

ORIGINATOR: CHIEF CONSTABLE

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SUBMITTED TO:

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL –
15 JANUARY 2020**

SUBJECT:

SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

SUMMARY:

1. This report provides an update on the describes Constabulary's response to the COVID-19 pandemic from 10 May 2020 through to 7 December 2020
2. This report aims to provide a reflection of policing at the current point in time as changes in infection rates, government policy and national police guidance may influence tactical delivery options.
3. This report summarises the ongoing work with partners through the strategic and tactical forums in order to manage the risks and impacts associated with COVID-19
4. This report will also provide an update regarding how we have continued to adapt our working practices in order to maximise the safety of our staff and provide flexible and adaptive working solutions in order to minimise the impact on organisational performance and efficiency.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Accountability and Performance Panel is asked to note the content of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It must be acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global crisis the likes of which have never been experienced before. The multi-agency response has been comprehensive and fast moving by necessity, with rapid changes in infection rates across regions, counties, towns and even estates dictating a thorough and resilient planning process, effective multi-agency cooperative working, and a rapid and flexible reaction from public agencies such as police.
- 1.2 In response the UK government has introduced numerous changes in legislation and associated guidance which in turn has required interpretation and implementation by UK Policing.
- 1.3 Suffolk Constabulary has been required to put in place an effective response to managing both the external implications of COVID-19 in the form of enforcement protocols for individuals that breach legislation, as well as the implications for its own workforce, including health and safety measures, well-being, effective communications, maintaining operational capability and maintaining public trust and confidence.
- 1.4 In its response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the UK Government imposed a countrywide lockdown on the 20 March 2020. Strict rules were put into place in order to limit public movement and therefore control the spread of the virus.
- 1.5 The Coronavirus Act allowed the government to put into legislation, new criminal offences for breaching various aspects of the regulations which ultimately could see a sanction of a fixed penalty notice, a summons to court, or an arrest when absolutely necessary.
- 1.6 In May this year, the lockdown restrictions were eased, allowing some businesses to re-open, schools to welcome children back into the classroom and for the rules relating to public movement to be relaxed.
- 1.7 Although the easing of lockdown was in response to the slowdown of the spread of the virus, the associated risks were still present and although places of work and leisure were allowed to re-open, strict restrictions were put in place to manage the safety of employees and the public. The information available at the time, suggested there could be a second spike of infections in the autumn.
- 1.8 Following increasing infection rates within certain regions of the country during September and October, the government introduced a three-tier approach to implementing COVID-19 restrictions (medium, high, very high). Suffolk was placed into the lowest tier (medium).
- 1.9 A further lockdown across England was then announced by the government, following the continued rise in infection rates. The three-tier approach was suspended, with universal restrictions being put into place on 5 November 2020.
- 1.10 At the time of writing national lockdown 2.0 ended on 2 December 2020 and the UK has entered a new, more onerous tiered approach to COVID-19 with Suffolk moved into Tier 2 (High Risk).

2 NATIONAL POLICING RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- 2.1 The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) is responsible for advising, guiding and leading communications on the policing response to COVID-19.

- 2.2 NPCC guidance to police forces is contained within the Operation Talla strategy.
- 2.3 Suffolk Constabulary receive regular updates from Operation Talla into the Suffolk Silver cell, ensuring that national directions are promptly acted upon.

3 SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY RESPONSE

- 3.1 The command structure stood up in March this year in response to the pandemic has remained in place. A joint “Gold Commander” was appointed (ACC Megicks) with separate Silver Commanders for each force, supported by staff from both organisations. This model ensures that a consistent approach is applied, but with each force able to express its own view, and reflect the subtle differences that do apply on occasion in terms of strategic and operational priorities.
- 3.2 Whilst the command structure has remained in place, the supporting governance (silver meetings) and staff invested in the silver cell, were both paired back over the summer period, in line with a drop in COVID-19 related demand during that period.
- 3.3 However, in response to the increase in demand and case rates during the autumn period, a stepped increase in command and governance has also occurred (October 2020). Gold meetings have re-convened and a weekly joint Silver meeting is held with key internal stakeholders. In addition, a Bronze sub-group focusses on the “People” element of our response.
- 3.4 The strategy initially set by the Joint Norfolk and Suffolk Gold Commander in March remains in place:

The strategic intent:

For Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies to work in partnership to provide a proportionate and effective policing response to the national COVID-19 outbreak in order to protect life and minimise the risk of serious harm to our communities.

The overarching objectives of the strategic plan are:-

- To minimise the risk to the public by working with our partner agencies through the Local Resilience Forum to contain the spread of COVID-19.
- To maximise the safety and welfare of our officers and staff by providing accurate advice and the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and offering on-going and longer-term wellbeing support.
- Maintain an effective and proportionate policing service to our communities by ensuring that business continuity plans are in place and activated as necessary to keep communities safe from crime and bring offenders to justice.
- To reassure the public by supporting HM government and Public Health guidance and messaging working collectively through the Local Resilience Forum.
- To ensure that community tensions and concerns are effectively monitored and managed.

- To support partnership working, Local Resilience partners and local communities through the establishment of a number of working cells through the Tactical Coordination Group to mitigate the impact of the virus.
- To maintain and where possible increase the trust and confidence of the public in Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies as a result of how we respond to the pandemic.
- To work effectively with other partners, when the time is right, to move into a recovery phase. To consider our own learning and use this effectively to support the potential transformation of how we deliver policing into the future.

