

CORPS RELAY

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CORPS
SECURITY

COVID-19: Easing of Lockdown Restrictions Begins

The approach towards lockdown easing is currently quite tentative. The lockdown restrictions have, and continue, to be eased gradually across the nations of the United Kingdom, following the predetermined order of easing whilst reviewing the impact at each stage. Wales are leading the way, having moved to a state of unrestricted travel within Wales on the 27th March. This was followed by England removing the “stay-at-home” rule on Monday 29th March and replacing it with “minimise travel”. England plans to ease the lockdown further on 12th April with changes including the reopening of close contact services (e.g. hair dressers) and allowing outside service for pubs and restaurants.

Northern Ireland sent some children back to school on 22nd March, with plans for more age ranges to follow on 12th April. Northern Ireland also removed the “stay-at-home” directive on 1st April, replacing it with a “stay local” instruction, with further easing taking place on 12th April. Scotland is working to a similar timetable as England and Northern Ireland, where primary schools returned in mid-March, restrictions on communal worship having been eased on 26th March, the “stay-at-home” directive being replaced with “stay local” on 2nd of April and further easing on of close contact services (e.g. hair dressers) taking place on 5th April. Mid-April will see the return of secondary schools in Scotland and

26th April is the date time tabled for cafes, bars and restaurants to begin serving outdoors again.

As lockdown restrictions continue to gradually ease in many areas, the impact is reflected in the official statistics. [Over 50% of the workforce visited their place of work](#) during the week beginning 8th March, which is potentially linked to the return of children to schools in England joining those that had already returned in Wales. Preparations for opening more of the economy are being made, with various additional challenges being identified. The availability of the workforce is one such challenge, as many that have been out of work throughout the pandemic will return to their previous profession when they are able to, others have sought alternative employment which they may decide is a permanent career change. The night time economy has identified this with certain roles, with [the availability of Door Supervisors being in question](#) now being a genuine risk that could limit the number of venues that can re-open in April.

Fake COVID Texts

The NHS are aware that the successful roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination scheme, including their use of a text messaging service to notify people of their eligibility to book their vaccination, has the potential for criminals to try to take advantage of it. There have been a number of fake text messages sent by criminals claiming to be from the NHS so understanding [how to spot a genuine NHS text message](#) is vital. The NHS have said that “all legitimate messages will come from ‘NHSvaccine’, link to the NHS.uk website.”, and will be sent using the Government’s [Notify](#) service.



New Independent Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner

Fraser Sampson began his appointment as the newly created [Independent Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner](#) in March 2021. The role combines two previous positions, namely the Biometric Commissioner and the Surveillance Camera Commissioner, which were created under the [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#).

Mr Sampson is solicitor and Honorary Professor and Research Fellow at Sheffield Hallam University. Combining his legal training and experience as a police officer of 14 years, Mr Sampson has previously held the positions of Chief Executive of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner in North Yorkshire and the Chief Executive and General Counsel for the Police & Crime Commissioner in West Yorkshire. Mr Sampson also held the role of Executive Director of the Civil Nuclear Police Authority.



Changes to Trespass Laws – Private and Public Land

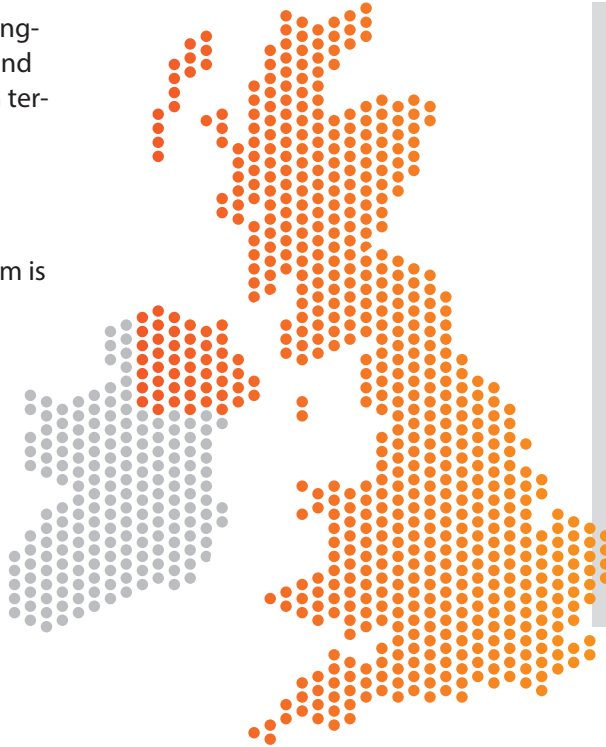
Trespass has traditionally been a civil matter, with trespass only entering the realms of criminal law when connected with other offences such as criminal damage. As a result of this, historically, the police have been very limited in their ability to deal with trespass/trespassers. Discussions around potential changes to the law of trespass have been underway since being proposed in 2019. These changes came into effect in March 2021 with an amendment to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. [Section 61](#) grants the Police new powers to remove and arrest trespassers from private and public land under a number of specific conditions. The amended law focuses on trespass where a person is believed to be planning on "...residing there for any period..." and has either caused damage to land/

property, used threatening/abusive/insulting words or behaviours towards the occupier or their family/employee, or the trespassers have six or more vehicles on the land between them. The [Home Secretary has said](#) "This new offence will enable the police to fine or arrest those residing without permission on private or public land in vehicles in order to stop significant disruption, distress or harm being caused to the law-abiding majority".

