

Subject: FW: Detention and interviews of suspects

Chief Inspector Wilkes

I am a colleague of Nick Walsh, so was forwarded your email below.

I have just returned from the Bridewell and can inform you that there are literally no measures being taken to distance people. Officers approached me and had to be asked to keep a safe distance away. I was not offered any PPE, but it would have been pointless in any event as nobody else was using it.

There are no adjustments being made to normal procedures in deciding whether interviews are actually necessary. My client was to be interviewed about 18 shop thefts where she was clearly shown on CCTV committing the thefts. The officer planned to show all CCTV in interview and estimated it would take about 90 minutes. I was told that she would be charged with the offences whatever she did in interview. My client chose not to be interviewed. I cannot imagine that any solicitor will be advising their client to agree to be interviewed in the current circumstances. I am also confident that no court would ever allow an adverse inference to be drawn in these circumstances. It is clearly reasonable to refuse to be interviewed where there is a risk of exposure to a potentially deadly virus.

The officer told me that they had to interview in every case, otherwise "the CPS would have a go at them".

Whilst I acknowledge that in an ideal world, interviews can serve a useful purpose, in the light of the extreme and unprecedented measures being taken in the criminal justice system to prevent exposure to the virus, I cannot imagine that the CPS would still insist on an interview in every case, thereby greatly increasing the number of people who can be infected.

I have carefully followed Public Health England guidance and therefore this was the first time I have left my house in three days. As a result of this attempt at a pointless interview, I have now risked exposing my family to the virus. This scenario is being repeated numerous times every day across the two Nottinghamshire custody suites.

I urge you to seek urgent advice from the CPS as to the necessity of recorded interviews, so that as many people as possible can be protected from wholly unnecessary risks.

Many thanks.

Jon Hullis