

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 issued under all emergency health protection regulations in force as at 20th December 2020¹ (including fines issued under local “lockdowns”, that is local areas where restrictions have been temporarily tightened, and includes revisions to previously published figures). The figures reported here do not include any Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued under the Health Protection International Travel Regulations.

Data on 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 (BTP) 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. As outlined in previous releases, the police have recorded hundreds of thousands of Covid-19 related incidents since the 27th March 2020. 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 FPNs issued under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations, England and Wales

In total, 32,329² notices have been recorded as having been issued in England (28,744) and Wales (3,585) between Friday 27th March and Monday 20th December 2020.

In England:

- 15,914 notices were issued under number one regulations;
- 567 under number two regulations;
- 196 for holding a gathering of more than 30 people;
- 1,099 in relation to breaches of local “lockdowns”;
- 2,936 under the “Local COVID-19 alert levels”;
- 6,475 under number four regulations (national restrictions) and
- 1,557 notices issued under the “All Tiers” regulations. The forces issuing the most fines under “All Tiers” regulations were: Greater Manchester (190), Nottinghamshire (177) and West Midlands (147).

In Wales:

- 2,664 notices were issued under number one regulations;
- 173 notices were issued under number two regulations;

¹ For a full list of all regulations please see: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/coronavirus> and <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-legislation-and-guidance-law>

² Three notices are recorded as having been issued in England prior to March 27th

- 274 notices were issued under number three regulations;
- 469 notices were issued under number four regulations;
- 2 notices were issued under regulations relating to holding a gathering of more than 30 people
- 3 notices were issued under the International Travel Regulations

Chart 1 shows previously published figures for earlier reporting periods together with the latest revisions as more FPNs have been processed. In earlier releases this was reported on a daily basis but, given the length of time these regulations have been in place, this is now summarised on a weekly basis.

The weekly count for England and Wales shows that in recent weeks there has been a downward trend in the number of FPNs issued, with 542 FPNs issued in the last full week (11th to 17th December), compared with 821 FPNs in the previous week.

The recent downward trend is a reversal of the upward one seen following the introduction of “Local COVID-19 Alert Levels” regulations on 14th October and No.4 regulations (national restrictions) on 5th November and the re-tightening of restrictions in some areas of the country in early September.

