

# Policing a pandemic

The challenges of maintaining law and order during the Coronavirus response

Richard Walton and Sophia Falkner



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## Key Recommendations

- The Government should instigate a national advertising campaign to raise morale across the country and to sustain and build social cohesion across communities that will be under stress during the coronavirus crisis.
- The Home Office and Police Service should re-invigorate Neighbourhood Watch schemes across the country and ensure that police Safer Neighbourhood Teams are retained as a vital visible presence on the streets.
- The National Crime Agency (NCA) should issue guidance and advice on avoiding online fraud and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) should expand existing advice on phishing relating to the Coronavirus crisis.
- The Government should engage Third Sector and Civil Society organisations and devise a national strategy for sustaining strong levels of mental health and well-being across the country and in order to prevent increases in domestic violence.
- Local authorities should use existing Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to enhance community engagement and information sharing, including creating and monitoring websites that strengthen the ability of individuals and community groups to help the elderly and vulnerable connect with local support.

## Introduction

The impact of the coronavirus crisis on crime and law and order will be profound but likely short term. The consequences of extremely high 'surge' demand on the health service alongside drastic government induced measures will shake up all social norms, resulting in a significant shock to the economy and high levels of disruption combined with pressure on families and local communities. This will increase demands on the already overstretched police and other emergency services.

These new pressures should, however, be offset by a reduction in demand for some traditional policing functions, for example through the withdrawal of government support for mass gatherings and possibly 'lockdowns', allowing police resources to be diverted to respond to the crisis and support the health service. Additional support from the third sector and military will inevitably be used as the pandemic reaches its peak in the UK. Inter-agency collaboration will be vitally important if the crisis is to be responded to effectively.

The impact on crime will vary depending on crime type and severity of the coronavirus crisis. Some crimes such as alcohol-related disorder will inevitably be reduced as the shutdown limits the number of people on the streets, especially at night. Other crimes, such as domestic violence, will probably increase as self-isolation increases opportunities for perpetrators to abuse victims, leading to more demand on emergency response teams.<sup>1</sup>

1. Brogan Driscoll, HuffPost. (March 2020) 'Higher Risk' of Domestic Abuse During Coronavirus Self-Isolation, Warn Campaigners

While difficult to predict owing to the unprecedented scale and nature of this crisis, some modelling can be done based on the behaviour of criminals during previous times of national crisis. It will be important for the Home Office and police leaders to strike the correct balance between the amount of police resources diverted to aid health workers and the health service, and carefully monitoring the capacity of the police service to ensure that it is able to deal with public order, crime and enforcement of quarantine measures.

It is worth noting that those seeking to gain from criminal behaviour in the face of this crisis are a small minority. People across the UK have already witnessed an overwhelmingly positive reaction from the general population, which has been highlighted in the Chief Medical Officer, Chris Whitty's, first address to the nation:

'The other thing that is very clear from behavioral science that the response - and this is a scientific, not a general, point - is the response of the British public to disasters and emergencies is extraordinary outbreaks of altruism.'<sup>2</sup>

### Emergency Crisis Management

Crisis management is a core function of all the emergency services which in the UK are extremely well practiced at working together with joint control rooms, synchronised command and control and fused information centres. There are established protocols, procedures and manuals that have been honed following numerous reviews of the responses to various crises, not least a number of terrorist attacks in the UK over the past decades, the most recent being *The Kerslake Report* relating to the Manchester Arena bombing and *The Grenfell Inquiry*.<sup>3</sup>

Multi agency committees established to manage emergency responses have been in place for many years (e.g. the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP) that was formed as long ago as 1973 and the London Resilience Forum that was established in 2002).<sup>4</sup>

Emergency Planning Teams have been planning for and testing and exercising the response to a global pandemic for many years, after its inclusion as one of the most likely and impactful risks on the National Risk Register in 2008.<sup>5</sup>

The UK government passed the Civil Contingencies Act in 2004, published *The National Framework for Responding to an Influenza Pandemic* as long ago as 2007, the UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy in 2011 and the *Operating Framework for Managing the Response to Pandemic Influenza* in 2017. These have already informed the national strategic response to the crisis by the UK government through meetings coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Committee at the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR).