3.5 The Silver Command set of principles on which the policing response was based remain unchanged:-

- Whilst we are not operating in a 'Business as Usual' context we will continue to seek to police our communities to the best of our abilities; maintaining our public facing service whilst taking all appropriate precautions in relation to social distancing and health and wellbeing.
- We will continue to be there to protect and support our communities with a particular focus on the most vulnerable.
- We will target those individuals who seek to break the law, with a focus on those causing the most harm or posing the greatest threat and those who will seek to exploit criminal opportunities arising from COVID-19.
- We will continue to engage with the public and our communities but we will look at safe ways to do this, ways that protect our own staff and the public. We will encourage our staff to be creative in their approach but ensure our messages align to our organisational messaging. We will use this engagement to reassure and inform the public.
- We will focus our approach on Engagement, Encouragement and Education first and foremost – where this does not work or is ignored we will use Enforcement utilising the powers provided to us.
- We will prioritise the health and wellbeing of our staff – we will manage with care and compassion, listen and acknowledge concerns and work with our staff, Police Federation and Unison to provide the appropriate reassurance, support and guidance.
- We will ensure that staff follow the operational guidelines in relation to social distancing and PPE, we will not compromise or take risks in this respect.
- We will make the best use of our resources ensuring we prioritise based on threat, harm and risk and re-deploy resources when and where we need to.
- We will work with all our partners from all sectors – protecting the NHS and saving life is what we are all striving to do.

- We will recognise that how we police will now be under the highest level of public and media spotlight and scrutiny so we will ensure that our values and the Code of Ethics are visible to all through our actions.
- 3.6 The Silver Commander defined the tone and style of the policing response to be:-
- Professional, approachable and engaging.
 - Firm but fair.
 - Proportionate.
 - Open and transparent.
- 3.7 In addition to the Silver Cell, a bronze “People” structure provides advice to the cell and disseminates tasks and information as required by the Silver Commander.
- 3.8 The silver cell operates a 24/7 7 day per week on-call facility for dealing with any COVID-19 local outbreaks at stations, as well as IMT and TCG attendance as required.
- 3.9 Weekly silver meetings are held with County Policing Command (CPC) and the Crime, Safeguarding and Incident Management Department (CSIM), to ensure that key messages are understood and tasks completed.
- 3.10 Monthly joint Silver briefings are held with heads of department to ensure key messages are understood and to provide an opportunity for asking questions.

4. PARTNERSHIPS

- 4.1 There is an agreed national framework for managing the local multi-agency response to emergencies. Command, control and coordination are important concepts in a multi-agency response. The central government response is underpinned by COBR (Cabinet Office Briefing Room) meetings and direction from these meetings is disseminated to local Strategic Coordinating Groups. National and local contingency planning ensures our preparedness for emergencies and the existing flu pandemic plans informed the response to COVID-19.
- 4.2 The COVID-19 Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) for Suffolk is chaired by Suffolk’s Deputy Chief Constable Rachel Kearton. The role of the group is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of the COVID-19 emergency and to establish the policy and strategic framework. The Suffolk SCG strategy is written according to the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) adopting the ‘JESIP Principles for Joint Working’ together with pandemic specific objectives as advised by Suffolk’s Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP).
- 4.3 Suffolk Constabulary is represented throughout the SCG with the police gold, ACC Simon Megicks, representing the Constabulary.
- 4.4 The SCG strategy is implemented by the Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) for onward implementation. The Silver Cell C/Superintendent, or deputy Silver C/Inspector, attend the TCG facilitating police input to the tactical response.
- 4.5 Following the relaxation of the COVID-19 restrictions during the summer period, on the 16th of September, the SCG was suspended with business being over seen by the Recovery coordination group (RCG). The group focussed on the social, economic and financial impacts of COVID-19 on our communities. However, with the increases in infection rates during the autumn, the SCG was the reinstated-on the 5th of November to manage the immediate actions required by partners to help contain the virus in Suffolk. The situation was similar

with the TCG, which the group initially standing down on 5 September 2020, but then being stood to on 4 November 2020, also to encompass the work of the EU transition cell.

- 4.6 Within the TCG structure, there are various subgroups populated by different agencies covering thematic such as Communications, Enforcement, Mass Vaccinations, Joint Information and Intelligence and EU transition, all of which have a Constabulary input.
- 4.7 Within the partnership structures, the Silver cell also attend and contribute to the following boards/meetings:-
- COVID-19 response and EPI joint priority setting
 - Local Outbreak Engagement Board
 - Collaborative Communities Board
 - Vaccination Centres
 - Information and priority setting hub
 - Health Protection Board

5. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- 5.1 Although the Constabulary has made some changes to working practices in order to maximise the safety of its staff, there have been no direct impacts on business continuity since March this year.
- 5.2 Outbreaks are managed via a new CORAM process (Coronavirus Outbreak Risk Assessment and Management Meeting). This meeting is chaired by Op Response Silver and involves the Federation, UNISON, Work Place Health, Corporate Communications, Head of Department and Unit Manager. A risk assessment is conducted and status amended as appropriate, immediate measures introduced and welfare of staff addressed. Communication messages are disseminated amongst the team, department and organisation as appropriate.
- 5.3 To date there has only been one confirmed outbreak of COVID-19 within the organisation necessitating a CORAM, that being within the Records Management Department. The outbreak was successfully managed without significant adverse impact on the operations of the department. In addition, an Incident Management Team (IMT) meeting was held with public health who were able to advise, guide and provide oversight of the containment measures.
- 5.3 In order for departments to continue to provide their key functions and services, home working has been an important control measure where office space has been restricted due to the need for social distancing. Home working has also allowed those staff and officers who are classed as medically more vulnerable to continue in their role, whilst limiting social contact.
- 5.4 During the first peak of the virus in March and April this year, the COVID-19 response hub worked with ICT to manage the allocation of IT equipment for those staff who needed to move into a new working environment or work from home. It was also incumbent on the Constabulary to ensure its staff and officers who were working from home, had suitable work 'areas' in order that staff weren't working in conditions which were going to cause them physical strain. The Wellbeing department has produced guidance for all staff and officers working from home, including advice to line managers delivering remote supervision. This has ensured that managers and department heads could be satisfied that staff welfare and performance needs were being addressed.

- 5.5 These additional control measures are now being written into department business continuity plans and well as a joint Constabulary Pandemic Disruption Plan, which is in the process of being drafted.