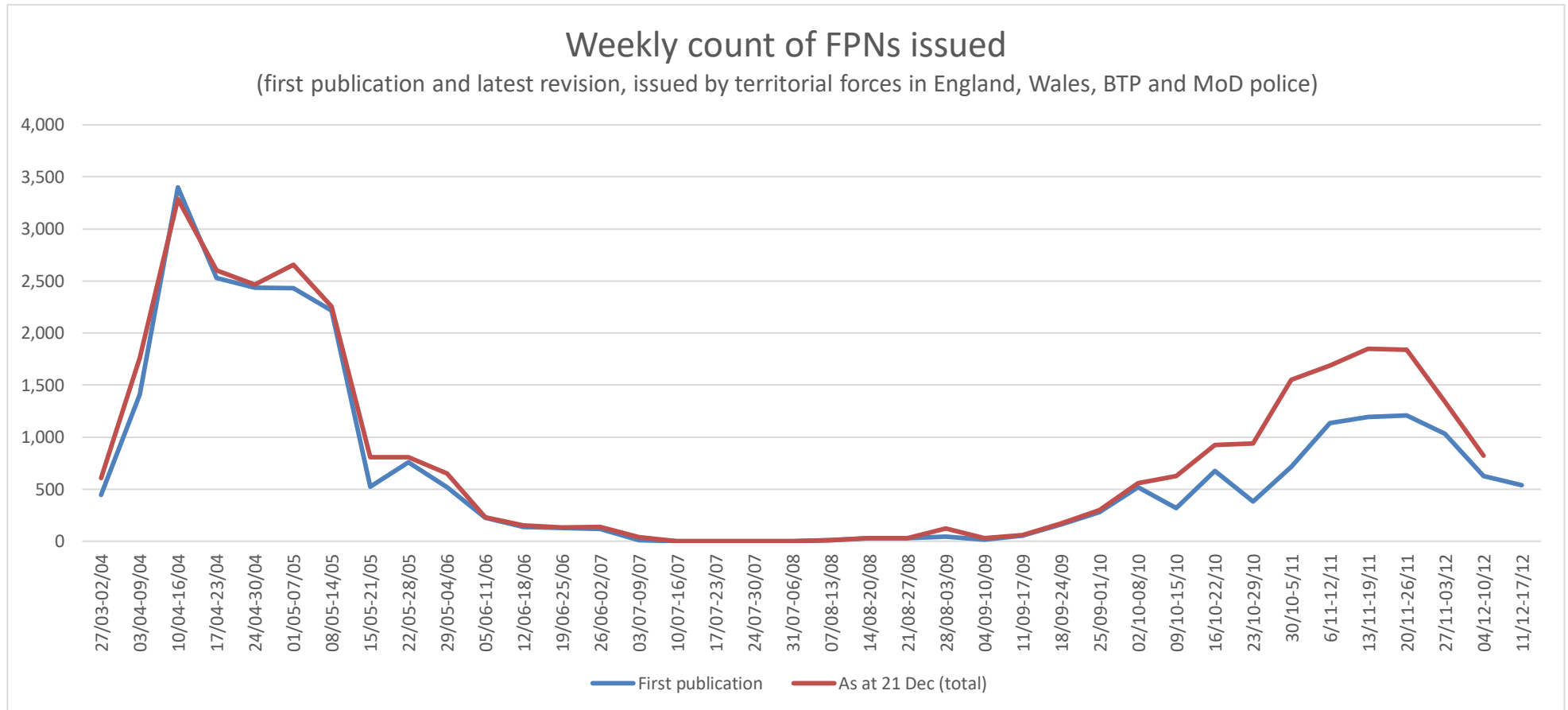
Prior to this, levels were substantially higher during the first period of restrictions, with a peak of 3,288 FPNs issued between 10th – 16th April 2020) during the week of the Easter Bank holiday. There was then generally a flatter trend through the rest of April and early May, after which there was a considerable reduction in enforcement activity as the restrictions were progressively eased, particularly in England.

Of all enforcement notices issued in England and Wales:

- The vast majority (13,946) have been issued for “Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period” (Table 1).
- The large majority (over 7 in 10) were issued to males (Table 2).
- Over 7 in 10 were issued to the under 35s; with 43% issued to 18-24 year olds, 16% to those aged 25-29 and 12% to those aged 30-34 (Table 3).
- Of those FPNs where the individual issued with the notice had a self-identified ethnicity³ recorded, 80% were issued to people who self-identified as White. Around one in ten (11%) went to those who self-identified as Asians and 5% to those identifying as Black (Table 4).

³ 22% of FPNs issued did not have the self-defined ethnicity of the individual identified.

Chart 1: FPNs issued under COVID-19 regulations between 27th March and 17th December 2020



Note: excludes 3 FPNs with incorrect date of issue.

Table 1: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, between 27th March and 20th December 2020 in England and Wales

Regulations	Jurisdiction	Reason for issue	England	Wales	Total
No.1, No.2, local lockdowns (England only); No.3 and No.4 (Wales only)	England and Wales	Contravene requirement as to restriction of movement during emergency period	11,758	2,188	13,946
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public of more than two people	4,166	279	4,445
		Contravene a direction or fail to comply with instruction	2,328	355	2,683
		Contravene requirement from a relevant person	432	47	479
		Obstruct person carrying out a function under the regulations	285	10	295
		Contravene requirement to not participate in an indoor gathering of two or more people	33	21	54
	England only	Contravene requirement to not participate in an outdoor gathering of more than six people	74	N/A	74
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people – dwelling/houseboat	25	N/A	25
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people – vessel (other than houseboat)	-	N/A	-
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people – land (certain public outdoor spaces)	25	N/A	25
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people – indoor amplified music	9	N/A	9
		Entry into and/or remaining in a restricted area	3	N/A	3
		Failure to restrict access to a restricted area	1	N/A	1
		Stay overnight other than at place of living / linked household, in England, without reasonable excuse	7	N/A	7

