

COMMUNITY UPDATE

COVID-19



09/10/2020



Reports of rising cases across the country and here in Norfolk, in Great Yarmouth in particular, make for sobering reading. Many people in our communities will, as a result, be understandably concerned about the increase in infection rates and what the next few months will have in store for us.

Drawing on my experience from the first wave, we witnessed some remarkable acts of kindness and generosity; our community spirit was stronger than ever with people supporting one another through these testing times.

However, it is now a very different time of year and dealing with a repeat of the challenges we faced before, combined with the longer, darker nights and the ending of the furlough scheme means we will need to work even harder with our partners to support you all.

When I look at the crime trends seen during the first phase, we did see a fall in some crime types. This was expected to a degree because of the stay-at-home restrictions we were all living under. However, we always had real concerns about crime taking place behind closed doors. We refer to these as 'hidden crimes', offences like domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and online abuse. We have seen rises in these crime types following the easing of restrictions so our initial concerns appear to be well-founded.

We are working closely with our council and health partners to make sure we have the capacity to deal with these increased reports whilst equally providing reassurance that we are also dealing with blatant breaches of the Health Protection Regulations.

I suspect current rules may change and tighten even further in the weeks and months to come and it's really important you understand that while we always strive to meet the expectations of the public, we have to strike a balance and apply discretion to the situations we are faced with.

The next few months will be a challenging time for us all. Our demand has steadily increased back to normal pre-COVID levels which means balancing enforcing restrictions and dealing with crime and hidden harm – not always an easy decision but one we are trying to manage.

There's safety in numbers and I truly believe that if we work together, be considerate and understanding of others, we will overcome this challenge.

Many thanks.

Temporary Assistant Chief Constable, Julie Wwendth



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