

Chief Constable's message to Scottish public

Police Scotland Chief Constable Iain Livingstone QPM today joined First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and National Clinical Director Professor Jason Leitch at the Scottish Government's coronavirus briefing.

He told the Scottish public that his officers will continue to act with courtesy and common sense as the law changes to prohibit house parties with more than 15 people.



He also took time to praise the support and co-operation from people throughout the country during this difficult time.

He said: "All of us naturally want life to become as normal as possible, as quickly as possible – that is entirely understandable. Since the start of the pandemic people in Scotland have been asked to take personal responsibility, to step forward and support what are very restrictive measures on personal freedoms of movement and association – measures which have never been seen before. Our experience thus far is that the vast majority of the public have overwhelmingly demonstrated that responsibility, with high levels of co-operation and I thank them for that.

"I've repeatedly expressed my concern and compassion for our young people, who have faced significant restrictions at such an important time of their lives and their development when many milestones are arising. Children and young people have a right to socialise with their friends and it is the

responsibility of us, as adults, to support them to do so safely. So from the outset of this emergency, the advice has been clear. Indoor gatherings of people from multiple households can allow the virus to spread and should be avoided.

“The public health advice has been very clear about these dangers. Thus, as the First Minister announced yesterday, indoor gatherings of over 15 people are now against the law. It is vital everyone sticks to the rules to do the right thing, to control the spread of the virus, to address the public health emergency and to protect life. Do not arrange or attend large house parties, please meet in smaller groups. We have seen people very visibly changing their lives to do the right thing. There has been extremely high levels of compliance for the requirement to wear face masks while shopping indoors.

“Police officers and staff have been in communities across Scotland day in, day out, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide advice and guidance as the rules change. What we’ve found over the months is that the vast majority of people have stepped forward and are making the changes and sacrifices that are required. As Chief Constable of Scotland, I thank everyone for their commitment and forbearance. The regulations and rules have often changed quickly and often but the approach of Police Scotland has not, and will not. We will act with courtesy and common sense to maintain that relationship of confidence and trust we have with our fellow citizens who we are here to serve and keep safe.

“That’s been reflected in the remarkable, high levels of interaction officers have had with the public throughout the period of the pandemic, the overwhelming majority of which have not resulted in any enforcement. We will always seek to engage and encourage our fellow citizens – but we will take decisive action to enforce the law where required. I’m hugely grateful for the support and co-operation that policing has encountered and it is encouraging to see early indications

that public confidence, if anything, has grown during this time. It is that public trust and consent which gives policing our legitimacy.

“And the confidence, trust, and consent that exists is down to the work of officers and staff who, have also been required to attend and respond to other, significant and critical needs, have acted with tact and good sense and I thank them and their families for their commitment to public service and public wellbeing. Finally, supporting those at additional risk when at home or when in the online space remains a significant concern and priority for policing. I have said a number of times that home is sadly not a safe place for everyone and I’d again urge anyone with concerns for themselves, their families or their neighbours, to contact the police. We are here at all times to help and to keep everyone safe. Please, keep doing the right thing. Don’t arrange or attend large house parties. Look after yourselves, look after each other, and look after your families.”