

PPP Members Bulletin
#3

Public Protection Partnership

**Bracknell Forest
West Berkshire
Wokingham**

Introduction

Whilst Covid 19 and non-Covid 19 related complaints and inquiries continue to rise we are now looking ahead to our Recovery phase.

Our Recovery Strategy has been prepared to support the individual recovery plans of the three authorities and to address how we bring back PPP services ,that were suspended due to the pandemic. We'll use what we have learnt in order to adopt better practices in future. The Government's incremental lifting of lockdown affects the rate of progress and the Recovery Strategy will need to reflect this.

Our Recovery Action Plan gives the key headlines for our progression into the new normal. There will be many milestones and PPP has begun to create a timeline for the expected recovery. We are mindful of Government guidance risk profiling, local PPP risk profiling and nationally accepted enforcement guidance/policy and are taking the wider risk to public health locally and organisationally into account.

We are providing advice for our customers based on guidance published by the Government so as different business sectors reopen we are able to give appropriate advice and keep our website up to date. It is clear that each transitioning phase brings new challenges.

Example of posters and advice posters made available for businesses to download and use.



See [here](#) for full list of posters.

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Bracknell Forest Council, West
Berkshire Council and
Wokingham Borough Council.**



Response

The types of complaints or requests for advice received in the last month have included the following:

- Concerns over lack of social distancing due the large increase in foot traffic along a lane
- No social distancing in store/shop
- Concern about a lack of social distancing provided for employees
- Pub landlord operating 'lock-ins' for small groups of friends
- Gym still operating
- Clarification on collection and delivery of animals for grooming
- Advice for dog walkers
- Non-adherence to Covid-19 Best Practice Guidelines at takeaways and restaurants offering a collection service
- Request for information on opening a bakery
- Request for advice on reopening a business
- Fly-tipping due to closed re-cycling centre
- Bonfires
- Noise from parties
- Disagreement over changes to insurance policy due to Covid Pandemic, possible miss sold policy.

We have seen an increase in health and safety risk assessment enquiries by businesses preparing to re-open. We are seeing an increase in complaints relating to where the Regulations (as amended) do require further clarity.

Examples of nuisance complaints that have led to our officers intervening / investigating are:

- A public house in a rural setting providing takeaway food and drink where the customers are consuming off the premises but close to residents. This is causing nuisance to the local community by refuse, noise and defecating.

- A fast food outlet reopened for takeaway with the high demand resulting with long traffic queues on the highway and social distancing concerns.
- A visit resulting in the issuing of a Prohibition Notice to a landlord who served drinks and allowed customers to sit in the garden to consume them whilst awaiting their takeaway order.

It is becoming increasingly clear that there is misunderstanding within the trade, the public and business employees, over the application of the Regulations with regard to certain business practices and circumstances. The Regulations seem to allow certain business practices which in turn conflicted with the restrictions on essential travel. We continue to work with colleagues from across the south-east tier one authorities and with colleagues at OPSS (Office for Product Safety and Standards) to identify these anomalies and share best practice. It is likely that the easing of lock-down restrictions will be incremental so we are keeping matters under constant review.

During May 12% of all service requests relate to Covid 19, which continues to be a high proportion. A number of visits following allegations of Covid business restriction breaches have been investigated with a small number resulting in Prohibition Notices being served and businesses advised on compliance.

There was an increase in bonfire complaints to 163, which is a 353% increase on the same period last year. Fly tipping cases, although the numbers are low, have doubled. As time continues we hope to see the effect of the civic amenity sites reopening. We are continuing to advise in all circumstances, and where there is evidence of nuisance, we will serve an abatement notice. We have also put out statements about bonfires through social media and these have been picked up by local media in the run up to all the recent bank holiday weekends.

There was a 31% increase in noise complaints compared to 2019, representing 19% of complaints with an increase in those from domestic sources. As some commercial businesses are reopening and as background noise levels remain relatively low in terms of traffic/aircraft noise residents will be more sensitive to these changes so we are mindful of this when dealing with complaints and aim to encourage discussion and mediation through the easing phases.

We will still respond to complaints but want the message to be 'think before you make a complaint'. If you receive complaints from residents please pass on the details to us or ask them to log it directly with us to avoid delay. This can be done easily online via the link [here](#).

We have received an increase in anonymous complaints via our online form and unfortunately this stops us getting further details and/or giving feedback on our actions. As a result, we have added the following statement to our website to ensure expectations are explained:

"By choosing to remain anonymous we will assess your complaint but we are very limited in the investigation and action we may be able to take, as well as not being able to contact you to update you. Please be assured that your identity will not be disclosed (unless we take legal action)."

