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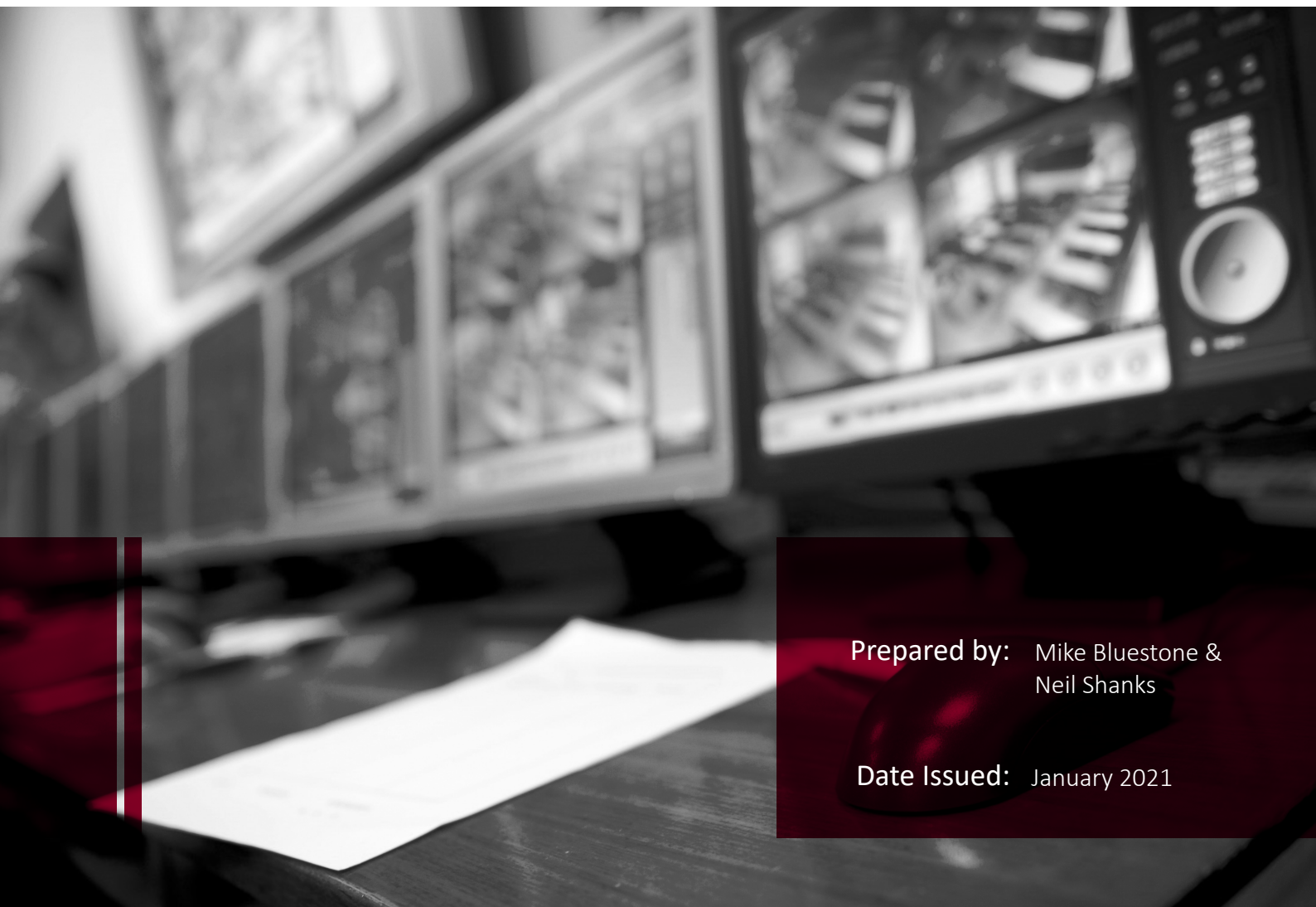
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**CORPS**  
**SECURITY**

# CORPS

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# RELAY



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# COVID-19: Third National Lockdown

The COVID-19 landscape remains in a state of constant flux, as although the [Pfizer vaccinations](#) have been underway since December and the [first Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccination](#) has now been given, a report of a new strand of the virus requires tighter restrictions on a greater percentage of the population. A new tier, Tier 4, was introduced in England on 20th December 2020 to replace Tier 3 as the highest tier. Over 44 million people in England were in Tier 4 prior to England entering its third national lockdown, dubbed Tier 5, on 5th January 2021.

