

Fixed penalty notices issued under COVID-19 emergency health regulations by police forces in England and Wales

Introduction

This release presents the latest data on the police use of COVID-19 enforcement notices issued under all emergency health protection regulations in force as at 19th October¹ (including fines issued under local “lockdowns”, that is local areas where restrictions have been temporarily tightened and includes revisions to previously published figures. The figures reported here do not include any Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued under the Health Protection International Travel Regulations.

Data on FPNs issued in England and Wales is collated centrally by the ACRO Criminal Records Office and cover the 43 territorial forces, the British Transport Police (BTP) and Ministry of Defence Police.

The figures below relate to enforcement activity by police forces and these data should be seen in the context of wider police activity to engage with the public to explain and encourage compliance with the new regulations. As outlined in previous releases, the police have recorded hundreds of thousands of Covid-19 related incidents since the 27th March. This will include incidents where officers have proactively offered advice to people, responded to reports from the members of the public about breaches of the regulation by others and offences where criminals have sought to take advantage of the pandemic to commit a crime.

Headline figures for FPNs issued under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations, England and Wales

In total, 20,223 notices² have been recorded as having been issued in England (17,451) and Wales (2,772) between Friday 27th March and Monday 19th October. This includes 18,646 issued under number one regulations, 530 under number two regulations, 66 for holding a gathering of more than 30 people and 980 notices issued in relation to breaches of local “lockdowns”. The majority of fine issued for breaches of local “lockdowns” were issued in two forces: 374 in Greater Manchester and 366 in Northumbria.

Chart 1 shows previously published figures for earlier reporting periods together with the latest revisions as more FPNs have been processed. In previous releases this was reported on a daily basis but, given the length of time these regulations have been in place, this is now summarised on a weekly basis.

The weekly count for England and Wales shows that there was a general upward trend in the first period of the restrictions which continued through early April and peaked in the week ending 16th April which included the Easter Bank holiday. There was then generally a flatter trend through the rest of April and early May. From mid-May onwards there has been a considerable reduction in enforcement activity as the restrictions have been progressively eased, particularly in England. The levels of FPNs were particularly low between July and the

¹ For a full list of all regulations please see: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/coronavirus> and <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-legislation-and-guidance-law>

² Includes three notices issued prior to 27th March.

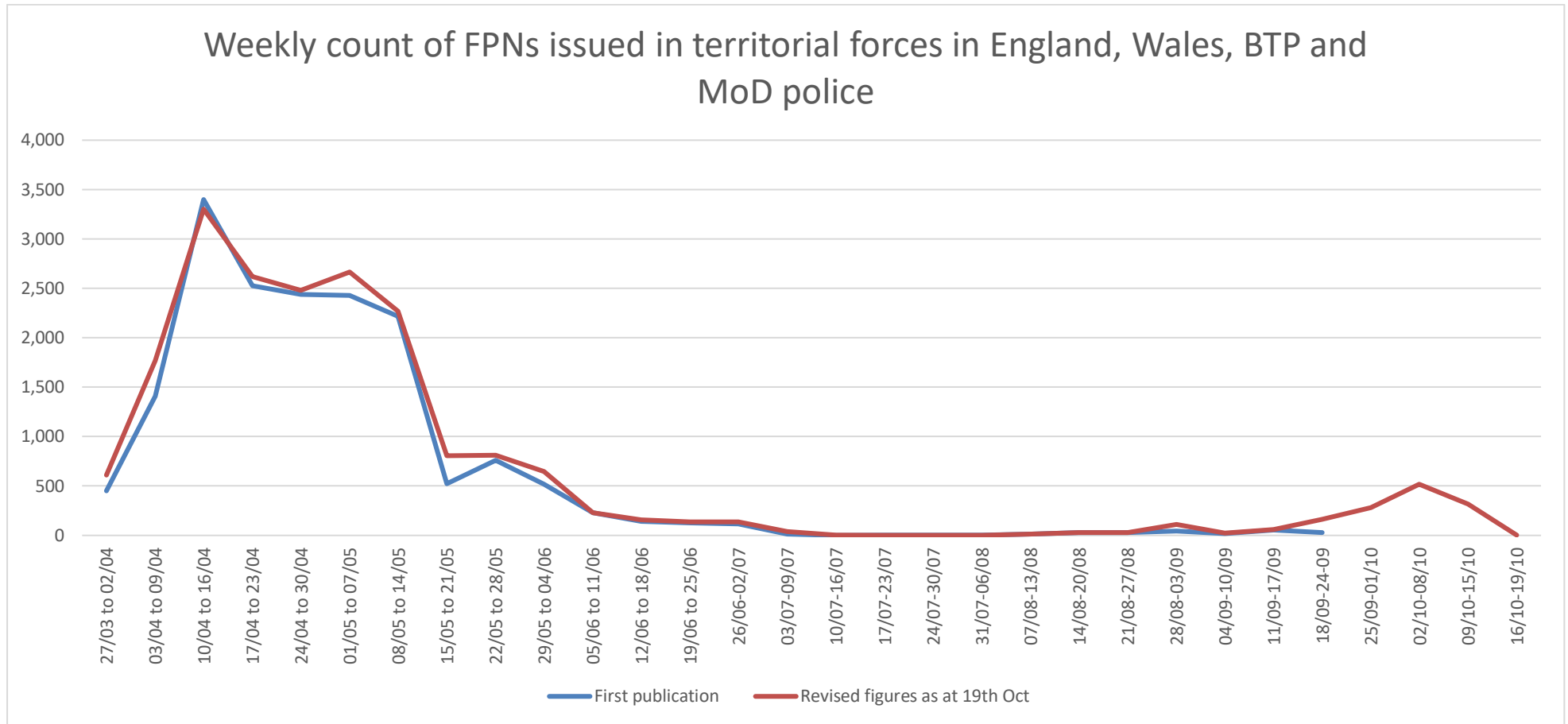
beginning of September but has since seen a rise following the re-tightening of restrictions in some areas of the country. While figures for the most recent weeks are subject to future revision, it is evident that there has been an increase in enforcement activity, with 318 FPNs issued in the last full week (9th and 15th October), and 518 issued in the week prior (2nd to 8th October). Weeks since the introduction of the “rule of six” (introduced on 14th September) have seen a general increase in the number of FPNs issued.

