

## Assaults on police officers up by 21% over lockdown, with rise in spitting

**(September 7 2020)**

Police forces across the UK have suffered a 21% increase in assaults on their officers over the lockdown period.

Figures gathered by the PA news agency from 31 forces show that at least 7,863 instances of assault were recorded over the first three months of lockdown, compared with 6,505 for the same period in 2019.

This comes as a recent study involving 40,000 police officers and staff showed that 88% of officers said they had been assaulted during their career, with 39% having been attacked in the past year.

Leicestershire Police recorded the most substantial increase of 102%, with 205 cases noted in the first three months of lockdown, up from 101 the previous year.

The next largest increase of 57% was recorded by Derbyshire Constabulary, followed by South Yorkshire Police and Cleveland Police each noting a rise of 55%.

Leicestershire Police's Chief Constable Simon Cole said a "particularly distasteful trend" of offenders spitting and coughing on officers and threatening to infect them with coronavirus has also developed countrywide.

He said: "The rise in assaults has huge impacts on staff both physically and mentally, and it has a huge impact on communities.

"Thousands and thousands of days of policing are lost because of these assaults."

He added: "I think officers and staff know that they have to take risks on occasion, and they understand that, it comes with the nature of policing. But you can also see that they're concerned."

Some 38 offenders spat on Leicestershire Police officers in the first three months of lockdown, compared with 20 last year, and coughing entered the offence records with 10 incidents in 2020, up from zero.

Mr Cole said police forces are working together in an attempt to safeguard their officers against assault, and all his officers have been equipped with body-worn cameras to record any incidents as court evidence.

All 43 forces will be establishing more contact time with personal safety trainers following the rise in assaults, as recommended by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

The NPCC also wants suspects who spit at police to be forced to give a blood sample to test for disease, and also called for spit guards to be issued to all officers if supported by local risk assessments.

(Ends)

- **Video package (video interview with CC Cole by me and all edits):**  
<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/uknews/assaults-on-police-up-by-21percent-during-lockdown/vi-BB18LvWt>

## Coronavirus: Assaults on police officers rise in lockdown

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Coronavirus pandemic

News

# Pleas to protect police as attacks hit record high

Fiona Hamilton

Attacks on police officers had hit record levels and become increasingly violent before the fatal shooting yesterday, prompting victims' families to demand greater protections.

Nine out of ten officers have been attacked during their career, with 30,679 assaults last year in England and Wales — amounting to 84 a day.

A report from the National Police Chiefs' Council revealed that officers took 71,308 sick days in 2018-19 as a result of assaults.

Data released by the Ministry of Justice this year revealed that offenders jailed for assaulting emergency workers were sentenced to less than 12 weeks in prison on average.

The most recent killing was that of PC Andrew Harper, 28, who was dragged to his death behind a car of fleeing thieves in Berkshire in August last year. His widow, Lissie, who is campaigning for killers of emergency workers to get automatic life imprisonment, said yesterday: "This is devastating news. No person should go to work never to return. No human being should be stripped of their life in a barbaric act of crime.

"Another hero has been taken from us in unwarranted violence. They protect us but who protects them? Another life is gone in a disgraceful act that reminds us of the danger our police officers face with every shift they begin.

"My heart is broken for yet another member of our blue line family, and all of his family, friends and colleagues who must now accept a life without him in it. My thoughts and love are resolutely with them."

The number of Metropolitan Police officers suffering serious injuries after being assaulted increased by 95 per cent over the first three months of lockdown, compared with the same period in 2019, according to reports yesterday.

The Crown Prosecution Service describes a serious injury as requiring medical treatment, such as bone damage, extensive and severe bruising, cuts requiring suturing and those that result in loss of consciousness.

Between March 23 and June 23 this year, 942 officers in the capital were injured in an assault, including 37 who suffered "serious" injuries, according to figures obtained by the Press Association. This compares with 793 injured

### Killed in the line of duty

The custody sergeant killed at a south London police station was the eighth officer shot dead in the UK in 20 years. Twenty-five others have been murdered since 2000, according to the police roll of honour (Fiona Hamilton writes).

Sergeant Matiu Ratana was the first to be killed by a firearm in the line of duty since PCs Fiona Bone, 32, and Nicola Hughes, 23, in September 2012. They were murdered by Dale Cregan while responding to reports of a burglary in Greater Manchester.

In July the same year PC Ian Dibell, 41, who was off duty, had been shot dead while trying to stop Peter Reeve, 64, a gunman who had fired at a couple in Clacton, Essex.

In 2009 PC Stephen Carroll, 48, was shot dead while responding to a call in Craigavon, Co Armagh.

PC Ricky Gray, 43, was shot in the head by a gunman who turned the weapon on himself in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, in 2007.

PC Sharon Beshenivsky, 38, was shot dead when she and a colleague tried to stop armed robbers in Bradford in 2005.

PC Ian Broadhurst, 34, was murdered by David Bieber, an American, in 2003 in Leeds.

over the same period in 2019, including 19 seriously.

The Police Federation of England and Wales has launched a Protect the Protectors campaign to increase sentences for those who assault police.

Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, said yesterday that he was doing everything to keep officers "as safe as they possibly can be". He said: "Every time a police officer starts his or her shift, they start their shift knowing the risk to their personal safety and it is possible they can lose their life in the line of duty."

Mr Khan said time was needed to allow the police watchdog to conduct its investigation into the incident.

"In the meantime, we're going to make sure we give the police all the support, all the resources, all the kit they need to make sure they are safe when they do their job of keeping us safe," he added.

Independent (online)

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## Police see 21% rise in assaults on officers during coronavirus lockdown

Total of 7,863 cases recorded over first three months of lockdown, compared with 6,505 for same period in 2019

Samuel Lovett | @samueljlovett | Monday 07 September 2020 06:21



The Telegraph (online)

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## Spit attacks on police reach record levels as assaults rise by 20 per cent during lockdown

Senior police chiefs said the "particularly distasteful trend" of officers being spat and coughed on had also developed across the country

By Gabriella Swerling, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS EDITOR  
7 September 2020 · 6:00am

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Assaults on police officers have increased by 20 per cent during lockdown | CREDIT: Nick Ansell/PA

Spit attacks on police officers have hit a record high, figures reveal, with assaults rising by 20 per cent during lockdown.

Figures gathered from 30 forces show that at least 7,147 instances of assault were recorded over the first three months of lockdown, compared with 5,969 for the same period in 2019.