

# Hundreds of arrests and deal lines closed as police crackdown on county lines gangs

Four forces launched a concerted campaign to dismantle criminal groups, underpinned by the first round of funding from a £25 million government cash boost.

New figures show that, as a result of this activity, police made over 650 arrests, closed nearly 140 deal lines, seized cash and drugs with a total value of over £3 million, and made over 100 weapons seizures.

Officers also safeguarded scores of individuals – including 140 children.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I am determined to roll up county lines drugs gangs and stop them from terrorising our towns and exploiting our children.

I have seen first-hand the important work the police are doing to tackle county lines, and these impressive results show just how much of an impact our investment is having.

The police will always have my backing in tackling this threat and, crucially, protecting victims.

The operations were carried out by British Transport Police, the Metropolitan Police, Merseyside Police and West Midlands Police, and took place between November 2019 and March 2020.

This police surge activity was funded by £5 million from the government's £25 million package to tackle county lines.

Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Graham McNulty, national lead for county lines, said:

County lines is an abhorrent crime which inflicts misery on communities across the UK. This issue is not being tackled in isolation. Dedicated teams in forces across the nation are identifying lines, locating those running them and dismantling their operation entirely.

This work will not cease – it will increase and intensify over the coming months. I am pleased at the announcement of additional funding which will ensure we can continue to bring those intent on peddling drugs to justice.

Detective Superintendent Gareth Williams, the lead for the British Transport Police County Lines Taskforce, said:

Our Taskforce works nationally, targeting the train routes used by gangs to transport drugs and cash. We carry out operations daily and without warning, securing hundreds of arrests within a few short months.

Our national focus has helped us build a strong understanding of the scale of this issue and its impact on communities.

Merseyside Police Chief Constable Andy Cooke said:

We have seen considerable success through this kind of targeted action in recent months and it is vital that we keep up this relentless level of activity targeting criminals and protecting the young and vulnerable who they groom to do their dirty work.

Those responsible for these county lines bring misery to our local communities through their drug dealing. Here on Merseyside we have arrested 137 people and shutdown 61 County Lines between November 2019 and March this year. The additional funding this year will certainly be put to good use and will provide us with the ability to use new ANPR technology to target county lines and provide support services for the vulnerable.

Chief Inspector Ronan Tyrer from the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit said:

The funding has enabled us to create a taskforce dedicated to targeting top-tier drugs criminals operating in our region. These are people running drugs networks, exploiting vulnerable people and making large sums of money on the back of others' suffering.

"These results are just the start: there will be many more warrants, arrests and seizures over the coming weeks and months.

Nikki Holland, NCA Director of Investigations and joint National County Lines Lead, said:

Protecting young and vulnerable people from County Lines networks remains a priority for law enforcement, and our work continues despite the challenging situation the UK is facing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since the National County Lines Centre opened our intelligence picture is the best it's ever been and law enforcement has united

to target criminals, making thousands of arrests and seizing significant amounts of cash in coordinated action.

We welcome investment in our work to tackle County Lines and we are continuing our work at pace with partners to target the illicit finances behind the county lines operations; working to strip criminals of their assets to have maximum and lasting impact against those damaging our communities.

The Home Office is delivering the remaining £20 million of the package this year. Other measures being invested in include the expansion of the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre, new technology including Automatic Number Plate Recognition and support services for victims.

British Transport Police have also used the funding to introduce specialist drug detection dogs to work within their new dedicated county lines task force.

The National County Lines Co-ordination Centre is ensuring more intelligence is shared between forces and police are targeting dirty money. Since it opened in 2018, the centre has coordinated action which led to over 2,500 arrests and has safeguarded over 3,000 vulnerable people.

County lines is criminal exploitation, where children and vulnerable adults are coerced by gangs and organised crime networks to carry and sell illegal drugs from one area of the UK to another, usually across police and local authority boundaries.

The National Crime Agency's most recent strategic assessment of serious and organised crime found that more than 3,000 unique deal line numbers were identified in 2019, of which 800 to 1,100 lines were estimated to be active during a given month.

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## [New dates agreed for COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference](#)

The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), with the UK and its Italian partners, agreed today new dates for the COP26 UN climate conference, which will now take place between 1 and 12 November 2021 in Glasgow.

The agreement followed consultation with UNFCCC members, delivery partners and the international climate community. The conference was originally set to take place in November 2020, but had been postponed due to COVID-19.

