

The people of Cheshire are being urged to help play their part in keeping the nation safe by following new rules introduced to tackle the coronavirus crisis.



As the country continues to absorb the detail of the strict new social distancing measures, which have been introduced in a bid to slow the spread of the virus and protect the public and the NHS, residents are being urged to take on board the advice and stay at home where they can.

In Cheshire, neighbourhood policing is key and officers, PCSOs and members of the Special Constabulary will continue to provide a visible presence in the local community.

Chief Constable Darren Martland said: “British policing is founded on respect and engagement with the public - we resolve issues daily by talking to people and reasoning with them and that will continue.

“We will continue to police by consent – officers will be engaging with the local community, talking from a safe distance, explaining the new measures and what they mean and encouraging people to do the right thing and abide by them of their own accord.

“Officers will apply their discretion and will ask questions to establish individual circumstances and will instruct people to go home if they do not have a good reason to be outdoors. However, where necessary and appropriate, we will enforce the measures if people are not listening and putting others at risk, as the public would expect us to do.

“The pace of change in relation to the coronavirus outbreak remains extremely challenging for us all and we know that this is a really disruptive time. But in these tough moments we need to make sure we all pull together.”

The new public health regulations, which came into force on Thursday 26 March, have been introduced to ensure people stay at home and avoid non-essential travel – unless for one of the following reasons:

- **Shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible**
- **One form of exercise a day - for example, a run, walk or cycle - alone or with members of their household**
- **Any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person**
- **Travelling to and from work, but only where they cannot work from home**

Participating in gatherings of more than two people in public spaces is also not permitted except in very limited circumstances, for example, where it is for essential work purposes.

Chief Constable Martland added: “As police officers, we are sensitive to the

difficulties our communities are facing - after all we are part of those very communities.

“We’re all in this together and each and every one of us has a role to play by following government advice. Here, in Cheshire, where we have a great community spirit, I am confident that people will listen to the advice, take note of it and stay at home to protect our fantastic NHS and save lives.

“This is an unprecedented time for all of us and I understand that people are concerned about what this means for them. I want to reassure all residents in Cheshire that we are here to serve and protect and maintain the best service to the public. We will continue to work as hard as we can, alongside our partners, to keep you safe, protect our officers and staff, and support the nationwide response.”

Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane added: “The Chief Constable has my full support as he and his officers do their utmost to keep all of us safe at this challenging time.

“Police officers and staff in Cheshire are working flat out in extremely challenging circumstances while putting themselves and their families at risk. It is our duty to support them and not put them under unnecessary pressures.

“It is vital that we all follow the government’s advice to protect our NHS and, ultimately, save lives.

“If we stay at home under all circumstances, unless we are leaving our homes for one of the few reasons listed by government, Cheshire police will not have to use their new powers.

“The more we cooperate and work together as a community by acting responsibly the faster we will be able to beat this crisis.”

If you do need our help there are a number of ways that you can contact the force.

In an emergency, where there is a threat to life or a crime is taking place, please call 999.

If it isn’t an emergency it is possible to report incidents via our website (<https://www.cheshire.police.uk/>), which people are encouraged to use when possible, or call 101.

If you need information and advice following on from the coronavirus announcement by the Prime Minister please visit the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Attachments

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