		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than six people	469	N/A	469
		Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons in the protected area	45	N/A	45
		Contravene requirement to not participate in gathering of two or more persons outside the protected area	1	N/A	1
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than two people – dwelling / houseboat	848	N/A	848
	Wales only	Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people	N/A	61	61
		Enter/Remain in a local health protection area in Wales without reasonable excuse	N/A	89	89
		Leave or remain away from place when living in local health protection area in Wales without reasonable excuse	N/A	60	60
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in public	N/A	38	38
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in private	N/A	154	154
		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering outside of a private dwelling that consists of more than 4 people	N/A	30	30
		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering in holiday or travel accommodation with people outside of their household	N/A	-	-
		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering in a private dwelling with any other person apart from the household or extended household	N/A	293	293
		Contravene a requirement not to participate in a gathering in a private dwelling consisting of more than 15 people	N/A	76	76
		Contravene a requirement not to be involved in organising an indoor event of more than 15 people	N/A	4	4
		Contravene a requirement not to be involved in organising an outdoor event of more than 30 people	N/A	4	4

		Contravene restriction that no person living outside Wales may enter or remain in Wales without a reasonable excuse	N/A	53	53
		Contravene restriction that no person living in Wales may leave Wales without a reasonable excuse	N/A	-	-
		Contravene a requirement of a person required to isolate, may not to leave or be outside the place where they are living	N/A	4	4
		Contravene a requirement of a child required to isolate, may not to leave or be outside the place where they are living	N/A	-	-
		Contravene a requirement to provide details to contract tracer when requested to do so	N/A	-	-
		Contravene a requirement to not carry on restricted business or service at premises	N/A	-	-
		Contravene a requirement to not carry on restricted business or service at premises	N/A	-	-
		Contravene a requirement to not sell or supply alcohol between restricted times	N/A	-	-
		Contravene a requirement that an operator of public transport displays adequate signage	N/A	-	-
		Contravene the requirement to wear face covering on public transport	N/A	-	-
		Contravene the requirement to wear face covering in certain indoor places	N/A	2	2
Local COVID-19 Alert Levels/All Tiers (England only)	England only	Obstruct person carrying out function under the regulations	21	N/A	21
		Contravene a requirement imposed, or a direction given, by a relevant person	44	N/A	44

		Contravene a reasonable instruction given by a relevant person	26	N/A	26
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in a Tier 1 area of more than six people	499	N/A	499
		Contravene a Tier 1 Restriction	-	N/A	-
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering indoors in a Tier 2 area of two or more people	2,003	N/A	2,003
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering outdoors in a Tier 2 area of more than six people	142	N/A	142
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 2 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of two or more people indoors	9	N/A	9
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 2 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area of more than six people outdoors	26	N/A	26
		Contravene a Tier 2 restriction	26	N/A	26
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in the Tier 3 area of two or more people - private dwelling/any indoor space	1,397	N/A	1,397
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 3 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of two or more people - private dwelling/any indoor space	48	N/A	48
		Contravene a requirement to not participate in a gathering in a relevant public outdoor place in the Tier 3 area of more than six people	110	N/A	110
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering in any other outdoor place in the Tier 3 area of two or more people	120	N/A	120
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 3 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of more than six people in a relevant public outdoor place	18	N/A	18
		Contravene requirement that no person living in a Tier 3 area may participate in a gathering outside the restricted area which consists of two or more people in any other outdoor place	10	N/A	10

