

## Gloucestershire Constabulary

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Our Ref: RH-JF 090420 Covid

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Dear Colleague

As Chief Constable of Gloucestershire Constabulary, I thought that the time was right for me to make contact to update you on the work that my officers and staff are carrying out in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 emergency is one of the most challenging operations that the Constabulary has faced in its 180-year history. All officers and staff are working hard to ensure that we continue to provide the public of Gloucestershire with the best possible service in the circumstances and to try to keep you safe from harm.

As I'm sure you will be aware, from a national perspective, HM Government is leading the UK's response to the pandemic, supported by Public Health England (PHE). In Gloucestershire, the multi-agency response is led by Public Health, part of Gloucestershire County Council, and it carries out this responsibility through the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG), which it chairs. Its aim is *'to provide a coordinated multi-agency response to mitigate the potential impacts of the Coronavirus.'*

The Government has put in place new legislation that restricts movement within the community and only permits movement for specified purposes such as work (if this cannot be done from home), shopping for food or medicines, exercise, to help someone who is vulnerable or for any medical need. The message from the Government is clear – stay at home, protect the NHS, and save lives. Responsibility for enforcing this legislation sits with the police service. It is challenging, particularly during this time of year when people would normally be travelling as part of the Easter holidays. We are grateful for the support that local communities are showing for the Government's new rules which are designed to minimise the impact of the virus. These can only be effective if communities and the Constabulary work together in partnership and this is something, I am pleased to say, that we are seeing on a daily basis.

Policing by consent is an important part of the style of policing in this country and I have been clear that officers and staff will enforce the legislation where there is **no other option**, but that in the first instance they will engage, explain and encourage community members to comply with the new legislation as always, in other words police the guidance and



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enforce the law. As a Constabulary we will take a thoughtful and proportionate approach to enforcement.

Several days ago, the SCG declared the response to the Covid-19 emergency, a major incident. I have appointed one of my most senior officers, Assistant Chief Constable Craig Holden, as the Gold/ Strategic Commander. He is responsible for the strategic oversight of the Constabulary's response and is also deputy chair of the SCG, which is chaired by Sarah Scott, the county's Director of Public Health. The Constabulary has put in place a number of changes to its operational deployment model to ensure that we maximise the availability of our resources so that we can continue to provide an appropriate service to the public. Again, this is challenging as our officers and staff are not immune from the virus and we have a number of people who are sick, shielding and self-isolating.

We have invoked our business continuity plans which have been developed and tested over many years and these plans are proving to be effective and fit for purpose. Given the situation could change quickly, and without being complacent, I am pleased that early adoption of measures such as cocooning and organisational distancing appear to be paying dividends as we are retaining adequate capability.

Public reassurance during difficult periods is a key part of the Constabulary's responsibilities and I am pleased to report that we continue to use our social media channels, our website and Your Community Alerts as well as working with the print and broadcast media to ensure that our wider communities are provided with the support they need and deserve. We are making sure that our local Neighbourhood Policing Teams are providing a visible presence in our communities as well as continuing to providing normal policing services.

If you are not already receiving information from us via Your Community Alerts, you can sign up on our website <https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/> or directly here - <https://www.yourcommunityalerts.co.uk/>

We have also engaged with our Independent Advisory Group IAG who are helpfully guiding us on our style, approach and tactics to ensure that we meet the needs of underrepresented or vulnerable communities. I am grateful to them and we have had tremendous support from the third and voluntary sectors and in particular Young Gloucestershire and InfoBuzz for helping us connect with young people in order to get safety messages out and encourage compliance with public health advice. I am also grateful to local businesses for adapting their normal working practices in order to help us as a service with items such as hand sanitiser – all of which help to minimise the likelihood of staff abstraction.

Whilst a large section of our communities is remaining at home in line with the Government's directive, the Constabulary is still dealing with incidents and crimes. Officers and staff continue to provide a response to all incidents in spite of the dangers that the Covid-19 virus presents. It is a testament to their professionalism that they continue to serve our communities even in these testing times.

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I am confident that the Constabulary has implemented the appropriate operational response to the Covid-19 emergency as well as the appropriate organisational governance and oversight. I continue to work in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Martin Surl, to ensure that the Constabulary deals with the emergency in a thoughtful, agile and compassionate manner.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your continued support for the Constabulary - by all working together, we will come through this emergency and return to normality as soon as is practicable. Indeed, there will no doubt be some useful learning for us all and it would be good to discuss that with you once we have come through this difficult time.

If you wish to share this letter with others within your organisation, please feel free to do so.

If there is anything more you wish to know or need support from us as a Constabulary please do not hesitate to contact me and thank you of course for all that you are doing to help the county return to a new normality in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'R. Hansen'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rod Hansen MBA, BSc (Hons), Dip Appl Crim  
Chief Constable

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