6. OUR PEOPLE

- 6.1 The health and wellbeing of our people has been paramount whilst managing the response to COVID-19. The Constabulary have implemented a number of activities to support those affected by COVID-19 as well as those who continue to work during the pandemic. These are: _

- Dedicated COVID-19 Team who manage all notifications for isolations, test results and provide advice and guidance on all aspects of COVID-19.
- For those who test positive, a care plan is put in place to support them whilst they are off and for when they return to work.
- Wellbeing handbooks on 'Working from home during COVID-19', 'Working through COVID-19' and 'Leading through COVID-19'.

- 6.2 All officers, staff and specials have been able to access testing when they have needed to; this has been via the government NHS portal as well as via local priority test sites when the demand was at its highest.

7. OUR PEOPLE – SICKNESS

- 7.1 Including COVID-19 related absence and all other sickness types, the financial year to date sickness absence for Suffolk Police Officers has been 4.71% (percentage of hours lost to sickness absence of the available hours). At the corresponding point of the last financial year, the figure was 4.51%. representing a minimal increase.

- 7.2 For Suffolk Police Staff, the financial year to date sickness absence has been 5.99%. At the corresponding point of the last financial year, the figure was 3.48% so this does represent a more significant increase than that of police officers. If COVID-19 related isolation is removed from the figures, then the year to date sickness shows a reduction to 3.14% which is substantial.

Month End	COVID-19		Non-COVID-19	
	Suffolk		Suffolk	
	Officer	Staff	Officer	Staff
29-Feb	1	0	38	29
31-Mar	79	86	50	26
30-Apr	25	44	39	21
31-May	16	37	32	19
30-Jun	13	35	26	23
31-Jul	6	21	24	24
31-Aug	2	2	28	18
30-Sep	8	6	36	32
31-Oct	4	7	34	30
30-Nov	10	37	43	29
04-Dec	6	15	39	35
Total	170	290	389	286

Sickness data Feb – Dec 2020

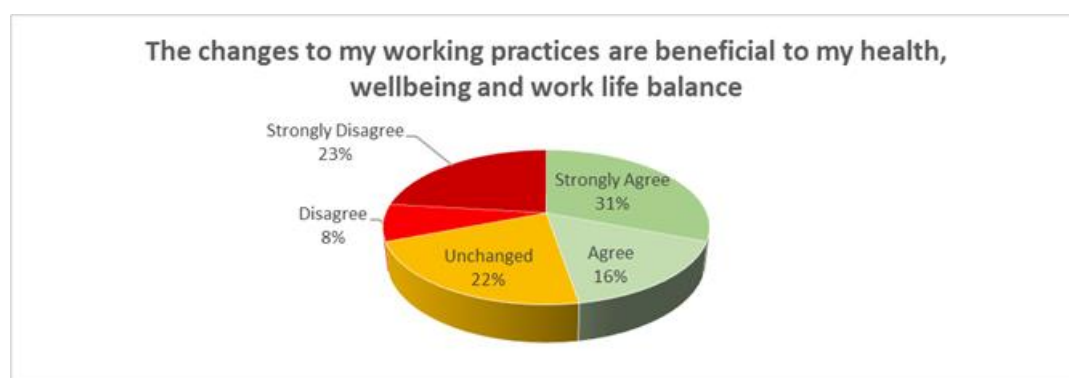
- 7.3 In addition to the data for sickness, it is important to consider whether there has been a detrimental impact on psychological illness suffered by our staff and officers resulting in absence from work.
- 7.4 The data shows that during 2020 there has been no increase in psychological disorders despite COVID-19, with in fact the data indicating a modest fall for officers, and a slight increase for police staff.

Suffolk Police Officers	Instances of Sickness Absence related to Psychological Disorders
April 2016 – November 2016	75
April 2017 – November 2017	86
April 2018 – November 2018	75
April 2019 – November 2019	77
April 2020 – November 2020	64

Suffolk Police Staff	Instances of Sickness Absence related to Psychological Disorders
April 2016 – November 2016	71
April 2017 – November 2017	54
April 2018 – November 2018	61
April 2019 – November 2019	65
April 2020 – November 2020	71

- 7.5 In addition to monitoring sickness data, the Constabulary undertook a staff survey in May 2020 in order to gauge the impact that staff had felt, due to the changes required by COVID-19. In particular staff were asked about the impact on their health, wellbeing and work/life balance. 46% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the changes had been beneficial, with 31% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. (shown in the chart below)

The accompanying paragraphs provide a summary of the officer/staff responses.



- **Improved changes** – common responses included: I can.... work full time with loss of travel, do quick domestic activities in short breaks, am reassured about my health, can handle life better, feel less stressed, eat healthier, have time for more exercise, have easier access to emails, have more available work hours, less pressure to work excess hours, have more available time with family, improved physical health, can focus better, more headspace for strategic thinking, less risk of infection, financially better off, less anxious (about health/work), longer in bed/improved sleep, stronger

family connections, family are less at risk, less tired, confidence has increased, less exposure to office moans and groans, work is more enjoyable.

- **Worsened changes** – common responses included: suffering greater isolation, worry of not enough PPE, poor morale in the office during virus, children make it hard to concentrate at home, having to come in and being more exposed to the virus, my mental health is affected because I'm alone/ worrying about being at work/worrying about the virus, hard to work at home as no office furniture/poor furniture set up/small house and big family, less fit as no gym access, miss interaction with colleagues, harder to separate home and work, more stress as children have to be schooled at home.

