



*** FOR DECISION ***			
Disclosable under FOISA 2002		YES	
Author/Contact	Inspector REDACTED	Department / Unit	Criminal Justice Services
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COVID-19 related offences against the police

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The coronavirus pandemic remains a national health emergency and Police Scotland continues to perform a vital role in explaining physical distancing guidance to the public, encouraging everyone to adhere to it and, where necessary, enforcing the regulations.
- 1.2 Due to the nature of policing activity it brings officers and staff into contact with the public to encourage compliance with the regulation. As a consequence of these interactions we have observed in some cases is that our officers and staff in roles such as; local frontline policing, custody suites and front counters have been maliciously targeted by some individuals.
- 1.3 The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide an update in relation to crimes against police officers and staff where there has been an aggravation of the offence by reference or inference to the accused COVID-19 infectious status.

2. Background

- 2.1 Police Assaults - It has been reported that there have been instances of individuals who during interactions with police officers and staff infer they may be infectious with coronavirus before coughing or spitting at staff. Following consultation with COPFS these instances are being treated seriously and the marking teams have been advised to progress with such assaults on indictment.
- 2.2 Crimes against officers and staff may also fall into other crime types such as Culpable and Reckless conduct, S38 CJLSA or Breach of the Peace.
- 2.3 Use of Police Undertaking – in order to reduce demand on police custody units during the Coronavirus pandemic the use of undertakings has been increased in line with revised Lord Advocates Guidelines. In order to ensure the application of appropriate decision making and to examine the impact of extended use of undertakings it is desirable to understand how many such liberations are being

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE: POLICE AND PARTNERS

made, the occasions when these conditions are breached and if individuals fail to answer their undertaking at court.

3. Data extraction

- 3.1 Extensive consultation has been made with force crime registrar and force analysts to understand the recording and search capability of the crime systems.
- 3.2 Crime recording - The Operation Tall marker was initially considered to identify relevant crimes however from an initial data set it was clear that the markers have been used in a manner which was not consistent with this particular requirement.
- 3.3 Police Scotland Crime recording and case reporting systems are limited in the way in which the data can be extracted and as such a manual interrogation of each recorded crime has had to be undertaken to identify relevant crimes and subsequent police reports.
- 3.4 Undertaking data – the crime of failing to comply with an undertaking can easily be identified from police systems where it is an individual crime however in instances where another crime is committed the failure to comply with undertakings is reported as an aggravation of the crime and there is no individual crime report. Police systems will not allow for these modifiers to be extracted and as such the only source for this data is from COPFS.
- 3.5 Work is ongoing with STCS to assess the undertaking compliance rates against the similar period in the last year. Whilst it is known that the numbers released hon undertaking have increased dramatically this will be made up of individuals who would previously been held in custody for court. This will allow us to assess the decision making of police custody staff a

4. Analysis

- 4.1 Crimes - Analysis of the crime systems revealed that between 24/3/20 to 30/4/20 there were 4,944 crimes that fell into the category; Assaults on emergency workers, a Culpable and Reckless conduct, S38 CJLSA and Breach of the Peace.
- 4.2 This analysis has involved a manual interrogation of all 4,944 charges to determine if they have involved a police victim and if they were COVID-19 related. This has been broken down in the table at Appendix A.
- 4.3 Of the 4,944 charges extracted 648 of those were committed against police officers or staff.
- 4.4 There were 265 assaults on our staff of which 89 were COVID-19 related.
- 4.5 There were 383 other offences committed against our staff and 216 of those had a COVID-19 element.

5. Summary

- 5.1 In terms of charges recorded nationally we have seen during the review period 648 charges where the victim has been either a police officer or a member of police staff of which 265 were assaults on emergency workers.
- 5.2 During the review period there have been 216 offences which were COVID-19 related against Police Scotland officers or staff.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 It can be seen that there have been 216 charges recorded which have a direct COVID-19 element it is proposed that these should be monitored through the criminal justice journey.

Offences committed against Police Officers and Police Staff 24/3/20 -30/4/20

Division	Offences with Police as victim (including assault on Emergency Worker) includes non Covid-19		Assault on Emergency Worker (police victim) includes non Covid-19		Assault on Emergency Worker (police victim) Covid-19 related		Total Culpable and Reckless, S38 & BOP (police victim) includes non Covid-19		Total Culpable and Reckless, S38 & BOP (police victim) Covid-19 related	
	No.	% of national total	No.	% of all offences with Police as victim	No.	% of all offences against police	No.	% of all offences against police	No.	% of all offences against police
A	88	13.6%	35	39.8%	7	8.0%	53	60.2%	14	15.9%
D	59	9.1%	32	54.2%	9	15.3%	27	45.8%	7	11.9%
N	34	5.2%	22	64.7%	18	52.9%	12	35.3%	9	26.5%
C	176	27.2%	55	31.3%	18	10.2%	121	68.8%	37	21.0%
E	110	17.0%	48	43.6%	11	10.0%	62	56.4%	19	17.3%
J	79	12.2%	32	40.5%	10	12.7%	47	59.5%	16	20.3%
P	69	10.6%	29	42.0%	5	7.2%	40	58.0%	7	10.1%
G	6	0.9%	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	4	66.7%	3	50.0%
K	5	0.8%	1	20.0%	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	2	40.0%
L	2	0.3%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
Q	14	2.2%	5	35.7%	5	35.7%	9	64.3%	9	64.3%
U	4	0.6%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%
V	2	0.3%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
National Total	648	100%	265	40.9%	89	13.7%	383	59.1%	127	19.6%

Note - Police victim includes police officers and police staff