



**Chief Officer Team  
Briefing for COM**

**Title: Policing Lockdown**  
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**SUMMARY**

The Government introduced new national lockdown legislation on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January in response to the Coronavirus spreading increasingly rapidly across the country, endangering lives and the capacity of the NHS.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the police have been given an important role to ensure that people follow the rules, limiting the spread of the virus. My officers and staff have worked and will continue to work closely with our communities and our partners to achieve this.

Overall, we have seen the rules adhered across the county, with most people taking personal responsibility for their own actions. I would like to thank the public for their support.

Where there have been breaches, our strategy to deliver compliance has been to consistently follow the 4E approach. First engaging, explaining and encouraging. Where this has not worked, we have moved to enforcement where appropriate, at the discretion of the officers involved. This approach has been important, to ensure that our communities know what the rules are and why they should comply.

However, it is clear whilst we remain in the third national lockdown and in spite of the success of the vaccination programme, we are at still at a very dangerous stage of the pandemic. If

the rules are not followed, there is a real and present risk that our health service could be overwhelmed, the success of the vaccination programme eroded and the lives of our friends and family could be needlessly put at risk.

For that minority who choose to flagrantly break the rules, endangering public health, I have instructed my officers and staff that we will take enforcement action. This is a tougher approach, but both right and proportionate to the circumstances we face.

## **Q&A**

### **Is this a new approach?**

We will continue to use the 4Es, engaging with the public and encouraging compliance. However, officers have been guided to issue fines more quickly where people are blatantly breaching the regulations in a way that endangers public health e.g. having a house party, gathering in vehicles.

### **Will additional policing enforcement lose public support?**

Police officers and staff are doing their very best in challenging circumstances. I believe the public recognise that and support us. We continue to take action that we believe to be proportionate.

### **How quickly will you resort to a fine?**

Generally, we are still following the 4Es and fines remain a last resort. However, it is in everyone's interest that those committing the most serious and obvious breaches have action taken against them, preventing them from continuing to place others at risk.

### **How far can people go for a walk?**

The Government guidance strongly requests that people do not leave their local area. However, the COVID regulations which offers enforce, do not restrict the distance travelled. Officers will still engage with members of the public and encourage them to follow the government guidance. We all have a role to play in protecting the NHS and saving lives.

**Are people paying the fines?**

So far we have seen that the individuals we have issued fines to quite often do not pay them. However in that case there is a high likelihood that they will end up in court. For example, in September 2020 the courts heard 130 cases in the absence of the defendant, these were all found guilty and given fines of between £440 and £990.

**Is this taking up a lot of police time?**

We are placing additional resources onto COVID enforcement duties, but compliance with these regulations is a priority for the country and therefore a priority for the police. We are using our existing neighbourhood policing resources to assist with these demand.

**Do you have enough resources to enforce this properly?**

It is not all about the police and enforcing our way out of this. The virus will not be defeated by the police issuing fines. People and businesses must all play their part in this collective effort. We use the resources we have to the best extent possible, assessing risk and deploying appropriately.