

# **RAPID** >>> **DRUGS**

**SUPPORTING THE POLICE** BY REDUCING TIME FROM ARREST TO FIRST COURT APPEARANCE.

## **DELIVERING**

Early identification of suspects and offenders.

## **SUPPORTING**

Police in making our streets safer.

## **IMPROVING**

Public confidence in policing and criminal justice.



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**

# RAPID DRUGS

DELIVERING . SUPPORTING . IMPROVING

In the UK, the established process utilised by London's Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) for submitting drugs for laboratory analysis seized from suspects arrested for drugs supply, was contributing to an average time of **87 days from arrest to charge**.

Officers investigating drugs supply offences were routinely arresting a suspect only to have to bail or release individuals under investigation (RUI), whilst waiting for the forensic analysis to be undertaken to confirm that the recovered exhibits were in fact a controlled substance.

The established process for drugs submissions required the exhibits to be sent via courier for analysis at Eurofins Forensic Services' (EFS) laboratory facilities based in the outskirts of London. The analytical results would take 4 to 6 weeks and charges could not be brought without a confirmed analysis that controlled drugs had in fact been seized.

Despite there being a strong evidential case against them, suspects were often released back into the community allowing dealers to continue with their activities relatively unhindered. Dealing continued to blight many communities within the capital, not only in terms of the anti-social behaviour caused by drug use, but more significantly fuelling the ongoing violence between rival gangs supplying London's drug market.

## Before RDS

- From a sample of **43** arrests, due to the time taken to analyse evidence only **17** individuals were able to be charged and remanded in custody by the Court.
- This left **26** suspects being released and at risk of committing further offences in the community.
- Additionally, **3 individuals** that were sent a PCR actually failed to appear at Court and have still not been traced, more than a year after their arrest.

To avoid having to release suspects following arrest pending scientific analysis of drugs seized, the MPS collaborated with EFS to change the model, bringing the forensic analysis closer to the point of need. By creating a drug-testing laboratory within their own Forensic Services HQ in Lambeth, run by EFS scientists, a Rapid Drugs Service (RDS) was developed whereby officers could attend with drugs submissions and analysis would take place at the same location, providing confirmation of the drug type, along with purity and weight.

The target was for the drugs evidence required in a case to be examined within 4 hours of submission, enabling a charging decision to be made and potential for remand in custody. This was delivered with improvements in analytical testing capability due to the partnership approach between MPS and EFS.

To test the efficacy of this solution, a pilot was run from June 2018 to the end of March 2019, involving 6 London boroughs identified as having a high proliferation of drugs supply offending. During the pilot phase, 165 suspects were charged whilst in police custody.





## RDS Pilot Summary Statistics

	BEFORE RDS	WITH RDS
REMANDED FOLLOWING CHARGE	40%	93%
REMANDED FOLLOWING COURT APPEARANCE	42%	74%
EARLY GUILTY PLEA	0%	8%
FAILED TO APPEAR AT COURT FOLLOWING CHARGE	7%	0%

In April 2019 RDS became an established MPS wide service as well as supporting pro-active test purchase operations (TPOs).

“ We recognise that the individuals that supply drugs are significant drivers for weapon enabled violence, which on occasion can result in homicide. Any opportunity to mitigate the risk that these individuals pose is welcome – remanding suspects in custody through utilisation of the Rapid Drugs Service presents Investigators with this opportunity and increases the likelihood of pursuing an expeditious conviction. ”

**Detective Superintendent,  
Violent Crime Task Force**

“ My experience was great and managed to get the charge of Possession with Intent to Supply along with other offences. It’s great you don’t have to wait for a long time for the drugs to come back for the lab, so charges can be sought a lot quicker. ”

**Detective Constable**

“ To be honest, the rapid drugs service was brilliant, and was the only reason we were able to charge, and not have to RUI the suspect and do it all ‘slow time’. ”

**Police Constable from Lambeth**





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## Case Study

A sixteen-year-old youth was stopped by police on 30/04/19 at 21:30 hours and found to be in possession of a cannabis joint.



He was arrested, taken to custody, searched and 13 drug wraps were recovered, a mobile phone and £133 in cash. Police records revealed he had 11 convictions for 24 offences. He was also under investigation by 2 other UK police force for possession with intent to supply class A drugs.

An RDS submission was made on 01/05/2019 and a result received at 16:20 hours: 12 crack cocaine wraps and one heroin wrap.

The drugs expert witness report stated the drugs were valued at £230 and the phone's download contained evidence of drug dealing. He was charged on 01/05/2019 at 20:10 and remanded in youth detention.

For more details about **RAPID DRUGS** contact us: [EFSenquiries@eurofins.co.uk](mailto:EFSenquiries@eurofins.co.uk) or scan the QR code opposite.



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