



Stay Local and Explore from Your Door

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Dorset Police is joining forces with partner agencies in the county to ask the public to stay local and explore from their door this February half term rather than travel to Dorset.

With the country still in tightened restrictions as part of the National Lockdown, people must only leave their homes for a limited number of reasons. This includes to shop for essential items, to go to work if you cannot work from home, to exercise, meet support or childcare bubbles, seek emergency help or attend education or childcare.

Chief Constable James Vaughan said: "While the number of daily cases continue to fall, over 110,000 people have tragically lost their lives in the UK from COVID-19. We must stick with the rules and not become complacent or lose sight of why these restrictions are in place – to reduce the spread of the disease, protect the NHS and save lives.

"While the legislation allows people to travel locally to carry out their daily exercise with members of their household or one other person, there has been much discussion about what 'local' means. The Government states that local means staying within your village, town or city. It does not mean travelling for over 100 miles from out of the county to visit Dorset's beaches, countryside or beauty spots. This is not within the spirit of the legislation. We know people love to visit Dorset, but trips here will have to wait and we are encouraging people to stay local and explore from their door. Disappointingly we have still seen people travelling for over 100 miles to visit our beauty spots. Travelling to stay in second homes or other rentals is also not allowed at this time.

"Our officers will be continuing their daily patrols on the main arterial routes in and through Dorset, as well as at popular beauty spots, and will be speaking to motorists about their journeys. If people are found to have travelled unnecessarily and in blatant breach of the rules, they could be handed a £200 fine and turned around."

Between 27 March 2020 and 17 January 2021, Dorset Police issued a total of 1,083 fixed penalty notices (FPNs). Since 6 January 2021 almost 200 FPNs have been issued in the county. Between 6 January 2021 and 17 January 2021, 40 per cent of the FPNs were handed to people who live outside Dorset. During all three national lockdowns – 23 March 2020 and 17 January 2021 – 76.3 per cent of the total FPNs issued were handed to those living out of the county.

Last week the Force received 376 COVID-19-related reports. Examples of recent breaches include people travelling from as far away as London to surf off the Dorset coast and five people were fined after driving from Leicester to Lulworth to look at the coastline.

The number of people currently travelling on the county's roads is far higher than that experienced in the first lockdown. On 1 February 2021, traffic flow in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area was 35 per cent lower than the same time the previous year and 72 per cent higher than the first lockdown. In the Dorset area it was around 39 per cent lower than the same time last year, but 94 per cent higher than the first lockdown.

Councillor Nicola Greene, Portfolio Holder for COVID-19 Resilience and Public Health at BCP Council, said: **"We know families are facing a challenge as they look ahead to half term and think about how to keep everyone entertained. However, COVID-19 is still very much a real threat in our communities so it's vital people stick to the rules and stay at home."**

"We're looking forward to welcoming visitors back to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole when it's safe to do **so but for now, please play your part in helping to stop the spread of this deadly virus and if you do head out for exercise, stay local.**"

Councillor Spencer Flower, Leader of Dorset Council said: "I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who is continuing to follow Government advice to stay at home where possible. It is more important than ever that we all carry on acting responsibly, as the large majority of residents are doing in Dorset. We know how hard this lockdown is, with us all being affected by the restrictions in some way, but the light really is at the end of the tunnel as vaccines are rolled out every day to our most vulnerable people and front line workers. Please, continue to stay home and stay local this half term."

Area Manager Seth Why, of Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: **"We completely understand and would like to encourage the public to get outside with their children this half term, but we also need everyone to respect the guidelines and stay local. We're incredibly fortunate to have some of the most beautiful sites in the country on our doorsteps, but we still shouldn't be making unnecessary journeys outside our village, town or city."** These beauty spots aren't going anywhere!

"Explore from your door, protect the NHS, save lives."

Message Sent By

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