The UK government's Coronavirus Action Plan was quick to set out its four-stage strategy: Contain, Delay, Research, Mitigate and emergency legislation to deal with the crisis was tabled on 19<sup>th</sup> March in Parliament.<sup>6</sup> These measures include strengthening the enforcement powers of the

2. Helen Carter, Manchester Evening News. (March 2020) *Coronavirus: How long will it last? Who is at risk? How many people could die?*

3. The London Emergency Services Liaison Panel. (2015) *Major Incident Procedures Manual*. 9th edition.

4. A panel made up of the Metropolitan Police, City of London Police, British Transport Police, London Fire Brigade, London Ambulance Service, local authorities, the Port of London Authority, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the Military and voluntary sector. Mayor of London & London Assembly. (Accessed March 2020) *London Resilience Forum*.

5. Cabinet Office. (2008) *National Risk Register*.

6. Department of Health & Social Care. (March 2020) *What the coronavirus bill will do*.

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police, including new powers to suspend port operations and detain people for screening and assessment for coronavirus.

## National Policing Co-ordination

In times of national crisis, the police service focuses on its core mission as outlined by Sir Robert Peel's Principles of Law Enforcement which describes the 'basic mission for which the police exist': the protection of life, keeping and preserving the peace and preventing all offences against people and property.<sup>7</sup>

The National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) is responsible for coordinating the deployment of police officers and staff from across UK policing to support forces in times of national crisis.<sup>8</sup> NPoCC supports the chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in COBR. The National Police Chiefs' Council lead for civil contingencies Deputy Chief Constable Paul Netherton described the police response as:

*'working with the Government and Public Health England in the response to the Covid-19 Coronavirus. Police forces are working with their partners at a local level to plan for, and respond to, issues raised by Covid-19'*<sup>9</sup>

The national police Coronavirus strategy will focus on supporting the Government's national Coronavirus Strategy, the Health Service and Public Health England. Additional police resources will be required to respond to an increase in emergency calls to police, requests from the Health Service, other emergency services (local Ambulance Services in particular) and the public. Inevitably, this will result in a diversion of police resources away from other areas of policing, which combined with pressure created by a proportion of police officers contracting Coronavirus, will leave some vulnerabilities in communities.

The Government is currently drawing up a contingency plan (Operation Broadshare) for the military to provide additional support to the police and to the Health Service.<sup>10</sup> This will likely include a range of measures such as using military medical staff and military medical hospital facilities, the backfilling of ambulance workers, armed police at fixed checkpoints and other guarding duties (for instance, of supermarkets and food supply chains). It is based on an existing mobilisation plan for providing military support to the police service in response to a terrorist attack (Operation Temperer), which was used effectively for the first time following the Manchester Arena terrorist attack on 22 May 2017.<sup>11</sup>

The police service will use existing Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) arrangements (established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) to share information between agencies at the local level, in particular, between Local Authorities, the police and NHS Trusts.

## Maintaining Policing Presence in Neighbourhoods

Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) routinely engage in local law enforcement, problem solving and engagement and often lead multi-agency responses at the local level. They provide a reassuring street police

7. Durham Police. (Accessed March 2020) Sir Robert Peel's Principles of Law Enforcement 1829.

8. National Police Chiefs' Council. (Accessed March 2020) National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC).

9. National Police Chiefs' Council. (March 2020) *Police in strong position to support UK's response to Coronavirus.*

10. Alistair Bunkall, Sky News. (March 2020) *Coronavirus: Thousands of armed forces staff could be put on standby over COVID-19 spread.*

11. Clark Mindock, Independent. (May 2017) *Critical threat level: What does it mean, and what is Operation Temperer?*

presence and routinely address local crime challenges and anti-social behaviour.

However, an increase in demand for police emergency response will inevitably result in the stripping back of SNTs by police forces across the country. Neighbourhood officers will be required to backfill emergency response teams and replace other police officers and staff who contract Coronavirus, to assist with crisis management and to fill new roles created as a result of the challenges of the crisis. This will leave some communities vulnerable to local disorder and criminal opportunists, while reducing the visibility of the police.

Neighbourhood Policing teams have already been substantially denuded nationally due to cuts in police budgets. For instance, the current commitment by the Mayor of London and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police of just 2 Constables and 1 PCSO on every ward (there are 632 wards in London) represents a significantly reduced policing presence across London's wards since 2016 and is a strength not yet achieved. SNTs across London have already been subjected to drastic cuts, with the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) reduced by 50% between May 2013 and July 2018.