Test and Trace

PPP are now assisting with this newly created service with Public Health colleagues across the 3 partner authorities that will operate 12 hours a day, 7 days a week to investigate and contain Covid 19 outbreaks and provide local support.

Officers already experienced in dealing with Infectious Disease work will monitor notifications from Public Health England (PHE) Regional Team on a rota basis,

7 days per week from 08.00-20.00. They will respond to notifications within 2 hours of receipt and carry out contact tracing as required. These officers are the first point of contact and their previous experience and knowledge of notifiable disease work will create a 'safe pair of hands'. In the absence of national guidance, PPP have devised a questionnaire to collect relevant information for Covid 19 positive cases.



Covid-19 Joint Working

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought several agencies together in order to manage the constantly evolving situation and joint working unrelated to Health & Safety or Environmental Health legislation has come about.

Recently PPP was asked by the Berkshire West NHS Care Commissioning Group via Public Health England, to assist with Infection Control Support visits for nursing and care homes in West Berkshire. This has commenced and is being delivered remotely.

Officers were given training at the NHS Covid 19 Centre on Newbury Racecourse by an NHS Infection Control nurse and finished the day armed with suitable knowledge and an inspection kit with PPE (including scrubs).

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Those same officers have since visited several care homes to ensure that the management teams are aware of all training resources available to them, to review infection control procedures, ask if more training/advice is required and used the 'light touch' to talk through critical areas such as social distancing, PPE, management of suspected/confirmed cases of Covid 19 and how to isolate the same. These officers are there to advise not enforce, so if any problems are identified a report is made to CCG who then do the follow up.

Licensing Governance

Under the Licensing Act 2003 there is no lawful power for Licensing Authorities to delegate decision-making to Officers where relevant representations have been received in response to an application. Determinations in such cases will still have to be made by licensing committees or their sub-committees. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 was published on 2 April 2020 and made under section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. The Regulations make provision to enable local authorities to hold meetings remotely including by (but not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming. Part 2 of these Regulations, relating to the holding of remote hearings, only relate to England. There have now been 2 sub-committees / panels held remotely with 2 more planned for this week. The first one was a new premises license sub-committee and you can view the meeting [here](#).



Licensing & Applications

In addition to the influx of service requests relating to Covid 19, the Licensing and Applications officers continue the essential work aligned with the Licensing Act 2003 including New Premises Licence Applications, Licence reviews, Variations, Virtual Licensing Committee Hearings and Annual Fee payments.

Other licence holders like taxi drivers, home dog boarders, dog walkers and dermal licensees are asking for more information than usual and these requests receive a reasoned approach and solid information despite additional pressures from Coronavirus queries.

Animal Warden

Kira joined the animal warden team last week. She's an experienced dog behaviourist and so as owners start to go back to work we shall be looking at implementing various educational messages for dog owners. These messages will include how to prevent excessive dog barking as well as how to properly care for your dog, such as dog micro-chipping, control when dog walking and how to look after pets in the warm weather.

Air Quality

The Air Quality monitoring work continues and although shielding caused a drop in available personnel those remaining intrepid officers have ensured the diffusion tubes were changed as usual. Even though the processing labs closed down briefly we now have the results from March and April, they make interesting reading in as much as they indicate just how much lockdown assisted in the reduction of Nitrogen dioxide levels from emissions.

The continuous monitoring at all our sites in Newbury, Wokingham, Twyford and Bracknell have shown a marked difference in Nitrogen dioxide concentrations from January to March lowering in incremental stages, most likely attributed to the changing lockdown rules of Covid-19. The levels have reduced over this period by a third. Comparing to the same period in 2019 there has been a reduction of between 20-28%.

Weight Restrictions and Overweight Vehicles



We are continuing to enforce weight restriction orders made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This work is particularly pertinent whilst the country's reliance on deliveries of all types is so crucial.

It is an offence to drive a vehicle through a restricted area where the vehicle exceeds the weight limit imposed (unless delivering or collecting items within the weight restriction). These orders are intended to protect old or weak bridges and structures as well as to stop heavy vehicles accessing areas not suitable or which pose a danger. Therefore, routine inspections by PPP officers continue to take place across Bracknell, West Berkshire and Wokingham to ensure vehicles are not breaking the law.

Since the start of the pandemic there has been a slowdown in the numbers of vehicles contravening the regulations. However, Mill Lane, Newbury and Ermin Street, Stockcross are noted hotspots whilst Crookham Hill, Thatcham, Streatley, Kirtons Farm Road and Church Lane in Aldermaston Village are all considered problem areas.

