



To: All Chief Constables (England)

22 December 2020

Covid-19 Police Enforcement Strategy

Dear All,

Policing has played a critical role during the pandemic, and we are both hugely grateful for the contribution your staff and officers have made to keeping this country safe. It is a testament to the skill and professionalism of our fantastic officers and staff that public support for the enforcement of unprecedented measures remains high.

We appreciate your continued effort to effectively enforce against the Covid regulations. Your work continues to play an important role in supporting the governments objective to drive R below 1, and to keep it there on a sustained basis until enough people are vaccinated so that restrictions can be eased and ultimately removed. The Prime Minister has been clear that enforcement is of critical importance in the fight against Covid and it is vital that we maintain the momentum of enforcement activity, which has increased, particularly against egregious breaches in all parts of the country.

We know the months ahead will be crucial to suppressing the virus, and that there is no room for complacency. This period will undoubtedly be challenging. So with your input we have jointly developed a Covid-19 Police Enforcement Strategy to meet these challenges and target resources as we move into the new year.

Our strategy is based on three broad objectives:

- a) **Infection:** to help slow or reduce the rate of infection by disrupting high risk activities.
- b) **Public confidence:** to give the public confidence that measures are being fairly and proportionately enforced.
- c) **Public trust:** to maintain or increase the broad public support which is the cornerstone of our model of policing by consent.

To deliver these objectives we have agreed an approach which is targeted, visible and weighted towards areas of high infection, monitored closely against our objectives, and based on the latest evidence.

Targeting enforcement against the highest risk activities

We know not all breaches of COVID regulations carry an equal risk of transmission; the risk of infection may be highest at gatherings that are crowded, involve close contact and are poorly ventilated/indoors. As such we believe the best way to help achieve our objective of slowing the rate of infection will be to prioritise larger indoor gatherings such as house parties- and targeting organisers and repeat offenders. We must also remain

responsive. We will therefore work jointly to keep under review our enforcement priorities based on the trajectory of the virus and the emerging science.

Greater visibility in areas of high infection

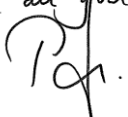
We also agree that police activity should be weighted towards those areas where infection rates are most acute. This means heightened visibility and patrols in Tier 2 and Tier 3 areas, with priority placed on areas with the highest rates of infection. We know the benefits of increased police visibility and patrols- including on public confidence- and we are hugely grateful for the work forces have already done as part of multi-agency efforts to help reduce the spread of the virus locally.

Better monitoring and evidence


We will continue to work together to further refine the information we collect on enforcement so we can better monitor progress against our headline objectives (e.g. through information on the number of larger gatherings officers have attended/dispersed). For our efforts to be successful we recognise that our policies must reflect the day to day realities of policing Covid restrictions. Therefore, we will establish a frontline officers' group to ensure government is getting an 'on the ground' view of emerging challenges and issues. We will continue to base our efforts and activities on the latest policing and scientific evidence, noting that the most successful approaches are public health based, multi-agency initiatives, supported by clear and consistent messaging. Please find attached a short summary of the key aspects of the strategy.

We do of course appreciate the operational independence of policing and the individual responsibility of Chief Constables, and as such our strategy should be taken as a national framework, with forces quite rightly maintaining their ability to respond appropriately to the specific challenges faced by their communities.

Thank you again for all your efforts in keeping the public safe, and in maintaining and strengthening our proud tradition of policing by consent. Copies of this letter will also be sent to the College of Policing, Police Federation and Superintendents' Association who have inputted into the strategy via Operation Talla, and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables in Wales.

With our good wishes


Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary



Martin Hewitt QPM
Chair National Police Chiefs'
Council