SNTs also manage Neighbourhood Watch Schemes that will be vitally important during the crisis for strengthening community cohesion and ensuring that the elderly and vulnerable are protected if self-isolating in their own homes. The crisis presents an opportunity for the police service and SNTs to reinvigorate these schemes across the country.

### Keeping the Peace

A significantly reduced policing presence in neighbourhoods across the country may create a void in communities under stress potentially leading to occasional pockets of street disorder. If the response to local disorder at pinch points such as supermarkets is inadequate, more serious public disorder is a possibility (albeit unlikely), as seen in the London Riots of 2011. A review into the riots by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in 2011 emphasised the importance of community engagement and the best tactics for deterring and dampening disorder when it occurs:

*'Rapidly increasing the number of officers on the streets remains the best option for deterring and dampening disorder with the least use of force. However, when disorder spreads quickly, overtaking the police across urban areas, then other feasible, mobile, disruptive tactics may have to be considered to protect the public from looting, arson or violent attacks. A range of tactics to deal with more than one or two seats of dangerous disorder has to be available in reality – not just as theoretical options in manuals'.<sup>12</sup>*

The National Police Mobilisation Plan has been significantly improved since the 2011 riots and when invoked, is now more able to deploy additional police resources around the country to areas where unrest may be occurring or about to occur, thereby preventing escalation.

The national police strategy for dealing with the coronavirus crisis

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12. HMIC. (2011) The rules of engagement: A review of the August 2011 disorders.



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will need to take account of the vulnerabilities in neighbourhoods and ensure that a policing presence on the streets is maintained and that neighbourhood policing teams are not extinguished altogether.

A national strategy for managing and monitoring supermarkets will need to be invoked to ensure that the vulnerable are able to receive supplies of food without risk to themselves. Some supermarkets have already introduced 'special hours' for the elderly to shop safely and prioritised deliveries for the most at risk. In the face of excessive stockpiling, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Asda have introduced limits to the purchase of all items.<sup>13</sup> However, these measures will have to be closely monitored in order to be effective. Reports of supermarkets with empty shelves hours after opening are still rife and many elderly people will not be comfortable ordering online.

The police service will occasionally be called upon to assist public health officials needing to detain a person for screening or assessment for the Coronavirus. Sec 13(3) of the new Coronavirus Bill empowers an immigration officer or Constable to detain a person (using reasonable force if necessary) for up to 24 hours if necessary for the purpose of screening or assessment.<sup>14</sup>

It is important to stress that the UK model of 'Policing by Consent' is likely to assist social cohesion and prevent any breakdown of law and order whilst the crisis is on-going, even if 'lockdowns' are necessary. Similarly, when the UK military are used to support the police and other emergency services during this crisis, their approach will be collaborative, engaging and in keeping with their conventional style (as demonstrated during the London Olympics 2012 and following the Manchester Arena terrorist attack).

## Preventing Domestic Violence

The stringent 'self-isolation' restrictions by government of individuals and families across the country will almost certainly result in an increased level of stress within families, likely leading to an overall increase in domestic violence, including sexual assault and an increased demand on police emergency response.<sup>15</sup> Reports from China suggest that cities under lockdown have reported almost twice as many domestic abuse claims.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of the absolute levels of domestic violence in China, the size of this relative increase has worrying implications for what the rest of the world can expect under stricter controls and self-isolation. Academic research confirms that domestic violence increases in the wake of disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and other national crises and that 'disaster can trigger an increase in the severity of existing violence and violence that is new'.<sup>17</sup>

Increased levels of stress of police officers dealing with the Coronavirus outbreak may also increase levels of domestic violence within police officer families, where rates of domestic abuse have been shown to be higher than for the population as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

The Government should consider pre-empting a potential deterioration

13. BBC News. (March 2020) Coronavirus: Online shopping website Ocado suspends service

14. Parliament. (March 2020) *Coronavirus Bill*.

15. Office for National Statistics. (November 2019) Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2019.

16. Zhang Wanqing, Sixth Tone. (March 2020) Domestic Violence Cases Surge During COVID-19 Epidemic.

17. Debra Parkinson and Claire Zara, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience. (April 2013) *The hidden disaster: domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster*.