Fly Tipping Campaign

Fly-tipping is a criminal offence and one of the most common forms of anti-social behaviour that poses a significant environmental, social and financial problem nationally and in PPP authorities. It blights our countryside, is a threat to livestock and local wildlife, a source of pollution, a danger to public health, and attracts other forms of anti-social behaviour and other enviro crime including arson, littering, graffiti and dog fouling.

What we are doing?

- We are currently monitoring Facebook to identify persons who are offering to collect and remove waste but who do not have a Waste Carriers Licence. These persons are more likely to fly tip waste as it is generally not possible for them to take waste to Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- We have an active social media campaign on both Facebook and Twitter.
- Press releases to raise local awareness.
- We are collecting all reports of fly tipping, details of persons collecting waste without Waste Carriers Licences and will be focusing our enforcement on repeat offenders and regularly used fly tip sites.
- We are encouraging proper disposal of waste.

- We are working with our partners to actively enforce all applicable legislation and to ensure that all instances of fly tipping are investigated and where offenders are identifiable they are dealt with in accordance with our Prosecution Policy.

As an example we are working with Wokingham Borough Council Localities Team and others to deliver their Fly-Tipping Strategy. Details of this strategy are at the advice section of their website [here](#).

We are also issuing messages around advice for households, businesses and licensed waste carriers.

Example Social Media Post from campaign below:



Fly Tipping can be reported via the following channels:

Bracknell Forest Council - [report here](#)

Wokingham Borough Council - [report here](#)

West Berkshire Council - [report here](#)

Protecting the Vulnerable

Covid-19 Scams continue to make headlines.

Fake fines and testing kits and bogus requests for donations are among coronavirus-related scams targeting the public.

It is being isolated with friends or family could make people lower their guard. [Action Fraud](#), the UK's reporting centre for fraud, said there has been £4.6m in losses nationwide during lockdown.

Our Victim Support Officer has made three videos on how to spot scam emails and protect yourself from scams - see [here](#) (under Trading Standards.) As well as doing virtual presentations to vulnerable groups, including the Falklands Newbury WI.

See example on one of the videos below:



<https://vimeo.com/426997115>

Snapshot of our Social Media Posts

PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 23 hrs · 🌐

How to Spot a Scam Email - part one.
<https://vimeo.com/426997115>



VIMEO.COM
PPP - Scam Emails - Part One
Short video on how to spot a scam email (part one) from Malcolm...

PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 3 June at 13:00 · 🌐

Checklist from Food Standards Agency on re-opening for food businesses.



Food Standards Agency
3 June at 09:30 · 🌐 Like Page

Restarting your food business? Look for evidence of pests, and act if necessary, before opening.

Download our [#ReopeningChecklist](#) for more on reopening safely during COVID-19
<https://www.food.gov.uk/.../reopening-checklist-for-food-busi...>

PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 27 May at 14:05 · 🌐

Guidance for housing and trade industry businesses during the coronavirus pandemic.
<https://www.businesscompanion.info/.../coro.../home-improvements>



Public Protection Partnership Bracknell Forest West Berkshire Wokingham

PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 5 June at 11:07 · 🌐

Tenants and Landlords in private rented sector. The MHCLG has published guidance on the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations, which came into force at beginning of June.
See below for full guidance:
<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/.../mhclg-guidanc.../>



Public Protection Partnership Bracknell Forest West Berkshire Wokingham

PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 3 June at 12:36 · 🌐

COVID-19 NHS Test & Trace Scam

Although we are currently not aware of this scam happening in our areas, at the current time, we have heard reports of it in other areas. Please help spread the word to prevent more victims.

The scammers are calling people and saying they are from NHS COVID tracing teams - ... [See more](#)



Public Protection Partnership Bracknell Forest West Berkshire Wokingham

Snapshot of our Social Media Posts

PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 11 May at 14:12 · 🌐

Meet Monty...

This lovely chap was left tied up outside the gates of [Binfield Dog Rescue](#) on the evening of 24th April. Brian, the owner of Binfield Dog Rescue, had received a phone call asking him to collect a 'stray', he rightly told the caller they don't collect strays and to contact the Animal Warden. A short time later this dog, who they named Monty was found tied by a straggle piece of lead to their gate.

Monty was in a bad way, his eyes needed attention, and he has scars... [See more](#)



#AnimalWardenUpdate

A shared service provided by Bracknell Forest Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council
**Public Protection Partnership** Bracknell Forest West Berkshire Wokingham

PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 21 May at 15:08 · 🌐

Since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic the Public Protection Partnership has seen a 622% increase in bonfire complaints over the same period last year (from 32 complaints to 231).

