



College of Policing

# Brief

BTP – joint custodial inspection →

Domestic abuse support →

Prison estate expansion →

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ISSUE 4 | APRIL/MAY 2020

Updates in police law, operational policing practice and criminal justice, produced by the **Legal Services Department** at the College of Policing



Mental health support frontline staff →

3,000 officers in recruitment drive →

Mike Cunningham WeCop →

Health Protection Regulations 2020 →

The College of Policing Brief is a scanning publication intended to capture and consolidate key criminal justice issues, both current and future, impacting on all areas of policing.

During the production of the Brief, information is included from governmental bodies, criminal justice organisations and research bodies. As such, the Brief should prove an invaluable guide to those responsible for strategic decision making, operational planning and police training.

The College of Policing is also responsible for Authorised Professional Practice (APP). APP is the official and most up-to-date source of policing practice and covers a range of policing activities such as: police use of firearms, treatment of people in custody, investigation of child abuse and management of intelligence. APP is available online at [app.college.police.uk](http://app.college.police.uk)

Any enquiries regarding this publication or to request copies in accessible formats please contact us at [brief@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:brief@college.pnn.police.uk)

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# Editorial

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Dear readers,

Welcome to the Brief, your monthly update of what's new in the policing and criminal justice field, produced by the Legal Services team at the College of Policing.

After the government's announcement to slightly ease the restrictions, allowing members of the public to exercise as frequently as they wish, and to meet up with one member of another household whilst socially distancing, questions have been raised as to how, practically, the police will be able to enforce the relevant legislation. Attention has also been brought to the disproportionate amount of COVID-19 cases in certain ethnic groups, and many forces have outlined how they intend to support members of these communities.

Within this month's edition:

- CPS' review findings on coronavirus legislation.
- SI 2020/447 – The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.
- Mental health support for frontline staff.

To find out more about the College and what we do, including information on the PEQF training, please visit the [College of Policing website](#).

We hope that our publication supports police officers and staff in their work. We are always looking for ways to get better at what we do, so if you have any feedback or ideas for future content, [get in touch](#).

Thank you for reading,

**The Legal Services Team**

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For subscription requests, further information or to send us ideas about what you would like to see in upcoming editions, please email us at:

[brief@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:brief@college.pnn.police.uk)

# Share with our community

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There's lots of great work and innovation taking place across the police service, with some remarkable people working diligently to support and safeguard the communities they serve. Sharing this news can jump-start collaboration and growth, so we want to hear from you.

We'd like to invite police officers and staff to contribute by including a monthly guest article under one of the following categories:

**Pride:** Tell us something about your team or a project you're working on which has produced results you're particularly proud of.

**Innovation:** New initiatives and projects, what worked and what didn't, and how you learnt from it.

**Collaboration:** Tell us about the relationships with other forces and external agencies which help your team.

**Your team, our community:** Diversity, equality, inclusion and key support mechanisms – that special team member whose hard work deserves recognition in the Brief.

If you'd like to contribute, please email [brief@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:brief@college.pnn.police.uk) and we'll provide you with the information you need.

We'd like to pick one article a month, and will ensure there is a wide variety of authors and forces. We will inform you in advance if your article has been chosen.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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# College news

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## College CEO Cunningham responds to Home Affairs Select Committee report into COVID-19 and policing

Chief Constable Mike Cunningham, College of Policing CEO, said:

‘Today’s welcome report highlights the professionalism of officers and staff, who have almost unprecedented responsibilities in very challenging and fast-moving circumstances. Officers have hundreds of thousands of interactions with the public every day, using guidance designed to protect the public, the NHS and themselves from harm, and in the vast majority of cases this is working well.

‘The welfare of officers and staff remains a priority and the National Police Wellbeing Service is carrying out vital work to support forces and those on the frontline. National guidance for officers and staff is kept under review and officers will continue to work hard in the communities they are dedicated to protecting. The top priority for the police is to keep people safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19.’

