

Keith Hunter – Police and Crime Commissioner Blog – 17th April 2020



During the past week improving weather has tested the how seriously people are taking the instructions to stay at home unless one of a very few reasons for leaving apply. It is heartening that the vast majority of people have played their part in protecting themselves, their family, others in their communities and also the NHS. Protecting the ability of the NHS to care for those who require its services when under the increased pressure created by Covid-19 is the number one national priority at this time. The Police have a part to play in this and one aspect of my role is to

oversee how effectively the police are fulfilling that requirement, whilst still carrying out their other day to day duties.

I am content that Humberside Police are maintaining a good degree of balance in their application of the new rules and powers, I issued a [statement](#) earlier this week when national figures were released about how police were enforcing the new rules. That doesn't mean every report of people failing to maintain social distancing can be responded to immediately, but it also does not mean that those intent on ignoring advice on how and why to comply will evade a penalty. Enforcement will be carried out where other options fail to make people understand we all have a duty now, regardless of personal views. This current situation absolutely requires the co-operation of the public and the key aspect of the policing response now must be to maintain public confidence so as to encourage that willing co-operation; people must understand that failure to comply will lead to prosecution but persuasion and engagement remain the preference.

At a time when people are staying home, the nature of the issues the police must face are changing in some ways. Fewer people on the streets, pubs, social and sports clubs closed and far fewer shops open mean that some crimes are reducing whilst the opportunity for other crimes to be committed grows. Domestic Abuse is an obvious area where there are likely to be additional pressures, with people forced to spend longer periods together. The targeting of people through use of the internet and social media either for fraud or the exploitation of young people for sexual or criminal aims are other areas where we need increasing vigilance and ability to respond when necessary. As more people find money very tight with reduced opportunities to work we need to be alert to loan sharks preying on new vulnerabilities. My office, the OPCC, is doing what it can to assist and alert people to these dangers and ensure support services are there when people need them. I am also fulfilling my role of scrutinising Humberside Police to make sure it is being flexible in how it responds to these emerging and evolving threats.

Keith Hunter
Police and Crime Commissioner