

COVID-19: Issues and Policy Implications for Community Safety

Findings from Webinars



Session 1: Social Distancing in the Pandemic: Policing & Compliance



Police response is to police by consent. Initial response should be to encourage voluntary compliance by asking if people are aware of the social distancing guidelines, and stressing risks to public health:

1. Engage
2. Explain
3. Encourage
4. Enforce

Implications for policy and practice?

COVID-19 Challenges for the police:

- ❖ Engagement and encouragement require a '2-metre' conversation
- ❖ Explanation requires understanding of COVID-science and clarity on legislation. These will change throughout the course of the pandemic, as will rules on physical distancing
- ❖ Consistency of enforcement across different regions
- ❖ Backlash against police responses going 'too far', e.g. public shaming
- ❖ There is likely to be a growing legitimacy gap for restrictions, particularly enforcing these upon the young and fit

Session 2: Will Social Distancing Aggravate Polarisation?



- ❖ Rotterdam are using a tool called [Quick Scan](#) to measure polarisation. It is used every 4 months and can be used directly after incidents (e.g. a terrorist attack), and with specific population groups.
- ❖ From preliminary scans on the impact of COVID-19, it is emerging that attributing 'blame' is key factor emerging in people's attitudes. These beliefs are becoming extremely polarised and racialised, e.g. blaming China.

Implications for Policy and Practice?



Session 3: Can we accept a lockdown on our fundamental rights?



Principles of a human-rights based approach:

1. **Transparency:** how and why decisions are made
2. **Accountability:** ensuring mechanisms are in place, e.g. scrutiny processes
3. **Non-discrimination:** must not impact disproportionately on different groups
4. **Conservation of rights:** governments must engage and support civil society in these processes

COVID-19 Implications:

- ❖ There is not enough time to do a comprehensive equality and human rights assessment on emergency legislation. Limited scrutiny happening in parliament due to the swiftness of action.

COVID-19 Implications (continued)

- ❖ **Lockdown measures have a discriminatory effect:** they disproportionately impact groups e.g. people with mental health difficulties, disabled people, homeless people, low income families, those without internet access, and migrants. There are also local/regional disparities in terms of service provision, exacerbating inequalities. Despite this, human rights have been treated as a secondary consideration after responses are already decided.
- ❖ **Tension between local vs. national:** People from different countries highlighted the fact that the crisis is being locally managed but with decisions coming from national/federal governments. In France, there have been some calls for more power at city-level so that COVID-19 responses can account for local circumstances and be tougher or more lenient accordingly.

Implications for Policy and Practice?

Session 4: Does the crisis change the forms of criminality in cities?



Public space crime falling, shift to online crimes like scams and fraud exploiting the current situation.

Increase in poverty and unemployment creating conditions for expansion in organised crime

Large increase in organised crime coming in forms of illegal betting, loans, drug trafficking, fake PPE

Drug traffickers finding innovative ways to operate e.g. apps like Deliveroo. Potential for increased drug use due to increased anxiety

Increase in domestic violence

Research is suggesting that socialised people *feel safer* than isolated people

Implications for policy and practice?



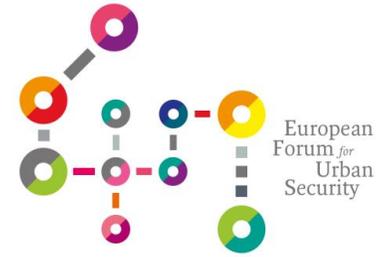
Session 5: Terrorism and the Pandemic



Current issues

- ❖ A number of extremist organisations have adopted a narrative that Covid19 is a punishment on Western Society (and others) for immoral behaviour.
- ❖ Due to social distancing, it is currently more difficult to commit attacks and mass casualties are likely to be lower, but terror groups will be looking for opportunities and are good at adapting their strategies. For instance, Afghanistan recently witnessed a hospital attack
- ❖ In the UK and across Europe, protests are emerging against COVID restrictions with a mixture of participants from right-wing extremists, anti-vaxxers, conspiracy theories and people worrying about their future, some with violence against police and journalists.
- ❖ It is difficult to predict who these groups are because participants may not normally agree ideologically but have found something uniting in this.