In the run up to November 2021, the UK as hosts will continue to work with all involved to increase climate action, build resilience and lower emissions. The new date will also allow the UK and our Italian partners to harness our incoming G7 and G20 presidencies in driving climate ambition.

The decision on the new date comes as the UK Government announces that over 25 experts in multiple global sectors will be advising the COP26 Presidency.

The Friends of COP bring expertise from countries across six continents, including France, Barbados, Chad, Australia, India and Peru. They will advise the UK Government and inspire action from their sectors ahead of the conference.

The Friends of COP include Selwin Hart, Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Climate Action, Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles and Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

COP26 President and Secretary of State for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Alok Sharma, said:

While we rightly focus on fighting the immediate crisis of the Coronavirus, we must not lose sight of the huge challenges of climate change. With the new dates for COP26 now agreed we are working with our international partners on an ambitious roadmap for global climate action between now and November 2021. The steps we take to rebuild our economies will have a profound impact on our societies' future sustainability, resilience and wellbeing and COP26 can be a moment where the world unites behind a clean resilient recovery.

Everyone will need to raise their ambitions to tackle climate change and the expertise of the Friends of COP will be important in helping boost climate action across the globe.

Italian Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea Protection, Sergio Costa, said:

I am glad that consultations with Parties have made it possible to collectively and quickly agree new dates for COP26. The new dates mean the conference will be at a time when the Covid-19 tragedy will be behind us and we will be able to ensure inclusiveness, for us a fundamental prerequisite for an ambitious COP26 based on global commitment to action.

Between now and November 2021 we will take advantage of every

international opportunity to increase ambition and mobilization, also harnessing the G20 under the Italian Presidency and the G7 under the British Presidency.

Carolina Schmidt Zaldívar, COP25 President and Minister of Environment of Chile said:

It is very important that we continue to push for climate action, and having quickly agreed on new dates for COP26 is a sign of this commitment. While the subsidiary body sessions (SB52) were also postponed 4-12 October 2020, the work of the Parties and stakeholders will continue through virtual meetings such as the upcoming 'June Momentum'.

The urgency with which governments and the way in which countries promote recovery from the post-COVID-19 crisis will directly affect the other serious global crisis we are experiencing: global warming and climate change crisis. That is why we will continue to strongly mobilize all actors. We need more ambition to reduce emissions, to build resilience and to cooperate with each other.

UN Climate Change Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa, said:

Our efforts to address climate change and COVID-19 are not mutually exclusive. If done right, the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis can steer us to a more inclusive and sustainable climate path.

We honour those who we have lost by working with renewed commitment and continuing to demonstrate leadership and determination in addressing climate change, and building a safe, clean, just and resilient world.

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## **PM: Six people can meet outside under new measures to ease lockdown**

Read the PM's press conference statement [here](#).

Groups of up to six people will be able to meet outdoors in England from

Monday 1 June, including in gardens and other private outdoor spaces, provided strict social distancing guidelines are followed.

The Prime Minister announced the change as he set out a carefully-designed package to ease the burdens of lockdown in a way that is expected to keep the R rate down.

Thanks to the public's continued patience and hard work in helping to protect the NHS and contain the virus, the Prime Minister confirmed that the government's five tests are being met. This means we can now move forward to the next phase of adjusting the lockdown.

In line with the Prime Minister's announcements earlier this week, a series of measures will be put in place in England from Monday 1 June in three core areas – schools, retail, and social contact.

Primary schools will welcome back children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 on 1 June, and nurseries and other early years settings will be reopened. On 15 June, secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges will begin to provide some face-to-face contact time for Year 10 and 12 and the equivalent groups in further education. This will help students prepare for exams next year, and we expect there to be around a quarter of these secondary students in at any point.

The Prime Minister has also acknowledged that some schools may not be able to reopen immediately, and has committed the government to continuing to work with the sector to ensure any schools experiencing difficulties are able to open as soon as possible.

Thousands of high street shops, department stores and shopping centres will also begin to reopen in June as we restart the economy.

Outdoor markets and car showrooms will be able to reopen from 1 June, provided they meet COVID-19 secure guidelines to protect shoppers and workers. We intend to open all other non-essential retail from 15 June, as long as the government's five tests are still being met and COVID-19 secure guidelines are followed.

Recognising the impact that lockdown is having on family and friends who have been unable to see each other, the Prime Minister announced today that from 1 June up to six people from different households will be allowed to meet outside, including in gardens and other private outdoor spaces.