8. OUR PEOPLE - PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND COVID SECURE ENVIRONMENTS

- 8.1 During the first outbreak of COVID-19 the national demand for PPE was exceptional, not just within the police service. Suffolk Constabulary, as with other forces experienced difficulties obtaining supplies in the numbers we needed and of the correct type for the nature of the work we were asking officers and staff to undertake.
- 8.2 However over the summer period, Work Place Health were able to secure a regular supply of PPE via 7Force coordination. This means that all staff have been properly equipped and protected, throughout the summer and autumn period.
- 8.3 During the first spike in COVID-19 cases, extensive work was undertaken across our estate to work towards our office space being COVID-19 compliant. Some teams have required re-location, areas have been cordoned off, desk spaces closed, office equipment removed and specialist equipment such as the screens purchased for the CCR. The review of our estate and adherence to COVID-19 compliance is the responsibility of departmental managers tasked with maintaining safety measures to ensure staff safety.
- 8.4 To facilitate safe working practices, a cohort of COVID-19 marshals have been introduced across the organisation. The COVID-19 marshal role is to conduct fortnightly checks within their department, to help monitor COVID-19 compliance within the workspace and feedback concerns to WPH. A "working Safely" meeting is chaired by the head of WPH, with attendees including the Health and Safety team, WPH and members of the Silver Cell, with actions allocated accordingly. This process has worked very well, and has helped local managers maintain a COVID-19 compliant environment for staff.

9. CHANGE IN WORKING PRACTICES

- 9.1 Prior to COVID-19 Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies were part way through an ICT modernisation strategy which included replacing desktop computers with laptops, the aim being to move to a modernised, more agile workforce. The roll out of laptops has been according to a prioritisation framework and many departments and roles were benefiting from this change programme as COVID-19 arrived, with the pandemic accelerating the need to develop that program.
- 9.2 The Constabulary has supported home working to those in a position to do so. The Silver Cell, ICT and Estate staff designed a process to triage and prioritise applications for equipment based on details including staff vulnerabilities, critical service delivery, availability of alternative office space. Throughout COVID-19 additional equipment has been ordered, delivered and distributed and further IT uplift is on order to enable further homeworking. To

date an additional 700 laptops have been issued across Norfolk and Suffolk to facilitate home working.

- 9.3 As a means to improve both internal and external remote working, Skype for business was introduced to allow the organisation to continue to deliver effective daily business. Skype has since been superseded by the implementation under the National Enabling Programme (NEP) of Microsoft O365 and specifically MS Teams. This has added excellent functionality and provided a common platform for accessing external partnership video conference meetings. MS Teams has proved an extremely effective and invaluable tool for remote working, remote supervision, and effective multi-agency conferencing.
- 9.4 Multi-agency meetings are now far more effective, with document sharing and comments contributed via chat facility. Examples of innovative use of MS Teams includes Chief Officer briefings; new recruit interviews; Force Performance; Training Delivery and staff PDR's are now all regularly conducted remotely.
- 9.5 Of particular note, has been you use of video calls in order to conduct recruitment interviews for police officers. This has allowed our recruitment programme in Suffolk to continue throughout the pandemic meaning that the Constabulary remains on track to deliver the increase in officer numbers required under Operation Uplift.

10. OPERATIONAL DELIVERY AND ENFORCEMENT

The Coronavirus Act 2020

- 10.1 Following the first period of 'lock down', the regulations under the initial Act of Parliament have continually developed and changed in light with the need to increase or decrease restrictions or apply local variation depending on infection rates.
- 10.2 The Act created a number of offences and what follows below is a breakdown of how the Constabulary has used the four 'E' approach to support public adherence to the regulations.
- 10.3 Suffolk Constabulary, like other police forces, uses the four E's (engage, explain, educate and enforce) in response to potential breaches of social restrictions, with enforcement only being used when necessary.
- 10.4 A total of **338 FPN's** have been issued over the three combined periods, 85% of which were issued during the first lockdown. In total, the 338 FPNs related to **424 offence types**, i.e. when a person breaches more than one offence at a single time. A breakdown of offences is shown in the tables below however it is important to note that the classifications of breaches have undergone a number of revisions over the three periods. For instance, the top three breach classifications in table 2 were only used in the first lockdown period.

Time frame	FPNs issued	Average per day
March 23rd - June 14th	288	3.5 per day
June 15th - November 4th	6	
November 5th - December 2nd	44	1.6 per day

Table 1: FPNs issued in Suffolk

FPN Offence Type	Count
Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period – Coronavirus	184
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public of more than two people – Coronavirus	106
Contravene a direction or fail to comply with instruction – Coronavirus	68
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than two people in public outdoor place	17
Contravene requirement to not participate in an indoor gathering of two or more people	12
Contravene requirement from relevant person – Coronavirus	7
Contravene a requirement on a person to self-isolate	6
Contravene requirement to not leave or be outside of place where they are living	6
Contravene a direction, prohibition notice or otherwise fails to comply with instruction	3
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of two or more people in other outdoor place	3
Obstruct person carrying out a function under the regulations – Coronavirus	2
Contravene a requirement imposed, or a direction given, by a relevant person	2
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than six people	2
Contravene a requirement on a person to self-isolate and in doing so has reason to believe they will come into close contact with another person or group, does then come into close contact with another person or group, and is reckless as to the consequences of that close contact.	1
Contravene a requirement to notify employer of the requirement to self-isolate (Worker).	1
Contravene a requirement/direction/instruction from a relevant person	1
Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of more than 6 people	1
Enter / remain in a relevant place in England without wearing a face covering	1
Entry into and/or remaining in a restricted area	1
Total	424

five FPNs. Note, we are unable to provide the FPN break down by policing command area at this time.

- 10.6 Over a third of FPNs were issued to those in the 16-24 age group (table 3 below) and this is consistent across the two lockdown periods. The gender split for FPNs being issued is 85% male, 15% female.

Age range	Number of FPNs issued	Proportion of all FPNs
16-24	122	36%
25-34	92	27%
25-44	63	19%
45-54	45	13%
55-64	11	3%
65+	5	1%
Total	338	100%

Table 3: FPNs by age group.

- 10.7 The figures below show the self-defined ethnicity for the individuals who were issued an FNP for a COVID-19 related offence. 'Blank' refers to where the individual has declined to provide this information.

