

SUMMARY OVERVIEW – 3E INTERACTIONS, WARNINGS AND FIXED PENALTY NOTICES RELATING TO COVID-19 REGULATIONS



Wiltshire and Swindon
pcc

Period covering 26 October - 25 November 2020

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, the Government introduced legislation on 24 July aimed at slowing the spread of the virus and protecting the public as lockdown eases and businesses begin to re-open. The legislation requires members of the public who do not hold an exemption card to wear face coverings in a number of different spaces including shops/supermarkets and public transport.

Further to this, legislation also requires members of the public to self-isolate for 14 days after returning to the UK from a number of countries on the COVID-19 'at risk' list.

On 14th September further legislation was put in place regarding the 'rule of six' and 24th September saw legislation extending the wearing of face coverings to hospitality areas and curfews placed on bars, restaurants and pubs to 10pm.

Failure to comply with this government legislation gives police the power to sanction a now increased fine of £200 with the serving of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).

Throughout the easing of lockdown period, Wiltshire Police have continually adopted an approach to Engage, Explain, and Encourage (3Es) compliance with COVID guidelines and we resort to Enforcement (4th E) only as a last resort. We are delighted to report that this approach has been very successful, with very high levels of compliance from the public.

This updated summary of the use of engagement with the public and FPNs in Wiltshire and Swindon covers the new regulations in order to ensure transparency and openness with our communities around any enforcement action that Wiltshire Police officers have taken.

This report covers the period from 26 October to 25 November 2020. From 5 November to 2 December, the country had been placed under a second lockdown with new regulations and restrictions. This has forced any non-essential businesses to close and has prohibited the mixing of households indoors with outdoor activities being limited to two people only. This has obviously impacted the volumes of interactions, calls and reports that Wiltshire Police have received, which we will explore in more detail in this report.

During this timeframe, Wiltshire Police have created **754 COVID-19 logs**, which includes online reports relating to COVID-19. This is an increase of 96% (n = 396) from the previous month, this increase is likely due to the second lockdown imposed by the government. This has led to increased reporting by members of the public reporting those who are not abiding by the rules.

Out of these logs, Wiltshire Police received 28 calls for assistance to help enforce the face covering legislation from businesses and concerned members of the public.

355 3Es interactions and warnings have been recorded in this period. This is when our officers approach individuals to Engage, Explain and Encourage compliance with COVID guidelines. Of these 3Es interactions, 12 were regarding individuals not wearing a mask, 84 related to large groups and 10 regarded failure to isolate.

Wiltshire Police have issued 13 COVID-related FPNs in this period out of a total of 245 FPNs overall. As this report covers the lockdown period, these FPNs were issued for different categories from previous periods. The majority of these FPNs were issued for being in groups of more than two in public or outdoor spaces. Only one FPN was issued for an indoor gathering of two or more people.

Wiltshire Police have, so far, issued one FPN in total to an individual not wearing a face covering in public. Wiltshire Police have, in total, issued two FPNs to individuals who are required to self-isolate. During this reporting period, no FPNs were issued for either of these reasons.

Wiltshire's Police and Crime Commissioner has approved a process to provide scrutiny and oversight of the legality and proportionality of FPNs. A Scrutiny Panel meets regularly to review and test all pro-forma templates issued in Wiltshire and Swindon with an option to rescind unlawful and/or disproportionate notices.

A second scrutiny panel has been put in place to specifically oversee disproportionality. The group is chaired at Superintendent level, and has representation from the OPCC, it reviews every FPN issued to members of the BAME community, it ensures a consistent approach and allows for both feedback to officers at the individual level but also has the authority to amend policy should any corporate issues be highlighted.

These reviews also ensure learning is captured at an organisational and individual level. As part of the scrutiny, disproportionality is considered and, if appropriate, local Inspectors will be tasked to engage with their local Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs).

The Scrutiny Panel reports into a Strategic Leaders meeting and is also reported into the Wiltshire Police strategic oversight governance meeting which is attended by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner. The process as a whole is overseen by the Deputy PCC and Deputy Chief Constable.

****We would like to thank the majority of the public within our County for their compliance with the Government measures, and the effort our communities are making in the fight against the spread of this virus. Coronavirus is still a threat - please remember 'Hands, Face, Space'. Stay alert and help control the virus****