Current National Threat Level

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

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

CTP and UK Intelligence Services have foiled three terrorist plots during COVID-19

Information within the Home Office's quarterly release of statistics relating to police use of powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 show that the [Counter Terrorism Police \(CTP\) and UK Intelligence Services foiled three terrorist plots](#) between the initial lockdown in March 2020 and December 31st 2020. Although 2020 was the quietest year for terrorism offences in the UK since recording started in 2011, and despite the national lockdowns, there were still a total of 185 arrests made for terrorism-related offences. Recent examples of the continued prevalence of, and fight against, terrorism include [Sohaib Embarek](#), a Bristol man, being jailed for possessing terrorist materials, and the [ongoing trial of a 52-year-old man from Londonderry](#) facing terrorism charges in connection with the New IRA.

Loyalist Paramilitary Groups Renounce Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement

A letter has been sent to the UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and Ireland's Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, [warning of the permanent destruction of the peace agreement](#) unless changes are made to the post-Brexit arrangements for Northern Ireland. The Loyalist Communities Council (LCC) represent the views of the UVF, UDA and Red Hand Commando and their opposition to the Northern Ireland protocol. David Campbell, chair of the LCC, states in the letter "...I have been instructed to advise you that the loyalist groupings are herewith withdrawing their support for the Belfast agreement until our rights under the agreement are restored and the protocol is amended to ensure unfettered access for goods, services, and citizens throughout the United Kingdom. If you or the EU are not prepared to honour the entirety of the agreement, then you will be responsible for the permanent destruction of the agreement."

Notable Dates/Events

Key Religious or National Celebrations

There are significant days for several religions and nations in April 2021. It is not only important to be mindful of these to celebrate our diverse society, but also because several Terrorist Groups have been known to select the days for their actions based on significant days in either their own or their targets' calendars. For a full list of key dates, events and demonstrations, please view the "Corps Events Calendar" in the Customer Portal or on the "Corps Secure" App.

Notable dates in April 2021 include:

- 2nd April – Good Friday – A Christian celebration
- 4th April – Easter Sunday – A Christian celebration
- 4th April – Final Day of Passover – A Jewish celebration
- 5th April – Easter Bank Holiday – Nation Event
- 7th/8th April – Yom HaSoah/Holocaust Remembrance Day – A Jewish celebration
- 11th April – Quasimodo (Low Sunday) – A Christian celebration
- 13th April – First Day of Ramadan – An Islamic celebration
- 21st April – 95th Birthday of Queen Elizabeth II – National and Commonwealth celebration
- 23rd April – St George's Day/ the Feast of Saint George – A Christian and English celebration
- 29th April – Anniversary of West Midlands Attack – See below for details
- 30th April – Orthodox Easter – A Christian celebration

Anniversary

Anniversary of the 2013 West Midlands Attack

The 29th April 2021 is the eight anniversary of when [Pavlo Lapshyn](#) stabbed 82-year-old Mohammed Saleem, a Muslim neighbour, to death in Small Heath, Birmingham. Mr Lapshyn, a Ukrainian White Supremacist Terrorist, later attempted to blow up a Mosque in Walsall on 21st June before planting further devices at Mosques in Wolverhampton and Tipton on 12th July 2013. The device in Tipton, which was filled with nails, exploded near the Kanzul Iman mosque. Mr Lapshyn is currently serving a 40-year prison sentence for his crimes.

Demonstrations

- 1st April – "Storm London" – Demonstration by "Save Our Children" in London
- 1st-5th April – "Wave One" XR 2021 – Multi-Location Demonstrations (see below for more details)
- 4th April – "Kill the Bill" – College Green, Bristol
- 24th April – World Day for Animals in Laboratories – A day of activism in Liverpool/UK Wide
- 24th April – "Trespass Together" – A planned demonstration by XR Multi-Location

Extinction Rebellion (XR)

XR are planning their next “Wave” from April 2021 onwards. Notable features and dates within this include:

- WAVE 1st-5th April – Global Money Rebellion – On this day Local/affinity Groups across the UK and around the world are invited by XR to participate in actions targeting banks at both local branches and HQs
- 24th April – This Land Is Our Land (Trespass Together): Trespass Action where their aim is to “Reclaim, rewild and redistribute UK land”
- 30th April – Peace Lotus Internationalist Solidarity Day of Anti-War Resistance. Campaign starts on 1st April
- WAVE 1st May – REBELLION OF ONE – Rebellion of One is a single-person roadblock, times 1,000
- WAVE late June/July – Free the Press where they state they are “keeping up the pressure on the mainstream media in 2021”

“Kill the Bill”

The “Kill the Bill” protesters were firmly in the headlines during March and continue to demonstrate in April. The official aim of the demonstrators is to challenge the areas of the proposed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021 that focus on [protest powers](#). Whilst the majority of the protests have been peaceful, there has been violence and arrests at protests held in Bristol and Manchester. Bristol has been the main area where “Kill the Bill” protests have turned violent with an initial [violent demonstration on 21st March](#) resulting in police staff being assaulted and police property being damaged and destroyed. There have been multiple [violent clashes between protestors and police in Bristol](#) since then under the “Kill the Bill” banner.

The key point formally being protested by “Kill the Bill” is the proposed change regarding peaceful protest. At present, police powers to impose restrictions on demonstrations come into effect when they perceive serious public disorder, property damage or serious disruption to the life of the community being at risk. The new Bill seeks to give police powers to impose restrictions if the demonstration is causing a “public nuisance”. A new offence of “intentionally or recklessly causing public nuisance” is introduced which carries penalties of fines or prison sentences. The Bill will allow the police to impose restrictions, including noise levels and time constraints for protests.

The Bill also introduces a specific offence of criminal damage to a memorial with a sentence of 3 months to 10 years in prison. One of the most prominent examples of this behaviour in recent years was the [destruction of the statue of Edward Colston](#) during the Black Lives Matters protests in Bristol (June 2020). Demonstrators have turned out in support of some of the individuals responsible, dubbed as the “Colston Four”, showing there is an element of acceptance of their behaviour from a minority. As the Bill sets to establish an offence of behaviour that was displayed by a small group of individuals during previous volatile demonstrations in Bristol, there is potential that some of those individuals have also been involved in the “Kill the Bill” demonstrations that have descended into violence.

Whilst many protests have been peaceful, the demonstrations in Bristol and Manchester have resulted in serious public disorder, property damage and serious disruption to the life of the community, meeting the criteria for the police to impose restrictions under both the current legislation and the proposed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021.

Demonstration and Activism - Now and in the future

Corps Focus: Security Issue of the Month

Despite the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the past 12 months have seen demonstrations and activism increase in both frequency and levels of public disruption. From the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 to the recent Kill the Bill protests in 2021, the UK has seen a steady increase in certain groups taking to the streets in protest. It is also likely that demonstrations, although under one banner, are being infiltrated and attended by members of other groups. This may be in support of a mutual cause, [such as XR at the Hereford "Kill the Bill" demonstration](#), or to further an ulterior motive. An example of the belief of recent infiltrations [include the claims made by the chair of the Metropolitan Police Federation that the violence during the Sarah Everard was initiated by infiltrating members from XR, Black Lives Matter and Antifa](#). Counter protests have also been taking place making the job of policing demonstrations twice as difficult.

Probably the most varied of all the current activist groups, in both targets and methods, is Extinction Rebellion (XR). As XR launch into their "Wave One" phase in 2021, it is expected that we will see an increase in activity. They have detailed their target sectors (as above) but we should also expect to see an increase in their activity targeting other sectors as well.

XR's methods are disruptive and non-violent which make police intervention difficult. One of their main methods is to "occupy", be it in a permanent occupation such as [HS2 Rebellion in London Park](#), or temporary occupations such as the [road blockades](#) used to shut London down in February 2020. These methods prevent businesses from

conducting their lawful business until the individuals have been removed, often at great expense and annoyance to their targets. The Rebellion of One planned for 1st May 2021 is a continuation of this methodology, albeit on a smaller scale.

The changes to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 offer some additional powers to the police to remove trespassers that are occupying land they do not own, especially in cases where they have set up residency on private or public land for prolonged protest. The proposed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021 seeks to provide the police with increased powers to counteract disruptive non-violent protest and would require groups like XR to rethink their tactics. One area that may become more prevalent if physical activism becomes more difficult could be digital activism. Tactics such as distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks on corporate websites/systems may become more prevalent.

DDoS attacks come in many [forms](#) and have [increased in popularity, frequency, and power since their initial use in 1996](#). These have been used to take on some of the biggest names on the internet, including the 2017 DDoS attack on Google and the 2020 DDoS attack on Amazon Web Services. The combination of restricting physical demonstrations and the next generation of activists being digital natives increases the likelihood of this, and other forms of digital activism, significantly.



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