



Wealden District Police Weekly News and Alerts

Thursday 16th April 2020

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Police thank Sussex residents for following Covid-19 guidance over Easter weekend

'Thank you' is Sussex Police's message to the public after the four-day Easter weekend as our communities overwhelmingly followed the government's Covid-19 advice.

While the vast majority of local residents followed government advice and stayed at home, officers had to issue more than 100 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) across the county from Friday (April 10) to Sunday (April 12), with over half of these being issued in Brighton.

A significant proportion of the FPNs were issued to people travelling from outside of the county on day trips. On Easter Sunday (April 12), all of the FPNs issued in Brighton and Hove Division were to people who live outside of Sussex.

Four fines were issued to people in breach of Covid-19 restrictions in Camber - a couple from St Albans who made the 150-mile round trip to come and walk on the beach, a man from Bexley who admitted to riding around the south east on his motorbike, and a man from Mordon who drove to the beach for a walk with his children.

Sussex Police Chief Constable Giles York said: "Once again, I'm so thankful for the amazing community spirit across Sussex. Local people are listening and doing the right thing by staying home, protecting the NHS and saving lives.

"Police officers and PCSOs out and about across the county report people, for the most part, complying with the guidance and engaging with them positively, showing support for their efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19.

"Unfortunately, a small number of people from outside of the county deemed it appropriate to visit the area, and these people were engaged with, explained to and encouraged to go home, with enforcement being a last – but necessary - resort in some cases.

"The number of FPNs we issued represents a tiny proportion of the thousands of interactions with the public over the weekend.

"We are incredibly grateful to our local communities. We appreciate their patience, resilience and respect and ask them to simply continue in that same manner."

Many people are now reporting potential or perceived breaches to the police and each report is reviewed, triaged and prioritised for response. The number of crimes reported to Sussex Police over the four-day Easter weekend remained low as many people stayed indoors.

A small minority of people continued to breach the restrictions and the law, with the force seeing an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour connected to Covid-19 and a few instances of officers, security guards, shop staff and other keyworkers being threatened.

Sussex Police will continue the current approach of engaging with members of the public in the first instance, explaining the importance of following the government advice and encouraging them to make the right choice.

Enforcement remains a tactic where people refuse to comply or deliberately breach the guidelines.



Officers and emergency workers experience verbal abuse and assaults on duty

Increasing reports of verbal abuse and assaults on people on the frontline of the coronavirus crisis are being reported every day.

Police, NHS staff and key workers are reporting being verbally abused, spat or coughed at,

with some people claiming to have Covid-19 symptoms.

Chief Superintendent Jane Derrick said: "We have engaged, explained and encouraged people to do the right thing in following the government's guidance to stay home and ensure we protect the NHS and ultimately save lives during this devastating public health crisis. With those who chose not comply with the government's guidance, we have taken the necessary enforcement action.

"However we had cases of our officers who are engaging with the public or responding to reports of crime who have been spat or coughed on by individuals claiming to have coronavirus in a bid to avoid being arrested. We have also had reports of people spitting at and verbally abusing key workers.

"It is appalling that the women and men on the frontline of this crisis are being threatened with the virus that they are working so hard every day to protect us against. The fact that they are being spat or coughed on is bad enough, but to then claim to have Covid-19, makes the behaviour even more despicable. Being assaulted is not part of the job."

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) announced that such behaviour could constitute common assault, and attacks on emergency workers specifically were punishable by up to two years in prison.



Is your business premises safe?

If you have a business that is currently shut we are advising that you check your security features are working effectively, where you can remotely.

Please ensure that all entrances, such as service doors, are securely locked and that high valuable items and cash are not stored in the premises.

Officers are patrolling more frequently day and night, but we are asking members of the public to keep an eye out for any suspicious activity whilst outside exercising.

[You can find out more about protecting your business premises here.](#)

Sussex Police is urging the public to continue to adhere to government guidelines as the number of coronavirus fines issued is published

Figures released by the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) show a total of 163 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) have been issued in the county between 00.01hrs on 27 March and 00.01hrs on 13 April.

Of these, 135 were issued over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend (10-13 April) and the vast majority at beauty spots including coastal resorts.

Nationally, a total of 3,203 have been issued across all police forces in England during this time.

Sussex Police Chief Constable Giles York said this figure is a tiny proportion when compared to the significant number of people officers have engaged with.

"Our approach has been, and remains, to encourage and support people to make the right choices to comply with the restrictions in place and to only use enforcement as a last resort," he said.

"Thankfully, the vast majority of people are fully complying with the guidance and we thank them for helping to stop the spread of the virus.

"Our officers and PSCOs are engaging with literally thousands of people every day and we have recorded an increasing number of incident reports from members of the public reporting perceived breaches since the legislation was brought in."

More than 60 per cent of all online reports made to Sussex Police last week related to Covid-19 breaches – 2,723 of 4,163 report Sunday to Sunday.

This represented a four-fold increase in the number of Covid-19 related online reports from the previous week and ranged from reports about individuals, to groups and businesses.