		Contravene a Tier 3 Restriction	41	N/A	41
No.4 regs (national lockdown, England only)		Contravene a requirement/direction/instruction from a relevant person	258	N/A	258
		Contravene requirement to not participate in an indoor gathering of two or more people	3,792	N/A	3,792
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than two people in public outdoor place	1,149	N/A	1,149
		Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of two or more people in other outdoor space	288	N/A	288
		Contravene requirement to not leave or be outside of place of living	1,130	N/A	1,130
	Holding a gathering	England only	Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – dwelling/houseboat	94	N/A
Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – vessel (other than a houseboat or a vessel used for public transport)			-	N/A	-
Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – land (certain public outdoor spaces)			41	N/A	41
Contravene requirement not to hold, or be involved in holding, a gathering of more than thirty people – indoor amplified music			62	N/A	62
Wales only		Contravene a requirement that no person may be involved in organising a relevant unlicensed music event	N/A	2	2
	TOTAL		31,863	3,770	35,633

Note: a) The total in this table exceeds the headline measure of total FPNs issued as an FPN can be issued for more than one reason.
b) No FPNs have been issued for the reason of: 'Contravene requirement to not participate in a gathering of more than thirty people - vessel (other than houseboat)'

Table 2: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by gender, between 27th March and 20th December 2020 in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
Male	72%	73%	73%
Female	26%	26%	26%
Other	0.01%	0%	0.01%
Unknown	1%	1%	1%

Table 3: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by age group, between 27th March and 20th December 2020 in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
18-24	44%	33%	43%
25-29	16%	16%	16%
30-34	12%	15%	12%
35-39	9%	11%	9%
40-44	6%	8%	6%
45-49	5%	5%	5%
50-54	4%	4%	4%
55-59	2%	3%	2%
60-64	1%	2%	1%
65+	1%	2%	1%
Unknown	0%	0%	0%

Table 4: FPNs issued under emergency COVID-19 regulations, by self-defined ethnicity, between 27th March and 20th December 2020 in England and Wales

	England	Wales	Total
White	79%	87%	80%
Asian and Chinese	11%	9%	11%
Black	6%	2%	5%
Mixed	2%	2%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%

Notes: Excludes 22% of FPNs where the ethnicity of the individual issued with the notice was unknown (24% for England and 7% for Wales).

Headline figures for FPNs issued under the face coverings regulations, England and Wales

A total of 199 notices have been recorded as having been issued by police forces under the Wearing of Face Coverings on Public Transport Regulations between 15th June and 20th December 2020, and 759 notices have been issued under the Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place Regulations between 24th July and 20th December 2020.

Face coverings on public transport

A weekly count of FPNs issued under face coverings on public transport regulations has shown that an average of seven FPNs have been issued each week (with 199 notices issued to 20th December 2020 since 15th June 2020). There is no discernible trend apparent from the data.

Further breakdowns of FPNs issued under the Face coverings on public transport regulations are presented below.

- The vast majority of FPNs issued under this regulation type were issued to males (around 8 in 10).
- Around two-thirds (61%) were issued to individuals aged between 18 and 29.
- Of the 138 records where ethnicity was provided, the majority (72%) were issued to individuals who self-identified as White.
- As might be expected, the BTP issued most of such FPNs to date (90 out of 199) for individuals not complying with the transport regulations.
- Most FPNs issued under these regulations were for contravening the requirement to wear a face covering when on public transport (178 – Table 5).

