

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 14th March 2021¹ (including fines issued under local “lockdowns”, that is local areas where restrictions have been temporarily tightened and includes revisions to previously published figures).

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 2020. 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, 94,368² notices have been recorded as having been issued in England (85,975) and Wales (8,393) between Friday 27th March 2020 and Sunday 14th March 2021.

In England:

- 15,945 notices were issued under number one regulations;
- 575 under number two regulations;
- 284 for holding a gathering of more than 30 people;
- 1,104 in relation to breaches of local “lockdowns”;
- 2,901 under the “Local COVID-19 alert levels”;
- 7,029 under number four regulations (national restrictions);
- 58,137 notices issued under the “All Tiers” regulations:
 - 18 notices for Tier 1 (Medium);
 - 1,039 notices for Tier 2 (High);
 - 3,559 notices for Tier 3 (Very High);
 - 3,525 notices for Tier 4 (Extremely High);
- 49,996 were issued from 6th January 2021 when national restrictions came into force.

In Wales:

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 Three notices are recorded as having been issued in England prior to March 27th

- 2,664 notices were issued under number one regulations;
- 177 notices were issued under number two regulations;
- 285 notices were issued under number three regulations;
- 637 notices were issued under number four regulations;
- 4,624 notices have been issued under number five regulations;
- 3 notices were issued under regulations relating to holding a gathering of more than 30 people; and,
- 3 notices were issued under the International Travel Regulations (ITRs).

Chart 1 shows previously published figures for earlier reporting periods together with the latest revisions as more FPNs have been processed. In earlier 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 following analysis and the chart below do not include fines issued under the face covering regulations, business regulations or ITRs. Separate analysis is presented in the sections below for these FPN types.

There were steep rises in the number of FPNs issued following the week of 18th-24th December 2020, coinciding with the introduction of Tier 4 as part of the “Local COVID-19 Alert Levels” regulations. This upward trend continued following the introduction of the new national restrictions on the 6th of January 2021 (when all areas of England were moved into Tier 4). This reflected more proactive policing of the regulations in the context of the danger to public health and represented a shift to move more quickly to enforcement where there were clear breaches of the law.

Following this heightened enforcement activity there has been a decline in the number of FPNs issued in more recent weeks, with 3,481 FPNs having been issued in the last full week (5th to 11th March 2021), compared with 4,612 FPNs in the previous week. The chart shows that these figures are likely to be revised upwards as more fines are processed.

Enforcement levels during January and early February 2021 had returned to levels seen in the first period of restrictions in March and April 2020, with a peak of 3,294 FPNs issued between 10th – 16th April 2020 (during the week of the Easter Bank holiday). After this initial high level of enforcement, there was a considerable reduction in enforcement activity as the restrictions were progressively eased, particularly in England. This low number of FPNs issued continued from June to early September, after which there was a gradual increase as restrictions were tightened. This was then followed by a dip in the number of FPNs issued between late November to mid-December 2020 as restrictions were relaxed after the end of the second national restrictions. The number of FPNs issued began to rise again following the tightening of national restrictions on the 6th January 2021. Since 4th February, enforcement levels have steadily declined.