Of all enforcement notices issued in England and Wales:

- The vast majority (14,025) of notices continue to be issued for ‘Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period’ (Table 1).
- The large majority (just under 8 in 10) were issued to males (Table 2).
- Around 2 in 3 were issued to the under 35s; with 35% issued to 18-24 year olds, 18% to those aged 25-29 and 14% to those aged 30-34 (Table 3).
- Of those FPNs where the individual issued with the notice had a self-identified ethnicity³ recorded, 80% were issued to people who self-identified as White. Around one in eight (12%) went to Asians and 5% to those identifying as Black (Table 4).

³ 17% of FPNs issued did not have the self-defined ethnicity of the individual identified.

Chart 1: FPNs issued under COVID-19 regulations between 27th March and 19th October



Note: excludes 3 FPNs with incorrect date of issue.

Table 1: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, between 27th March and 19th October in England and Wales

Regulations	Reason for issue	England	Wales	Total
No.1, No.2 & local lockdowns	Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period	11,814	2,211	14,025
	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public of more than two people	4,176	263	4,439
	Contravene a direction or fail to comply with instruction	2,327	345	2,672
	Contravene requirement from a relevant person	432	52	484
	Obstruct person carrying out a function under the regulations	288	10	298
	Contravene requirement to not participate in an indoor gathering of two or more people	37	6	43
	Contravene requirement to not participate in an outdoor gathering of more than six people	61	0	61
	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - dwelling/houseboat	16	0	16
	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - vessel (other than houseboat)	0	0	0
	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - land (certain public outdoor spaces)	25	57	82
	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - indoor amplified music	8	0	8
	Entry into and/or remaining in a restricted area	3	12	15
	Failure to restrict access to a restricted area	1	0	1
	Stay overnight other than at place of living / linked household, in England, without reasonable excuse	7	0	7
	Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons in the protected area	43	0	43
	Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons outside the protected area	0	0	0
	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than two people – dwelling / houseboat	803	0	803
	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than six people	399	5	404
	Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons in the protected area	0	12	12
	Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons outside the protected area	0	0	0
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than two people – dwelling / houseboat	0	6	6	
Holding a gathering	Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – dwelling/houseboat	25	0	25
	Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – vessel (other than a houseboat or a vessel used for public transport)	1	0	1
	Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – land (certain public outdoor spaces)	22	0	22

	Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – indoor amplified music	15	0	15
	Involved in organising a relevant unlicensed music event indoors/outdoors with more than thirty persons in Wales	0	2	2
	Total to date	20,503	2,981	23,484

Note: a) The total in this table exceeds the headline measure of total FPNs issued as an FPN can be issued for more than one reason. b) No FPNs have been issued for the reason of: 'Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - vessel (other than houseboat)'; 'Failure to restrict access to a restricted area'; 'Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons outside the protected area'; 'Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – vessel (other than a houseboat or a vessel used for public transport)'.