The evidence shows that the risk of transmission is significantly lower outdoors and this step will mean that people can see more of their friends, family and loved ones.

However, as we take this small step forward, it is critical that those from different households continue to stay 2 metres apart. And it remains the case that people should not spend time inside the homes of their friends and families, other than to access the garden or use the toilet.

Minimising contact with others is still the best way to prevent transmission.

The Prime Minister was clear today that people should try to avoid seeing people from too many households in quick succession – so that we can avoid the risk of quick transmission between lots of different families and continue to control the virus. Those who are shielding should continue to do so. The Government recognises the toll this is taking on groups that have been asked to shield and hopes to say more soon on what further support we can provide.

Speaking at today's Downing Street press conference, the Prime Minister said

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Thanks to the caution we have shown so far, all five tests are being met. That is not my achievement or the government's achievement – it is your achievement, only possible thanks to your resolve and dedication to our national purpose to overcome this virus.

So the result is we can move forward with adjusting the lockdown in England on Monday.

I want to reaffirm that fundamental commitment to the British people that all the steps we have taken, and will take, are conditional.

They are conditional on all the data, and all the scientific advice, and it is that scientific advice which will help us to judge what we are doing is safe.

And as before, we will see how these new changes are working, and look at the R value and the number of new infections before taking any further steps, so we can ensure anything we do does not risk a second peak that could overwhelm the NHS.

The new NHS Test and Trace programme will ensure we keep making progress in easing the lockdown while continuing to keep the virus under control.

The government will closely monitor the impact of the changes set out today and continue to follow the scientific advice to ensure the five tests continue to be met before we take any further steps.

So far, the public have shown high levels of compliance and we are confident that this will continue as restrictions are relaxed, and that people will do the right thing to control the virus and save lives.

The police will continue to take the approach of engaging, explaining and encouraging individuals to follow the law. Where people do not follow the rules, the police will have the power to enforce these requirements as a last resort.

The Prime Minister's statement at today's Downing Street press conference is [here](#).

The Government's five tests are:

1. Protect the NHS's ability to cope. We must be confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment right across the UK
2. See a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rates from COVID-19 so we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak
3. Reliable data from SAGE showing that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board
4. Be confident that the range of operational challenges, including testing capacity and PPE, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand
5. Be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelms the NHS

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## [UK PM addresses Financing for Development event via video: 28 May 2020](#)

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson today addressed a virtual high-level event on "Financing for Development in the Era of Covid-19 and Beyond", convened by the UN Secretary-General and the leaders of Canada and Jamaica.

The event aimed to galvanise international action to address six major financing challenges: liquidity; boosting external finance to support jobs and growth; debt; private sector credit; illicit financial flows; and ensuring a sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

It builds on the Prime Minister's commitment to support the resilience of vulnerable countries and drive the global economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis. The UK will now lead a global workstream on ensuring an inclusive and sustainable recovery.

Speaking via a recorded video from 10 Downing Street, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I'm grateful to Secretary-General Guterres, Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Holness for bringing us together at this vital moment.

As we meet today, we face the greatest health crisis of our lifetimes.

Every government is striving to protect our respective peoples, and that is exactly as it should be. Yet no single country holds the keys to victory against our invisible enemy.

If we are to defeat COVID-19, achieve a global recovery and avoid a future



pandemic, then we must work together across borders. Our national efforts will count for little unless they are fortified by international cooperation.

Today, the most urgent tasks are to stabilise the world economy and develop a vaccine. Britain has contributed over £700 million – almost \$1 billion – to the international response.

We are the largest single donor to the efforts of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness to find a vaccine.

We've provided up to £150 million to the IMF to help developing countries cope with the economic impact.

But once we move beyond the emergency phase, we owe it to future generations to build back better and base our recovery on solid foundations, including a fairer, greener and more resilient global economy.

The UK will take this forward by hosting the UN Climate Change conference in Glasgow next year.

There is no need to reinvent the international system or renegotiate existing agreements; but there is every need for us to work together to get our shared goals back on track, including the expansion of girls' education, the Paris climate change targets, the Sustainable Development Goals, and our financing of development.

And though we are witnessing a tragedy that has touched every one of us, I believe that we can look to the future with buoyancy and hope.

In the year I was born, the World Health Organisation created a Smallpox Eradication Unit, designed to rid humanity of a scourge that claimed about 300 million lives in the 20th century alone. Just 13 years later, this international campaign achieved complete success and the world defeated smallpox.

Only a few months ago, before the pandemic struck, we stood on the brink of a similar victory against polio.