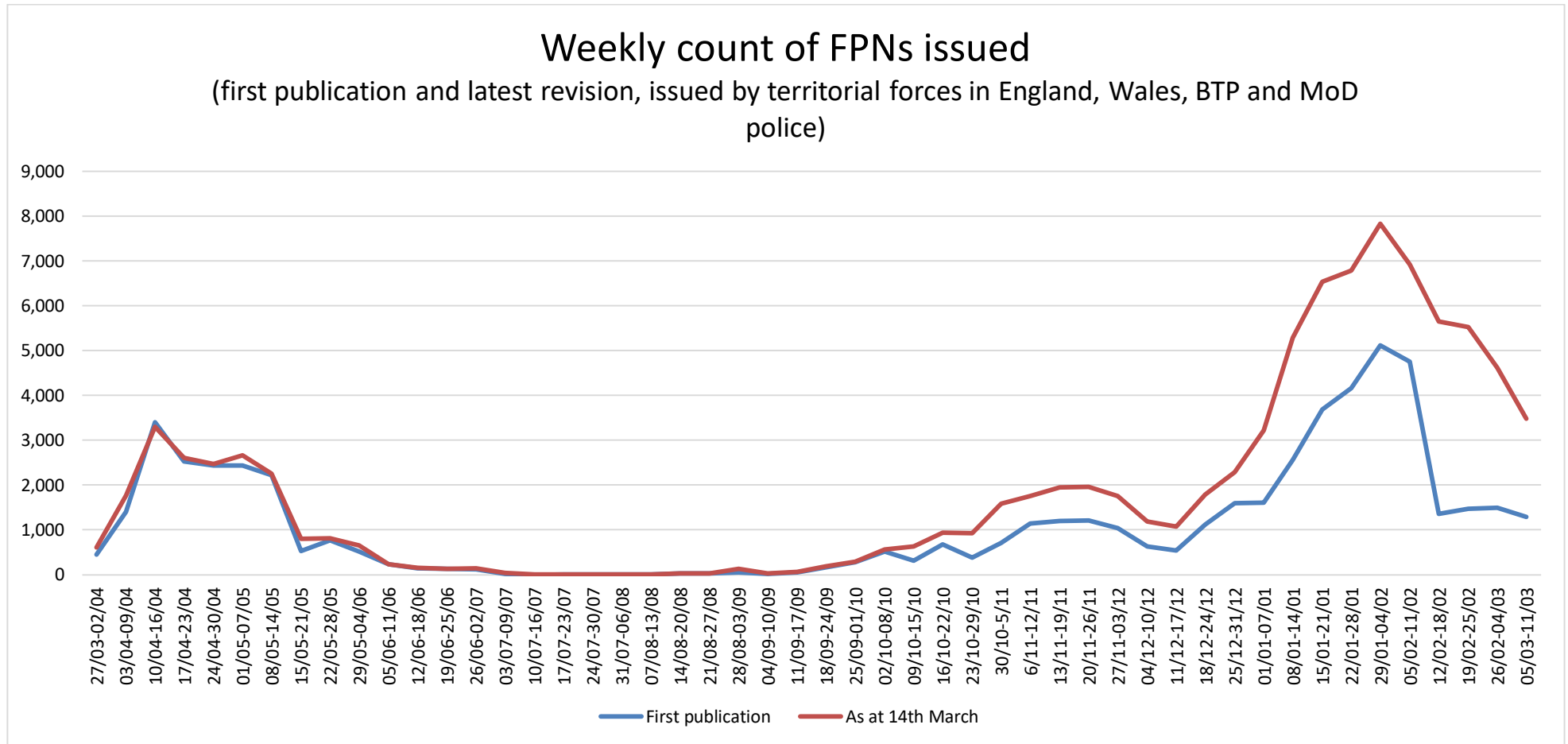
Of all enforcement notices issued in England and Wales:

- The vast majority (13,992) have been issued for “Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period” (Table 1).
- The large majority (over 7 in 10) were issued to males (Table 2).
- 75% were issued to the under 35s; with 46% issued to 18-24 year olds, 17% to those aged 25-29 and 12% to those aged 30-34 (Table 3).

- Of those FPNs where the individual issued with the notice had a self-identified ethnicity³ recorded, 77% were issued to people who self-identified as White. 12% went to those who self-identified as Asian and 7% to those identifying as Black (Table 4).

³ 21% of FPNs issued did not have the self-defined ethnicity of the individual identified.

Chart 1: FPNs issued under COVID-19 regulations (excluding face coverings, businesses and ITR), between 27th March 2020 and 11th March 2021

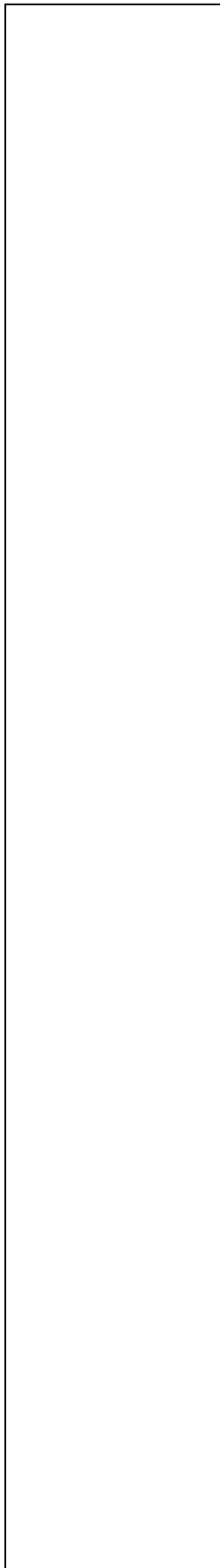


Note: excludes 3 FPNs with incorrect date of issue.