The devolved powers continued making decisions on COVID restrictions in their jurisdiction. Wales entered a state of lockdown on 20th December with no stated end date. Northern Ireland entered a state of lockdown on 26th December, which is scheduled to last for six weeks. Scotland went into a lockdown on 5th January 2021 which is intended to last throughout the month.

## **Lockdown/Tier 5 – What does it mean?**

The latest information on lockdown restrictions can be found on the [.Gov website](#). The lockdown requires that people only leave their homes if they have a “reasonable excuse” which includes, but is not limited to, visits to the shops, work that cannot be completed at home, providing care and exercise. The lockdown also states that people should not leave their area unless they have a valid reason for doing so.

## **COVID-19 Risks and Scams**

The [British Medical Journal](#) have stated that early findings indicate that COVID tests on students are highly inaccurate with 58% of positive results actually being false positives. This raises questions over the use of this form of testing for schools before there is assurance that they are sufficiently accurate. There are also multiple unproven “COVID-19 tests” available on the market that should be avoided. The [United States Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) has warned against fake COVID-19 tests and vaccines being sold, and Interpol issued a warning regarding the likelihood that organised criminals would engage in [COVID-19 Vaccine Scams](#).



## Greater Manchester Police (GMP) placed in Special Measures

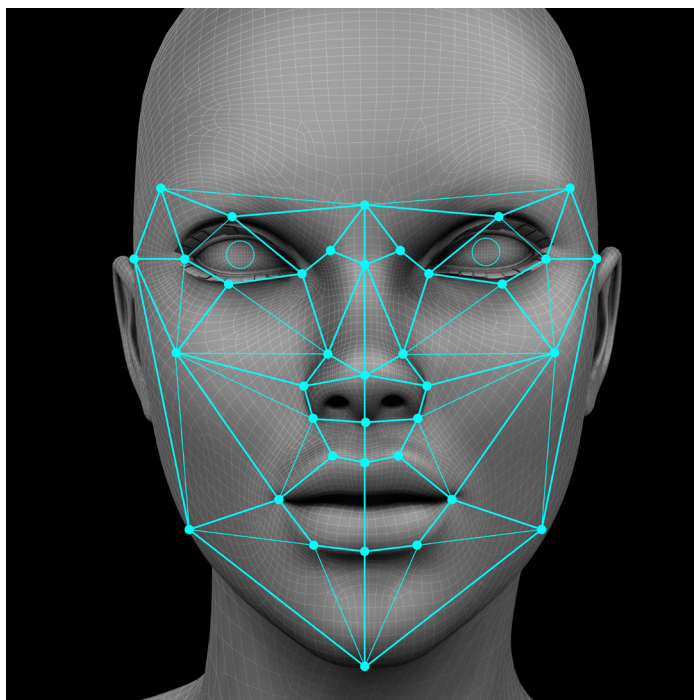
Plans were announced on 17th December 2020 to **place GMP into special measures** following a report from Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Within the report, Inspectors expressed serious cause for concern as they found evidence that GMP failed to record 80 thousand crimes in the year to 30th June 2020. This equates to an approximate increase of 25% to the actual crime rate in Greater Manchester, which is approximately 220 crimes a day unreported.

The announcement of special measures was accompanied by a notification that **GMP Chief Ian Hopkins** would stand down from his role. Ian Pilling, formerly Ian Hopkins Deputy Chief Constable, stepped up to GMP Chief on 18th December 2020.

## Retail Facial Recognition Trial

Southern Co-operative, which operates over 200 Co-op stores in the South of England, started a **controversial trial of facial recognition** technology in December 2020. The technology is said to alert if someone with a history of theft or anti-social behaviour enters the premises, with the stated intention of protecting the staff from shoplifters. The trial was used in 18 targeted shops with higher levels of crime, with the retailer stating they do not intend to roll this initiative out any further at present.

**Big Brother Watch**, a UK Civil Liberties group targeting the use of private and personal data by technology companies, are one of several groups petitioning Southern Co-operative to cease the use of facial recognition technologies. Big Brother Watch are also highlighting the lack of transparency from the Southern Co-operative group as they have failed to share the information on which shops are involved in the trial. Concerns have been raised specifically about where the information on offenders has come from, how that information is being stored and shared, and the potential for false identification impacting on peoples' liberties.





## Photography is Not a Crime (PINAC)

PINAC LLC was founded in the United States in 2007 by Carlos Miller. Mr Miller states he founded PINAC after he was arrested and beaten for photographing Police Officers in Miami, with the aim of raising awareness of civilians' rights regarding photography.

