



COVID-19 WEEKLY UPDATE

Update: 17 April 2020 Covid19@asco.police.uk

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A 'MUST READ' from Parliament: Policing and COVID-19

Report on [Policing and COVID-19](#) published by the Home Affairs Select Committee.

ASCO submitted a paper to Yvette Cooper, MP on 20 March 2020 and in their submission wrote:

"There is no 'reservist' model for the Special Constabulary such as 'the Reserve Army' and therefore employers cannot be required to release Special Constables to the Police Service. This has become apparent this week with some limited number of employers, some in the public sector suggesting that they would not release Special Constables. A reservist model, with power to 'call up' special constables with reimbursement to employers, offers a dynamic way of ensuring an 'on demand' service to provide additional resilience."

"The Special Constabulary is a well trained organisation with significant talent from a wide range of individuals in both public and private sector. The skill set that is available is remarkable and in the ordinary course of events, Forces could not afford to 'buy' or 'hire' the talent, ability and knowledge but is freely given with the 16 plus hrs given by most Special Constables usually on Friday and Saturday evenings. Special Constables should be part of the solution."

Recommendation 35 Policing and COVID-19. Chief constables have no legal powers to ensure the police service can make greater use of its volunteer officers (special constables) in times of national emergency. This contrasts with the armed forces and, since the Coronavirus Act 2020 came into force, Health and Social Care services. The Committee recognises the importance of preserving the special voluntary relationship between special constables and their forces. CC Lisa Winward told us that it was a "very special relationship" and "we want to maintain that very special element of volunteering in policing". However, she added that "a look at the legislation in times of crisis would absolutely be welcomed." **The Committee believes that, in times of national emergency only, chief constables should not have to rely on the goodwill of employers alone to make increased use of their trained special constables, should they need to do so. The Committee therefore recommends that the Home Office immediately addresses the discrepancy in Schedule 7 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, which does not list special constables amongst the types of volunteers employers are compelled to release on full paid leave should they be needed to report for duty by their chief constable.**

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<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/83/home-affairs-committee/publications/>

Message from Police Superintendents' Association President, Chief Superintendent Paul Griffiths, Associate ASCO member.

"I am writing to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation for your continued work and dedication, as we tackle the COVID-19 crisis together. I have long-believed that volunteers are the unsung heroes of our Service. Your efforts and achievements are often not seen or understood by the general public, but amongst the policing family, it is well known what an incredible contribution you make to our work.

I have been privileged to work with, and alongside, many members of the Special Constabulary during my time in Service, and have repeatedly seen first hand, the difference you make within forces and within communities. Now, at a time of national emergency, I know that the Special Constabulary, and our wider team of volunteers, are coming together and demonstrating the generosity of spirit of which we are so proud and playing your part in keeping people safe.

Together, I am confident that we will get through this, and on behalf of everyone at the Police Superintendents' Association, I thank you for everything you are doing to help us protect the NHS and save lives."

Ch Supt Paul Griffiths @griffindares

The lockdown continues

The [government announced yesterday that the lockdown will continue for](#) at least the next three weeks. The reasoning behind this is:

1. We must protect the NHS's ability to cope and be confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment right across the UK.
2. We need to see a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rates from coronavirus so we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak.
3. We need to have reliable data from the [Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies \(SAGE\) showing that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board.](#)
4. We need to be confident that the range of operational challenges, including testing capacity and PPE, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand.
5. We need to be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelm the NHS.

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COVID-19 mental health campaign launches

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge support new Every Mind Matters advice for looking after mental wellbeing.



Data shows over 4 in 5 adults are worried about the effect that coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on their life right now, with more than half saying it affected their wellbeing and nearly half reporting high levels of anxiety

- Public Health England's Every Mind Matters website includes new NHS expert tips and advice on looking after mental wellbeing and supporting your family and loved ones during this time
- Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have narrated a powerful new film in support of the campaign and to encourage people to look after their mental and physical wellbeing
- Every Mind Matters campaign will be supported through social media, digital, national TV and partner support activity, helping to reach the audiences most at-risk of poor mental health

Public Health England's (PHE) Every Mind Matters platform has launched new advice focused on looking after people's mental wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It has been updated after new data shows more than 4 in 5 (84.2%) Brits are worried about the effect that coronavirus is having on their life, with over half (53.1%) saying it was affecting their wellbeing and nearly half (46.9%) reporting high levels of anxiety. See [ONS Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 16 April 2020, for details.](#)

With many feeling worried, anxious or isolated during these challenging times, Every Mind Matters highlights that there are lots of things we can do to look after our mental wellbeing and help others to prevent these concerns from becoming more serious.

The range of new resources, designed specifically to help manage our mental wellbeing during coronavirus, include a tailored COVID-19 Mind Plan, COVID-19 specific content for individuals and their loved ones, and support for specific mental wellbeing issues such as anxiety, stress, low mood and trouble sleeping. The website signposts people to activities such as mindful breathing exercises, help reframing unhelpful thoughts and muscle relaxation.

To help get this vital message out there, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are supporting Every Mind Matters and have narrated a new short film set to be broadcast across national TV channels from Monday 20 April.

Everyone in the country has been affected by COVID-19 in some way, be it through staying at home and being separated from friends and family, uncertainty about work or education or knowing someone with the virus. The film portrays a range of people whose lives have been

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affected by COVID-19. It aims to reassure people that support is available and encourages everyone to take care of their mental wellbeing at this difficult time.

