

# Crime down by 25% since physical distancing came into effect

**Recorded crime has fallen by around a quarter since measures to support physical distancing came into effect, early indications suggest.**

Serious assaults have reduced by around 40% while common assault has fallen by just over a quarter between Tuesday, 24 March, and

Sunday, 19 April, 2020, when compared to the same time last year.

Housebreakings are down around 30%.

Deputy Chief Constable Fiona Taylor said: “The significant changes that everyone is having to adjust to are undoubtedly having an effect on the nature and level of demand on policing.



DCC Fiona Taylor

“While decreases in assaults and housebreaking are to be welcomed, this information covers a relatively short period of time and care must be taken to avoid assumptions about trends.

“We are seeing, for example, a slight decrease in domestic abuse incidents but are acutely aware this may not reflect what is happening behind closed doors and we know that people don’t always report abuse immediately.

“For some, this period of physical distancing and isolation may expose them to a greater risk of abuse, harm and neglect.

“We have been using our social media channels to highlight our concern and raise awareness in communities. We want people to feel safe and we want to prevent harm by identifying people who may be at risk, and putting in place measures that will help keep them safe.

“There will be no change to how we respond to child protection issues. Protecting children and reducing harm remains a priority for Police Scotland.”

DCC Taylor added: “It could be months or years before we have a clear picture of the effect that physical distancing requirements have had on some crime categories in Scotland.

“What I want to emphasise is that we remain committed to making sure that every one of Scotland’s citizens is looked after.

“Our primary responsibility is to prevent crime. We strive to leave victims of crime feeling safe and we will continue to make sure that those who are living alone, the elderly, the vulnerable are given full protection. If you need the help of the police, please contact us.”

The provisional management information, which may be subject to adjustment, suggests that breach of the peace has fallen by over 50% while possession of drugs is down by around a fifth.

Fraud, however, has increased by over 10% and there is some evidence that criminals are specifically exploiting the

coronavirus public  
health emergency to commit offences.

Meanwhile 'public nuisance' type incidents, generally relating to people reporting those they believe are failing to adhere to physical distancing guidance, have more than doubled and now account for around a fifth of all incidents.

Noise incidents have also increased significantly, anecdotally related to the increased time which people are believed to be spending in their home address.

DCC Taylor said: "These early indications suggest that there are fewer crimes committed on the streets and in our town and city centres because the overwhelming majority of people are stepping forward to do their part to protect the NHS and save lives.

"I would like to thank people for their continued co-operation and support as Police Scotland carries out our role in supporting the national effort to make the changes needed to combat the spread of coronavirus."