Read [Mike Cunningham’s statement](#).

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## Responding to COVID-19: Mike Cunningham shares his thoughts with WeCops

On 1 April, Mike Cunningham, and Chief Constable Andy Rhodes, took part in a special WeCops ([@wecops](#)) Twitter discussion, focused on the policing response to **COVID-19** (Coronavirus).

WeCops chats are hosted every two weeks on Twitter. WeCops is a network of police practitioners designed to encourage engagement and debate between frontline police officers and staff. Below, Mike shares his reflections on the WeCops chat around responding to COVID-19.

The national response to reduce the spread of COVID-19 represents an unprecedented challenge for emergency services. The College of Policing recognises the critical role of police officers and we thank you for all the work that you are doing. I wanted to host a WeCops session to hear first-hand the experiences of frontline officers and staff, in order to better understand

how we can support you in the coming weeks and months. We're all in this together and your views are a key part in the joint response from the College, NPCC, Oscar Kilo (the National Police Wellbeing Service) and all forces.

At the College, our work has been to issue relevant and up-to-date guidance on how to implement the law and other government directions on social distancing. The key message is that we want the public to stay at home. The brand new legislation, and the speed with which it was implemented, have presented a unique challenge to police officers and staff. It's clear that policing is once again rising to this challenge.

The discussion was insightful. You've made it clear that it is not the responsibility of officers to interpret vague instructions. You asked for more clarity to help you distinguish between guidance and law, with leaders suggesting that there is further work that the College could do to support them in guiding their staff. You also shared ideas and current practice, including daily orders, pocket book guides and briefing packs for supervisors to use during their shifts. The challenges of working from home and from on-site locations was also highlighted.

We have heard about a variety of good practice examples where our police officers and staff are going beyond the call of duty to protect the public - in particular those who are most vulnerable. There was a sense of optimism around the changing ways in which we work and the potential for sustaining some of these positive changes in the future.

Last year, the College of Policing launched a National Map of Police Ideas, which helped us collect hundreds of ideas from across the UK on how we can improve the ways in which we protect the public. This exchange of ideas is now more important than ever before.

We want to hear from you on what you think policing should be doing to work through this challenge together. The **COVID-19 Police Ideas Survey** is solely for the purpose of communicating with frontline officers, staff and volunteers. We want to find out what works, what could work and how we can bring some of these ideas to life or scale them up quickly to help us respond to COVID-19.

Finally, we recognise that the confusion and uncertainty can sometimes be more stressful than the job itself. Many of these challenges were raised during the WeCops chat and I know the National Police Wellbeing Service is evaluating and acting upon them to provide further support.

Once again, thank you for all the hard work and commitment each and every one of you are showing during this difficult time. Please be assured that we are

working hard to make sure you receive the right information at the right time, in a way that is meaningful to the work you do. Please continue to share your ideas and good practice with us. I promise we will continue listening to you, sharing your ideas and acting on your behalf to help you respond effectively during this global pandemic.

Read **Mike Cunningham's full statement**.

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# COVID-19 latest information

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Information and guidance released in relation to COVID-19 is updated daily. As such, any information contained within the Brief, was up to date at the time of publication.

The latest guidance for first responders and others in close contact with symptomatic people with potential COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

Please click [here](#) for updates on the status of the College's training, events, and assessments, as well as guidance for officers and staff in the midst of the virus.

Please find further information regarding the decision to postpone the Sergeants exam [here](#).

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# Legal updates

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## Statutory Instruments

### **SI 2020/447 – The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020**

This instrument makes provisions clarifying a number of public health measures under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/350) to reduce the public health risks posed by the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in England, which causes the disease COVID-19.

