

COMMUNITY UPDATE

COVID-19



03/07/2020



Tomorrow sees the most significant easing of restrictions since the lockdown was introduced back in March to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

We know the last few months has been challenging for our communities. Regardless of your circumstances, I'm sure we've all had personal battles to overcome, particularly when it comes to social isolation.

This weekend will see many businesses, including pubs, bars and restaurants, which have been closed for more than three months reopen their doors to customers again. Naturally, these greater freedoms will come as a relief to many who will take the chance to meet with family and friends. Equally, it's important to recognise there will be people, particularly those from vulnerable groups, who are nervous and cautious about socialising. Let's not forget, the virus is still with us so it's really important that people continue to follow social distancing guidelines.

People heading out this weekend will notice things haven't returned to normal. Venues will be operating differently, limiting capacity to help maintain social distancing and many will have booking systems in place. Please don't assume pubs will be like they were before, where you can just go in and get a drink. Many venues we've spoken to have booking systems and will not accept passing trade. Clearly, it's for the venues to decide how they operate within the guidelines so the best thing you can do is plan your outing in advance – check websites or give venues a call – at least this way you will avoid the disappointment of being turned away.

As part of our preparations for this weekend, we've worked with our partners and been speaking to licensees so know they're fully aware of their responsibilities. Through these conversations, we know a few venues in Norwich are already fully booked. People turning up unannounced will not be allowed in so please plan in advance. This advice goes for your journey home too as demand for taxis and private hire are likely to be at a premium.

We have additional resources in place to deal with any issues and anyone committing crime and anti-social behaviour will be dealt with in the normal way. We also have extra resources available to deal with anyone caught drink driving. However, officers will not be patrolling inside venues – social distancing is for businesses to monitor and manage and is not a police responsibility.

The overwhelming majority of you have embraced the gradual return of freedoms sensibly and I expect nothing less this weekend. However, we know from experience of policing the night time economy that things don't always turn out that way, especially when alcohol is involved. Behind this uniform I'm an ordinary person who hasn't been immune to the challenges of the last few months so I completely get that people want to enjoy themselves... we want you too as well. But please don't get carried away and remember to keep yourself safe.

Many thanks - **Temporary Assistant Chief Constable , Julie Wwendth**



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