Self-Defined

A1 Indian	0
A2 Pakistani	0
A3 Bangladeshi	0
A9 Other Asian	5
B1 Caribbean	0
B2 African	3
B9 Other Black	7
M1 White and Black Caribbean	0
M2 White and Black African	1
M3 White and Asian	1
M9 Any other mixed	13
N1 Person Declines to Define Their Ethnicity	9
N2 Person Does Not Understand What Is Required	9
N3 Officer's Presence is Urgently Required Elsewhere	2
N4 Situation involving public order	1
O1 Chinese	1
O9 Other	16
W1 British	162
W2 Irish	1
W3 Traveller of Irish Heritage	0
W4 Gypsy / Roma	24
W5 Other Travellers	0
W9 Any other White Background	56

Blank	146
Total	457

Officer Defined

Asian	9
Black	6
Mixed	18
Other	37
White	227
Blank	160
Total	457

- 10.8 For those FPN's for which self-defined ethnicity has been recorded 70% are White British or any other white background; 3% are African or Other Black; 5% are of Mixed Ethnicity; 2% are Asian; 8% are Gypsy/Roma.
- 10.9 Both the completion rate AND the disproportionality rate for self-defined and officer defined ethnicity is monitored by the COVID-19 Silver cell, in liaison with County Policing Command. Officers are currently being reminded to ensure data regarding ethnic origin is always recorded.
- 10.10 All COVID-19 FPN's issued by Suffolk officers are independently scrutinised by our Criminal Justice Department to ensure that the legislative and evidential requirements are met. This process is actually conducted by Norfolk Constabulary staff, who scrutinise all fixed penalty notices on behalf of both Norfolk and Suffolk. This therefore provides an extra layer of independence for Suffolk Fixed Penalty Notices.
- 10.11 The Criminal Justice Department have also introduced a Scrutiny Panel for Fixed Penalty Notices. A meeting is chaired by Criminal Justice staff and attendees include Police Officers, Criminal Justice staff, Learning and Development training staff, and an independent member of public with extensive experience of public scrutiny within the stop search arena and use of coercive powers. The scrutiny process includes analysis of disproportionality data, with any recommendations fed back to the Constabulary where applicable.
- 10.12 The Op Response Silver cell also review ACRO (Criminal Records Office) reports on COVID-19 Fixed Penalty Notices, thereby seeking to identify any opportunities for learning or improved professional practice.
- 10.13 For those offences regarding breaches of requirement to self-isolate the Constabulary continue to work in liaison with the local Test and Trace team. The T and T team contact individuals who have tested positive via telephone enquiries and/or personal visits to the home address. In the event that the T and T teams suspect an individual is breaching the legislation, the team forward details to the CCR who create a CAD and allocate to an officer for a supplementary visit. Attending officers employ the 4E's approach to such visits, with the option of sanction via FPN.
- 10.14 The Constabulary has also worked closely with Suffolk County Council's Community Intervention Team (C.I.T.), undertaking joint patrols with team members, supporting their work with educating the public around COVID-19 measures. This has been particularly successful where there have been reports relating to local school children congregating in large groups, or in targeted areas of outbreaks such as Moreton Hall estate in Bury St Edmunds.

- 10.15 During the week commencing 14 December 2020 in response to escalating infection rates Suffolk Constabulary will be conducting multi-agency licensed premises checks and high visibility public engagement as part of the Constabularies approach towards COVID-19 enforcement. Activity will involve Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Community Intervention Team (Suffolk County Council) and Community Action Team (Ipswich Borough Council). The results of this activity will be collated and shared amongst all partners with a view to establishing effectiveness and repeating the operation.

11. CONTACT AND CONTROL ROOM (CCR) - CALL DEMAND

- 11.1 The data in tables 6 and 7 shows the incoming demand into the force by telephone either directly into the control room (999 calls) or via the switchboard (101 calls). The call data shows that demand for both 999 and 101 events reduced over the three distinct phases compared to the same periods last year.

999 calls	2019	2020	+/- Diff
March 23 - June 14	23,925	19,910	-17%
June 15 - Nov 4	47,365	46,603	-2%
Nov 5 - Dec 2	8,666	7,436	-14%

- A total **7.5% reduction** for the whole time period compared to 2019

Table 6: 999 call demand

101 Calls	2019	2020	+/- Diff
March 23 - June 14	31,530	28,251	-10%
June 15 - Nov 4	54,453	49,520	-9%
Nov 5 - Dec 2	9,475	8,405	-11%

- A total **9.7% reduction** for the whole time period compared to 2019

Table 7: 101 call demand

- 11.2 The current target for emergency response is to attend urban 999 calls within 10 minutes and rural 999 calls within 15 minutes, with an internal benchmark of achieving 90% within target. The three-year average indicates that 90.6% of emergency incidents are attended in target cases, which compares to the below attendance rates since March this year:

- March 23 to June 14 – **94.5%** of emergency response was in target
- June 15 to November 4 – **90.8%** of emergency response was in target
- November 5 to Dec 2 – **91.7%** of emergency response in target

- 11.3 It should be noted that during the summer period, demand had started to return to normal with call demand increasing to pre-COVID-19 levels.

12. COUNTY POLICING COMMAND (CPC)

- 12.1 County Policing Command has continued to maintain its focus on public reassurance, increased visibility and proactive policing to target and disrupt organised crime (such as county lines) as well as protecting the most vulnerable in our communities.

- 12.2 Staff sickness rates within CPC have remained low, with no adverse impact on operational delivery.
- 12.3 During the first lockdown period, overall demand on policing services dropped. Public calls reduced as a result of more people being at home and businesses being closed. This was particularly the case in respect of the night-time economy. This coincided with increased visible presence in the form of public patrols, and proactive policing with Sentinel and Kestrel Teams supporting Neighbourhood Response Teams (NRT) and Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT).
- 12.4 As restrictions eased, demand has returned 'normal' levels at peak summer.