Terrorism and the Pandemic (continued)



Risks of radicalisation

- Potential exposure to radicalisation may be higher at the moment as many more people are spending additional time online. Efforts need to be made to disrupt propaganda being disseminated online.
- Mental health issues following the pandemic could lead to vulnerabilities and then increase the risk of radicalisation.
- Social cohesion and support critical at this time to lower risks of stigmatisation and radicalisation

Implications for policy and practice?

There are 5 pillars of ageing well. 3 of these are particularly relevant to preventing unintentional harm, and they interact to strengthen one another and therefore protect against unintentional harm:

- ❖ Physical activity
- ❖ Social interactions / stimulation
- ❖ Cognitive stimulation

There is a clear impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on all of these.

- ❖ A delay or decline in cognitive function means that signals travel much slower through the nervous system – a number of older people who fall will be on the floor before their brain registers they've fallen. This combined with frailty, medication issues, blood pressure and sight decline are all risk factors.

Implications for policy and practice?

Session 7: Hope After Trauma



Understanding trauma-based approach

- In a trauma approach, everyone is treated with compassion, included and enveloped.
- Giving people hope by showing them the reality that they could achieve
- Transforming pain into resilience
- Not about people who make good and bad choices: not all choices are equal.

How can we use the trauma healing approach to treat as a whole after this pandemic?

- “We want better than the new normal – we want to rethink the entire social contract” – Father Greg Boyle
- Healing is not individual but communal – creating safe spaces for grief
- Need to build in recovery time, especially for frontline staff. Working to exhaustion cannot be the new normal.
- Universal basic income to ensure financial security.
- Allow those most affected to be part of the solution. If people are ‘hard to reach’, there is a problem with our approach, not them.
- “Being trauma informed is not enough. We need to be trauma responsive” – Paul Gray
- Understand, instead of demonise people.

Implications for policy and practice?

Session 8: Implications for Scotland's voluntary sector

SCVO and
Aileen
Campbell MSP



- To ensure we keep partnership working, social policy gains, tech and remote support we need to capture discoveries, learning and provide space for reflection. This will allow consideration of how to 'build back better' rather than snapping back into how things were.
- An authentic process of recovery and renewal also requires us to hold difficult conversations with some communities who have felt less valued, less visible and more isolated by COVID-19. How will their voices be heard?
- Must advocate for the third sector as a key strategic partner to recover and renew. Third Sector must be valued for the crucial role played as employers as well as service providers, with more funding needing to recover from the pandemic impact.
- How can the Third Sector work better with local authorities?
- The pandemic has shown how unequal Scotland is – time to think about what kind of Scotland we want to have and how to all coalesce around that.

Implications for policy and practice?

Session 9: Joint approach to service delivery by the public & voluntary sectors



SCVO, COSLA President Alison Evison and GlasgowCVS Chief Exec Ian Bruce

- A conversation about a new relationship between COSLA and SCVO and Local Authorities and the Voluntary Sector. A charter is being drawn up for this. There are lots of positive examples of Local Authorities and the Third Sector working together during the pandemic. And elected members have been more hands-on and present in communities.
- There is concern from many in the Third Sector that things may return back to normal post-pandemic
- Two great examples of how Local Authorities can support communities:
 1. Grassroots football (and other sports and similar activities) have a huge contribution to local communities and to reducing demand on public sector. However, it is very difficult to get access to Local Authority sport centres and other facilities on the weekends.
 2. Mums and toddlers/babies groups use council facilities to meet and these meet-ups have untold value to health services, children and families, but councils charge these groups to use their facilities.

Implications for policy and practice?