18. Conor Friedersdorf, The Atlantic. (September 2014) Police Have a Much Bigger Domestic-Abuse Problem Than the NFL Does.

in mental health and well-being in individuals and families (as a result of an increase in stress levels and self-isolation) leading to increases in domestic violence and devise a plan with Civil Society and Third Sector organisations (such as the relationship counselling charity Relate) to prevent these outcomes from occurring.

### Street level violence

The recent UK Government guidance on social distancing will, by design, significantly reduce the numbers of people on the streets, in cafes, restaurants and other public places.<sup>19</sup> This will significantly reduce incidents of alcohol-related disorderly behaviour, including violence that can occur in and around bars, pubs, nightclubs and restaurants, reducing police demand for emergency response calls.

These measures are unlikely, however, to have the same impact on violence associated with street gangs who depend on income from an illegal street-based drugs market. Reduced demand for some illegal drugs (e.g. cocaine) caused by a reduction in events that are typically associated with drugs (e.g. nightclubs and parties) may cause an increase in inter-gang rivalry faced with dwindling revenue streams, resulting in increased violence.

Furthermore, following the Government's announcement of school closures on Friday 20th March, youth homicide linked to gangs may continue at the current high levels. A reduction in police 'suppression' measures such as an increased use of stop and search (targeted at violence 'hotspot' areas that has been a feature of a recent national violence reduction strategy) may result in increases in violence, including robbery on the street in certain parts of the country. A reduction in neighbourhood policing may embolden street gangs, increasing their sense of impunity. This will be exacerbated if courts are forced to close to slow the spread of the virus.

### Acquisitive Crime

Some acquisitive crimes such as theft, fraud and distraction burglary are likely to increase during the Coronavirus crisis. As some employees are laid off, reducing household income, a small minority may resort to theft. Food shortages in supermarkets and food banks are likely therefore to lead to increases in shoplifting, particularly if restrictions are placed on the amount of food that can be purchased.

With high numbers of people quarantined in their own homes, the nature of burglary will change as the opportunities for the burglary of empty or unoccupied homes diminishes. However, this may result in some burglars resorting to 'distraction burglary' and the exploitation of the elderly in their own homes. Some reports are already circulating of individuals fraudulently posing as 'coronavirus testers' from the Department of Health, in order to gain entry to homes and of individuals stealing money from the vulnerable under the auspices of buying their shopping for them.<sup>20</sup> Deterrence in the form of enhanced neighbourhood

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19. Public Health England. (Accessed March 2020) *Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults.*

20. Alex Jee, Kent Online. (March 2020) *Coronavirus Kent: Warning after fake 'testers' attempt burglaries in Ashford.*

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watch schemes and visiting by neighbourhood policing teams will help deter these crimes.

## Online Fraud and internet crimes

Online fraud is likely to increase with fake websites advertising goods in high demand, such as masks, hand sanitisers, and other related medical supplies. Individuals and families seeking supplies that are not available in their local supermarkets are likely to be duped into buying fake goods or paying for goods that don't exist.

On 19th March, the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency identified a 'disturbing trend of criminals who are taking advantage of the COVID-19 outbreak by exploiting the high market demand for personal protection and hygiene products'. In a press release it stated:

*'Globally, 2,000 online advertisements related to COVID-19 were found and more than 34,000 unlicensed and fake products, advertised as "corona spray", "coronavirus medicines" or, "coronaviruses packages" were seized'.<sup>21</sup>*

Interpol have already issued a warning of 'financial fraud linked to COVID-19' advising the public that criminals are 'taking advantage of coronavirus anxiety to defraud victims online'.<sup>22</sup> It lists scams linked to the virus including telephone fraud and 'phishing emails claiming to be from national or global health authorities with the aim of tricking victims to provide personal credentials or payment details or to open an attachment containing malware'.