Incidents recorded (comparing COVID-19 related to non-COVID-19 related incidents in 2020)

Period	2019	2020	% Diff	2020 COVID-19	2020 NON-COVID-19	COVID CALLS %
March 23 - June 14	37,182	35,773	-3.8%	5,401	30,372	15.1%
June 15 - November 4	67,983	66,826	-1.7%	1,111	65,715	1.7%
Nov 5 - December 2	11,594	11,850	+2.2%	794	11,056	6.7%
Grand Total	116759	114449	-2.0%	7306	107143	6.4%
% of 2019 Level		98.0%			91.8%	
% of 2020 Level				6.4%	93.6%	

Table 5: Number of CADs in 2020 vs 2019 and proportion of COVID-19 calls during the lockdown periods.

- 12.5 Table 5 shows that while CAD demand has remained relatively stable compared to 2019, COVID-19 demand has replaced traditional demand.
- March 23 to June 14 – **15.1%** of CADs were COVID-19 related
 - June 15 to November 4 – **1.7%** of CADs were COVID-19 related
 - November 5 to Dec 2 – **6.7%** of CADs were COVID-19 related
 - Recorded incidents between 23 March 2020 and 2 December 2020 were **2%** lower than the same period in 2019.
 - Non-COVID-19 related calls were **8%** lower in 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. This is likely to be driven by the reduction in crime, meaning fewer incidents are reported into the CCR.
 - **6.4%** of all 2020 recorded incidents were COVID-10 related.
- 12.6 Chart 3 (below) shows the volume of COVID-19 related CADs recorded since March 2020. It is worth noting that the code PS04A was the only code available until July, when additional codes were generated in order to reflect changing restrictions and to be able to break down our understanding of demand further. The opening codes each relate to different concerns raised by members of the public calling into the CCR (see below chart).

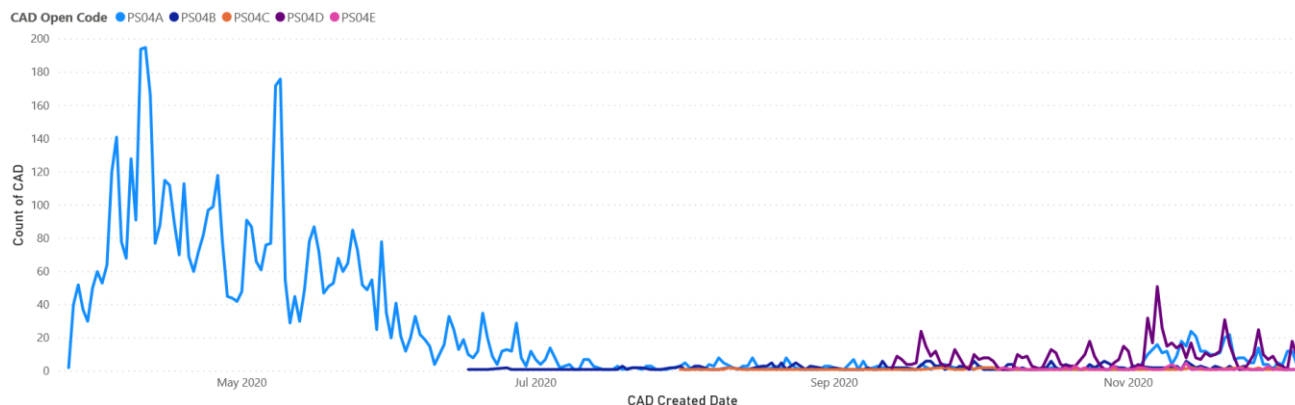


Figure 3: Chart showing the number of COVID-19 related CADs since March 2020

Opening code	Description
PS04A	Breach of Health Order
PS04B	Breach of Quarantine
PS04C	Breach of Face Mask
PS04D	Breach of Gathering Order
PS04E	Breach of Self-Isolation

Mass Vaccination Centres and Primary Care Network -

- 12.7 At the time of writing there is one mass vaccination centre due to be operational in Suffolk with effect from 18 December 2020, although no vaccines are due to be administered there until 2021. A further 8 sites have been identified throughout the County and are due to come on line in the first quarter of 2021.
- 12.8 On the 16 December 2020 five GP surgeries commenced delivering vaccinations in Suffolk, with further locations planned over the forthcoming months.
- 12.9 Each vaccination centre has been the subject of a Counter Terrorism assessment and a joint NHS security/Police Design Out Crime visit to ensure that all reasonable efforts have been made to prevent a vaccination location being subject of criminality.
- 12.10 Operation Tour refers to the Suffolk Constabulary plan to monitor and liaise with each site. Whilst it is not the responsibility of the Constabulary to manage site security, each location will be subject of regular Police patrols.

13. CRIME, SAFEGUARDING AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (CSIM)

- 13.1 Recorded Crime - One of the most noticeable impacts of COVID-19 has been on recorded crime levels, as illustrated in Chart 2 below which shows the rolling seven-day average for all crime recorded in Suffolk. The first lockdown in mid-March led to a significant decrease in recorded crime which began to reverse from May onwards, eventually reaching pre-lockdown levels in August. This trend was not replicated during the second lockdown, with record crime rates remaining relatively stable.



Chart 2: rolling seven-day average for crimes recording in Suffolk from 1st Dec 2019 – 2nd Dec 2020.

13.2 By comparing the COVID-19 period with the same period last year, there are some noticeable changes in demand for key crime types (table 4 below):

Crime type	Difference in recorded crime compared to the same period last year			
	March 23rd to June 14th	June 15th to November 4th	November 5th to December 2nd	Combined phases of social restrictions (March 23rd to December 2nd)
All crime	19% reduction	12% reduction	9% reduction	14% reduction
Aquisitive volume crime (Vehicle/ bicycle theft, shoplifting, 'other' theft)	46% reduction	36% reduction	28% reduction	38% reduction
Robbery	58% reduction	40% reduction	48% reduction	47% reduction
Domestic crime	46% increase	22% increase	15% increase	27% increase

Table 4: Changes in demand between the period of COVID-19 this year compared to the same period last year.