Table 1: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, between 27th March 2020 and 14th March 2021 in England and Wales

Regulations	Jurisdiction	Reason for issue	England	Wales	Total
No.1, No.2, local lockdowns (England only); No.3 and No.4 (Wales only)	England and Wales	Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period	11,782	2,210	13,992
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public of more than two people	4,179	280	4,459
		Contravene a direction or fail to comply with instruction	2,336	432	2,768
		Contravene requirement from a relevant person	431	52	483
		Obstruct person carrying out a function under the regulations	283	14	297
		Contravene requirement to not participate in an indoor gathering of two or more people	33	21	54
	England only	Contravene requirement to not participate in an outdoor gathering of more than six people	76	N/A	76
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people – dwelling/houseboat	29	N/A	29
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people – vessel (other than houseboat)	-	N/A	-
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people – land (certain public outdoor spaces)	25	N/A	25
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people – indoor amplified music	10	N/A	10
		Entry into and/or remaining in a restricted area	3	N/A	3
		Failure to restrict access to a restricted area	1	N/A	1
		Stay overnight other than at place of living / linked household, in England, without reasonable excuse	7	N/A	7

		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than six people	473	N/A	473
		Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons in the protected area	44	N/A	44
		Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons outside the protected area	1	N/A	1
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than two people – dwelling / houseboat	849	N/A	849
	Wales only	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people	N/A	60	60
		Enter/Remain in a local health protection area in Wales without reasonable excuse	N/A	508	508
		Leave or remain away from place when living in local health protection area in Wales without reasonable excuse	N/A	993	993
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public	N/A	444	444
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in private	N/A	2,115	2,115
		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering outside of a private dwelling that consists of more than 4 people	N/A	49	49
		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering in holiday or travel accommodation with people outside of their household	N/A	-	-
		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering in a private dwelling with any other person apart from the household or extended household	N/A	505	505
		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering in a private dwelling consisting of more than 15 people	N/A	225	225
		Contravene a requirement not to be involved in organising an indoor event of more than 15 people	N/A	13	13
		Contravene a requirement not to be involved in organising an outdoor event of more than 30 people	N/A	7	7



Contravene restriction that no person living outside Wales may enter or remain in Wales without a reasonable excuse	N/A	92	92
Contravene restriction that no person living in Wales may leave Wales without a reasonable excuse	N/A	69	69
Contravene a requirement of a person required to isolate, may not to leave or be outside the place where they are living	N/A	32	32
Contravene a requirement of a child required to isolate, may not to leave or be outside the place where they are living	N/A	4	4
Contravene a requirement to provide details to contract tracer when requested to do so	N/A	1	1
Contravene a requirement to not carry on restricted business or service at premises	N/A	12	12
Contravene a requirement to not carry on restricted business or service at premises	N/A	-	-
Contravene a requirement to not sell or supply alcohol between restricted times	N/A	-	-
Contravene a requirement that an operator of public transport displays adequate signage	N/A	-	-
Contravene the requirement to wear face covering on public transport	N/A	3	3
Contravene the requirement to wear face covering in certain indoor places	N/A	19	19
Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering outside of a private dwelling that consists of more than 6 people	N/A	1	1
Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering in a private dwelling which consists of more than 6 people	N/A	19	19

