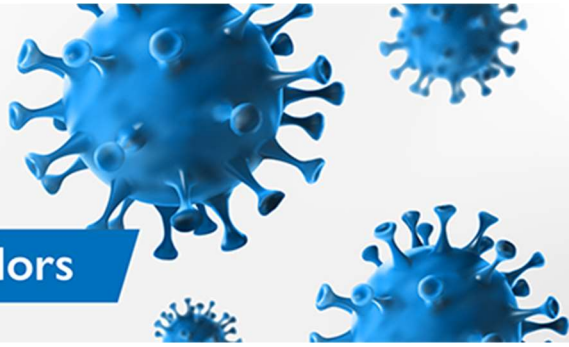


Hampshire County Council Public Health update Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Briefing for County Councillors



Edition No.9

17 March 2020

This briefing will focus on the new Government guidance on social distancing and protecting older people and vulnerable adults. It will also include information on working with Hampshire's Voluntary and Community Sector as well as information on signposting for Parish and Town Councils.

National context

Prime Minister's Briefing

At the Prime Minister's daily briefing on 17th March 2020, the Chancellor announced a series of measures to support businesses and individuals, including £330bn of loan guarantees and direct support worth more than £20bn. These included the following:

- Businesses that have a rateable value of less than £51,000 will pay no business rates for 12 months, plus an additional cash grant of up to £25,000
- All business within the hospitality or retail sector will receive a business rate holiday for this year

The Chancellor confirmed that **local authorities will be fully compensated** for these measures.

Older people and vulnerable adults

The Government has published [guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults](#). The guidance, which is for people of all ages, advises on social distancing measures in order to reduce the transmission of coronavirus.

The Government is currently advising those over 70, those who are vulnerable due to an underlying health condition and pregnant women, to follow the above advice and to significantly limit face-to-face interaction with friends and family if possible. The general principles of good hand and respiratory hygiene still apply.

In the guidance, the Government has [listed which health conditions](#) constitute an individual being considered a 'vulnerable adult' – and thus at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus.

NHS England will directly contact relevant individuals who are deemed to be at the highest risk next week with further advice on more stringent measures that will need to be taken in order to stay safe.

Self-isolation guidelines

For people displaying symptoms of coronavirus or living with others displaying symptoms, the main messages are:

- if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness, however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- if you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.
- if possible, move any vulnerable individuals out **of your home**, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

The relevant Government guidance for households with possible coronavirus is available [here](#).

Travel advice

The Government has today (17 March) updated its [guidance for British people travelling of living overseas](#) - people are now advised against all non-essential travel worldwide. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was already advising against all but essential travel or all travel to some areas or countries due to risks that do not relate to COVID-19. This advice remains in place.

Other government advice updates

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance for employees, employers and businesses](#) (updated 17 March)
- [General Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance](#) (updated 17 March)

Local context

Voluntary sector and community activity

Over the last week there has been an increasing amount of activity in many local communities by neighbours, voluntary organisations and community groups to support people affected by coronavirus. Mutual aid groups have been formed across the UK to provide support from shopping, dog walking and picking up prescriptions within communities. As well as practical support the groups are offering telephone calls with people who are self-isolating due to infection or increased vulnerability. Many groups are being coordinated nationally by ['Covid-19](#)

[Mutual Aid UK](#) , who are organising online meetings and are handing out flyers in streets.

The County Council recognises that Hampshire's Voluntary and Community Sector has a key role to play locally in the response to Coronavirus. This will include mobilising and coordinating volunteer effort across Hampshire to support public agencies and provide additional services to vulnerable people – particularly those engaged in social distancing measures and self-isolation.

The County Council is working with the Sector to coordinate effort, in order to maximise available volunteer resource and ensure it is targeted where need is greatest. This could mean redirecting appropriately qualified and willing volunteers to carry out non-personal practical care tasks to assist people with care and support needs.

The work will be led by a dedicated Volunteer Response Group within the Local Resilience Forum.

In taking this work forward, the County Council will seek to work closely with Hampshire District, Parish and Town Councils - as well as wider Public Sector partners within the Police, Fire and NHS – to ensure a joined-up, collaborative and impactful effort.

As well as looking externally, the County Council is acting to understand and redirect its own volunteers.

The County Council would urge anyone seeking to volunteer to do so safely and with regards to national Government guidance, taking all necessary steps to ensure their own safety and that of others.

Parish and Town Councils (PTCs)

PTCs are receiving regular advice through the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Advice has been communicated with regards to the Annual General Meetings which are required to be held in May. It is unknown whether this requirement will be changed by the Government and therefore PTCs are currently planning on the basis of these going ahead. HALC has previously distributed guidance on this matter to PTCs by email on 13 March.

Please note that the postponement of local elections announced by the Government includes any Town or Parish Councils that were due to hold an election on 7 May 2020.

Older people and vulnerable adults

A [press release containing specific advice for elderly and vulnerable people](#) was issued on 13 March and remains relevant. The press release includes reassurance from the Director of Public Health and highlights the practical steps people can take to reduce the severity of Coronavirus among these groups.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

The Leader and Chief Executive joined the MHCLG teleconference yesterday and continue to receive the most up to date information from government departments. The Secretary of State yesterday confirmed the Government's commitment to supporting councils to focus efforts on the priority area of social care. He also confirmed:

- Government will consider bringing forward legislation to remove the requirement for annual council meetings to take place in person
- It will consider bringing forward legislation to allow council committee meetings to be held virtually for a temporary period
- Routine Care Quality Commission inspections will be temporarily suspended for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak
- Ofsted will look very favourably on any requests to defer inspections because of coronavirus
- Councils will be able to use their discretion on deadlines for Freedom of Information requests
- The deadline for local government financial audits will be extended to 30 September 2020
- Additional military personnel will now work with Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) on their coronavirus response plans
- Relaxed restrictions on supermarket delivery hours
- Postponement of local, mayoral and PCC elections until May next year

Regular updates

Further updates will be issued as required.