- 13.3 Suffolk recorded fewer crimes in total during the lockdown periods when compared to the same periods in 2019. This is a pattern observed across the country with other police forces recording reductions in crimes against an increase of 'new' (COVID-19 related) demand.
- 13.4 Limitations presented by lockdown conditions have driven these changes, such as the closure of shops reducing the opportunity for theft and shoplifting, and increasing capabilities to work from home reducing the opportunity for vehicle crime. Similarly, restrictions on activity in proximity to other people reduced the opportunity for robbery offences which are more likely to be committed in urban or built-up areas which attracted a lower footfall over this period.
- 13.5 During the first lockdown period many crime types saw reduction in volumes, whereas DA recorded an increase during the lockdown periods. Suffolk is not an outlier in this trend, with other forces recording increases in this area- in part due to people remaining at home during the restrictions, therefore increasing opportunity.
- 13.6 Working in collaboration with the County Council ("Suffolk Collective"), several initiatives have been put in place, including: Targeted messaging via social media campaigns across a number of digital platforms such as Twitter and Facebook; A 24-hour helpline being introduced, funded and promoted by the County Council and delivered by Anglia Care Trust; A number of posters and banners were produced which were delivered by our SNT staff to be displayed at prominent supermarkets across the county.

- 13.7 Additionally, the DA teams selected those cases which they deemed to involve the highest risk victims, pro-actively contacting them and conducting welfare checks with enhanced levels of support. To date in excess of 600 contacts were made to Suffolk vulnerable victims.
- 13.8 With regards to the other impacts on CSIM, of particular note has been the delays within the criminal justice system. The impact of COVID-19 has caused cases to be delayed due to court hearings at the Magistrates and Crown Court being postponed for significant periods of time. Understandably this has led to additional support being required for victims and witnesses, to ensure they stay engaged with the process. CSIM managers have reported that there is a risk that some cases may be lost due to victims or witnesses no longer wishing to proceed. The subsequent management of the backlog will also require a significant amount of time and resource for police and CPS colleagues.
- 13.9 As with many departments, CSIM's work is heavily integrated with partners, and the benefits reported for the use of video conferencing/meetings cannot be understated. This facility has allowed work to continue across the board and in particular in high risk areas which would have only have been frustrated in VC wasn't available.

14. SPECIAL CONSTABULARY, POLICE SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS AND CADETS

- 14.1 During the first lockdown period there was a national drive to promote the use of the employer supported policing scheme.
- 14.2 This has proved to be very successful within Suffolk with 19 special constables being released for additional hours, as well as those individuals who had been furloughed from work being able to contribute additional time to the Special Constabulary.
- 14.3 As a result of the first lockdown period, all recruitment for special constables was suspended, in order to minimise risks posed through the recruitment process and training and to prioritise recruitment of additional regular officers in line with operation uplift.
- 14.4 Ordinarily, Suffolk will look to recruit 5-12 intakes of specials per year. 2020 will just see 2 intakes, with Special Constable numbers currently standing 118.
- 14.5 At the time of the first lockdown a decision was made to suspend the use of police volunteers, again to limit the risk posed by COVID-19. Following a review however and the requirements of certain departments, some volunteers were allowed to return following a strict risk assessment process. These included those volunteers working within transport services and the mounted police patrols.
- 14.6 In March a decision was made by COVID-19 Silver to suspend all Cadet groups meeting face to face, as one of several measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Currently the cadet groups are continuing to meet virtually and will look to resume face to face meetings in 2021.

15. COMMUNICATIONS AND KEEPING STAFF INFORMED

- 15.1 The multi-agency communications response to COVID-19 is coordinated via the LRF comms lead. In Suffolk the comms team are responsible for police specific external comms such as community newsletters, as well as internal messaging. Community updates are produced monthly and disseminated by Community Engagement Officers.
- 15.2 The importance of regular communications to our staff cannot be overstated – weekly updates are provided covering legislative changes as well as guidance and information.

These messages are supplemented by Chief Officer webinar sessions, intranet updates and staff briefings for key information.

- 15.3 In addition to the wider workforce, the Op Response cell provide a weekly written update to the Chief Officer Team, deliver a monthly joint Silver update session for Heads of Department, and meet weekly with CPC/CSIM command in order to ensure that tasks aligned to the multi-agency response are acted upon.

16. REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

- 16.1 The Constabularies approach to review, improvement and Innovation can be broken down into three elements – a) Reviewing national learning circulated on a weekly basis as part of Operation Talla; b) A formal review of the policing response to COVID-19; c) An exploration of the opportunities for organisational change which have been brought into focus by Covid-19 – Operation Evolve.
- 16.2 Under Operation Talla, the Op Response Silver cell review all documentation which is sent by the national team, identifying opportunities for an improved organisational response to COVID-19. This includes attending webinar sessions and identifying local “best practice” for wider dissemination.
- 16.3 A review programme for the Constabularies response to COVID-19 has been commissioned by the Op Response Gold Commander and is under development with a view to establishing what went well, as well as opportunities for improvement in the event of dealing with another pandemic, as well as any broader organisational learning opportunities.
- 16.4 The review will include – Command Structure; Communications; PPE; Enforcement; Well-being and Performance. The review programme will commence in the last quarter of 2020/21.
- 16.5 Operation Evolve – The Constabularies approach to COVID-19 has included a review of long-term strategic change opportunities. A team of nine Police Officers and Police Staff were brought together to explore these opportunities, with Chief Officers providing a “no red lines” approach to proposals. Pre-business case papers have now been submitted to Chief Officers for consideration including – a re-development of Learning and Development Estate; A sustainability Programme with governance structure focussed on Police estate; Fleet electrification; Robotic Process Automation; Digital Public Engagement; Workplace Modernisation including agile working; Citizens in Policing remodel; Digital Surgeries and Power APPs.
- 16.6 ACO Kenneth Kilpatrick commissioned an independent Assurance Review of Strategic Control and Corporate Governance, and Coronavirus Resilience management by TIAA. That review was completed in October and a copy of the report forwarded to Suffolk in November. The report identified no areas for improvement or development for Suffolk Constabulary, with the Constabularies approach summarised as follows –

“Effective processes and controls are in place to manage the constabularies’ response to COVID-19, which supports the constabularies’ ability to fulfil its statutory requirements. The constabularies have been over to recover the costs of PPE. The impact of COVID-19 has not resulted in significant additional costs for the constabularies, and the constabularies have managed to secure in year non-pay savings and are currently reporting a forecast underspend for both Forces.”