Table 5: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under the wearing of face coverings on public transport regulations, between 15th June and 20th December 2020 in England and Wales

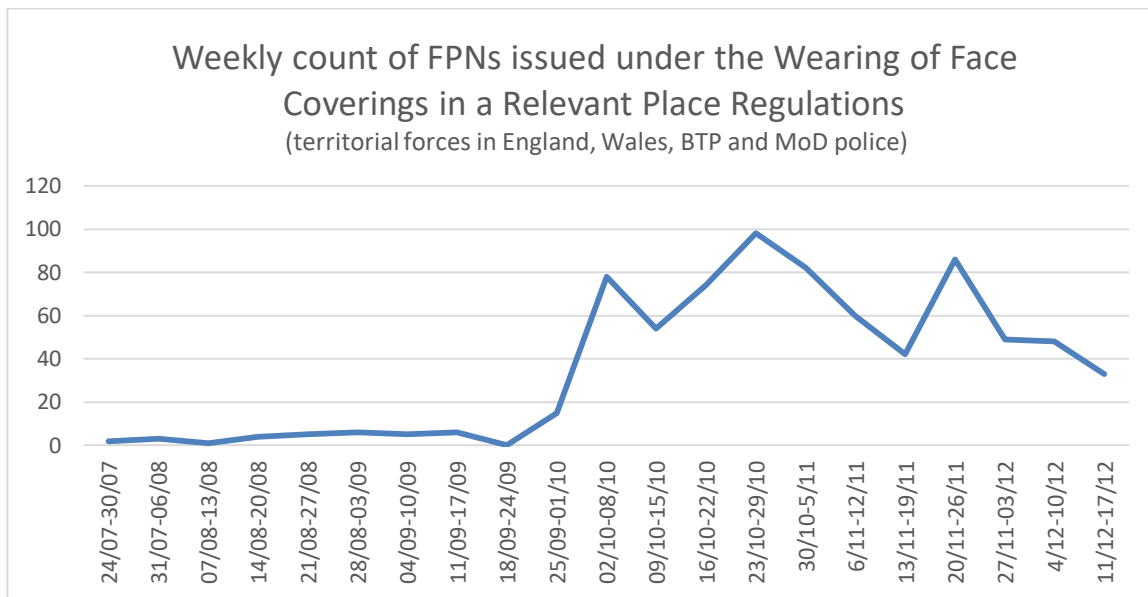
REASON FOR ISSUE	
Contravene requirement to wear a face covering when on public transport.	178
Obstruct person carrying out function under these regulations	3
Contravene direction given under these regulations	27
TOTAL	208

Note: a) The total in this table exceeds the headline measure of total FPNs issued as an FPN can be issued for more than one reason

Face coverings in a relevant place

Between 24th July and 20th December 2020, 759 FPNs were issued under face coverings in a relevant place regulations. Very few FPNs were issued in the first couple of months that the regulations were in place however, at the start of October the number of FPNs increased with 78 FPNs issued between 2nd and 8th Oct 2020. The number of FPNs issued each week then remained around this level before declining in late November. This decline appears to have continued into the most recent full week of the 11th to 17th December 2020 when 33 FPNs were issued.

Chart 2: FPNs issued under Face coverings in a relevant place regulations between 24th July and 17th December 2020



Further breakdowns of FPNs issued under the Face coverings in a relevant place regulations are presented below.

- The majority of FPNs issued under this regulation type were issued to males (around 3 in 4).
- Less than half (40%) were issued to individuals aged between 18 and 29.
- Of 608 the records where ethnicity was provided, the majority (66%) were issued to individuals who self-identified as White.
- West Mercia issued a quarter of the FPNs to date (190 out of 759) for individuals not complying with the rules regarding face coverings in a relevant place.

Table 6: Reasons for which FPNs has been issued under the wearing of face coverings in a relevant place regulations, between 24th July and 20th December 2020 in England and Wales

REASON FOR ISSUE	
Enter / remain in relevant place in England without wearing a face covering	587
Contravene direction given to wear face covering within a relevant place (Direct that person to wear such a covering)	188
Contravene direction given to wear face covering within a relevant place (Direct that person to leave the relevant place)	15
Obstruct person carrying out function under regulations regarding face coverings	5
TOTAL	795

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 has slowed significantly.