		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering in a private dwelling outdoors that consists of more than 4 people	N/A	0	0
		Contravene a requirement that no person may leave the place where they are living	N/A	599	599
Local COVID-19 Alert Levels/All Tiers (England only)	England only	Obstruct person carrying out function under the regulations	157	N/A	157
		Contravene a requirement imposed, or a direction given, by a relevant person	851	N/A	851
		Contravene a reasonable instruction given by a relevant person	632	N/A	632
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in a Tier 1 area of more than six people	517	N/A	517
		Contravene a Tier 1 Restriction	1	N/A	1
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering indoors in a Tier 2 area of two or more people	2,468	N/A	2,468
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering outdoors in a Tier 2 area of more than six people	160	N/A	160
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 2 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of two or more people indoors	21	N/A	21
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 2 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area of more than six people outdoors	3	N/A	3
		Contravene a Tier 2 restriction	25	N/A	25
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in the Tier 3 area of two or more people - private dwelling/any indoor space	3,356	N/A	3,356
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 3 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of two or more people - private dwelling/any indoor space	232	N/A	232
		Contravene a requirement to not participate in a gathering in a relevant public outdoor place in the Tier 3 area of more than six people	149	N/A	149

		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in any other outdoor place in the Tier 3 area of two or more people	293	N/A	293
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 3 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of more than six people in a relevant public outdoor place	51	N/A	51
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 3 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of two or more people in any other outdoor place	27	N/A	27
		Contravene a Tier 3 Restriction	40	N/A	40
No.4 regs (national lockdown, England only)		Contravene a requirement to not participate in a gathering in the Tier 4 area of two or more people - private dwelling/any indoor space	23,354	N/A	23,354
		Contravene a requirement to not participate in a gathering in a specified outdoor place in the Tier 4 area of more than two people	2,514	N/A	2,514
		Contravene a requirement to not participate in a gathering in any other outdoor place in the Tier 4 area of two or more people	9,553	N/A	9,553
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 4 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of two or more people - private dwelling/any indoor space	356	N/A	356
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 4 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of more than two people in a specified outdoor place	174	N/A	174
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 4 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of two or more people in any other outdoor place	376	N/A	376
		Contravene requirement to not leave or be outside of place of living	15,595	N/A	15,595
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than 15 people - private dwelling	1,283	N/A	1,283
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than 15 people - educational accommodation	137	N/A	137
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than 15 people - indoor amplified music	227	N/A	227

		Contravene a requirement/direction/instruction from a relevant person	277	N/A	277
		Contravene requirement to not participate in an indoor gathering of two or more people	4,132	N/A	4,132
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than two people in public outdoor place	1,264	N/A	1,264
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of two or more people in other outdoor space	326	N/A	326
Holding a gathering	England only	Contravene requirement to not leave or be outside of place of living	1,168	N/A	1,168
		Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – dwelling/houseboat	145	N/A	145
		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	N/A	1
		Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – land (certain public outdoor spaces)	56	N/A	56
		Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – indoor amplified music	83	N/A	83
	Wales only	Contravene a requirement not to be involved in organising an indoor event of more than 50 people	N/A	1	1
		Contravene a requirement not to be involved in organising an outdoor event of more than 100 people	N/A	0	0
		Contravene a requirement to not carry on business or provide restricted service between hours of 6.00 pm and 6.00 am	N/A	0	0
		Contravene a requirement that no person may be involved in organising a relevant unlicensed music event	N/A	3	3
		TOTAL		90,566	8,783

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)'

Table 2: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by gender, between 27th March 2020 and 14th March 2021 in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
Male	72%	68%	72%
Female	27%	31%	28%
Other	0.04%	0.00%	0.03%
Unknown	1%	0.3%	1%

Table 3: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by age group, between 27th March 2020 and 14th March 2021 in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
18-24	46%	41%	46%
25-29	17%	16%	17%
30-34	12%	13%	12%
35-39	8%	9%	8%
40-44	6%	7%	6%
45-49	4%	5%	4%
50-54	3%	4%	3%
55-59	2%	3%	2%
60-64	1%	2%	1%
65+	1%	1%	1%
Unknown	0.03%	0.01%	0.02%

Table 4: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by self-defined ethnicity, between 27th March 2020 and 14th March 2021 in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
White	75%	89%	77%
Asian (including Chinese)	13%	6%	12%
Black	8%	2%	7%
Mixed	3%	2%	3%
Other	2%	1%	2%

Notes: Excludes 21% of FPNs where the ethnicity of the individual issued with the notice was unknown (22% for England and 12% for Wales).