The Chief Constable added: "But while most have adhered to our advice and have had genuine reasons for being outdoors, a very small minority of people have refused to cooperate.

"Notably, a significant proportion of fines were issued to people who had travelled into the county during the Bank Holiday weekend to visit the coast and local beauty spots, which

clearly goes against advice and we will be working to further deter this.”

Among those fined were a family who travelled from Birmingham to Brighton for a day out; a family from St Albans who travelled to Camber for a walk on the beach; a couple who travelled from Hemel Hempstead to Eastbourne because they heard the view was nice; a number of motorists who went out for a ride or drive because it was sunny; and a number of people who travelled from London for picnics and sunbathing on Brighton beach.

In each case, individuals were issued with £60 on-the-spot fines (reduced to £30 if paid within 30 days).

The Chief Constable added: “This is new legislation and we are learning every day. Our officers and PSCOs are being asked to use their professional judgement and common sense around the legislation which does not cater for the range of complex lives that people lead.

“We will only use the new powers when we need them, and will continue to police by consent where we can and with the trust and help of our local communities.

“Overwhelmingly, people are making the right choices and doing the right thing to support the NHS and help prevent the spread of the virus in Sussex.”

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne said: “Police officers across Sussex continue to do an outstanding job navigating their way through this complex time for operational policing. Public support shows that they have struck the right balance so far between explaining, encouraging and enforcing the social distancing measures in place to protect us all.

“Sussex is a popular destination and, when the weather is good, it attracts significant numbers of day-trippers. Sussex Police has issued consistent messaging to deter people from travelling to our county at this time and putting us all at more risk of this virus.

“Most of us understand the critical need to stick to these measures. However, there has been a small, selfish minority that have refused to heed the advice given and fines have had to be issued.

“The message from the Chief Constable has always been to use enforcement as a last resort and I wholeheartedly support this strategy on behalf of the public. This successful approach will continue to be how officers manage the restrictions going forwards.

“I want to thank the public for the sacrifices they are making. If we can all stay at home, we can reduce the risk to other people and ourselves and avoid putting unnecessary demands on our courageous emergency services.”



Crime Summary

Various tools were stolen from a garage at a property off Alder Close, Heathfield, overnight on the 12th April. Unknown suspects have forced entry and damaged the locking mechanism to gain entry. (0488 of 12/04 relates)

Discovered on the morning of the 14th, a quad bike was stolen from a property off Berwick Court, Polegate. Unknown suspects have removed secure locks to the garage to gain entry and unchained the vehicle. (1449 of 14/04 relates)

A business address off Hankham Road, Pevensey was broken into overnight on the 14th April. Unknown suspects have entered the address and forced entry to areas within the property to steal items, including plants. (0256 of 15/04 relates)

2 quad bikes were stolen from a property off Hailsham Road, Polegate, a barn containing the vehicles was entered by unknown suspects overnight on the 14th April. (0731 of 15/04 relates)

There have been no further reports of residential burglaries on the Wealden district.

For a range of crime prevention advice, support and tips to keep you and your property safe can be found [here](#).

If you have been the victim of a burglary, please report [online](#), or by calling 101 – always dial 999 in an emergency/burglary in action.



Action Fraud scam watch

Did you know scams cost the UK economy £5-£10 Billion a year, with over 50% of people over 65 having already been targeted by scams; and only 5% of all scams reported?

This week's scam and fraud warnings from Action Fraud:

Fake Covid kits, medical supplies and more sold online

Criminals are targeting people looking to buy medical supplies online, sending emails offering fake medical support and scamming people who may be vulnerable or increasingly isolated at home.

[For more info and for help on how to keep yourself click here.](#)

NCA make arrests of those selling illegal Covid19 testing kits

A pharmacist and a surveyor have been arrested on suspicion of illegally selling Coronavirus testing kits in two National Crime Agency investigations, including thousands of pounds seized and website taken down read more [here](#).

Action Fraud's top tips

Although fraud and cybercrime comes in many forms, there are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself.

Follow Action Frauds' personal safety checklist to keep you and those around you safe from fraud [here](#).



Help us keep Sussex safe

If you saw or heard anything, or have any information about any incident in this message please contact us online, or call 101, quoting the reference number provided.

Alternatively you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111, or online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org

You can also visit our website at www.sussex.police.uk where you can find our easy to use online forms to report all non-emergencies to us.

You can also find police advice to keep you safe and help you understand the law, and also browse our crime prevention pages for first-hand knowledge, industry best practices and practical crime prevention advice from officers and specialist teams all across the police.

Have you ever had a policing question that doesn't actually require direct police involvement to answer?

Ask the Police is a great online source of information for the most frequently asked policing questions, visit www.askthe.police.uk/ for more information.



Your local teams

You can find your local PCSO by entering your postcode at www.police.uk

Follow your local Police team on social media, click below:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Links and attachments

Sussex Police will only ever link you to secure Websites we trust. We will only send you attachments where we believe it is absolutely necessary.

Message Sent By

Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden team (Police, Prevention team, Sussex)