

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 21st September¹ (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, 18,912 notices² have been recorded as having been issued in England (16,240) and Wales (2,672) between Friday 27th March and Monday 21st September. This includes 179 notices issued in relation to breaches of local “lockdowns”: 128 in Greater Manchester, 26 in Lancashire and 25 in Leicester.

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. While figures for the most recent weeks are subject to revision, the levels of FPNs now being issued are at very low levels, with 27 FPNs issued between 18th and 21st September (partial week), and 56 issued in the last full week (11th to

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.

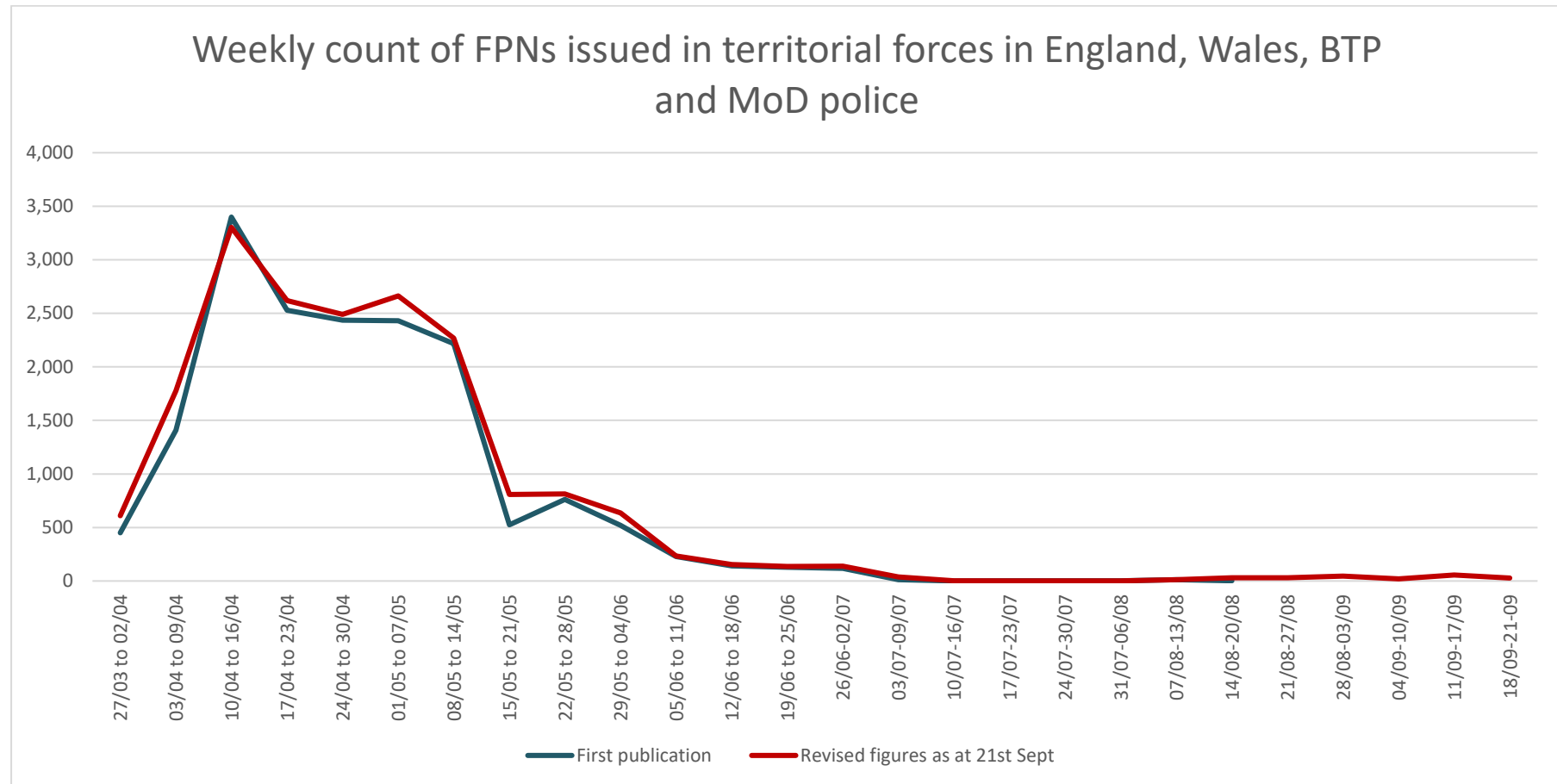
17th September). While very low, these numbers are slightly higher compared with the previous reporting period and can largely be attributed to FPNs issued under local lockdowns. This is the first full week since the “rule of six” has been in operation (introduced on 14th September) and 15 FPNs were issued for contravention of this regulation in England. 59 further fines were issued for contravention of regulations restricting gatherings of more than six people, which are issued in local lockdown settings or old regulation codes which are now void due to the development of the pandemic.