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 are presented for England in Annex A and Wales in Annex B. 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).

ANNEX A - Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued in England under emergency health regulations, 27th March to 20th December⁴

Force	No.1, No.2 and local lockdown regs	Local COVID-19 alert levels	Hold a gathering of more than 30 people	No.4 regs (national lockdown)	All tiers	Face coverings regulations (public transport & relevant place)	International travel regulations	Business regulations	Total number issued to date including local lockdowns (27 th March to 20 th December 2020)
Avon & Somerset	372	35	2	130	59	1	6	5	610
Bedfordshire	277	2	-	24	11	1	2	4	321
British Transport	321	-	-	14	1	111	5		452
Cambridgeshire	137	25	4	69	13	23	8	1	280
Cheshire	203	67	-	152	2		8	8	440
City of London	73	-	1	9	1	1		1	86
Cleveland	298	-	1	13	1				313
Cumbria	740	13	-	136	21	12	8	11	941
Derbyshire	254	5	2	20	14	2	1	3	301
Devon & Cornwall	1,006	47	-	152	12	7	6	3	1,233
Dorset	850	27	1	110	21	1			1,010
Durham	197	-	1	34	7	5	5	4	253
Essex	273	95	6	82	18	18	5	8	505
Gloucestershire	231	5	2	23	12	1	4	1	279
Greater Manchester	794	385	12	680	190	58	41	23	2,183
Hampshire	254	106	-	109	40	22	2	34	567
Hertfordshire	272	10	1	50	29	6	6	6	380

⁴ Nil does not necessarily mean nil FPNs issued, but nil processed by ACRO at the time of the snapshot. Please confirm with forces directly if questions arise and check future publications where appropriate as numbers will be updated.

Humberside	143	3	1	20	-		2		169
Kent	128	1	7	116	10	4	1	3	270
Lancashire	856	101	12	335	113	42	34	13	1,506
Leicestershire	414	10	14	90	82		5	3	618
Lincolnshire	237	2	-	89	23	8	8		367
Merseyside	615	145	26	483	79	4	12	47	1,411
Metropolitan	1,144	14	40	367	93	32	16	55	1,761
Ministry of Defence	37	-	-	-	-				37
Norfolk	410	6	2	35	3	1	2		459
North Yorkshire	1,149	4	-	285	39	1	4	2	1,484
Northamptonshire	370	16	6	229	57	160	10		848
Northumbria	793	1,318	1	774	-	137	11		3,034
Nottinghamshire	205	158	12	334	177	9	9	2	906
South Yorkshire	373	28	-	252	5	7	8		673
Staffordshire	43	15	-	201	117	1	3	2	382
Suffolk	262	1	-	38	6	4	4		315
Surrey	513	-	-	19	29	2	5	5	573
Sussex	865	1	1	11	1	7	4	2	892
Thames Valley	771	56	5	97	17	2	12	5	965
Warwickshire	102	90	4	193	59	18	1	11	478
West Mercia	240	61	3	198	38	196	6	6	748
West Midlands	398	22	11	310	147	42	10	30	970
West Yorkshire	774	60	17	178	10	4	10	8	1,061
Wiltshire	186	2	1	14	-	2	3		208
Total	17,580	2,936	196	6,475	1,557	952	287	306	30,289

ANNEX B - Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued in Wales under emergency health regulations, 27th March to 20th December

Force	No.1 regs	No.2 regs	No.3 regs	No.4 regs	Hold a gathering of more than 30 people	Face coverings (public transport & relevant place)	International travel regulations	Total
British Transport	24	-	-	1	-	6	-	31
Dyfed-Powys	1,727	4	42	11	-	0	-	1,784
Gwent	132	19	96	48	-	0	-	295
North Wales	476	102	15	30	2	0	-	625
South Wales	305	48	121	379	-	0	3	856
Total	2,664	173	274	469	2	6	3	3,591