The principles of PINAC have been adopted internationally, with several YouTubers in the UK operating in association with PINAC. Notable examples of this include Auditing Britain and NB Media UK, both of whom regularly post videos where they aim to highlight the responses they elicit from Police and security staff from filming areas and people. Corps Security will produce a Corps Relay Special Edition to cover this topic in more detail, including the aims of these organisations, who they target, and what areas they aim to exploit. The Special Edition will be published in January and will provide detailed guidance on the laws around photography in public spaces and the roles/rights of security and business owners if they are targeted by these individuals.



# Current National Threat Level

The threat to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from terrorism is **SEVERE**

The threat to Northern Ireland from Northern Ireland-related terrorism is **SEVERE**

## NOTE:

Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack

- **LOW** means an attack is highly unlikely
- **MODERATE** means an attack is possible, but not likely
- **SUBSTANTIAL** means an attack is likely
- **SEVERE** means an attack is highly likely
- **CRITICAL** means an attack is highly likely in the near future

# Recent Developments

## Novichok Poisoning Update

The role that the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (known as the G.U., formerly the Main Intelligence Directorate known as the G.R.U.) had in the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal was the centre of much speculation in 2018. Sergei Skripal was a former Russian Military Officer and allegedly a double agent for the UK intelligence agencies. Sergei, and his daughter Yulia were poisoned using the nerve agent Novichok, on 4th March 2018 in Salisbury, Wiltshire. Both survived the attack but spent several weeks in hospital. The Russian Government denied any involvement.

The British authorities identified Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov as suspects in September 2018, with the investigative journalists at [Bellingcat](#) later stating they had positively identified both men as working for the G.R.U., with a third G.R.U. operative, a Major General, also in the UK at the same time.

In August 2020, Russian opposition figure and anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny became violently ill on a Russia internal flight from Tomsk to Moscow, with German doctors later diagnosing that Navalny had been poisoned with Novichok. Navalny survived this incident and the Russian Government deny any involvement. Once again [Bellingcat conducted a joint investigation into the incident](#) and have alleged that, not only is there evidence that this attack was perpetrated by the state, but that the Russian chemical weapons program that was supposed to have ceased, continued under the guise of another state-run institute.

Whilst the latest incident did not occur on British soil or directly target any British citizens, the link this new evidence has to the previous attack in Britain and potential for similar attacks in the future is noteworthy.

# Anniversary

## **Charlie Hebdo Attacks 07.01.2021 (2015/16)**

Thursday 7th January 2021 marks the 6th anniversary of the attack on the Charlie Hebdo Offices in Paris, France, in 2015 and the 5th anniversary of the 2016 attack that took place on the first anniversary of the Charlie Hebdo attack.

There were several incidents associated with Charlie Hebdo in France towards the end of 2020 (see the [September](#), [October](#) and [November](#) editions of Corps Relay for more information), linked to the [trial of 14 people accused of being involved in the 2015 attack](#), and this is the first anniversary following the guilty verdict in the 2020 trial. Any organisations with staff or associates in Paris should ensure necessary steps are taken to safeguard their employees in case there are further incidents.

# Demonstrations



## **Anti-COVID Restriction Protests - Nationwide**

There has been a rise in actions from groups that are against COVID-19 restrictions, the wearing of face masks, and vaccinations. Groups like Save Our Rights UK have planned a multiple anti-lockdown protest in locations across the UK and these are expected to continue throughout January 2021. Groups are expected to protest in London on the 9th and 11th of January, with the meeting place yet to be confirmed but prospective areas include Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square based on previous demonstrations.



