

Sharing knowledge during the COVID-19 lockdown

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How one DCI navigated the physical limitations of the coronavirus pandemic by co-hosting an online event with help from the College

Views 3 mins read

At Cheshire Constabulary we are redesigning our operating model to make improvements to service delivery and take advantage of the uplift programme which is nationally seeing policing recruit 20,000 officers over a three-year period. All of which will help us invest in areas of policing that will put Cheshire in a strong position to tackle crime in the future.

One of the work streams within this programme is an operational group tasked with improving governance and crime management processes. It was through this group that I became aware that the College of Policing hosted knowledge sharing events, under the umbrella of the operational policing response to COVID-19, known among forces as Op Talla.

We were just entering lockdown and so the traditional approach of physically visiting neighbouring forces to 'see what they do' wasn't possible. A colleague updated the group that he had recently taken part in an Op Talla event, which gave police forces the opportunity to directly communicate and share information or ideas with each other via video conferencing.

I had previously contacted the College for tactical guidance when dealing with a sexual offence a number of years ago, so I was aware that they could put forces in touch with each other or be a focal point to share ideas. I could see our work would benefit from an event, but I did think that trying to arrange a national conference during a global pandemic may be a little adventurous.

My colleague made contact with the College and asked what other forces do to make use of technology to improve how they enhance desk-based investigations. I don't exaggerate when I say that within hours the team had set up a national conference for the next week and invited representatives from all 43 UK forces!

A worthwhile experience

On the day of the event I was very aware that I was logging on to co-host a web event with almost 100 officers and staff from all over the country – a daunting prospect for me. But with support from the team at the College who facilitated the event and took notes, we managed to have a discussion that made the experience efficient and very worthwhile.

I also made some contacts from other forces that I would never have been able to otherwise do, and everyone at the event was keen to share their ideas and local practices. I have learned a lot from this process as I strive to build improvements and introduce new ideas to how we police in Cheshire.

Within weeks of the event I have initiated a trial with Adobe to test a process – used in other forces – that enables officers to send statements for electronic signature, rather than relying on staff having to physically go out and have face to face contact, or posting statements and waiting for documents to be returned.

This is just one of many ideas that I took from the event and I would encourage anyone in policing who have a question or problem and want to know what other forces are doing to tackle similar issues to get in touch with the College. This is a fantastic facility to have: the team are really helpful, it's quick and painless and really is of value – not just to those of us on a project, but to real cops with real operational issues.

Tags

Knowledge sharing Operational policing