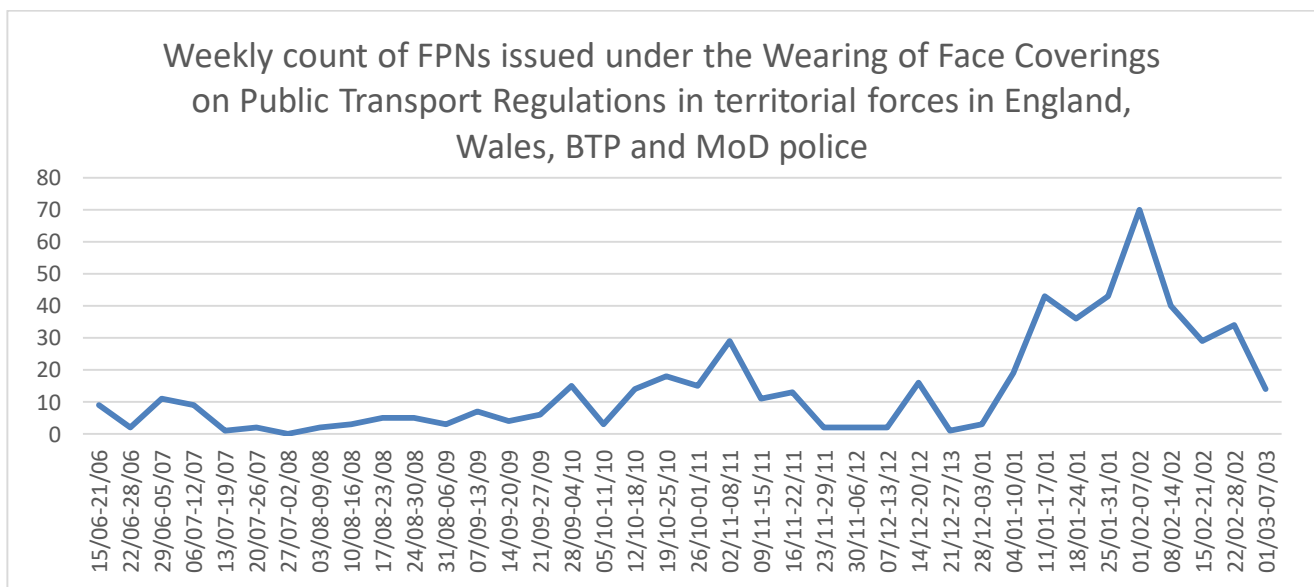
Headline figures for FPNs issued under the face coverings regulations, England and Wales

A total of 547 notices have been recorded as having been issued by police forces under the Wearing of Face Coverings on Public Transport Regulations between 15th June 2020 and 14th March 2021, and 2,593 notices have been issued under the Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place Regulations between 24th July 2020 and 14th March 2021.

Face coverings on public transport

A weekly count of FPNs issued under face coverings on public transport regulations has shown that an average of fourteen FPNs have been issued each week (with 547 notices issued between 15th June 2020 and 14th March 2021). The number of FPNs issued increased during the current national restrictions, peaking at 70 FPNs in the first week of February. The number of FPNs issued per week have now returned to similar levels seen prior to the tighter restrictions. In the first week of March 2021, fourteen FPNs were issued under face coverings on public transport regulations.

Chart 2: FPNs issued under Face coverings on public transport regulations between 24th July 2020 and 7th March 2021



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 8 in 10).
- Over half (55%) were issued to individuals aged between 18 and 29.
- Of the 404 records where ethnicity was provided, the majority (60%) were issued to individuals who self-identified as White, a lower proportion than other FPNs. This may reflect public transport being more prevalent in metropolitan areas.
- As might be expected, the BTP issued most of such FPNs to date (219 out of 547) for individuals not complying with the transport regulations.

- Most FPNs issued under these regulations were for contravening the requirement to wear a face covering when on public transport (510 – Table 5).