# Corps Focus: Security Issue of the Month

## Brexit

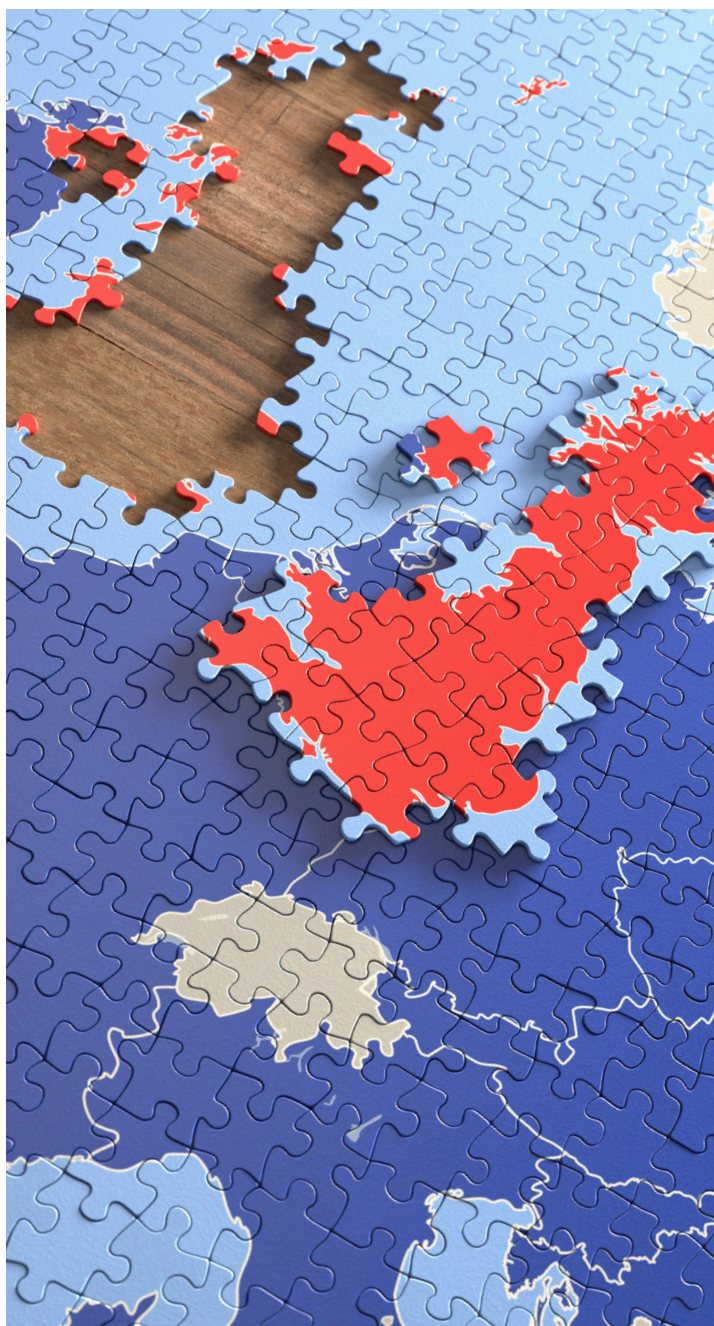
As the details of the Brexit deal between the UK and the EU are shared there may be additional considerations that companies need to make. The [October 2020 Corps Relay](#) identified the need to prepare for potential for disruption of products entering the UK from the EU. The UK's decision to [delay checks on the majority of goods incoming from the EU until 1st July 2021](#) will undoubtedly assist in mitigating any immediate issues resulting from the changes in the incoming customs processes. An area that some businesses may not have addressed could be the impact that occurs with areas that remain within the UK but are separated through internal borders.

### Borders

There is a lot of focus on the traditional borders for the UK, which are generally easy to identify as an island nation, but the greater issues have arisen in areas where there are land borders with EU states.

As there is an unavoidable land border on the island of Ireland, and to preserve the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, [no border was placed between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland](#). Northern Ireland continues to follow many EU rules to negate the necessity for a land barrier and as such, there is essentially a new border in place between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK (England, Scotland and Wales). Northern Ireland, under the Northern Ireland Protocol, will continue frictionless trade with the EU in the way they did pre-Brexit.

Gibraltar is the only UK territory within the Schengen Zone, as is required for the lives of Gibraltarians and those in the neighbouring area of Spain to avoid excessive disruption. The [agreement in principle](#) gives Spain the final say in access to Gibraltar, with the active boarder for the EU and the Schengen zone being Gibraltar's ports and airports.





## VAT

Since 1st January 2021, Her Majesties Revenues and Customs (HMRC) have applied Value-Added Tax (**VAT**) on goods coming from outside the UK at the point of purchase rather than the point of importation. This not only increases the bureaucracy for companies dealing with the UK, as they are now required to register for UK VAT, but also an increase in cost. HMRC say their decision will ensure that EU and non-EU countries are treated the same, whilst many businesses believe that this approach makes dealing with the UK impractical and have decided to postpone or cease trade with the UK as a result. If a business relies on any security products or services from the EU they should ensure there is still a viable supply chain in place.

## December 2020 COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

In the **October 2020 Corps Relay** the subject of the potential for Brexit to impact on supply chains was forewarned. The potential issues for severe delays and backlogs at major ports was also explored, with the **COVID travel restrictions over Christmas** providing a reminder of how much disruption delays at ports can create. The management of delays that could occur in the future is key in ensuring the smooth movement of goods and vehicles, and the prevention of recurrence of the limited number of **violent clashes** caused by the delays in December.

Businesses within the immediate area of any major ports which could see similar disruptions should take note of what happened in Kent in December. Whilst the obvious issue for drivers was the delay, they also felt the impact of associated issues, such as the lack of provisions including adequate food and rest facilities. As with any form of unrest, if left unchecked, there is a potential that things can degenerate into criminality in the area around it.

