



Force Headquarters, Woburn Road
Kempston, Bedford, MK43 9AX

15 January 2021

OPEN LETTER TO PERSONS ORGANISING AND/OR PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC GATHERINGS

Infection rates across Bedfordshire are rising and we are seeing a greater increase in those aged between 19 and 59 years old. The most common form of transmission is between people who are in close contact.

The NHS is under significant strain from both those suffering from Covid 19 related illness and those who require other urgent treatment. The message is clear: stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

The government has introduced guidance and there is legislation to support this message in order to keep you safe, with restrictions on all outdoor activity including meeting people, exercise and work. There are restrictions on travel and gatherings, but the single most important action we can take is to stay at home.

Bedfordshire Police strongly advises people not to attend any gathering, for the protection of yourselves and others. We are still in the middle of a global pandemic.

Please be advised that you may also be at risk of committing a criminal offence. Under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 (as amended) no person in a tier four area may participate in a gathering of more than two people in a public outdoor place (or two or more people in any other outdoor place, such as the outdoor area of any private premises), unless certain exemptions apply.

There are exemptions that apply to gatherings, for example those that are necessary for the purposes of work, providing emergency assistance or escaping the risk of harm. This open letter does not contain all the provisions.

To find the Regulations, look online at www.legislation.gov.uk

If you attend a gathering that breaches the Regulations, you may be committing an offence, which is punishable by a fine. In certain circumstances, if you hold a gathering of more than 30 people and you do not meet the requirements of the Regulations you might be committing a different offence, which is also punishable by a fine.

It is also an offence to encourage others to unlawfully participate in a gathering (contrary to s44 or 45 of the Serious Crime Act 2007). Police officers will take appropriate enforcement action where necessary.

It is your responsibility to check the current position and ensure you are not committing an offence by being involved in a gathering. We urge anyone arranging a gathering to inform your local police.

We all need to continue to play our part to prevent the spread of the virus.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sharn Basra' with the number '469' written at the end.

Sharn Basra
Temp Assistant Chief Constable
Bedfordshire Police