head of Local Policing