Key points include:

- Regulation 5(8) of the Restrictions Regulations is amended to clarify burial grounds, including those surrounding crematoriums, can remain open.
- Regulation 6(1) is amended to state beyond doubt that a person commits an offence if they remain outside of the place where they are living without reasonable excuse, having left it for a permitted reason.
- Regulation 6(2) is amended to clarify that it is a reasonable excuse to leave, or be outside of, the house to:
  - access all types of money service businesses, including savings clubs and international money transfer businesses
  - visit a burial ground, garden of remembrance or grounds surrounding a crematorium to pay respects to a family member or friend
- Regulation 8(5)(a) is a clarificatory amendment to provide that where a child is contravening regulation 6(1), enforcement officials (police officers) should instruct the responsible adult of the child to escort the child to the place where the child is living.
- Regulation 10 is amended to clarify that a fixed penalty notice can be issued to a person aged 18 and over, rather than over 18.

Read the **full statutory instrument**.

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## **SI 472/2020 – The Criminal Legal Aid (Coronavirus, Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2020**

The purpose of this instrument is to amend the circumstances under which litigators and advocates, providing legal aid services under the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme and the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme, can receive hardship payments under The Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013 ("the Remuneration Regulations"). This is specifically because of the impact COVID-19 has had on the profession and this instrument will provide greater access to payments for work done in cases of financial hardship.

This instrument provides the following:

- The threshold at which a hardship payment may be made is reduced from the current amount of £5,000 to £450.
- The time that must pass before a practitioner can apply for a hardship payment is reduced from six months following instruction to one month following instruction.

Read more about the amended [Criminal Legal Aid Regulations](#).

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## **SI 478/2020 – The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (Commencement No. 14) Order 2020**

The purpose of this instrument is to bring into force section 76 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, which inserts the Alcohol Abstinence and Monitoring Requirement (AAMR) at section 212A into the Criminal Justice Act 2003. This enables AAMR to be imposed as a sentencing option for alcohol-related offending where a community order or suspended sentence order is imposed.

AAMRs are being introduced as an optional requirement for community orders and suspended sentence orders. They are intended to tackle offending behaviour where alcohol has been a contributory factor. They are supposed to ensure that the offender does not consume alcohol during the period in which the AAMR is in force and, through enforcing abstinence, they are designed to mitigate offending behaviour which is driven by alcohol. Those subject to an AAMR should not drink alcohol during the lifetime of the order, thereby

removing a contributing factor or trigger to the behaviour of offenders who undertake alcohol-related crimes.

Read more about the **Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act**.

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## Bills

### **Domestic Abuse Bill 2019-21**

To make provisions in relation to domestic abuse, including the establishment of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner, prohibiting cross-examination in person in family proceedings in certain circumstances, certain violent or sexual offences, and offences involving other abusive behaviour, committed outside the United Kingdom.

The Bill was debated at second reading on Tuesday 28 April 2020 and has now been sent to a Public Bill Committee. The Public Bill Committee will scrutinise the Bill line by line. The first sitting of the Public Bill Committee will be on a date to be confirmed and the Committee is scheduled to report by Thursday 25 June 2020.

Read more about the **Domestic Abuse Bill 2019-21**.

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### **Victims of Abuse (Support) Bill 2019-21**

A Bill to establish a right to specialist sexual violence and abuse support services for victims of sexual, violent and domestic abuse.

The next stage for this private members' bill is the second reading, which is scheduled to take place on Friday 10 July 2020.

Read the full **Victims of Abuse (Support) Bill 2019-21**.

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# Before the court

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## **Pashias & Anor, R. v [2020] EWCA Crim 510**

On 8 July 2019, the day set for their trial, Monica Pashias and Tyrone Waugh pleaded guilty to robbery. On 24 January 2020, they were each sentenced to a suspended sentence. Ms Pashias received two years' imprisonment suspended for two years with a mental health treatment requirement for two years, and a rehabilitation activity requirement for 60 days. Mr Waugh was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment suspended for 18 months, with an unpaid work requirement of 135 hours and a rehabilitation activity requirement for 10 days.

Her Majesty's Solicitor General believed those sentences to be unduly lenient, and therefore made an application for leave to refer the case to the Court of Appeal, so the sentencing could be reviewed.

