

# Message from the Chief Constable

Chief Constable Alan Pughsley has urged the public to continue to stay at home, save lives and protect both the NHS and other frontline workers.

With lockdown measures extended by the Government for at least another three weeks, the requirement for people to adhere to social distancing restrictions is as important now as it was at the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Pughsley revealed that seven Kent Police officers and staff had been confirmed as having coronavirus, including one who is currently in hospital. Just over 20 others are displaying symptoms and self-isolating as a result.

He said: 'Our sickness absence rate is now down to about 4%, which is incredible and shows just how committed my officers and staff are. We are continuing with normal business in tackling crime and protecting the most vulnerable members of our society, as well as ensuring the new legislation is adhered to. They inspire me every day and I am extremely grateful to them for continuing to do an excellent job in difficult circumstances.'



'While we do not know how each of these officers caught the virus or whether or not it was during the course of their policing duties, what this demonstrates is that we are all at risk of contracting Covid-19 even with the protective equipment that all my officers have access to.'

'They are putting their health on the line to ensure the people of Kent continue to receive a policing service they can be proud of, and the best way to protect them and other frontline workers is to stay at home. I am pleased to say that the vast majority of people have been doing just that.'

As of Wednesday 15 April 2020, Kent Police officers had issued a total of 53 fines to people who have refused to comply with the social distancing restrictions, including 23 over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend. These included three people who had travelled from London to the beach at Hythe and were caught fishing after previously being asked to go home, and others who had been repeatedly warned against loitering in town centres.

Mr Pughsley said: 'My officers are continuing to engage, explain and encourage people caught in breach of the restrictions, with enforcement used only as a last resort. It is disappointing that my officers had to issue more fines than previously over the Bank Holiday weekend due to a minority of people not doing as they have been asked, but I would like to thank the overwhelming majority who did resist the temptation to leave their homes to enjoy the warm weather.'

'These are difficult times for us all and I completely understand why some people, for example those without gardens, may struggle to stay at home for an extended period of time. However, when you consider that more than 12,000 people have already died in the UK, it is of paramount importance that we all do as instructed by the Government.'

'There is nothing more important than saving people's lives and we all have a part to play. Please stay at home.'

**Chief Constable Alan Pughsley, QPM**



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