



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

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Via email

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Dear Harriet,

I am writing in response to your letter of 15 April regarding guidance the Met has issued to its Borough Commanders and individual officers on the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations and the Coronavirus Act.

This letter follows that of 14 April sent to you by Martin Hewitt, Chair of the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), on behalf of all forces in England and Wales. I want to reiterate the points made in Martin's letter regarding the guidance issued by the NPCC (and developed in partnership with the College of Policing), that whilst the purpose of this guidance is to ensure that police officers and staff are fully aware of the powers available to them, the clear message across policing is that they are to be used only when absolutely necessary. I can assure you that this approach has been fully adopted in the MPS.

Police officers across London have been out talking and engaging with Londoners to help our communities to follow government advice. Our approach, in line with that of policing across the country, is to engage, explain, encourage and, only if absolutely necessary, enforce, and this seems to be working well. As detailed in Martin's letter, the additional policing powers are important to help us to safeguard the public. However, we are acutely aware of the importance of ensuring that our public continues to have trust and confidence in their Met, not only during this crisis but long after it. Policing by consent remains at the core of our mission and our approach is, first and foremost, to engage the public – explain the new guidelines and encouraging Londoners to comply with them. Officers are aware, perhaps more so than ever, that they must be inquisitive, kind, caring, and respectful during these unprecedented times. Enforcement will only be used where absolutely necessary in pursuit of protecting the wider public from Covid-19.

I am pleased to say that during this unprecedented time, the vast majority of Londoners have been co-operating positively and are complying with the Covid-19 restrictions. I am incredibly grateful to the vast majority of our public for this and for the responsibility they are showing. We appreciate the scale of disruption for the public, and their understanding is a crucial part of efforts, across the Capital, to keep people safe and protect the NHS.

It has been truly inspiring to see the City come together to support our key workers and our communities. The Met of course is no different. We continue to play our part, and my officers are working tirelessly to keep London safe. I am sure you will have also seen the many heart-warming stories from the frontline of our officers going the extra mile to help and support vulnerable individuals across London. It has been so heartening for officers and staff to see the acts of kindness, acknowledgements and thanks for their work, and that of key workers across the NHS, emergency services and many more. The men and women who police London are at their best when faced with difficulty – and this time is no different. We stand

ready to do whatever it takes to keep people safe, keep the peace and respond when people need us.

I can confirm that our officers and staff have clear guidance on the new powers and what they mean in practice. This includes an internal version of the NPCC guidance tailored towards use in London. I am pleased to enclose a copy of this guidance. However, I am sure that you will understand that as this is an internal document it is not, unlike the NPCC document, for wider distribution and therefore it is being shared with you in confidence.

As you know, the MPS along with the NPCC, are liaising regularly with government. In addition, the Met of course continues to work closely with our local partners during this unprecedented public health crisis. This includes our local authority partners, who we work closely with to support compliance with social distancing in parks and open spaces, however we have been clear that park closures are a decision for local authorities and not for police.

I am copying this letter to Martin Hewitt and Chief Superintendent Colin Wingrove, as I understand you have been in touch with him as your local BCU commander regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Cressida Dick

Commissioner