The offence of robbery was committed on 2 August 2018. Ms Pashias' friend, Ms Kaur, had previously reported a stolen laser hair removal machine to the police. Some time later, Ms Kaur mistakenly thought she saw the stolen machine in a salon, however it was a different machine, with a different registration number. Ms Kaur told Ms Pashias that she had seen the machine and they planned a way to recover it, including Mr Waugh, their friend, at a later stage.

On 2 August 2018, Ms Kaur entered the salon, pretending to be a customer wanting a consultation. She had her face covered and wore dark glasses. The sole member of staff present, Ms Marquez, locked the door while the consultation took place, before Ms Kaur unlocked it, allowing Ms Pashias and Mr Waugh to enter the room. Ms Pashias stated that she was a police officer and ordered Ms Marquez to sit down, before pushing her back against the wall when she tried to reach for her phone. Ms Pashias threatened to arrest Ms Marquez and stated that they would be removing the machine because it was stolen. Mr Waugh removed the machine and all three left, leaving Ms Marquez locked in the premises.

Ms Marquez was left locked in the salon for about an hour, until her employer arrived and unlocked the door. Her physical injuries were: pain to her chest, bruising of one arm, and swelling of one foot, due to exacerbation of a pre-existing injury. She also suffered severe psychological harm. The theft of the machine had a significant impact on the proprietor of the salon, who had to buy a new machine for £65,000, while continuing to pay hire purchase charges of more than £1,800 per month on the stolen machine.

The offenders were captured on CCTV and subsequently traced by the police. When arrested and interviewed, Ms Pashias admitted taking the machine, but said they were entitled to take it, as it was owned by her friend. She denied using physical force and denied impersonating a police officer. Mr Waugh stated that he had been contacted by Ms Pashias on the morning of the robbery, who had asked him to help move a heavy item into a car. He denied using any violence and did not accept that Ms Pashias pretended to be a police officer. Ms Kaur contested the charges against her, and was ultimately convicted of false imprisonment and possession of an article for use in fraud.

Each of the offenders had previous convictions, but none were particularly relevant to the present offence. The judge received a report dated 13 January 2020 by a consultant psychiatrist, which showed Ms Pashias had been assessed by psychiatric services in 2014 and had been a patient of a clinic since March 2018. She was diagnosed with a borderline personality disorder and post-traumatic disorder. She was assessed as being compliant and suggestible, and the clinic lead stated that if she were to be imprisoned, she would be vulnerable to others' controlling behaviour and high suicidal impulses. Mr Waugh was placed in a lesser role than the other two defendants, as he was brought in at the end to simply carry out a favour for a friend.

The Court of Appeal, after considering the facts of the case, and the Solicitor General's submission that the appropriate prison sentences were of a length that could not be suspended, held that the current sentences were unduly lenient. However, they largely considered the potential effects a sentence of immediate imprisonment could have on Ms Pashias. The court also considered that since the sentences were passed, each offender had complied with the community requirements of their respective suspended sentences, and that any sentence of immediate imprisonment would have to be reduced to reflect that compliance.

By a narrow margin, the Court of Appeal held that the initial sentence was unduly lenient but that it was not necessary or appropriate to increase or vary the sentences.

Read the **full judgment**.

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# Policing

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## News

### **Round-the-clock mental health support for frontline staff**

Mind, Samaritans, Shout, Hospice UK and The Royal Foundation have joined forces to provide round-the-clock mental health support to those working on the frontline against COVID-19. Our Frontline will provide a combination of one-to-one support and online resources for NHS workers, carers, the 'blue light' emergency services and key workers who are putting their mental health under pressure, while many of us do our bit by staying at home.

With face-to-face contact limited, frontline staff can call or text a trained volunteer and access specifically developed online resources, toolkits and advice to support their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge is formally supporting Our Frontline to ensure frontline staff are aware of the available services.

