

COVID-19 patrols in place as second lockdown comes in

Officers attended 41 reports of COVID-19 legislation breaches across the Avon and Somerset policing area from Wednesday 4 to Thursday 5 November, both before and after the new lockdown regulations came into force. Dedicated units supported patrolling teams to respond to incidents.

The new dedicated COVID-19 units supported patrolling teams to respond to incidents and reported breaches in areas including Frome, Glastonbury, Little Stoke, Radstock, Watchet, Wellington, Wells, Yate and Yeovil. Some cases were found not to be breaches while most of the rest were dealt with by engaging, explaining and encouraging people to comply.

In Bristol officers patrolled the city centre from about 8pm, engaging with groups on College Green, the Harbourside and the city centre and encouraging people to disperse after 10pm when licensed premises closed. Officers continued to patrol the area until 11pm.

Just after 2am officers responded to a call reporting a house party in Horfield. A group of people fled the property as officers arrived but three men were given fixed penalty notices for COVID breaches while another two were reported for breaches. All were aged in their late teens or early 20s.

In Staple Hill police put a dispersal in place under section 34 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 at 10.45pm on Wednesday, following a number of reports of drunken anti-social behaviour and disorder. The dispersal area included the High Street, Broad Street, Page Road and Page Park. It was brought in following reports of a large group of people smashing bottles, shouting and swearing. Officers were first called just before 10pm to reports of a disturbance in Broad Street and remained in the area until about 11.40pm to ensure the groups had dispersed.

In Bath officers were patrolling the city centre from 7.30pm encouraging people gathered in groups to abide by the COVID-19 legislation. Following a number of reports of drunken anti-social behaviour, a section 34 dispersal was put in place and officers remained in the area until 11pm.

In Bridgwater police responded to reports of a group of more than six people who were drunk and abusive towards passers-by on Salmon Parade at about 2.30pm. The group was dispersed by 3pm, with two men, one in his 50s and one in his 30s being given COVID-19 fixed penalty notices.

Assistant Chief Constable Stephen Cullen said: "The vast majority of people are sticking to the rules and following the guidance that's in place and we're extremely grateful for this. We are fortunate the number of COVID-19 cases in the South West are not as high as some other parts of the UK, but they are rising and we cannot afford to be complacent.

"The coronavirus legislation is in place to save lives and stop the spread of a virus which has claimed the lives of more than 46,000 people in the UK. We will continue to engage with the public as we have done throughout this crisis, explain the restrictions in place and encourage them to comply.

"But we won't tolerate flagrant breaches of the regulations. We will move more swiftly to enforcement because we simply cannot allow the selfish actions of a few to jeopardise the determined efforts our communities have put in over the past seven months."

He added that the Government have given Avon and Somerset Police an additional £680,000 to directly tackle the pandemic which we have used to set up a dedicated COVID-19 response team.

[The government website has more information on the new coronavirus rules](#)