

WRS Board

Date: 11th February 2021

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2 and 3 2020/21

Recommendation

That the Board notes the Report and that members use the contents of the activity data in their own reporting back to fellow members of the partner authorities.

Background

The detail of the report focuses on the first 3 quarters of 2020/21 but the actual data allows comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

Contribution to Priorities

Board members have asked the service to provide data on activity levels to help reassure local members that WRS continues to address a range of issues in each partner area and more broadly across the county.

Report

Activity Data

The third quarter of 2020/21 featured a second mini-lockdown and the area working its way through Central Government's Covid control tier system. Officers dealing with Covid have had to respond to and adjust activities twice in this period to accommodate a rapidly changing regulatory framework. This was whilst managing business as usual activity which delivered an unexpected flurry of statutory nuisance work during November.

The Food Standards Agency suspended the Food Hygiene inspection programme at the beginning of lockdown in March and this continued throughout the second quarter. In the third quarter the Agency returned to local authorities providing a slight amendment to their expectations. The service will be expected to deliver on a range of activities, focused only on the highest risk businesses and, in some cases, this will be tackled during Q4 alongside Covid control visits. Numbers of interventions for the year will inevitably remain low, reflecting that the service was engaged mainly with new entrants to the sector, those wanting re-rating and those that posed the highest hygiene risk locally. All allegations of serious non-compliance have been and will continue to be followed up but thankfully these have

been relatively few in number as a proportion of the total number of food complaints.

On the Health and Safety at Work front, we saw a reversal of last quarter with accident numbers up and a fall in complaints and enquiries. However, two lengthy and complex investigations were concluded in Q3 with prosecution files being submitted to the relevant partner legal teams. These relate to serious injuries sustained at a workplace and a fatality in connection with leisure activities.

Stray dog numbers continued to follow their downward trend and numbers of complaints/ enquiries about dogs followed their cycle around their own downward line. Both remain indicative of improved conduct of owners however concerns remain that the economic difficulties that will ultimately follow from the pandemic might lead to a spike in dog abandonment. Time will tell.

Although numbers increased into quarter 3, the number of licensing cases received in the year to date represents a reduction of approximately 31% and 24% compared to previous years. This is hardly surprising with the hospitality sector and night time economy significantly affected by COVID-19 restrictions and overall we have seen a significant reduction in the volume of alcohol licensing applications, for particularly temporary event notices. Overall, approximately half of cases dealt with by the team have been applications and registrations; with 37% of these cases relating to hackney carriage vehicles and 11% relating to premises licences.

In general terms, licensing receives a higher number of enquiries (generally requests for advice or information) compared to complaints about the conduct of a license-holder. Based on the 380 cases recorded in the year to date, 28% have related to taxis, 22% have related to alcohol licensing and 17% have related to animal licensing.

Quarter 3 saw planning application numbers continue to rise, following the trajectory predicted by our historical data. Information Requests, often associated with the planning and development process also continued on an upward trajectory during this period, supplemented by requests for information about the Covid response.

Following the usual summer peak, overall numbers of nuisance complaints fell during quarter 3 although unusually there was a further spike in activity in November providing a challenge to resources. The number of pollution cases received in the year to date represents an increase of approximately 7% and 23% compared respectively to the previous 2 years. Approximately 44% of cases have related to domestic noise, whilst 21% have related to smoke nuisance. A significant proportion of the latter has related to domestic bonfires which have often been discussed with Board members as something that the law allows but the public find difficult to accept, especially given the current pandemic restrictions. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions are a notable factor in the level of domestic nuisance, good weather still remains the major driver behind numbers.

As we have reported previously, our business as usual services continue to be delivered against the background of the service having a significant staff commitment to the pandemic response. Your Officers responding to the challenging pandemic and equally those who continue to manage and deliver the normal day to day activities on the front line deserve a huge amount of praise at a time when things are far from normal and they are continually tested beyond anything the professions have encountered in our lifetime.

Covid related activities

Covid Advisor work is covered in a separate report that forms part of this meeting's agenda.

Covid Enforcement

WRS investigated 873 Covid related requests Q3 with an approximate 70/30% split between complaints and advice being sought by businesses. This includes service requests made by the Police for joint operations, demonstrating our close working relationship.

The following is a breakdown of the formal actions taken:

	Prohibition Notices	Written/Verbal Warnings
Bromsgrove	-	5
Malvern Hills	1	10
Redditch	2	22
Worcester City	2	5
Wychavon	3	8
Wyre Forest	1	26

	Prohibition Notices	Written/Verbal Warnings
Restaurants/Cafes	-	23
Pubs/Clubs	2	22
Takeaways	-	28
Other Food Premises	-	3
Non Food Premises	7	-

Local Outbreak Response Team

WRS, with Officers embedded within the Local Outbreak Response Team, dealt with a total of 190 referrals Q3. 25 were general complaints about Covid controls, 4 seeking advice. 161 were regarding outbreaks though 70% related to one or two cases only.

Backward Contact Tracing

WRS commenced backwards contact tracing during this period whereby the Public Health team identify a District and sometimes specific age groups for WRS to follow up on contacts. The purpose is to conduct do in depth interviews (30 mins to 1 hour) with positive cases and identify any links to workplaces, schools, etc or whether just unknown community transmission. We contacted some 560 parties Q3 with several significant links and unreported incidents being reported back to PH/PHE for further investigation.

Lost to follow-up

This is the term used to describe individuals that have tested positive for COVID-19 but not engaged with National NHS Track and Trace teams and so have been 'lost to follow-up calls'. WRS and Partner Councils have been providing local support to the NHS since the end of November. The process is different for each local authority area, but for all WRS try to contact the individual with three calls in three hours. The aim is to confirm they are self isolating, establish whether others have been in contact with them and obtain their contact details.

