



Update from Chief Constable John Campbell on Coronavirus

Thames Valley Police Chief constable John Campbell gives an update on how we are dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

To view the video, please visit the Thames Valley Police [YouTube channel](#) or click the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mYfWrbX8ok>

If you are unable to view the video a full transcript can be found below:

Hello everybody, my name's John Campbell, I'm Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police and I thought I would give you an update in regards to how Thames Valley Police is responding to the current Coronavirus challenges.

In terms of the force itself, we remain resilient. We have about 20% of our workforce currently either self-isolating or off work because of pre-existing medical conditions. That's about normal for any of the organisations at the current time. I'm pleased to say that over the last few days, we've had 500 of our own staff come back into work, having previously been self-isolating. So we are seeing that as a pretty consistent number at the moment and long may that continue. But we do have to make sure that we are resilient not only now, but for the future as well. And we've put into place some changes to make sure that we can not only protect the public, over the next few weeks and months, but also protect our own staff, and they are linked. Officers are not immune from contracting the virus or transmitting the virus as well. We've merged some of our teams together to give us a greater resilience in some of our patrol and response teams as well. But we are also keeping a reserve of officers available to us at short notice so that if we do get a surge in demand, then we can call them in, and they can deal with that very, very quickly.

We've also asked whether or not any recently retired officers would want to come back and work with us over the next few weeks and months, and we've had over 200 officers make contact and my thanks to them.

We also have available to us Special Constabulary officers, and they're also being held in reserve. And that's important because it means that they're not going to get the virus so we can protect them as much as we possibly can and also, they're therefore not going to be potentially transmitting it to their colleagues or to any members of the public that they work for.

Let's talk a little about demand. One of the reasons we can remain resilient is because we are actually getting less calls from the public, in respect of some of the historical type of things that the police would deal with. So for example, there is almost no night time economy now in terms of pubs and clubs, so we have a significant amount of work associated with that. People are staying in their homes, they're not going about their normal activities during the day, the roads are quieter, so all of that means that we get less calls from the public. And that's quite important because we are then able to use some of that capacity to enforce the new powers that we've been given.

Now you recall that these powers came in quite recently and they're very important because they're about protecting the community and protecting our NHS, and that is why my officers are going out and engaging with members of the public.

So what is our approach to the new powers? Well first of all we're asking our officers to engage with members of the public, have those conversations, and then if there is some uncertainty, explain what the new rules are. Then we'll ask them to encourage the member of the public to comply, and only as a last resort, will we enforce. We have seen some examples in the last few days where we have had to make arrests, in respect of people breaching the new legislation and a number of people are now serving custodial sentences because of that, normally associated with some of the criminal acts they've been committing at the time. And we did have an incident where a member of the public coughed at our officers, and he too is currently in prison.

We are seeing certain types of demand go up, we have seen an increase in fraud, online fraud in particular. We are expecting a potential rise in domestic abuse, just because of the nature of people being confined within their homes. If you are a victim of domestic abuse, I would encourage you to call. You can call us on 999, and if you're unable to actually speak, you can press 55 and you'll get a response from the police.

The other thing that we've been doing is looking at how we can actually separate our police stations. We have very few people go into our police stations currently, many people contact us by the phone or online, and so across the force area we've actually shut many of our front counters.

Can I just finish with a couple of words of thanks. Thank you to all of my staff, whatever role their doing, for being there, and continue to do all they can willingly and enthusiastically to protect us all. And thank you for the support you are showing to my officers, when you are speaking with them, engaging with them, some of the comments that we receive into the force, both in terms of letters and online, it is greatly appreciated. Thank you for listening and my very best wishes to you all.

Message Sent By

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