

# Maximum police presence promised as deterrent to those thinking of breaching restrictions

Chief Constable Iain Livingstone promised to maximise policing's visible presence in our communities and on our roads to help people and to offer reassurance; but also to act as a deterrent to those who may be thinking of breaching restrictions

He also made it clear that where officers encounter wilful and blatant offences they will continue to act decisively to enforce the law.



To date officers have had over 100,000 interactions with members of the public regarding coronavirus compliance, issued over 7,000 fixed penalties and made almost 550 arrests. In addition they have made over 350 interventions at different premises and closed nearly 90 of them.

Speaking at today's Scottish Government coronavirus briefing with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and National Clinical Director Professor Jason Leitch he said: "The First Minister has outlined that vaccination now provides us with a route out of this pandemic.

"However, as cases are rising steeply and rapidly, everyone must continue to do the right thing as, collectively, we all play our part to protect life.

“Right now, that means one key thing – staying at home unless being outside your home is for an essential purpose.

“To support this public health imperative, as Chief Constable I will maximise policing’s visible presence in our communities and on our roads – to help people; to offer reassurance; but also to act as a deterrent to those who may be thinking of breaching restrictions.

Although the restrictions have changed again, as they have done often and at times quickly, the approach of Police Scotland will not change. Our response will remain proportionate, reasonable and fair – underpinned of course by the principle of policing by consent, from which we draw our legitimacy.

“Officers and staff have overwhelmingly discharged these new responsibilities and duties with compassion and common sense, explaining the rules and helping people to do the right thing.

“But be assured, be very clear, where officers encounter wilful and blatant offences we will continue to act decisively to enforce the law, as the public would expect.

“Since the pandemic commenced, officers across Scotland have had over 100,000 interactions with their fellow members of the public regarding coronavirus compliance. We have issued over 7,000 fixed penalties and made almost 550 arrests. In addition to that we have made over 350 interventions at different premises and closed nearly 90 of them.

“Our communities have demonstrated forbearance when asked to co-operate with extensive, necessary restrictions on personal liberty, personal freedoms. Our experience over the last 10 months is that, overall, the people of Scotland have shown overwhelming support for their police service during the pandemic.

“It’s important for me to say on behalf of policing in

Scotland, thank you to our fellow citizens for taking responsibility in supporting officers and staff and I ask that in this new lockdown that support and that sense of personal responsibility continues.

“And of course officers and staff themselves face the same professional and personal challenges as everyone in the country. So I thank them and their families for their commitment to public service and their resilience, changing duties and shifts at very short notice, at times putting themselves in harm’s way to help others and keep people safe and protect the health service.

“Police Scotland will continue to do everything we can to support and enable our officers and staff as they, in turn, support the national effort and support our close colleagues in the health service.

“In responding to this latest lockdown, policing, and indeed society as a whole, is able to draw on the experience of late March and April, a very intense time in the early weeks of the first lockdown, when unprecedented changes had to be made at pace.

“I’m very clear in my own mind of the benefit of our single national service in Scotland, able to assess need and quickly deploy resources to meet those needs wherever they arise across the whole of Scotland, is increasingly clear, enabling a rigorous, consistent and effective policing response.

“We need to recognise that the significant sacrifices and changes to daily life, including policing, will not be without consequence.”

Mr Livingstone also made a pledge to victims of domestic violence, particularly impacted during Covid restrictions.

He added: “In this regard, as the First Minister underlined and as I have I’ve repeatedly expressed, concerns remain about

the impact of the restrictions for people where home is not a safe place to be. As the requirement to stay at home becomes more acute, so does our concern.

“Protecting victims of domestic abuse, vulnerable children, vulnerable adults is a priority for policing, it goes to the core of the police purpose.

“As we did during the first lockdown, we will keep our approach to protecting the public under constant review. We work with our partners in local authorities and the third sector to make sure protection is there, support is there at all times for those at risk of abuse, harm or neglect both in the private, and virtual space.

“I urge anyone with concerns about someone – a relative, friend, colleague, neighbour – to contact the police. We are here 24 hours a day, every day. The Police Service of Scotland is there to help you.

“As we now enter another difficult period of lockdown, my priority, as always, remains the safety and wellbeing of everyone in Scotland.

“Policing is committed to supporting and ensuring everyone sticks to the rules to help prevent the terrible harm and death that can arise from this virus.”