



Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner

Ensuring we are all
Safer in Sussex

Hello,

In response to the Government and Public Health's recent guidance regarding the outbreak of COVID-19, my Chief Executive and I have made temporary changes to the way my office is managed and in how I hold the police to account on your behalf.



I will be suspending my webcast Performance & Accountability meetings for the foreseeable future to free up valuable time for senior officers so they can focus on pressing operational matters. However, I want to assure you that I am still in daily contact with the Chief Constable and his senior team, receiving updates on how they are working to keep you safe.

Today I spoke with Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Jo Shiner and she outlined how Sussex Police will be supporting measures introduced to tackle the spread of coronavirus.

She said: *"As the coronavirus pandemic situation in the UK continues to evolve at a fast pace, the command structure and resources across Surrey Police and Sussex Police has evolved to increase the resilience around the policing response and to plan for the changing landscape. We are prepared and we are working closely with partners to limit the impact this may have on all of our emergency services. We will still be there for people in their times of need."*

I also asked for reassurances on how they are protecting their frontline officers and staff and the DCC assured me that they have sufficient personal protective equipment in place and are providing constant advice and support.

Support is still available for victims of crime:
www.safespacesussex.org.uk

I welcome the Government announcement this week to strengthen the powers of police and immigration officers during the outbreak. These need to be used proportionately and only when absolutely necessary. It is important that police officers are given the tools and powers they need and it is reassuring that the Government has limited the lifespan of this change.

You can read about this Emergency Bill [here](#).

In addition, proposals to scale up the use of video in court hearings is also eminently sensible and recognises that technology solutions - like the video enabled justice programme I have been leading - can keep the wheels of justice turning even when courts are closed.

In the current climate that we are in, victim support services across the country are making the difficult decision to close drop-ins, workshops and other 1:1 support. However essential this may be to ensure the safety of their staff and wider community, it is still distressing for those whose situation may escalate during the crisis and I recognise this.

It's important now, more than ever, that survivors don't feel alone and that we are making sure they know there are still helplines that they can access for support and guidance. If you have been a victim of crime or are feeling particularly trapped in a toxic home environment you can still reach out for help and support.

My online directory of local support services Safe Space Sussex can be found [here](#).



Katy Bourne OBE

Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner



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