

Dozens of police officers forced to self-isolate following Rangers title celebrations

The Scottish Police Federation have reported that a number of officers who responded to the illegal gatherings of fans on 7 March following Rangers' title celebrations have tested positive.

This has resulted in between 30-40 other officers whom they had contact with were also required to self-isolate along with their families.



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Although it is not possible to determine with certainty where exactly the officers were infected, the Federation linked the incidents and pointed out that the majority of those present had not been vaccinated.

David Hamilton, chairman of the SPF, told the BBC: "It is entirely predictable and, of course, most of these officers will not have been vaccinated. It is everything we warned about.

"Our call is for people to reflect on those numbers and the impact it is having on the community through the lack of policing.

"We did not choose to be in George Square. It is something we had to do and it is part of our role."

Officers made 27-arrests and issued seven fines after large numbers of supporters made their way to Ibrox Stadium and Glasgow's George Square to mark the title win despite warnings to stay at home.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon subsequently said the crowds were "infuriating and disgraceful" and could delay the end of the Covid lockdown.

In view of the crowds, Sunday's match between Celtic and Rangers was in doubt however it was given the green light yesterday although a significant number of officers will be deployed to 'maintain public safety'.

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf said: "Police Scotland have confirmed there will be a significant police presence in Glasgow to maintain public safety.

"I urge the fans to listen to the messages from their clubs, the police and government to stay at home.

"I also encourage Celtic and Rangers – and all other clubs in Scotland – to continue to encourage their supporters to stay home during games until they are permitted to return."

Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins said: "Detailed plans are in place for an extensive and proportionate policing response to this weekend's match at Celtic Park.

"Our approach throughout the pandemic has been to encourage people to do the right thing to avoid the spread of the disease.

"However, where officers encounter blatant breaches of the legislation they will not hesitate to enforce the law where necessary to ensure public safety."

Responding to the positive police cases, a Police Scotland spokeswoman said: "Police Scotland is following Scottish government and health guidance and where cases of coronavirus

are identified, we work with the local health board and adhere to Test and Protect procedures.

“We have sufficient capacity and as a national service Police Scotland can flex resources should there be a requirement to do so.”