None of these advances would have been possible without this great organisation, the United Nations, which strives to represent the combined genius and resolve of humanity.

Our predecessors overcame terrible evils and they were at their best in moments of adversity.

As we face our own time of adversity, I believe that we can come through this crisis and achieve a strong, green and fair recovery, if we show the same generosity and breadth of spirit that should always animate the United Nations.

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# PM press conference statement on the five tests: 28 May 2020

Good evening,

Before I set out our next steps in the fight against the coronavirus, let me update you on the latest data:

- 3,918,079 tests for coronavirus have now been carried out in the UK, including 119,587 tests carried out yesterday;
- 269,127 people have tested positive, that's an increase of 1,887 cases since yesterday;
- 8,560 people are in hospital with coronavirus, down 11% from 9,607 this time last week.
- And sadly, of those tested positive for coronavirus, across all settings, 37,837 have now died. That's an increase of 377 fatalities since yesterday and we are with their friends and family in mourning.

As you know, we have set five tests which must be met before adjusting the lockdown – as set out on the first slide.

It is vital that these tests are met before any changes are made, because we must not risk all the hard work and sacrifice of the British people.

At all times we are informed by the data and evidence, about the spread of the virus and the impact of the measures taken so far.

I will now take you through our latest assessment of progress against each of the five tests.

Next slide please.

Our first test is to protect the NHS's ability to cope, so that we are confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment right across the UK.

At the start of the outbreak, there was significant concern that the NHS would not be able to cope. That turned out not to be the case, thanks to the heroic efforts of everyone who works in the NHS. And the heroic efforts of the British people to contain this virus.

The data show that on 26 May, 475 people were admitted to hospital in England with coronavirus – down from a peak of 3,121 on a single day, on 2 April.

On 27 May, 11% of mechanical ventilator beds in the UK were occupied by patients with coronavirus, down from a peak of 41% on 10 April.

This significant progress means we are meeting the first test.

Can I have the next slide please.

Our second test is to see a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rates from COVID-19 so we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak.

As measured by a seven-day rolling average, the UK daily death rate now stands at 256, down from a peak of 943 on 14 April.

While every death is one too many, it is now the case that there has been a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rate, and so the second test is being met.

Next slide please.

Our third test is to receive reliable information, reliable data from SAGE showing that the rate of infection – the number of people catching Covid – is decreasing to manageable levels across the board.

And in the last seven days, an average of 2,312 new cases were confirmed with a positive test, that's down from a peak of 5,066 in the first week of May.

Based on the various data available, the Government is satisfied that the third test is being met.

And in a moment, Sir Patrick will tell us more about other methods of measuring infections, including the R number.

Next slide please.

Our fourth test is that we must be confident that the range of operational challenges, including on testing capacity and Personal Protective Equipment, are in hand, with supply able to meet future demand.

I fully acknowledge the difficulties on testing and PPE that we have faced since the start of the outbreak. It has been immensely frustrating, but we are now making progress.

Yesterday we carried out 119,587 tests, compared to around 12,000 at the start of April. Testing capacity has now increased to 161,214 a day.

We have now signed over 100 new deals with PPE suppliers around the world. Here in the UK, thanks to the efforts of Lord Deighton and his team and the brilliance of domestic manufacturers we have signed contracts for over two billion items of PPE, including facemasks, visors, gowns and aprons.

We are therefore satisfied that the fourth test is being met and we can start to rebuild stocks – though we recognise there may be some settings that require urgent restocking on occasion.

Can I have the next slide please.

Our fifth and final test is that we must be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelms the NHS.

I am very grateful to the Chief Scientific Adviser and the Chief Medical Officer for their assessments of the measures I am about to set out on schools, retail and social contact. Although all parts of the UK are moving in the same direction, it is important to note health is devolved and different parts of the UK are quite properly all moving at different speeds.

This package has been carefully designed so that we can ease the burdens of lockdown while expecting to keep that R below one. I cannot and will not throw away all the gains we have made together, and so the changes we are making are limited and cautious.

It is thanks to the caution we have shown so far that all five tests are being met. That is not my achievement or the government's achievement – it is your achievement, only possible thanks to your resolve and dedication to our national purpose to overcome this virus.

So the result is we can move forward with adjusting the lockdown in England on Monday.

Firstly, as I set out on Sunday, we will now reopen schools to more children. Closing schools has deprived children of their education, and as so often it is the most disadvantaged pupils who risk being hardest hit.

