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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear colleagues

We wanted to write to you ahead of the Bank Holiday weekend to talk about our ongoing approach to policing our communities during these restrictions, which we know are likely to continue beyond the three week review period on Monday.

Firstly, we would like to thank you all for your continued efforts to work in partnership to reassure and support our residents during this period – it is a disconcerting and difficult time for us all.

No one is untouched by the COVID-19 outbreak, whether that's in a personal or professional capacity, and we're proud of the response from all agencies and partners across Avon and Somerset who have come together in this crisis and demonstrated great resilience to ensure we provide people with the support and service they need.

As mentioned, we are approaching the end of the third week of tougher restrictions put in place by The Government.

We would like to reassure you that our officer and staff resilience is good and we're committed to maintaining a visible police presence at this time. We feel this will be important over the Easter bank holiday weekend, when the weather is expected to be good.

We would like to reiterate that our policing strategy remains engaging, explaining and encouraging people to adhere to the rules before we consider any enforcement.

Ways in which we are doing this include:

- Ensuring officers and PCSOs have clear instructions that they should use their communication skills to police by consent before considering enforcement.
- Using breach reports to identify hotspots and target patrols by neighbourhood teams in those areas.
- Tasking patrol teams to keep an eye out for any gatherings before engaging with them at a safe distance, explaining the need to abide by the measures and encouraging them to stay at home and save lives.

We are supporting this strategy through our ongoing use of communications through as many channels as we can- Including a dedicated area on the [Avon and Somerset Police website](#), social media, broadcast and print media and through our neighbourhood policing teams in the community.

Our communications strategy has been very much to echo government guidance and show as many positive images where the public have stayed at home, leaving streets and community spaces empty of people. We know this has a more beneficial outcome on behaviour than showing non-compliance.

Thankfully, the overwhelming majority of people and businesses are taking the social distancing instructions seriously.

As you all know the new legislation now gives police power to fine anyone who chooses to wilfully ignore the measures put in place.

Since the tougher measures came into effect three weeks ago, we have issued 79 fixed penalty notices – a small number in relation to the 1.8m residents in our area.

We want to stress this course of action will continue to be a last resort.

The creation of the online reporting form has been received well by the public and has been used 2,400 times. Reports made on this channel are being used to identify patterns or hotspots and inform local patrol plans.

Despite the good use of the reporting form to manage demand, we are still getting a high volume of breach reports on our 101 and 999 phone lines- 3,660 to date, and the pressure and demand on our call centre staff has been immense. Our attendance of breach reports coming in via our call centre has been over 45%.

We need to be clear that our preference is that people report any past breaches through the online form, and not 101, as we need to ensure we maximise our resources and have call handlers available to respond to ongoing requests for policing services at this critical time. We would appreciate your help in sharing this message.

Officers and staff continue to work around the clock on the frontline out in our communities and we want to be sure that, should we face staffing issues because of illness, we have the structures in place to continue to provide the public with the service they expect.

Thank you again for your support and we do hope you have a safe enjoyable Easter break.

Yours sincerely



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Police & Crime Commissioner



Sarah Crew
Deputy Chief Constable