Where contact can not be established alternative locally held contact details are checked by District Council teams and then additional calls are made. In Bromsgrove, Redditch and Worcester City these calls are made by their own employees during the week with follow up door knocks to encourage them to engage with the callers. For all Districts at weekends and for Malvern Hills, Wychavon and Wyre Forest during the week WRS make the additional calls and undertake door knocking.

District	% allocated reached locally by WRS (and partners*)	% reached by national team
Bromsgrove	48.3*	40.2%
Wyre Forest	44.8	37.0%
Malvern Hills	36.4	38.9%
Worcester	48.7*	39.5%
Wychavon	54.3	39.2%
Redditch	47.3*	40.2%

For the few individuals who are identified as not self isolating referrals are made to the police as the relevant enforcing authority.

Performance

Quarter 3 is a period in the year where reporting against the suite of indicators is more limited. The year continues reasonably well from a

customer satisfaction perspective with the non-business customer measure at 73.6% and business customers at 98.1%. Given the demands and pressures on the service this year, this has to be seen as impressive. At the same point last year, customer satisfaction was at 73.5% and business satisfaction at 97%.

People who felt better equipped to deal with issues has fallen slightly from 72.3% to 67.5%, however it is still above the 62% that it was this time last year.

As Council garages closed for much of lockdown and have intermittently been open for business, there is still no meaningful data to show the % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service.

9 RBC, 1 BDC and 1 WFDC vehicles were suspended in Q2. The WFDC vehicle was suspended after an accident rather than being found defective in service. 5 vehicles were recorded as non-compliant in Worcester in Q3 (4 in Oct, 1 in Nov), all for over ranking.

Compliments outnumber complaints by around 4:1 (31:120). Staff sickness is up but still looking good at 1.65 days per FTE. This includes additional staff taken on for pandemic response. This is better than last year's figure at Q3 (3.82 days per FTE.)

Other indicators are not reported in this period but we thought members might be interested in our engagement with licensed premises as they have featured heavily in our Covid related activity. We report each year on the proportion of premises subject to allegations of failing to uphold the 4 licensing objectives. It is debatable in legal terms whether the Covid controls do indicate a failure to comply with the objectives and so in the last quarter we left Covid allegations out of the report. However, we have seen one review under the 2003 Act come forward in the County as a result of Covid breaches and the summary review process has been used elsewhere to help deal with such non-compliances.

The table below shows the levels of allegations that our normal indicator would yield up until 31st December 2020 and alongside these, the same figure if Covid breaches are included in the calculation.

District	Normal Measure	With Covid Breaches
Bromsgrove	4.9	15.8
Malvern Hills	3.0	8.3
Redditch	8.3	19.9
Worcester City	4.5	10.7
Wychavon	3.3	14.0

Wyre Forest	4.5	23.0
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This reflects the hugely increased level of engagement with the licensed trade that we have seen during the pandemic. It is important to say that the vast majority of breaches identified have been minor and that the vast majority of pubs and restaurants with alcohol licenses have worked incredibly hard to achieve compliance and protect the health of customers. Now that premises can only operate as takeaways and alcohol sales have to be only by delivery, we should see these figures fall dramatically.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

Appendix A: Activity Report (separate document)
Appendix B: Performance indicators Table

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Table of PIs 2020/21

Indicator	Reporting period	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4/ Outrun
1. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	74.6	75.4	73.6	
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	99.3	97.7	98.1	
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.3	Bromsgrove 98.6 Malvern Hills 98.6 Redditch 97.7 Worcester City 98.3 Wychavon 99.1 Wyre Forest 98.2 Worcestershire 98.5	98.4	
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.7	1.5	1.6	
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 100 Malvern Hills 85.7 Redditch 97.9 Worcester City 93.9 Wychavon 97.9 Wyre Forest 100 Worcestershire 97.4	NA	
6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this	6-monthly	NA	As Council garages closed for much of lockdown and have only recently re-opened for business, at this stage there is no meaning full data for this measure. Enforcement capacity is	NA	

	represents of the fleet county-wide			currently focused on Covid compliance in licensed premises so no taxi stop checks.		
7	% of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	63.2	72.3	67.5	
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	6/18	24/ 78	31/120	
9	Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	0.61 days per FTE	0.95 days per FTE	1.65 days per FTE	
10	% of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
11	% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 4.0 Malvern Hills 3.0 Redditch 8.3 Worcester City 4.5 Wychavon 3.3 Wyre Forest 4.5 Worcestershire 4.3	NA	
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 0.98 Malvern Hills 0.84 Redditch 1.20 Worcester City 1.16 Wychavon 0.64 Wyre Forest 0.86 Worcestershire 0.94	NA	
13	Total income expressed as a % of	6-monthly	NA		NA	

district base revenue budget (16/17)					
14 Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)	Annually	NA	NA	NA	

Complaint Breakdown

	BDC	MHDC	RBC	WC	WFDC	WDC	Other	Total
Q1	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	6
Q2	0	1	3	2	1	3	6	16
Q3	2	0	0	0	1	1	5	9
Q4								
Total	4	1	4	4	3	4	11	31

Compliment Breakdown

	BDC	MHDC	RBC	WC	WFDC	WDC	Other	Total
Q1	4	2	4	2	2	3	1	18
Q2	5	9	4	15	7	16	8	64
Q3	10	6	7	4	1	9	1	38
Q4								
Total	19	17	15	21	10	28	10	120