Of all enforcement notices issued in England and Wales:

- The vast majority (13,999) of notices continue to be issued for ‘Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period’ (Table 1).
- The large majority (around 8 in 10) were issued to males (Table 2).
- Around 2 in 3 were issued to the under 35s; with 34% issued to 18-24 year olds, 18% to those aged 25-29 and 15% to those aged 30-34 (Table 3).
- Of those FPNs where the individual issued with the notice had a self-identified ethnicity³ recorded, 78% were issued to people who self-identified as White. Around one in eight (13%) went to Asians and 6% to those identifying as Black (Table 4).

³ 15% 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 21st September



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 17th August in England and Wales

Reason for issue	England	Wales	Total
Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period	11,814	2,185	13,999
Contravene a direction or fail to comply with instruction	2,290	344	2,634
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public of more than two people	4,167	264	4,431
Contravene requirement from a relevant person	425	52	477
Obstruct person carrying out a function under the regulations	286	10	296
Contravene requirement to not participate in an indoor gathering of two or more people	21	-	21
Contravene requirement to not participate in an outdoor gathering of more than six people	59	-	59
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - dwelling/houseboat	6	-	6
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - land (certain public outdoor spaces)	19	-	19
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - indoor amplified music	7	-	7
Entry into and/or remaining in a restricted area	3	-	3
Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons in the protected area	6	-	6
Stay overnight other than at place of living / linked household, in England, without reasonable excuse	7	-	7
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than two people – dwelling / houseboat	134	-	134
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than six people – Rule of Six	15	-	15
Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – dwelling/houseboat	8	-	8
Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – land (certain public outdoor spaces)	9	-	9
Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – indoor amplified music	1	-	1
Involved in organising a relevant unlicensed music event indoors/outdoors with more than thirty persons in Wales	-	2	2
Total to date	19,277	2,857	22,134

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 21st September in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
Male	80%	76%	79%
Female	18%	23%	19%
Unknown	2%	1%	2%

Table 3: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by age group, between 27th March and 21st September in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
18-24	35%	28%	34%
25-29	18%	17%	18%
30-34	14%	16%	15%
35-39	10%	12%	11%
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%	0%	0%

Table 4: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by self-defined ethnicity, between 27th March and 21st September in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
White	79%	85%	80%
Asian and Chinese	12%	10%	12%
Black	5%	2%	4%
Mixed	2%	2%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%

Notes: Excludes 15% of FPNs where the ethnicity of the individual issued with the notice was unknown (17% for England and 8% for Wales).

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

A total of 61 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 21st September, and 28 notices have been issued under the Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place Regulations between 24th July and 21st September.

Further breakdowns of FPNs issued under the Face coverings on Public transport Regulations are presented below. Demographic breakdowns are not provided for FPNs issued under Face Coverings in a Relevant Place regulations as so few have been issued.

Face coverings on Public transport

- The vast majority of FPNs issued under this regulation type were issued to males (9 in 10).
- Two-thirds (66%) were issued to individuals aged between 18 and 29.
- As might be expected, the BTP issued most of such FPNs to date (51 out of 61) for individuals not complying with the transport regulations.

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 can be found here. 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).