Table 5: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under the wearing of face coverings on public transport regulations, between 15th June 2020 and 14th March 2021 in England and Wales

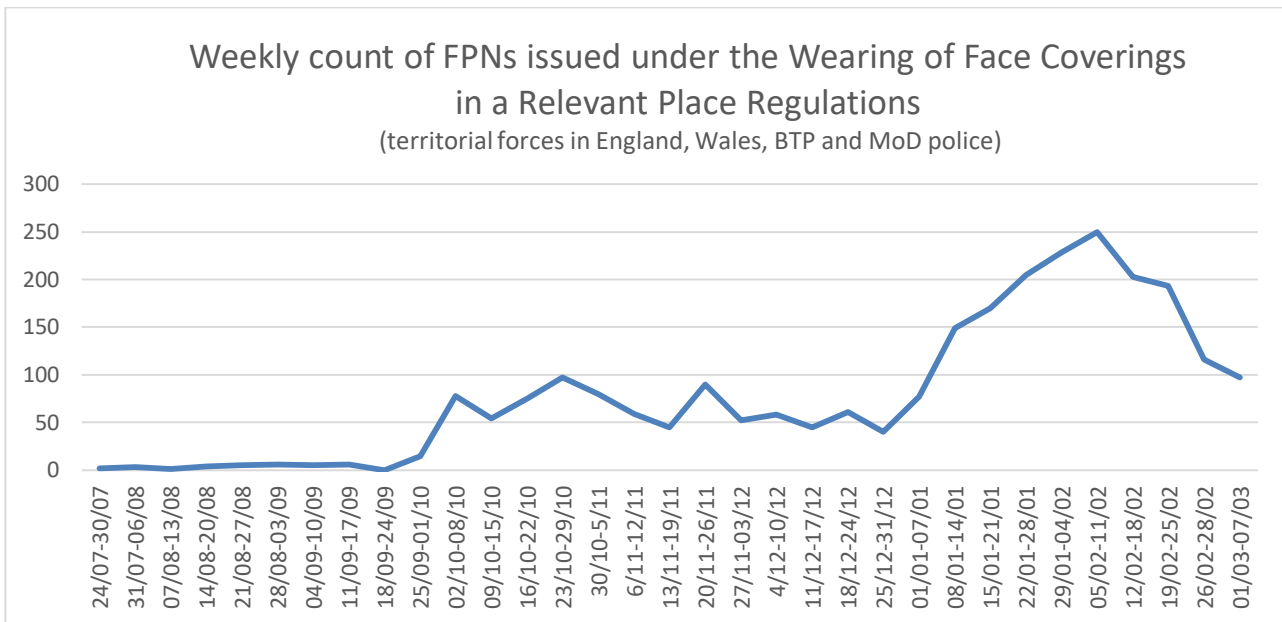
REASON FOR ISSUE	
Contravene requirement to wear a face covering when on public transport.	510
Obstruct person carrying out function under these regulations	9
Contravene direction given under these regulations	41
TOTAL	560

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 2020 and 14th March 2021, 2,593 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 increased with 78 FPNs issued between 2nd and 8th October 2020. The number of FPNs issued each week then remained around this level before declining in late November. The number of FPNs remained relatively stable until early January 2021 when they began to increase, reaching a peak of 250 FPNs in the second week of February. They have since fallen again, down to 97 FPNs issued in the first week of March 2021.

Chart 3: FPNs issued under Face coverings in a relevant place regulations between 24th July 2020 and 11th March 2021



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 (75%).
- Less than half (43%) were issued to individuals aged between 18 and 29.
- Of the 2,171 records where ethnicity was provided, the majority (68%) were issued to individuals who self-identified as White.

Table 6: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under the wearing of face coverings in a relevant place regulations, between 24th July 2020 and 14th March 2021 in England and Wales

REASON FOR ISSUE	
Enter / remain in relevant place in England without wearing a face covering	1,932
Contravene direction given to wear face covering within a relevant place (Direct that person to wear such a covering)	629
Contravene direction given to wear face covering within a relevant place (Direct that person to leave the relevant place)	85
Obstruct person carrying out function under regulations regarding face coverings	21
TOTAL	2,667

Understanding the data

These data cover the number of FPNs issued under COVID-19 regulations which came into effect from 27th March 2020.