The Duke of Cambridge chaired a call with representatives from the emergency services sector and the NHS in which he heard how Our Frontline can support keyworkers. Those on the call included NHS England and NHS Improvement, the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care – Royal College of Surgeons, Mind, Lifelines Scotland, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Fire Fighters Charity, Police Care UK and the Ambulance Staff Charity.

Read **more about Our Frontline**.

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### **Man jailed for assaulting three police officers**

Dragos Marchidan, 33, has been jailed for seven months after deliberately coughing on three police officers, as he was being cautioned for breaching COVID-19 lockdown measures. On 31 March, at Birmingham Magistrates' Court, he pleaded guilty to three counts of assault on an emergency worker and was sentenced on 28 April at Birmingham Crown Court.

On Saturday 29 March 2020, officers arrived at an address in Tyseley, following reports of a party being held, contrary to social distancing rules. On arrival, officers found approximately 20 adults having a gathering, involving loud music and alcohol.

Police advised participants to leave the address and, as the group started to depart, the defendant deliberately coughed in the direction of the officers, while smirking, and not covering his mouth. He was warned several times to stop, but continued to cough in the same direction, before being arrested for assaulting an emergency worker.

This case follows Director of Public Prosecutions Max Hill's announcement that anyone using Coronavirus to threaten emergency and essential workers would face criminal charges.

Read more about **[the man jailed for coughing on officers](#)**.

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### **More than 3,000 officers recruited**

According to figures released on 30 April 2020, more than 3,005 officers have joined police ranks across England and Wales since the government launched the major recruitment drive in September 2019, to recruit 20,000 officers.

The statistics show that forces have successfully accelerated their recruitment plans, and are on schedule to meet their target of 6,000 officers by March 2021. There are now a total of 131,596 officers, a 5% increase when compared to March 2019, of which uplift officers account for approximately half.

The College has announced it is rolling out new online assessment centres, which will ensure the recruitment is able to continue during the coronavirus pandemic. The College's online assessment process will guide candidates through situational judgement tests, briefing exercises, and interviews. West Midlands and Hampshire are already trialling this online assessment, and the service will be launched nationally in June.

Read more about **[the recruitment drive](#)**.

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## Our workforce

### British Transport Police – Joint inspection of custody suites – 2020

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has published its findings following an inspection of British Transport Police (BTP) custody facilities. The inspection was jointly conducted by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HMICFRS between 6 and 16 January 2020.

The inspection assessed the effectiveness of custody services and outcomes for detained people throughout the different stages of detention. It also examined the force's approach to custody provisions in relation to safe detention and the treatment of detainees.

Key points from the report include:

- BTS has a clear governance structure, which provided appropriate accountability for its custody services and facilities. The force has made good progress against the recommendations made in the 2014 HMICFRS report.
- The force has developed a comprehensive action log to improve services, which was monitored closely.
- Custody staff engaged respectfully and courteously with detainees. Good attention was paid to maintaining detainees' privacy and dignity.
- Good examples of staff using de-escalation techniques to mitigate and minimise the use of force on detainees was witnessed. When force was used, it was generally necessary and proportionate.

There were, however, some causes for concern and recommendations.

**Cause for concern:** The staffing arrangements for the custody suite were not robust enough to ensure safe detention. Officers on overtime, from outside custody, were used, which meant the suite was sometimes staffed by less experienced staff, who did not receive enough support.

**Recommendation:** The force should ensure that there are sufficient and adequately trained officers on duty in the custody suite, to deliver safe detention and meet the needs of detainees in a consistent way.

**Cause of concern:** The force did not consistently meet the requirements of PACE Code C in relation to the detention, treatment, and questioning of individuals.

**Recommendation:** The force should take immediate action to ensure that all custody procedures comply with legislation and guidance.