Table 2: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by gender, between 27th March and 19th October in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
Male	78%	76%	78%
Female	20%	24%	20%
Unknown	2%	1%	2%

Table 3: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by age group, between 27th March and 19th October in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
18-24	37%	28%	35%
25-29	18%	17%	18%
30-34	14%	15%	14%
35-39	10%	12%	10%
40-44	7%	9%	7%
45-49	6%	6%	6%
50-54	4%	4%	4%
55-59	2%	3%	3%
60-64	1%	2%	1%
65+	1%	2%	1%
Unknown	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%

Table 4: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by self-defined ethnicity, between 27th March and 19th October in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
White	79%	85%	80%
Asian and Chinese	12%	10%	12%
Black	5%	2%	5%
Mixed	2%	2%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%

Notes: Excludes 17% of FPNs where the ethnicity of the individual issued with the notice was unknown (18% for England and 8% for Wales).

Headline figures for FPNs issued under the face coverings regulations, England and Wales

A total of 86 notices have been recorded as having been issued by police forces under the Wearing of Face Coverings on Public Transport Regulations between 15th June and 19th October, and 172 notices have been issued under the Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place Regulations between 24th July and 19th October.

Face coverings on public transport

A weekly count of FPNs issued under face coverings on public transport regulations has shown that an average of five FPNs have been issued each week (with 86 notices issued to 19th October since 15th June). There is no discernible trend apparent from the data.

Further breakdowns of FPNs issued under the Face coverings on public transport regulations are presented below.

- The vast majority of FPNs issued under this regulation type were issued to males (around 9 in 10).
- Two-thirds (66%) were issued to individuals aged between 18 and 29.
- Of the 62 records where ethnicity was provided, the majority (73%) were issued to individuals who self-identified as White.
- As might be expected, the BTP issued most of such FPNs to date (65 out of 86) for individuals not complying with the transport regulations.
- Most FPNs issued under these regulations were for contravene requirement to wear a face covering when on public transport (78 – Table 5).

Table 5: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under the wearing of face coverings on public transport regulations, between 15th June and 19th October in England and Wales

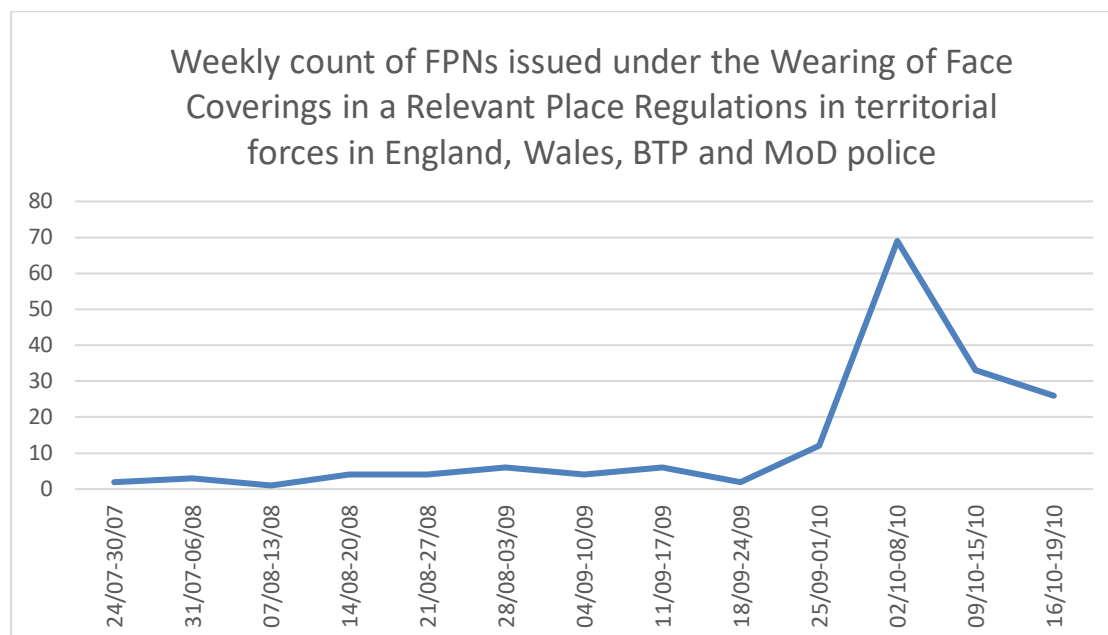
REASON FOR ISSUE	
Contravene requirement to wear a face covering when on public transport.	78
Obstruct person carrying out function under these regulations	1
Contravene direction given under these regulations	14
TOTAL	93

Note: a) The total in this table exceeds the headline measure of total FPNs issued as an FPN can be issued for more than one reason

Face coverings in a relevant place

Between 24th July and 19th October, 172 FPNs were issued under face coverings in a relevant place regulations. Very few FPNs were issued in the first couple of months that the regulations were in place however, at the start of October the number of FPNs issued saw a large increase with 69 FPNs issued between 2nd Oct and 8th Oct. The number of FPNs has since fallen in recent weeks, with 33 FPNs issued between 9th and 15th October and 26 issued in the latest part-week.

