# Audio file

[KIM NEWCOMBE AUD-20221227-WA0001.m4a](https://seessexcollegeac-my.sharepoint.com/personal/lou_cox_southessex_ac_uk/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/KIM%20NEWCOMBE%20AUD-20221227-WA0001.m4a)

# Kim Newcombe - Audio Transcript

00:00:01

Memories of COVID lockdown, I remember before we went into lockdown.

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And this was boiling, it was like a rising tide that I spoke to some elderly friends of mine who I visit regularly and just said look while this is going on.

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I'm not going to come and see you because if anyone's going to catch this, it'll be me because I'll still be working. I'm a police officer. I don't get the choice.

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I don't get the choice to not go to work regardless of what's going on.

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I still go and I take that on, and I've done it for many, many years, and that's OK, but this felt very different.

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This felt very different.

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This was.

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I don't know, it's a very different thing, it's.

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It was frightening.

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There was a lot of fear.

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There was a lot of stress.

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There was a lot of anxiety.

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It was incredibly lonely.

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So, I felt so isolated.

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The only people I saw throughout the worst of it were people that I worked with.

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People who I’m basically paid to tolerate, these are not people I choose to spend my life with.

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It's not my friends or family, these are people I work with, or they were people that I might have seen on the train.

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You know the odd person on the train on the tube?

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Or there were people I was dealing with who clearly weren't following the rules, so they clearly weren't interested in whether they contracted the disease or whether they passed it on to anybody else, or whether they passed it on to me and I then took it home to anybody.

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Errm, but I'm single. I have no children, and I did feel disposable.

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I felt like it didn't matter if I got it because.

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Nobody depended on me, which was weird.

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As police, I think we were misrepresented in the press.

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There was a picture of me in the Daily Fail, you know, which just felt quite intrusive.

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Given that I was trying to do my job, but.

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That's, that's life.

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That's, that's the job all over, really.

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That's who we are.

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And there were some great things that came out of, of that period of time.

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Community spirit was, was high.

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People were willing to help people no matter what.

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There was some good teamwork going on.

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One of the hotels in London set up a soup kitchen for emergency workers, which was.

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Gratefully received, we got random gifts, some strangers, the lady gave me a chocolate Bunny thing and people in Marks and Spencer's were giving us flowers and stuff, because otherwise they'd have just been.

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Thrown in the bin, which was very sweet.

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Weird thing I enjoyed.

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Taking photographs in an emp,ty London going to places like Leicester Square and Soho, there wasn't a single other soul which you'd never see in your life.

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It was like an apocalypse.

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And I really enjoyed taking those photographs and I look at them now and it's just bizarre.

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But it's kind of cool that there's nobody in them.

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Just before the lockdown, I took up upholstery, a diploma and they were able, they worked very hard to, the college I go to worked very hard to keep that going throughout the pandemic because the place of education and.

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All that kind of stuff, so they were the only people I really saw who weren't my colleagues.

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So, they were important people and they weren't people.

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Breaking the rules.

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Or not caring about other people, they were people learning a skill and doing the best they could in an awful situation, so I'll be forever grateful to them.

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I have now nearly finished my diploma and it feels like a lifetime ago, strange.

00:04:02

I did a bit of dressmaking and because I had nothing else to do, couldn't go anywhere, I couldn't do anything. In my free time I was short on means of managing my stress.

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The way I would normally manage my stress and anxiety would be to see friends and family and you know, socialize or go for a meal or have drinks or just you know, go for a walk with somebody and we weren’t allowed to do that.

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So, I spent time Facetiming Nicola for advice on dressmaking.

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Not that we're not connected anyway.

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We're connected all the time.

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But it just gave us something else to talk about. And I joined the team at work.

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Pandemic Multi Agency Response Team which was members of the Fire Brigade, Ambulance Service NHS and ourselves, the Metropolitan Police and obviously other police services did the same thing.

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And we went into people's homes. People who were bereaved, who had lost somebody.

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From COVID

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Basically to.

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Deal with their bodies.

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The body side of it doesn't worry me, it's something else.

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I do mass fatality instance anyway.

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The body side of it doesn't bother me, but.

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Going into bereaved people's homes dressed in full PPE, you know suit goggles. I was taped into my wellies and taped into my gloves and all that kind of stuff.

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It's, it's weird. It dressed like a spaceman in a bereaved person's home. And there was no connection.

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With them you couldn't talk to them.

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You could.

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I couldn't even look you in the eye because you got goggles on, very strange.

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Situation to be in and the PPE doesn't bother me. I'm used to doing that. I do that, but it's normally in a more sterile situation, but being in somebody's house with their loved one, who's just died from a disease that is sweeping the country and feeling so disconnected was a very strange thing.

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But I work with some amazing people.

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They're amazing.

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I never thought we would have to advise people to wash their hands.

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I found that very strange.

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And you know, we weren't given.

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We weren't given any kind of priority or kind of.

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I don't know, like.

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We weren't.

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We weren't allowed to jump the queue for vaccinations, and yet we're still expected to deal with all the people and protest to spit and shout in your face.

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And that kind of stuff which I thought was disappointing, but I'm hardly surprised because we get to eat like shit quite a lot.

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We did play a version of Shove Halfpenny at Christmas at work, but rather than using a penny it was a bit like curling kind of thing.

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You know where they use the brush and the thing goes along the ice, but we had.

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A Ferrero Roche and a face mask, got a video of that, makes me laugh.

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And I think one of the.

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The standout things for me, standout negative thing for me, was losing a friend.

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He didn't die of COVID.

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He died of his body shutting down from alcoholism, but going to a funeral on a snowy day with very few people who weren't allowed to sit next to one another.

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It was very, very sad, very sad and there must be people all over the country.

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Who wish they could have given a better sendoff to their loved ones.

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Yeah, and then in the aftermath, we discover that the people who brought these rules in, the people who made these laws, the people who we were representing, in order to try and, you know, help the community and all the rest of it.

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Those people weren't.

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Following the rules.

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Which makes a total mockery of everything we did.

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And all the abuse we received for doing so.

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And that makes me really angry, and I can't wait to retire. Because when I retire, I'm gonna get a little pal for Ernie the Wonder Spaniel, who is every day, my savior, but particularly during that period.

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So as soon as I retire, I'll have another one and maybe a few.

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Maybe I'll get them from the rescue home and do something lovely with my dog in my retirement. But that's my that's my memories of COVID, it's kind of weird, it's finished.

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Kind of, is it?

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I don't know.

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Will it come back?

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Who knows, will we deal with it differently?

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I don't know.

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I don't know a lot, do I really?