Main recommendations from the report include:

- Pre-release risk assessments should be detailed, meaningful, and based on an ongoing assessment of detainees' needs while in custody. The custody record should reflect the detainee's position on release, and any action that needs to be taken.
- Custody sergeants should ensure detention is appropriate and lasts no longer than is necessary.
- Procedures for contacting face-to-face interpreters should be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriately vetted individuals, and are suitably qualified. The interpreters list should be up to date.

Read the **joint inspection of BTP custody suites report**.

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# Criminal justice news

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## **Prioritisation of serious cases during COVID-19 pandemic**

Prosecutors have been asked to prioritise more serious cases, and consider the impact of COVID-19, when considering whether criminal charges are in the public interest, to help the criminal justice system continue to work effectively.

Lawyers must always assess whether a prosecution is in the public interest. But **new guidance** requires an extra layer of consideration, in regards to the impact of the pandemic, when deciding on the most proportionate response for each case. This will not affect the most serious or violent types of crime.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **CPS review findings under coronavirus legislation**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have reviewed all prosecutions brought under the Health Protection Regulations and the Coronavirus Act, to ensure that the laws are being applied consistently and appropriately.

They found that out of the 187 prosecutions under the Regulations, 175 were charged correctly. Seven cases were discontinued in court on the day of the defendant's appearance, and five convictions were returned to be reopened and withdrawn.

Under the Coronavirus Act, all 44 cases were found to have been incorrectly charged, as there was no evidence that they covered potentially infectious people, which is the purpose of the legislation.

Martin Hewitt, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) chair, has apologised for the mistakes, and confirmed that officers have received additional guidance on the correct use of the legislation.

Read [more about the CPS findings](#).

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## Disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on ethnic groups

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has published a report on how COVID-19 has affected sections of the population differently. There are growing concerns about minority ethnic groups in the UK being disproportionately affected, after evidence has shown that minority groups are over-represented in hospitals and death statistics.

Ethnic inequalities are likely to manifest from COVID-19 through:

- exposure to infection and health risks, including mortality
- exposure to loss of income

Key findings from the report:

- Per capita, COVID-19 hospital deaths are highest among the black Caribbean population and are three times those of the white British majority.
- Once you take account of age and geography, most minority groups should have fewer deaths per capita than the white British majority.
- Many ethnic minorities are more economically vulnerable to the current crisis than are white ethnic groups.
- Men from minority groups are more likely to be affected by the shutdown.

Public Health England has launched an inquiry into the issue.

Read the **IFS report into how ethnic minorities are affected by COVID-19**.

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## Updated guidance on spending time outside

In connection with the easing of the lockdown restrictions, as of 13 May 2020, people in England can spend more time outdoors. They can also enjoy a slightly wider range of activities for any length of time, subject to the usual social distancing rules.

The public can now:

- relax in the park, sunbathe, go for a picnic and go fishing
- spend time with one member of another household, one-on-one, as long as they adhere to the social distancing guidelines, staying two metres apart at all times

- use outdoor sports facilities, such as tennis courts, golf clubs, and basketball courts
- travel without restrictions to exercise

However, members of the public cannot:

- go on holiday
- visit and stay overnight at a holiday home or second home
- visit the homes of friends and family, unless this is to help a vulnerable person for medical reasons, or to take a child to another household with whom parental responsibilities are shared

Fines have been increased and will now start at £100, which will be lowered to £50 if paid within 14 days. This will double on each further repeat offence up to £3,200.

Read more about **spending time outside**.

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## Online child abuse

**NSPCC** research has revealed that certain characteristics can make children more vulnerable to being abused on social media. Children who have expressed vulnerability, such as by sharing thoughts and feelings in social media posts, livestreams or videos, are often targeted.

2,000 young people, aged between 11 and 17, were surveyed by the NSPCC. Results showed:

- 4% had sent, received, or been asked to send, sexual messages to an adult.
- This more than doubled to 9% for children who felt lonely, unhappy, were extroverted, and who relied on social media.
- 9% of respondents had sent, received, or been asked to send sexual messages to another young person, which more than doubled to 20% for those with the same vulnerable characteristics.

