

Police Federation
Of England and Wales



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Lloegr a Chymru

Established by Act of Parliament

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CHAIR

30 December 2020

Martin Hewitt QPM
Chair
National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
10 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0NN

Sent via email

Dear Mr Hewitt,

Over recent weeks we have been in communication with you and colleagues from the NPCC about the prioritisation for police officers having the Covid vaccine. I completely understand for some this is an emotive issue. It has been suggested that I am supporting police officers been prioritised for the vaccine ahead of the most vulnerable in society and our NHS frontline care workers. This is not the case. What I am asking is that once those with the highest level of vulnerability and NHS workers are given the vaccine that our members are treated as a priority to have the vaccine.

If we expect police officers to continue to police in the way that we do then it's essential they are given the protection they deserve. Getting hands on and working in a close contact with members of the public is often unavoidable. This creates a risk, not only for our members and the public they are dealing with, but also for the officers' families.

Officers could be carrying the virus but non-symptomatic and therefore, by the nature of their role, risk being super-spreaders. We don't want officers to inadvertently and unknowingly spread the infection as they go about their day to day duties; because officers have no choice but to interact with the public when dealing with calls that come in and it is often with the most vulnerable people. This contact

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places the public at greater risk of infection, as well as being an organisational risk for the police service.

We know that the number of officers who are contracting the virus or are having to self-isolate is increasing, which creates a resilience issue for policing. There is a strong argument that police officers must be prioritised to receive this vaccine, as this will not only protect them and their families, but the general public too. Whilst I completely accept that, up to now, our conversations have been constructive we have not yet had any formal or positive announcement from government.

We appreciate your help and understanding on this vitally important issue to date. I am making direct representations to the Home Secretary about this, but I also formally request that the NPCC makes representations too, to ensure that police officers are prioritised as part of the Covid vaccine programme.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Apter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a distinct 'A'.

John Apter
National Chair