Chart 2: FPNs issued under Face coverings in a relevant place regulations between 24th July and 19th October



Further breakdowns of FPNs issued under the Face coverings in a relevant place regulations are presented below.

- The majority of FPNs issued under this regulation type were issued to males (3 in 4).
- Less than half (42%) were issued to individuals aged between 18 and 29.
- Of 137 the records where ethnicity was provided, the majority (73%) were issued to individuals who self-identified as White.
- West Mercia issued a third of the FPNs to date (57 out of 172) for individuals not complying with the rules regarding face coverings in a relevant place.

Table 6: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under the wearing of face coverings in a relevant place regulations, between 24th July and 19th October in England and Wales

REASON FOR ISSUE	
Enter / remain in relevant place in England without wearing a face covering	120
Contravene direction given to wear face covering within a relevant place (Direct that person to wear such a covering)	52
Contravene direction given to wear face covering within a relevant place (Direct that person to leave the relevant place)	7
Obstruct person carrying out function under regulations regarding face coverings	1
TOTAL	180

Understanding the data

These data cover the number of FPNs issued under COVID-19 regulations which came into effect from 27th March.

Data presented in this release represent the number of FPNs issued. While the vast majority of FPNs relate to a single individual, some people have been issued with an FPN more than once. An FPN can be issued for more than one reason.

Figures on the number of FPNs issued should not be seen as a measure of the amount of police activity involved in policing the new measures, or the level of public non-compliance, since fines are issued as a last resort after initial attempts to engage with the public to explain and encourage compliance with the new regulations have not been successful.

Owing to the time taken to process FPNs, figures presented here are likely to underestimate the volume of FPNs issued each day and will be updated with each release as new data are received, although the rate of increase in revised data has slowed significantly.

The nature of the administrative process involved in issuing an FPN is such that there is sometimes missing data or discrepancies when data are returned. For example, as ethnicity is self-defining this is not always completed, and the level of missing data needs to be considered when interpreting such figures.

Force level figures are presented for England in Annex A and Wales in Annex B. However, caution should be taken to make comparisons between forces as variation in is likely to reflect a range of factors including how the force has decided to police non-compliance as well as differences in local context (e.g. composition and density of the local population).

ANNEX A - Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued in England under emergency health regulations, 27th March to 19th October

FORCE	No.1 regs (up to 03/07/20)	No.2 regs and as amended (04/07/20 onwards)	Hold a gathering of more than 30 people	Local lockdown (excluding Alert Levels)	Total number issued to date including local lockdowns (27th March to 19th Oct)
Avon & Somerset	349	22	5		376
Bedfordshire	279				279
BTP	325				325
Cambridgeshire	133	5	2		140
Cheshire	197	4		2	203
City of London	67	6			73
Cleveland	299		1		300
Cumbria	727	11		2	740
Derbyshire	251	4			255
Devon & Cornwall	1,008	1			1,009
Dorset	843	6			849
Durham	178	1		17	196
Essex	239	9			248
Gloucestershire	232				232
Greater Manchester	316	89	2	374	781
Hampshire	252	3			255
Hertfordshire	272	2			274
Humberside	139	3	1		143
Kent	126	2			128

Lancashire	788	14	9	54	865
Leicestershire	369	5	6	39	419
Lincolnshire	237	1			238
Merseyside	491	46	6	86	629
Metropolitan	1,090	27	14		1,131
MoD Police	37				37
Norfolk	408	3	4		415
North Yorkshire	1,151				1,151
Northamptonshire	371	3			374
Northumbria	278	19		366	663
Nottinghamshire	183	12	1	9	205
South Yorkshire	375				375
Staffordshire	43				43
Suffolk	259	3			262
Surrey	512	2			514
Sussex	867	1			868
Thames Valley	753	27			780
Warwickshire	60	20	3		83
West Mercia	169	64		1	234
West Midlands	374	11	2	14	401
West Yorkshire	746	11	7	8	772
Wiltshire	185		1		186
TOTAL	15,978	437	64	972	17,451

ANNEX B - Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued in Wales under emergency health regulations, 27th March to 19th October

FORCE	No.1 regs (up to 10/07/20)	No.2 regs and as amended (11/07/20 onwards)	Hold a gathering of more than 30 people	Local lockdown	Total number issued to date (27th March to 19th Oct)
British Transport Police	24				24
Dyfed-Powys	1,731			4	1,735
Gwent	132	6			138
North Wales	474	57	2		533
South Wales	308	30		4	342
TOTAL	2,669	93	2	8	2,772