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 2020 to 14th March 2021

Note: Nil does not necessarily mean nil FPNs issued, but nil processed by ACRO at the time of the snapshot. Please confirm with forces directly if questions arise and check future publications where appropriate as numbers will be updated.

Force	No.1, No.2 and local lockdown regs	Local COVID-19 alert levels	Hold a gathering of more than 30 people	No.4 regs (national lockdown)	All tiers	Face coverings regulations (public transport & relevant place)	International travel regulations	Business regulations	Total number issued to date including local lockdowns (27th March to 14th March)
Avon & Somerset	373	39	2	136	1,251	8	10	20	1,839
Bedfordshire	278	2	2	21	474	55	4	5	841
British Transport	324	-	-	14	443	298	7	-	1,086
Cambridgeshire	136	25	2	66	525	30	14	9	807
Cheshire	203	67	-	149	1,013	8	14	10	1,464
City of London	73	-	2	9	188	1	-	1	274
Cleveland	299	-	2	14	162	0	-	-	477
Cumbria	740	13	-	137	646	19	8	12	1,575
Derbyshire	255	5	2	21	437	21	3	6	750
Devon & Cornwall	1,007	47	-	154	1,157	8	8	5	2,386
Dorset	851	28	1	122	421	2	1	2	1,428
Durham	197	-	1	43	618	5	5	7	876
Essex	274	93	8	82	763	25	8	15	1,268
Gloucestershire	233	4	2	29	249	2	7	2	528
Greater Manchester	801	377	14	680	2,450	72	51	42	4,487
Hampshire	255	107	-	114	1,499	32	5	34	2,046
Hertfordshire	275	10	5	48	492	25	9	8	872
Humberside	143	6	1	34	69	0	3	-	256

Kent	128	1	8	114	1,463	18	11	9	1,752
Lancashire	855	101	7	339	2,635	70	49	28	4,084
Leicestershire	416	10	17	118	1,826	9	7	8	2,411
Lincolnshire	236	2	1	88	528	30	9	5	899
Merseyside	610	145	29	491	4,165	597	21	90	6,148
Metropolitan	1,149	20	75	478	12,112	498	83	180	14,595
Ministry of Defence	37	-	-	-	77	0	-	-	114
Norfolk	411	5	2	35	1,251	5	2	2	1,713
North Yorkshire	1,149	4	-	287	1,859	8	6	4	3,317
Northamptonshire	370	16	9	234	1,693	405	22	7	2,756
Northumbria	796	1,289	1	988	2,171	145	11	-	5,401
Nottinghamshire	205	158	22	355	1,701	13	10	9	2,473
South Yorkshire	375	27	4	297	1,077	26	20	-	1,826
Staffordshire	43	15	1	206	1,350	23	4	7	1,649
Suffolk	262	1	-	39	702	4	7	4	1,019
Surrey	513	-	1	19	1,167	9	7	3	1,719
Sussex	867	1	2	15	1,074	9	11	13	1,992
Thames Valley	774	55	5	99	1,479	13	26	13	2,464
Warwickshire	102	92	4	209	653	28	3	20	1,111
West Mercia	240	61	2	206	1,323	315	8	15	2,170
West Midlands	407	22	23	327	2,255	292	13	70	3,409
West Yorkshire	776	51	26	199	2,291	6	18	21	3,388
Wiltshire	186	2	1	13	428	6	3	1	640
Total	17,624	2,901	284	7,029	58,137	3,140	508	687	90,310

ANNEX B - Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued in Wales under emergency health regulations, 27th March 2020 to 14th March 2021

Force	No.1 regs	No.2 regs	No.3 regs	No.4 regs	No.5 regs	Hold a gathering of more than 30 people	ITR	Total
British Transport	24	-	-	1	177	-	-	202
Dyfed-Powys	1,728	4	43	14	324	-	-	2,113
Gwent	132	22	98	69	846	-	-	1,167
North Wales	476	103	23	56	955	3	-	1,616
South Wales	304	48	121	497	2,322	-	3	3,295
Total	2,664	177	285	637	4,624	3	3	8,393