We are offering the following advice with regards to bonfires:

Right now, we are asking residents across the districts/boroughs to think of others and not light bonfires during the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic lock-down because many people at home are vulnerable and may have respiratory issues, ... [See more](#)



Thinking about having a bonfire this weekend?

THINK AGAIN!

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PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 27 May at 15:32 · 🌐

Businesses are being urged to carry out vital safety processes to their water systems to avoid increasing the risk of Legionnaires' disease as they reopen following the COVID-19 lockdown. CIEH warns.

With hot and cold water systems out of action for several weeks, the chances of bacteria forming which can cause Legionnaires' disease – a potentially fatal type of pneumonia – are much greater when businesses close for long periods.

This is combined with the potential for an inc... [See more](#)



CIEH.ORG

Businesses risk fuelling Legionnaire's disease without vital post-lockdown water checks, warns CIEH

PPP Public Protection Partnership
Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 14 May at 11:51 · 🌐

**** Menthol Cigarettes Ban from UK shops from 20 May ****

New smoking laws will see certain types of cigarettes banned in the UK from this month. From 20 May menthol cigarettes, menthol rolling tobacco and menthol skinny cigarettes will be banned from UK shops.

The ban stems from the EU Tobacco Product Directive, which includes measures to reduce smoking rates among young people. The Directive introduced in 2016 included a four-year plan to phase out flavoured cigarettes, as of ... [See more](#)

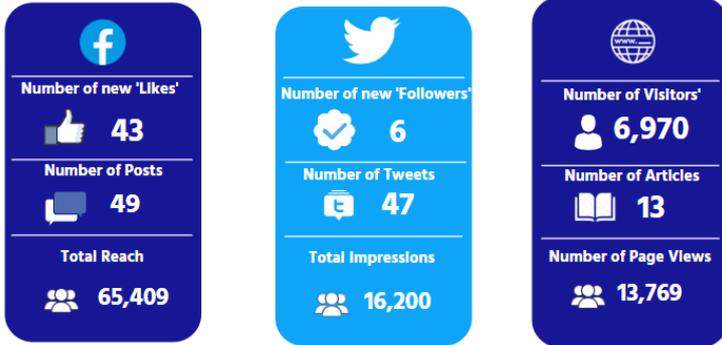


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Communication

Social media and website engagement continues to grow. See below for summary of May stats:

PPP Social Media Update 1st May - 31st May 2020



Total combined reach for May is 95,378

Facebook Stats:

	New Likes	Reach	No. Posts
Oct	15	7,645	17
Nov	44	9,890	35
Dec	52	12,346	30
Jan	70	19,202	36
Feb	96	107,684	29
Mar	153	38,930	38
Apr	96	103,470	53
May	43	65,409	49

Like us on Facebook [here](#)

Twitter Stats:

	New Followers	Impressions	No. Tweets
Oct	18	2,160	19
Nov	44	13,100	45
Dec	8	9,241	32
Jan	28	10,500	47
Feb	13	12,500	33
Mar	19	30,100	50
Apr	19	25,000	59
May	6	16,200	47

Follow us on Twitter [here](#)

Website Stats:

During May 2020 the website has had 6,970 visits with 13,769 page views.

In May 13 articles were published to the website as follows:

- 28 May - Retail Business Poster - Downloads
- 27 May - Legionnaires Disease Lockdown Risks & Reopening Safely
- 27 May - Covid-19 Business Grant Scam Emails
- 26 May - Notice of Decision Licensing Application
- 20 May - Help your Fire & Rescue service during the Covid-19 Pandemic
- 14 May - Taxi FAQ's COVID-19 Update
- 14 May - Menthol Cigarettes Ban
- 12 May - Fly Tippers Beware - 'We're on to you' campaign
- 12 May - Scam Alert - Scam involving fake CAB calls
- 11 May - COVID-19 Scams Video
- 7 May - Quit for COVID campaign (Quit Smoking)
- 6 May - Wokingham Council Approved Strategy to Tackle Fly Tipping
- 5 May - Bonfire Advice Note

Who to Contact

Reporting of complaints relating to Covid-19 can be made on the website via the Enforcement Form on the front page. [Link here.](#)

Trading Standards:

Concerned residents or anybody with information about coronavirus related scams are being asked to contact Trading Standards directly via:

TSadvice@westberks.gov.uk

Environmental Health:

Environmental Health matters are to contact us by emailing: ehadvice@westberks.gov.uk

Licensing:

Bracknell Forest Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: Licence.All@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk

West Berkshire Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: Licensing@westberks.gov.uk

Wokingham Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: Licensing@wokingham.gov.uk