Alongside the new COVID-19 mental health support, Every Mind Matters encourages people to complete a personal 'Mind Plan', a quick and free interactive tool offering tailored mental wellbeing advice. More than 1.9 million Mind Plans have been completed since the launch in October.

The NHS-endorsed content has been developed in partnership with clinicians, academics and leading mental health charities and social enterprises including Mind, Mental Health Foundation, Samaritans, Rethink, Mental Health First Aid England, the Royal Foundation, the Centre for Mental Health, Time to Change, NSUN and What Works Wellbeing. It offers authoritative, evidence-based and practical support to the general public, as well as people with specific mental health concerns.

The NHS's Top 5 Tips for maintaining mental wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak
You can view these and more tips on [Every Mind Matters](#).

- Talk about your worries: it is normal to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Maintain contact with friends and family via phone and video calls to share how you are feeling.
- Keep a regular routine and set goals: you may need to set a new routine for now. Try writing a plan for your day with the things you can still do at home, such as watching a film, reading a book or completing a puzzle. Setting goals and achieving them gives a sense of control and purpose. Maintaining good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally and physically too, so it's important to get enough (the [Every Mind Matters sleep page](#) provides practical advice).
- 6. Manage your media and information intake: if 24-hour news and constant social media updates are making you worried, try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak to once or twice a day.
- Do things you enjoy and try something new: focusing on your favourite hobby, learning something new or simply taking time to relax indoors should give you some relief from anxious thoughts and feelings and can help boost your mood. Look online for free tutorials and courses.
- Look after your body: our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. You can leave your house, alone or with members of your household, for one form of exercise a day – like a walk, run or bike ride. But make sure you keep a safe 2-metre distance from others.

Professor Paul Cosford, Emeritus Medical Director at Public Health England, said:
During the coronavirus outbreak, it is natural for all of us to feel worried or anxious, but there are things we can all do to help ourselves and others, to prevent these feelings from becoming more serious. Every Mind Matters offers NHS-endorsed guidance on the simple things we can do to maintain good mental wellbeing.

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Matt Hancock, Health and Social Care Secretary, said: We have asked people to make unprecedented changes to their day-to-day lives as part of our national effort to respond to this global pandemic. Staying at home and not seeing friends and loved ones can take its toll and it is completely understandable to feel overwhelmed or anxious.

It's vital that we all look after our mental health in these challenging times, so today we are launching new guidance on the NHS Every Mind Matters website, which is tailored to help people deal with this outbreak through practical tips and advice.

Whether it's through exercise, keeping to a routine or trying something new – there is so much we can do to keep our minds healthy and prevent issues becoming more serious – and I'd encourage everyone to take advantage of this brilliant resource.

Nadine Dorries, Minister for Mental Health, said: I know how scary a time this must be for many. We are all feeling something over coronavirus – anxiety, fear of the unknown or even just frustration at not being in control. It's easy to forget that this is an unprecedented situation that is both physically and mentally draining.

The new guidance that has been launched on the NHS Every Mind Matters website has been adapted, providing top tips for maintaining our mental wellbeing. We must all remember during these challenging times that while we are practicing social distancing for the physical health of ourselves and others, there is help out there to make sure we are taking care of ourselves mentally.

Claire Murdoch, National Director for Mental Health at NHS England and Improvement, said: At a time when as a country we face significant uncertainty, which can be worrying and stressful, it has never been more important to keep well and look after our mental health. While we stay indoors to protect our loved ones and save lives, we must also think about ourselves and how we can protect our mental wellbeing, which is why I am pleased Every Mind Matters reflects current pressures and am encouraging everyone who needs it to visit the website, which includes advice on dealing with stress and anxiety.

The campaign is backed by NHS psychiatrist Dr Max Pemberton who has shared his top tips for supporting mental wellbeing at this current time, including advice on managing your sleep and trying to stay positive.

For more information, search 'Every Mind Matters' online or visit www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters to create your personalised Mind Plan.

Force Updates.

We are really keen to learn what individual forces are doing with the deployment of their Special Constables. The Home Office, Press Office is asking if we can provide examples of good practice; where ESP is being effectively used or if Forces are struggling to secure offers of support from ESP firms; Companies where employees have been furloughed and those

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ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL CONSTABULARY OFFICERS

employees are then doing duties as Special Constables with an indication of hours etc being given and types of duties undertaken. Please check with your own Force Press Office before sending any information to covid19@asco.police.uk with the following statement.

“I CONSENT TO ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION BEING SHARED WITH ASCO AND THE HOME OFFICE PRESS OFFICE AND PRIOR TO SENDING THIS INFORMATION HAVE BEEN GIVEN CONSENT FROM MY FORCE TO SHARE WITH ASCO AND HOME OFFICE PRESS OFFICE AND TO PUBLISH DETAILS.” Please also provide the contact details of your Press Office

COVID 19 Mailbox

This is now monitored between 0800 and 2200 for any queries in relation to any COVID-19 related query. We will endeavour to offer relevant signposting and advice to support you during this really difficult period. **For more urgent enquiries ring 020 3051 9759**

To access the ASCO website and see the latest emergency services news [click here](#) and then your mission is to ask another Special Constable to join today! ***ASCO, created by members, stronger together***

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