On Monday we will start to put this right – in a safe way – by reopening nurseries and other early years settings and reception, year one and year six in primary schools.

A fortnight later on 15 June, secondary schools will begin to provide some face-to-face contact time for years 10 and 12.

Secondly, we will also start to reopen shops as we restart our economy.

We will begin, on Monday, with outdoor retail and car showrooms, where social distancing is generally easier.

And a fortnight later on 15 June, we intend to reopen other non-essential retail – but only provided the five tests are still being met and shops have been made Covid secure.

Lastly, I know the toll that lockdown has taken on families and friends who have been unable to see each other.

So from Monday we will allow up to six people to meet outside – provided those from different households continue strictly to observe social distancing rules by staying two metres apart.

At the moment, as you know, people can meet in parks but not in private gardens. This was a cautious first step – but we know that there is no difference in the health risk. So we will now allow people to meet in gardens and other private outdoor spaces.

These changes mean friends and family can start to meet their loved ones – perhaps seeing both parents at once, or both grandparents at once. I know

that for many this will be a long-awaited and joyful moment.

But I must stress that to control the virus, everyone needs to stay alert, act responsibly, strictly observe social distancing rules, and stay two metres apart from those who you do not live with.

Minimising contact with others is still the best way to prevent transmission. You should also try to avoid seeing people from too many households in quick succession – so that we can avoid the risk of quick transmission from lots of different families and continue to control the virus.

And it remains the case that people should not be inside the homes of their friends and families, unless it is to access the garden.

I should add that, at this stage, I am afraid that those who have been asked to shield themselves should continue to do so.

I want to say to those extremely clinically vulnerable people who are being shielded that I do understand how difficult this has been for you, especially. And I want to thank you for all the efforts you have gone to – because your actions have helped the NHS to cope.

We are looking carefully at how we can make your life easier, and how we can better support you, and we want to say more on that soon.

I want to reassure everyone that we can make all of the changes I have outlined in a safe way.

We know that children, and particularly young children, are much less likely to be seriously affected by the virus.

We know that if shops enforce social distancing, as required by our Covid secure guidelines, then the virus is less likely to spread.

And crucially, we know that transmission of the virus is far lower outdoors, so we can confidently allow more interaction outside.

I understand people will have questions as to how to do all of this safely – and we will publish guidance on these changes to help people, to help you, make the most of them.

Now inevitably, there may still be some anomalies, or apparent inconsistencies, in these rules. And clearly what we're proposing is still just a fraction of the social interaction each of us would normally enjoy.

I know many of you will find this frustrating – I am sorry about that. But I'm afraid it is unavoidable, given the nature of the invisible enemy we are fighting.

It is a complex problem and we are asking for everyone's patience as we work through it together. We will inevitably not get everything right first time.

But I must ask everyone to remember it is that same patience, the hard work,

and sacrifices of the British people in lockdown that have got us so far and allow us to make the progress we have.

By protecting the NHS, getting us through the peak, and getting the virus under control – we are able to deliver all of the adjustments and easing of restrictions I have set out today.

These adjustments are most of those we set out to achieve in step two of our roadmap, and we have also been able to have them in place by June 1 as we had hoped.

There is no doubt that we are making progress and I am hopeful that in the coming weeks we may be able to do more.

Because obviously while protecting the health and safety of the British public is, and must always be, our number one priority, we must also work to restart our economy and society – so as many people as possible can begin returning to their way of life.

But I want to reaffirm that fundamental commitment to the British people that all the steps we have taken, and will take, are conditional.

They are conditional on all the data, and all the scientific advice, and it is that scientific advice which will help us to judge what we are doing is safe.

And I have to warn you, there will be further local outbreaks. So we will monitor carefully, we will put on the brakes as required, and where necessary, we will re-impose measures. It's important to be clear about that up front.

And as before, we will see how these new changes are working, and look at the R value and the number of new infections before taking any further steps, so we can ensure anything we do does not risk a second peak that could overwhelm the NHS.

And yesterday, as I hope you all know, we took a huge step forward that will enable us to keep making progress in returning our lives to as close to normal as possible, while continuing to control the virus and isolate any new outbreaks.

And that is through our new NHS Test and Trace programme in England. The Scottish Government has established Test and Protect, and Welsh and Northern Irish schemes will follow next week.

And I'll now show a short video that explains how NHS Test and Trace works in England and what we all need to do to play our part.

Now I'll hand over to Sir Patrick.