

**NOTE: Update will be reflected in the papers to the next public session of the Scottish Police Authority on 20 May 2020.**

**SPA Board Update – COVID 19 – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020, 10 am (by video conference)**

**Attendees: Members**

David Crichton (DC)  
Matt Smith (MS)  
Martyn Evans (ME)  
Tom Halpin (TH)  
Michelle Miller (MM)  
Mary Pitcaithly (MP)  
Bob Hayes (BH)  
Grant Macrae (GM)  
Caroline Stuart (CS)

**Attendees: Officers**

Barry Sillers (BS)  
John McCroskie (JM)  
Catherine McIntyre (CM)  
Lynne Clark (LC)  
Vanessa Ewing (VE)  
Lynn Brown (LB)  
DCC Malcolm Graham (DCC MG)

**Apologies:**

Elaine Wilkinson (EW)  
Jane Ryder (JR)

**Introduction**

DC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the participants and running order for today's update.

**Police Scotland Weekly Summary Report**

DCC MG provided an update on the key considerations and priorities for Police Scotland (PS) in current circumstances. In particular how to maintain the service response to ongoing demand while moving into recovery phase noting that all the normal risks remain and still need to be addressed.

Over the next week or two PS will observe the changes in England and the impact on policing and assess and plan for the role of PS as the Stay at Home message in Scotland changes. Throughout it will be a key focus to ensure that public confidence is maintained.

DCC MG assured Members that the process established around the sourcing, management and deployment of PPE has served the officers well. PS has worked with staff associations, Health & Safety Executive, Public Health England and taken scientific evidence into account to ensure the policy and guidance for officers and staff is in place and kept refreshed.

Members noted there had been mixed messages around PPE played out in public, and although this mixed messaging had not come from Police Scotland, there were different views in the public domain on various aspects of PPE. There was discussion about the various reporting mechanisms which would continue to update the SPA on emerging issues and events, and it was agreed that a further summary report would be provided, as well as discussion at the forthcoming Board meeting.

From a workforce perspective, officers have access to NHS testing. The testing has been expanded to allow asymptomatic officers, who it is suspected have come into contact with the virus, to be tested also. This all means that officers are able to return to work quickly. PS are engaging with

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Scottish Government to expand further to allow family members to have access to this testing and this will go some way to ensuring there is no future spike in absence.

DCC MG confirmed that there has been close working with BTP during this first phase of lockdown however their role will revert to focus on the policing of the rail network as recovery measures are put in place. DCC MG also confirmed that public transport in general will be a matter for local government focus and guidance.

**ACTION: DCC MG will provide further information on PPE at the Board meeting on 20th May in addition to the submission of an additional summary report to Members.**

### Director of Forensic Services Update

TN acknowledged the great support that Forensic Services (FS) were receiving from PS in particular in the management and forward planning of PPE and the links into the COVID 19 command structure.

TN noted that absences were down with 90% workforce current availability. FS staff were also getting access to testing, currently with no positive results.

Partner engagement is progressing with weekly meetings with COPFS and regular discussions on workload and prioritisation. FS will also be meeting the partners within the Crime Campus facility to begin planning for the next phase of recovery which will enable staff to work while maintaining physical distancing.

TN gave reassurance to Members on the suitability of the training, standards and use of PPE in particular for scene examination officers who may come into close contact with the public.

### SPA Chief Executive Update

LB noted that SPA was maintaining 100% workforce availability. Weekly briefings were taking place with all staff and individual one-to-one calls were taking place between LB and all staff.

Discussion and planning is now taking place, with support from PS, on the next phase for staff returning to the office as restrictions become reduced.

LB talked through this week's financial position, giving a breakdown of the COVID 19 related costs. LB confirmed that because of the procurement practices in place we were not as yet experiencing the inflated costs on unit prices for essential equipment that has been experienced in other bodies. LB also confirmed that the current procurement process had been authorised by SG.

LB also highlighted to Members that public accessibility for SPA Board and Committee meetings has been a concern for some MSPs. LB noted that having compared SPA with other public bodies and their approaches during the COVID 19, SPA was setting the standard. LB will circulate a paper to Members outlining options for further enhancements to SPA's approach to public accessibility and will convene a roundtable discussion to progress.

**ACTION: LB to circulate a paper to Members outlining options for further enhancements to SPA's approach to public accessibility and will convene a roundtable discussion to progress.**

### SPA Board Public Survey

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BS informed Members that a revised question set had been agreed for the next wave of the survey. This included some additions around compliance and regulation restrictions. A paper on this will be issued in time for the Board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

To ensure the information gets into the public domain, Members will be able to consider the contents at the Board meeting. This information will be accompanied by a press statement from the SPA. The information will also be shared with the Chief Constable, the Scottish Government and the Independent Advisory Group members. DC also confirmed that a specific section on this will be included in the Interim Vice Chair's Report to the Board

Members also suggested some further analysis on the first wave of results could be included on the SPA website to ensure a continuing focus on the survey work.

**ACTION: VE to prepare an accompanying statement for the issue of the next wave of the public attitudes survey results.**

### **Independent Advisory Group (IAG)**

ME gave a short update on the work of this independent group confirming a focus on consistency and fairness around the application of the temporary powers for policing. ME also confirmed that the first report by John Scott QC will be given at the SPA Board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Members noted that there were 3 areas of oversight that the SPA may need to consider that are not being addressed by IAG. These are PS Scotland enforcement of new laws in relation to:

- private premises;
- custody wellbeing;
- non COVID-19 policing changes in practices.

**ACTION: LB to consider the SPA approach to some of the wider aspects of the legislation that are not currently in the remit of the IAG. These include, private premises, custody wellbeing and non COVID 19 policing changes in practice.**

### **Closing Remarks**

DC closed the update meeting noting that the SPA Board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May will be video streamed. A decision will be taken in due course on the need for the weekly update meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> May given that the Board meeting takes place the day before.

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