

A MESSAGE FROM BCU COMMANDER, CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT HELEN HARPER



Dear all,

I hope you are all well. I have included a number of updates today, some of which you may have read about in the press or seen in the news.

Covid testing for Officers

During this crisis, we are constantly assessing and taking advice on what the best approaches are to keep our officers and staff safe.

As you may have read in the news, Met officers, staff and families have been offered NHS COVID-19 antigen tests at “drive-through” testing centres across London. The NHS has extended its offer of testing to Met employees as we work alongside our blue light colleagues to keep London safe, protect the NHS and save lives – whilst also preventing crime.

I would like to reassure those living in communities where these tests are being carried out that this will not affect you and there should be no increase in the spread of the virus. The tests are being offered in a drive-through style system and no one will leave their vehicles to take tests. Once Met employees have been tested, they will leave the site and should return to their home.

We are extremely grateful to the NHS for offering us the opportunity to test our officers and staff who dedicate themselves to keeping Londoners safe all year around.

Safeguarding - Prevent

As you may have read, we have seen a significant decline in people being referred to “Prevent” (a scheme which works with young people at risk of radicalisation) since the lockdown was introduced. This is primarily a result of schools and other statutory services such as social care and mental health provision being impacted, but it will also be partially down to the fact that most people’s attention has, understandably, been focussed on the pandemic.

Despite the reduction in referrals, we know that the threat is not going away. In fact, it is likely that the risk of radicalisation has increased for a small number of vulnerable people, as the pandemic is driving young people to spend more time online and is exacerbating grievances which make people more vulnerable to radicalisation - such as financial insecurity or social alienation.

With the removal of the safety net of schools, colleges and social workers, we need parents, friends and family to be aware of what young or vulnerable people in their care are looking at online – and most importantly, what they can do to help.

If you have concerns about someone, we are here to help. Visit the Let's Talk About It website for more information <https://www.ltai.info/> If you have an immediate concern you want to share with a trained professional who will treat your enquiry with understanding and discretion, call police on 101.

Speeding

Sadly since the lockdown, we have seen that the average speeds across all roads have increased in recent weeks, with 30% of roads checked seeing an average speed of at least 10% above the speed limit, and some roads seeing an average speed more than 50% above the speed limit.

Whilst we are pleased to see that traffic volume in London has fallen by around 60% in recent weeks, this does not give drivers the right to start breaking the speed limit and put other people's lives at risk; as well as their own.

The Met has established a new Road Crime Team to focus on targeting the capital's riskiest drivers, using intelligence-led proactivity. The team will focus its efforts on these individuals in particular.

High-risk driving results in serious injuries and fatalities, which cause devastation for everyone involved. So far during the lockdown period, we have seen eight fatal road traffic accidents and several more resulting in serious injuries, leaving families utterly devastated.

At this unprecedented time, dealing with road traffic accidents puts a lot of additional and unnecessary strain on the NHS and other emergency services, who are working on the frontline 24 hours a day to keep us all safe.

If you see anyone speeding or driving dangerously, please report it to the police as soon as possible.

Good weather over the weekend

Lastly, according to the weather reports, happily we are to expect another weekend of warm weather and sunshine.

We will continue to remind the public to only leave their homes for essential travel and that by staying indoors we are all protecting the NHS and saving lives.

Officers will continue to explain and engage with the public over the weekend as they carry out their usual patrols.

We thank you for your continued support. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions.

Have a great weekend



Helen

BCU Commander Central West BCU and Royal Parks