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen via any device that's connected to the web, such as computers, tablets and mobile phones. Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know,

or from strangers. It may be part of other abuse, which is taking place offline, such as bullying or grooming, or the abuse might only happen online.

There are different types of online abuse, such as:

**Cyberbullying** – a type of bullying that happens online.

Emotional abuse – any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. This can happen both online and offline.

**Grooming** – when someone builds a relationship with a child with the aim of sexually abusing, exploiting or trafficking them. Children and young people can be groomed online or in person, by a stranger or by someone they know.

**Sexting** – when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexual messages. It's online abuse if a child or young person is pressured or coerced into creating or sending these types of images.

**Sexual abuse** – when a child or young person is forced, or tricked, into sexual activities. Sexual abuse can happen online. For example, a child could be forced to make, view, or share child abuse images or videos, or take part in sexual activities, or conversations online.

**Sexual exploitation** – a type of sexual abuse. When a child is sexually exploited online, they may be persuaded or forced to create sexually explicit photos or videos, or have sexual conversations.

A child or young person experiencing online abuse may:

- spend a lot more, or a lot less time than usual, online, texting, gaming, or using social media
- seem distant, upset, or angry after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they are talking to and what they are doing online, or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet

If a child talks to you about online abuse, it's important to:

- listen carefully to what they're saying
- let them know they've done the right thing by telling you
- tell them it's not their fault

- reassure them that it isn't their fault and that you will take them seriously
- not confront the alleged abuser
- explain what you will do next
- report what the child has told you as soon as possible

Read **NSPCC guidance on online abuse**.

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### **Prison estate expanded during COVID-19**

As much as possible, prisons are moving towards single-cell accommodation to limit the spread of Coronavirus and the number of deaths.

With six priority jails starting the work, combined with the recently announced early release of low-risk offenders, there will be an increase in space in prisons to help reduce the spread of the virus.

The project is expected to expand to additional prisons to follow public health advice. Prisons present a unique environment, in which rapid outbreaks could place a significant strain on local NHS services.

Only lower-risk category C or D prisoners will be held in the temporary unit, following careful risk assessment, and will be monitored by staff as normal.

The first sites have been chosen as they have the largest number of shared cells, lack in-cell sanitation and house high numbers of vulnerable prisoners.

Further prisons could be chosen based on whether the extra accommodation is needed and if there is sufficient space.

The measures put in place by the Ministry of Justice to protect prison staff, prisoners and safeguard the NHS are as follows:

- Shielding vulnerable prisoners through social distancing.
- Redeploying staff from headquarters into operational roles, where appropriate.
- Working with the judiciary to expedite sentencing hearings for those on remand to reduce the numbers being held in custody.
- Releasing risk-assessed prisoners who are within two months of their release date, with strict conditions.

- Pregnant women in custody who do not pose a high risk of harm to the public will be temporarily released from prison.

Read more about the **increase in prison space to limit virus spread**.

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## Getting help for domestic abuse

The Home Office has published guidance on recognising, and getting help for, domestic abuse. It is noted that, in relation to household isolation due to COVID-19, you can leave your home to escape domestic abuse. You can call the **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** for free and confidential advice, 24 hours a day, on 0808 2000 247.

## Recognising domestic abuse

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background. The most prevalent form of domestic abuse occurs in relationships, but the definition extends to abuse between family members. There are different types of abuse, which can take place in different contexts.

If you, or someone else, answers yes to any of the following questions, you, or they, may be in an abusive relationship.

### Emotional abuse

Does your partner, or former partner, ever:

- belittle you or put you down?
- blame you for the abuse or arguments?
- deny that abuse is happening, or diminish it?
- isolate you from your friends and family?
- stop you from going to work or college?
- make unreasonable demands for your attention?
- accuse you of flirting or having affairs?
- tell you what to wear, who to see, where to go, or what to think?
- control your money, or not give you enough money to buy food or essentials?