Governance of the forces responses was also positively commented upon –

“The Gold Commander is an experienced officer and is able to provide clear direction and leadership. The appointment of one gold commander covering both force is efficient and helps ensure a consistent approach is adopted.”

- 16.7 In addition to the TIAA review, in April 2020, A/DCC Simon Megicks on behalf of the Chief Constables of both Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies, commissioned Operation Hydrant to coordinate a thematic review of Operation Response 20. The challenges of the COVID 19 crisis have prompted a wholesale review of working practices and priorities across all areas of business. It was within this context, that Norfolk and Suffolk constabularies recognised the need to review their collaborated response to the COVID 19 crisis for organisational learning and for the benefit of identifying any issues relevant to national policing.
- 16.8 The purpose of the review was to check and test the approach across a number of areas to ensure they were effective and in line with the limited identified best practice. The review focused on the police response and not that of partner organisations or strategic stakeholders. The review was undertaken by a team of staff who, whilst employed by Norfolk Constabulary are operationally independent of it, working as part of a National Police Chief Council’s working group, and at the time of the review, some supporting the national response to the crisis, Operation Talla.
- 16.9 The overall conclusion of the review team was that:-
- The collaborated forces of Norfolk and Suffolk acted more swiftly to this crisis than most other UK law enforcement agencies and the response has proved to be effective throughout.
 - Advance planning was highly effective, in the main efficient and had positioned both forces and the joint workspace very well. Had the effects of the COVID-19 crisis been as severe as first predicted, both forces would have been very well prepared to respond to that eventuality. It is acknowledged that many of the recommendations in this report relate to issues that have been identified by both forces and are part of future planning. In this context, it is hoped the report and its recommendations provide confidence that the gold commander and his team have taken and continue to take the right course.
 - The COVID-19 crisis has taken the police service into new territory, and it will be sometime before we have completed that journey and returned to total normality; whatever that might look like. In many areas of business, normality will be forever changed and the police service, like other organisations will need to respond accordingly. Norfolk and Suffolk constabularies are in a good position to do so.
- 16.10 Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertook a thematic review of UK police’s response to COVID-19 earlier in the year. Although the inspection Team visited Norfolk Constabulary, due to the joined-up command structure they effectively reviewed both Constabularies. The inspection team focused on the Constabularies preparedness and Custody provision. Their findings were positive and provided further reassurance that the position that the constabulary was taking was right in addressing the many and varied challenges.

- 16.11 Whilst COVID-19 has undoubtedly presented significant organisational challenges, the Constabulary has instigated a comprehensive programme of internal and external review with a focus on lessons learnt and corporate improvement. Feedback from those reviews suggests that the Constabulary has responded very effectively to the pandemic.

In addition, the Constabulary has taken the challenges presented by the pandemic, and focussed on identifying radical opportunities for organisational change via Operation Evolve. Business cases are now being considered by Chief Officers under the management and oversight of the organisations Corporate Improvement and Innovation “2025” Team.

17 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1 Suffolk Constabulary have been provided with £270k of additional surge funding for the purpose of delivering COVID-19 enforcement activity.
- 17.2 Proposals for how the additional funding is to be spent have been approved by Chief Officers and submitted to the Home Office.
- 17.3 Spending is monitored by the Assistant Chief Officer.
- 17.4 Suffolk Constabulary surge funding is being spent as follows:-
- Targeted resources at key events such as Halloween, Bonfire Night, and the Xmas/New Year period.
 - To provide additional resource as a visible police presence for public confidence linked to the NTE.
 - An additional dedicated resource for responding to reported breaches of the regulations via either community reporting or track and trace notifications.
 - Funding an effective and targeted ongoing communication strategy.
 - Funding an effective police response to licensing breaches.
 - Funding for an effective enforcement and engagement APP.
 - Funding the dedicated Police COVID-19 Silver cell (uplift in rank).
 - Supporting the CCR in providing effective response to COVID-19 related calls .
 - Providing a dedicated COVID-19 sudden death vehicle thereby protecting other response functions..
 - Providing an effective Police on-call provision to local partners for local outbreaks
 - Providing a surge fund for increased visible policing in response to a change in tier status and to react to partner data.
- 17.5 Other expenditure - Supply of additional laptops for home working. The Constabulary have spent an additional £30,000 on laptop provision.
- 17.6 Savings realised through changes in working practices. The Constabulary has made a number of changes to its working practices in order to protect its staff, maintain core functions and help prevent the spread of the infection. Many staff were advised to work from home if possible, non-essential training was cancelled and journeys between the estate were kept to a minimum. Some analysis by the finance department has shown that these changes have resulted in savings in certain areas as an expected consequence of adapting normal business.

17.7 Over the period of April to August 2020:-

- The amount spent on fuel for pool cars dropped from £40,670 to £14,634, a saving of **£26,036**.
- Claims for public transport use decreased by approximately **£7000**.
- Claims for essential and casual mileage use decreased by approximately **£46,000**.
- The amount of our estate being used/required over that period decreased by **25%**.
- It is estimated that due to the reduced need for energy, our carbon emissions decreased by **53.6 tonnes of CO2**.
- Overall estimated savings under these headings equates to **£79,000 over 5 months**.

18. OTHER ORGANISATION RISKS

- 18.1 A risk register is managed via the Gold Command structure and is reviewed weekly. There are currently no significant risks identified necessitating highlighting within this report.