

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 and includes revisions to previously published figures.

Data for Fixed Penalty Notices (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 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. For example, the police in England and Wales recorded a total of 102,304 Covid-19 related incidents in the 4 weeks to the 7th June. 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.

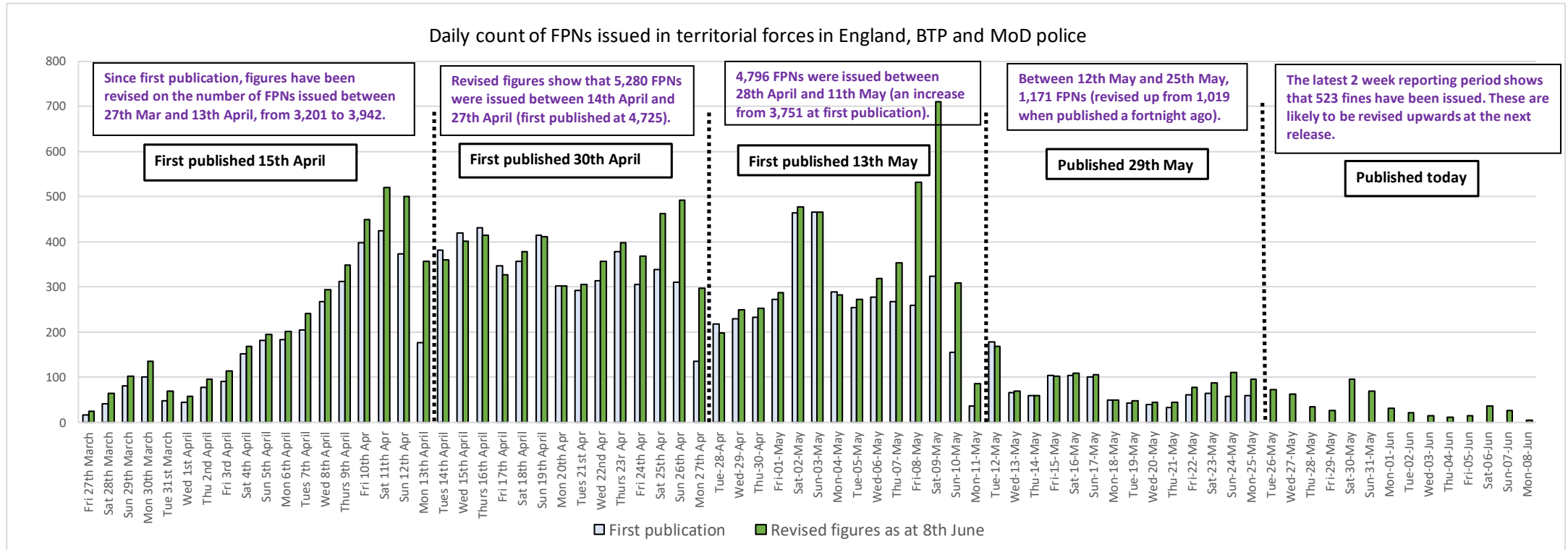
Headline figures for England

In total, 15,715 notices¹ have been recorded as having been issued in England between Friday 27th March and Monday 8th June. Chart 1 shows previously published figures for earlier reporting periods together with the latest revisions as more FPNs have been processed.

There was a general upward trend in the first period of the restrictions which continued through early April peaking during the Easter Bank holiday weekend (10th to 13th April). There was then generally a flatter trend through the rest of April and May with increases at weekends. However, the highest daily number of FPNs (711) were issued on Saturday 9th May. Since then there has been a considerable reduction in enforcement activity as the restrictions were eased in England (from 13th May) to allow unlimited outdoor exercise and meetings with one person from another household in an outdoors public space. While figures for the latest 2 weeks are subject to revision, the levels of FPNs being issued are now at similar levels to the first week of the restrictions.

¹ Includes three notices issued prior to 27th March.

Chart 1: FPNs issued under COVID-19 regulations between 27th March and 8th June



Note: excludes 3 FPNs with incorrect date of issue

Of all enforcement notices issued:

- The vast majority (11,559) were 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 7 in 10 were issued to the under 35; with 37% 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 ethnicity² recorded, over three-quarters (79%) were issued to people who self-identified as White. Just over one in eight (12%) went to Asians and 5% to those identifying as Black (Table 4).
- To date, 791 FPNs (or 5% of the 15,715 FPNs) have been identified as having been issued to repeat offenders, that is the individuals who have been fined two or more times. The vast majority of these (80%) being for those who had been fined twice (Table 5).

Table 1: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, between 27th March and 8th June in England

| Reason for issue | As at 8th June |
|--|----------------|
| Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period | 11,559 |
| Contravene a direction or fail to comply with instruction | 2,203 |
| Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public of more than two people | 4,130 |
| Contravene requirement from a relevant person | 416 |
| Obstruct person carrying out a function under the regulations | 269 |
| Total to date | 18,577 |

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.

Table 2: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by gender, between 27th March and 8th June in England

| | As at 8th June |
|---------|----------------|
| Male | 80% |
| Female | 18% |
| Unknown | 2% |

² 23% of FPNs issued did not have the ethnicity of the individual identified.

Table 3: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by age group, between 27th March and 8th June in England

| | As at 8th June |
|---------|----------------|
| 18-24 | 37% |
| 25-29 | 18% |
| 30-34 | 14% |
| 35-39 | 10% |
| 40-44 | 7% |
| 45-49 | 6% |
| 50-54 | 4% |
| 55-59 | 2% |
| 60-64 | 1% |
| 65+ | 1% |
| Unknown | 0% |

Table 4: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by ethnicity, between 27th March and 8th June in England

| | As at 8th June |
|---------|----------------|
| White | 79% |
| Asian | 12% |
| Black | 5% |
| Chinese | 0% |
| Mixed | 2% |
| Other | 1% |

Notes: Excludes 23% of FPNs where the ethnicity of the individual issued with the notice was 'not stated'.

Table 5: Number of FPNs issued to repeat offenders under emergency COVID-19 regulations, between 27th March and 8th June in England

| Number of FPNs | As at 8th June |
|----------------|----------------|
| 2 | 635 |
| 3 | 104 |
| 4 | 37 |
| 5 | 9 |
| 6 | 1 |
| 7 | 3 |
| 8 | 2 |
| Total | 791 |

Summary of FPNs issued in Wales

- In total, 2,282 FPNs have been issued in Wales between 27th March and 8th June.
- Similar to England, most FPNs³ (1,814) had been issued for 'Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period'.
- Just over three-quarters (76% or 1,737) had been issued to males and just under two-thirds (62%) were to individuals aged between 18 and 34.
- Excluding FPNs where ethnicity was not recorded, the vast majority (87%) were issued to those self-defining as White with eight percent of FPNs issued to those identifying as Asians and one per cent to those who were Black.

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 appears to be slowing.

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).

³ In total 2,449 reasons have been recorded. This figure exceeds the total headline figure as more than one reason can be given for issuing an FPN.