

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



Wiltshire and Swindon
pcc

Period covering 26 November - 29 December 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 14 September further legislation was put in place regarding the 'rule of six' and 24 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 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 November to 29 December 2020. From 2 December 2020, the country came out of the second lockdown which started on 5 November. Wiltshire and Swindon were placed into Tier 2. A review of the Tiers on 26 December placed Swindon into Tier 3, with the rest of Wiltshire remaining as Tier 2. During this time there was also an easing of restrictions to allow up to three households to come together on 25 December for a period of 24 hours only.

During this timeframe, Wiltshire Police have created **676 COVID-19 logs**; a decrease of 78 logs (-10%) from the last period, which includes online reports relating to COVID-19. Out of these logs, Wiltshire Police received 23 calls for assistance to help enforce the face covering legislation from businesses and concerned members of the public.

281 3Es interactions and warnings have been recorded in this period a decrease of 20% (n=72) from the October-November period. This is when our officers approach individuals to Engage, Explain and Encourage compliance with COVID guidelines. Of these 3E's interactions, 73 were regarding individuals not wearing a mask, 63 related to large groups and six regarded failure to isolate.

Wiltshire Police have issued nine COVID-related FPNs in this period. Of these one FPN was issued for failing to wear a face covering when required to do so; one was issued for failing to isolate following a positive COVID-19 test; four were issued for gathering outdoors in a group of more than six individuals; three were issued to individuals gathering in a vehicle from three separate households, from outside of the Swindon area.

Wiltshire Police have, so far, issued two FPNs to individuals not wearing a face covering in public. Wiltshire Police have, in total, issued four FPNs to individuals who are required to self-isolate, either after travel abroad or due to a positive COVID-19 test.

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****