## Threats and intimidation

Does your partner, or former partner, ever:

- threaten to hurt or kill you?
- destroy things that belong to you?
- stand over you or invade your personal space?
- threaten to kill themselves or the children?
- read your emails, texts or letters?
- harass or follow you?

## Physical abuse

Does your partner, or former partner, ever:

- slap, hit or punch you?
- push or shove you?
- bite or kick you?
- burn you?
- choke you or hold you down?
- throw things?

## Sexual abuse

Does your partner, or former partner, ever:

- touch you in a way you don't want to be touched?
- make unwanted sexual demands?
- hurt you during sex?
- pressure you to have unsafe sex, for example not using a condom?
- pressure you to have sex?

If you've ever felt afraid of your partner or former partner, or have changed your behaviour because you're afraid of what your partner or former partner might do, you may be in an abusive relationship. If you, or someone you know, is a victim of domestic abuse, find out how to report it [here](#).

If you are in immediate danger, call 999 and ask for the police. If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, call 999, listen to the questions asked by the operator and, if possible, respond by coughing or tapping the handset.

## Supporting a victim

Neighbours, community members and friends can be a lifeline for those living with domestic abuse. If someone confides in you that they're experiencing domestic abuse:

- listen and take care not to blame them
- acknowledge it takes strength to talk to someone about experiencing abuse
- give them time to talk, but don't push them to talk if they don't want to
- tell them nobody deserves to be threatened or abused, no matter what the abuser has said
- don't push them to leave the relationship if they're not ready
- help them to report the assault to the police if they choose to, or offer to go with them to a hospital or GP if they've suffered physical harm

For full information, including a list of organisations you can speak to for support, read the **government's domestic abuse guidelines**.

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## Improved legal aid support

Changes made by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) include expanding evidence requirements needed to qualify for legal aid for domestic abuse victims. The MOJ has also reinstated immediate access to individual help for debt, discrimination and special educational needs cases, initially via video link until social distancing measures are no longer in place and then face to face.

The Legal Aid Agency will be given the power to backdate payments from when the application was made, rather than when the application was granted. The MOJ is delivering on key government commitments that were made to broaden access to civil legal aid by reviewing legal aid means testing.

Additional support is available to protect victims of domestic abuse during the Coronavirus outbreak, with the government recently publishing guidance on applying for domestic abuse injunctions remotely. Furthermore, domestic abuse helplines and online support will receive an additional £2 million.

This statutory instrument was laid in Parliament on 21 April 2020 and changes will come into effect from 15 May 2020.

Read more about **vulnerable groups receiving improved legal aid support**.

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### **Death in service scheme for frontline health and care staff**

The families of health and care workers on the frontline in England will be able to access a new life assurance scheme during the pandemic. The scheme recognises the increased risk posed to staff during the crisis. It will cover Coronavirus-related deaths of workers in frontline health, and adult and children's social care roles, during the outbreak. The scheme will cover staff members who provide 'hands-on' personal care for people who have contracted Coronavirus, or who work in health or care settings, where the virus is present.

Bereaved family members will be eligible to receive £60,000 under the scheme. This will cover full, part-time, or locum NHS staff, and public health workers, including: GPs, dentists, retired staff, and second and final year students taking up paid frontline roles.

Within the social care bracket, the scheme will cover employees of publicly funded care homes, home care, directly employed carers, including personal assistants, and frontline child and family social workers. The scheme is aimed at the families of those who die from Coronavirus during the course of their essential work. As is stated above, this includes those providing direct care and cleaners and porters, who continue to carry out vital work in these care environments.

The scheme is time-limited, only providing cover for the duration of the pandemic. This scheme will cover frontline staff in England, but Wales is implementing the same scheme, and arrangements are currently being considered in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Read more about the **life assurance scheme for frontline health and care workers**.

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## About the College

We're the professional body for everyone who works for the police service in England and Wales. Our purpose is to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust.

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