In Singapore, the Health Science Authority, making reference to internet-based enforcement action co-ordinated by INTERPOL between 3 and 10 March 2020 stated:

*'HSA also detected a significant number of product listings claiming to prevent or treat COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019). These fraudulent products included health supplements, herbs, traditional medicines and "clip-on" products. The false and misleading claims made include "strengthen the immune system against the coronavirus" or "prevent and cure coronavirus". There is currently no evidence that such products can prevent or treat COVID-19. HSA also detected rapid test kits which claimed to be able to diagnose COVID-19 within 10 minutes. Testing for COVID-19 can only be done by clinical laboratories or medical professionals in clinics and hospitals to ensure an accurate test result and diagnosis. Product listings with false claims related to COVID-19 made up about half the total number of listings taken down by HSA. Such fraudulent claims are not allowed and HSA will take actions against the sellers of these products.'<sup>23</sup>*

Although the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have begun releasing information regarding phishing in the UK, this should be expanded through a public awareness campaign.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the National Crime Agency (NCA) should provide their own guidelines on how individuals can avoid fraud. This will be key in mitigating the risk of more people operating online and preventing people from suffering further stress by

21. GOV.UK, Press release. (March 2020) *Coronavirus: global crackdown sees a rise in unlicensed medical products related to COVID-19*

22. Interpol. (March 2020) *INTERPOL warns of financial fraud linked to COVID-19.*

23. Health Sciences Authority, Press Release. (March 2020) *HSA Took Down More Than 2,500 Listings of Adulterated Products or Products Making False or Misleading Claims from E-commerce Platforms During International Week of Action.*

24. National Cyber Security Centre. (March 2020) *Cyber experts step in as criminals seek to exploit Coronavirus fears.*

being defrauded.

### Street Protest

For the time being, with the epidemic in the UK rapidly accelerating, street protest will diminish significantly due to people not wanting to gather together and risk contracting the virus. This will not stop a minority of groups from potentially exploiting the crisis for their own ends. Despite the fact that Extinction Rebellion have cancelled their May protest in London, a protest outside Downing Street on 16th March went ahead, calling for ‘The System to be Paused’ linking future pandemics to ‘climate emergency, factory farming and trade of animals’.<sup>25</sup>

As time goes by with pressure and stress potentially building across communities most affected by the pandemic, it is likely that some street protests will emerge. Some measures introduced by the Government are likely to be viewed in time as disproportionate and discriminatory against one or other group in society. Pressure groups will inevitably respond with calls for protest and potentially more severe measures if a large number of people are disaffected.

### Homelessness

The impact of coronavirus will be particularly severe for the homeless, partly because they are more susceptible to the virus. Homeless people will not be able to quarantine themselves at home, increasing the spread of the virus among the homeless community. They also do not have regular access to hand washing facilities, required to prevent the spread of the virus. Furthermore, many homeless people have underlying health conditions that weaken their immune systems and exacerbate the consequences for them of contracting the virus.

Coronavirus will also have a serious impact on the lives of homeless people, due to the measures required by all in society to combat the virus. Despite the fact that the Government has stated that homeless shelters and hostels do not need to close, reduced volunteer numbers and the fear of infection means that many shelters are being forced to close. For example, Shelter for the Storm, which provides meals and shelters for 38 people in London every night, is set to close from next week. Furthermore, food banks that are already seeing reduced volunteer numbers as well as a drop in food donations as individuals stockpile, are being forced to close as well. Islington Foodbank has announced that it will be closed from March 23rd.<sup>26</sup>

Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, has pledged £3.2 million in emergency funding to help the homeless self-isolate, but the effectiveness of this funding will be reliant on overstretched councils finding accommodation for those rough sleeping. The Government has also advised hostels to remain open and Public Health England has published guidance for how shelters and hostels should act to ensure safety in these environments.<sup>27</sup> However, requests for older people, who make up a larger share of volunteers (46% of 55 to 74-year-olds

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25. Extinction Rebellion. (March 2020) *Extinction Rebellion UK on the May Rebellion and coronavirus*; Facebook. (Accessed March 2020) *Pause The System*.

26. Islington Gazette. (March 2020, *Coronavirus: Islington Food Bank set to close due to dwindling donations and risk of passing on Covid-19*.

27. GOV.UK. (March 2020) *£3.2 million emergency support for rough sleepers during coronavirus outbreak*.

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volunteer<sup>28</sup>), to self-isolate, and stockpiling by consumers means that even if hostels are kept safe, they no longer have the resources to remain open. We can therefore expect an immediate increase in the number of people sleeping rough, as they can no longer access shelter, with a potentially larger increase further down the line, as more people are made redundant. These changes at the street level may result in some social breakdown and disorder placing demand on emergency police response.

