

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 the emergency health protection regulations (including fines issued under local “lockdowns”, that is local areas where restrictions have been temporarily tightened) and includes revisions to previously published figures. This release also includes notices issued under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings on Public Transport, England) and (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings in a relevant place) regulations. The figures reported here do not include any Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued under the Health Protection International Travel Regulations.

Data 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, 18,683 notices¹ have been recorded as having been issued in England (16,021) and Wales (2,662) between Friday 27th March and Monday 17th August. This includes 36 notices issued in relation to breaches of local “lockdowns”: 23 in Leicester, 10 in Greater Manchester and 3 in Lancashire.

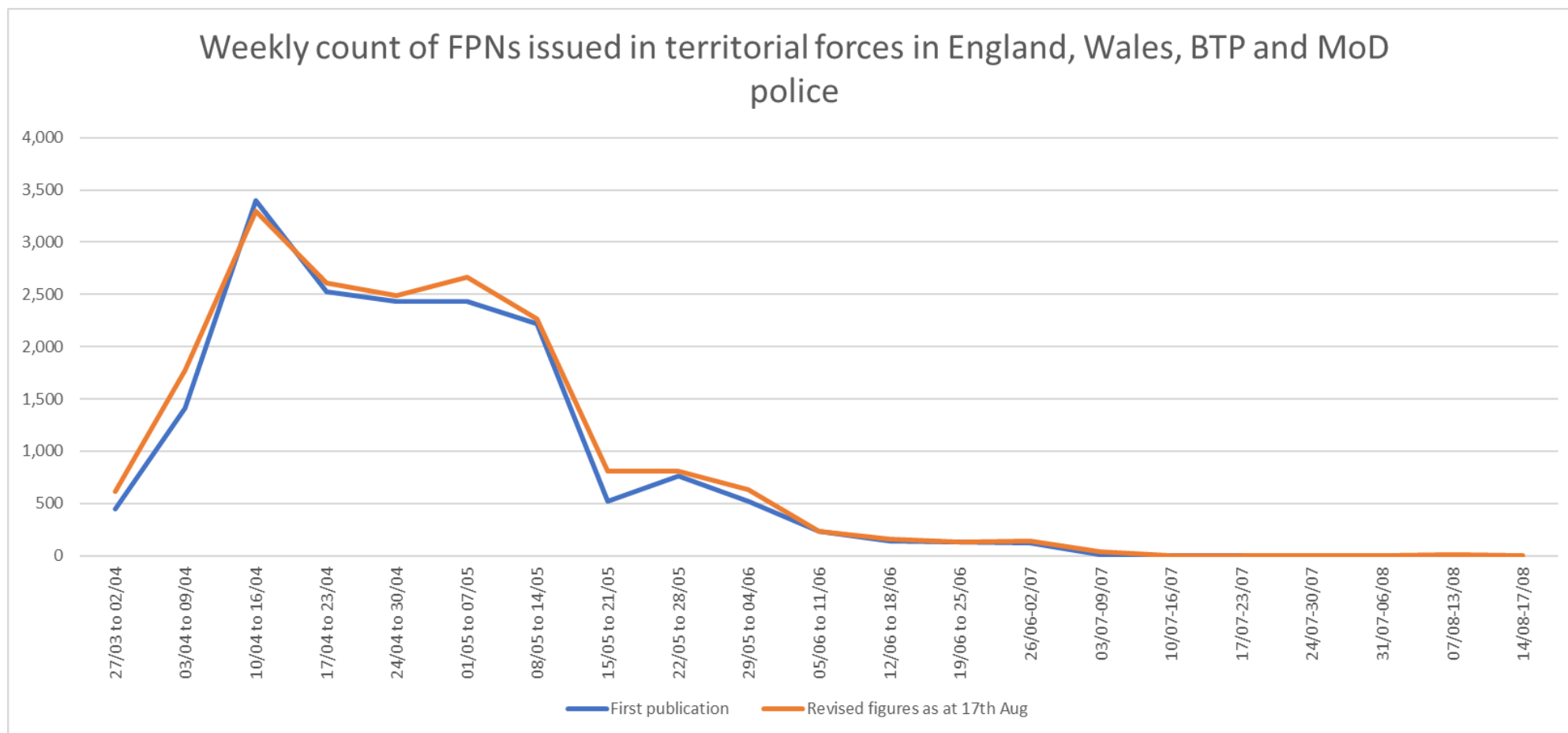
Chart 1 shows previously published figures for earlier reporting periods together with the latest revisions as more FPNs have been processed. In previous releases this was reported on a daily basis but, given the length of time these regulations have been in place, this is now summarised on a weekly 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 2 FPNs issued

¹ Includes three notices issued prior to 27th March.

between 14th and 17th Aug (partial week), and 11 issued in the last full week (7th to 13th August).

Chart 1: FPNs issued under COVID-19 regulations between 27th March and 17th August



Note: excludes 3. FPNs with incorrect date of issue.

The vast majority (13,980) of notices issued in England and Wales were issued for 'Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period' (Table 1).

As so few FPNs have been issued in recent weeks, we have not presented any demographic breakdowns in this release. The general patterns presented when these data were last published on 24th July remains the same and breakdowns on the number of FPNs issued up to 20th July by age, sex and ethnicity can be found here:

<https://cdn.prgloo.com/media/download/6664211dc192446b86f6cee6caaa1690>

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	11,805	2,175	13,980
Contravene a direction or fail to comply with instruction	2,258	343	2,601
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public of more than two people	4,166	264	4,430
Contravene requirement from a relevant person	423	52	475
Obstruct person carrying out a function under the regulations	279	10	289
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	56	2	58
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - dwelling/houseboat	1	-	1
Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - land (certain public outdoor spaces)	1	-	1
Entry into and/or remaining in a restricted area	2	-	2
Stay overnight other than at place of living / linked household, in England, without reasonable excuse	7	-	7
Total to date	19,019	2,846	21,865

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

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

A total of 38 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 17th August, and 8 notices have been issued under the Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place Regulations between 24th July and 17th August.

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

Face coverings on Public transport

Almost all FPNs issued under the Face coverings on Public transport regulations, except for one, were issued to males. Over two-thirds (68%) were issued to individuals aged between 18 and 29. Just over a third of this type of FPN (or 13 records) had missing ethnicity data; of the remaining 25, 18 were issued to White individuals, 4 to Asian individuals, one to a Black individual and two to individuals from a Mixed background.

As might be expected, the BTP have issued most of such FPNs to date (32 out of 38) for individuals not complying with the transport regulations (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of FPNs issued under Face Coverings Regulations by Police Force in England and Wales

	Public transport (15 th June to 17 th Aug)	In a relevant place (24 th July to 17 th Aug)
BTP	32	2
Cumbria	1	
Devon & Cornwall		2
Lancashire	1	1
Lincolnshire		1
South Yorkshire		1
West Midlands	4	1
TOTAL	38	8

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).