Neighbourhood Policing teams will have a role to play in engaging with the homeless and preventing further spread of coronavirus by those living on the street.

## Criminal Justice System

The UK criminal justice system will come under increasing pressure as the crisis develops, placing strain on the courts, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and prisons. On Tuesday 17th March, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Burnett of Maldon said it was:

*“not realistic’ to suppose that it will be business as usual in any jurisdiction’, but it was of ‘vital importance that the administration of justice does not grind to a halt’.*<sup>29</sup>

Faced with increased demand for emergency response, a reduction in capacity due to officers and staff contracting Coronavirus and limited CPS and court capacity, officers will use discretion and reduce the number of people being arrested. In time, this may mean that only the most serious crimes such as homicide, serious assault etc. will be investigated.

As the pandemic worsens, the capacity of the police service to deal with anything other than serious crimes may diminish, potentially loosening temporarily the fabric of law and order in society. It is likely, however, that these extreme measures would be short-term with a return to normality quickly established once the epidemic diminished. The police service is used to surges in demand in times of crisis and has a tried-and-tested National Police Mobilisation Plan that will monitor resource pressures nationally and move police resources around the country where there is a need to do so.<sup>30</sup>

Conversely, a strengthening of social cohesion may increase across the country through a strengthening of civil society groups that could bond communities together in a way not previously seen since World War 2, for instance, through an increase in local engagement and social media enabled chat forums. The Government would be advised to explore ways of encouraging a strengthening of social cohesion through national advertising campaigns.

## Border Security

Despite an agreement announced in October 2019 for both the UK and France to ramp up activities to prevent illegal Channel crossings of migrants, which would have involved doubling patrols, the use of new detection equipment and more direct interventions to dissuade migrants,

28. Royal Voluntary Service. (September 2016) *Older people gift 1.4 billion hours a year to volunteering.*

29. John Hyde, The Law Society Gazette. (March 2020) *Coronavirus: Business as usual ‘not realistic’ says lord chief justice.*

30. College of Policing. (Accessed March 2020) *Mobilisation.*

the aim for ‘attempts to cross the Channel in small boat to be an infrequent phenomenon by Spring 2020’ will be derailed by coronavirus.<sup>31</sup> As public services in both countries come under the pressure of dealing with the virus, with the number of border force officials either sick or looking after children increasing, this will present an opportunity that criminal gangs will be looking to exploit.

Meanwhile the incentives pushing migrants to attempt to make the journey over the Channel are also increasing. Not only are conditions in camps deteriorating due to falling numbers of volunteers, migrants in camps are at increased risk of infection due to the lack of sanitation, high density of camps, lack of self-isolation facilities and the poor health of many migrants. Some charities estimate that there are 1,000 refugees in Calais alone, with 3,000 across the French coastline.<sup>32</sup>

Further pressure will be put on UK borders, as customs and immigration officers will be hit with the virus or forced home to look after children. Schedule 19 of the Coronavirus Bill laid before Parliament on 19 March introduces new powers to suspend ports operations (airport, seaport or hoverport) if there are insufficient Border Officers (either immigration service or customs officers) to maintain the border.<sup>33</sup>

### Conclusions

The Coronavirus crisis will stretch the capabilities and capacity of the emergency response services but they will be able deliver a coordinated professional response. The impact on crime and law and order will be profound but short term and not of the same scale, complexity or severity as on the health service. The consequences of extremely high ‘surge’ demand on the health service alongside drastic government induced measures will shake up all aspects of society and all communities. High levels of disruption and pressure on families and local communities will result.

Some crime will increase but a lot of crime will decrease (especially if ‘lockdown’ measures are introduced), helping to balance crime-related demands. The investigation of serious crimes will continue but less serious crimes will result in a much-reduced service.

The police service will have the capacity and capability to deal with the high demands emanating from the crisis, the impact on law and order and on society more broadly.

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31. GOV.UK. (October 2019) *French patrols doubled to tackle migrant crossings.*

32. Michael Drummond, Independent. (March 2020) *Thousands of migrants on north coast of France at high-risk from coronavirus, warns charity.*

33. Parliament. (March 2020) *Coronavirus Bill.*





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