

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

Briefing for County Councillors



This briefing will focus on the announcements made by the Chancellor at today's press conference and will include government updates and announcements on car parking, hotel accommodation, broadband and new Police powers.

The briefing will also provide an update on changes to the County Council's service delivery including property maintenance, rights of way and the new shielding arrangements for vulnerable people.

Members are kindly reminded to direct any coronavirus related queries and comments to the new dedicated inbox - coronavirus.memberqueries@hants.gov.uk

[View in browser](#)

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National context

Government's daily press conference

The Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announced new support for the self-employed. The *Self-Employed Income Support Scheme* will see the Government pay self-employed people a taxable grant worth 80% of monthly wages, capped at £2,500 per month. The scheme will be open for at least three months and will be extended if necessary. The self-employed will be able to claim grants and at the same time continue to do business. The Chancellor stated that he recognises self-employed people are a diverse group and highlighted that steps have been taken to make sure the scheme is both deliverable and fair. It will be open to those with profits up to £50,000 and only to people who make the majority of their income through self-employed work. To avoid abuse of the scheme, it will only be open to those who are already self-employed and have a self-assessment tax return for 2019. The Chancellor estimates that 95% of people who are majority self-employed will benefit.

HMRC are currently working on the scheme and it is anticipated that people will be able to access it by June.

Stay at Home, Save Lives

The nationwide 'Stay at Home, Save Lives' campaign launched last night (25 March). It provides the most up-to-date information and details the only reasons that someone can leave their home. Public Health England has added supporting resources across print, social and digital to their [campaign resource centre](#).

HMRC helpline

HMRC has set up a new [helpline](#) to support businesses and self-employed people who are concerned about not being able to pay their tax due to coronavirus. The helpline number is 0800 024 1222.

Free car parking for NHS and social care staff

The Local Government Secretary has [announced](#) new measures to allow critical key workers to use council parking bays without time restriction or charge. The Health Secretary has also announced that the Government will provide financial backing to all NHS trusts to provide free car parking to NHS staff.

International co-operation

At the virtual G7 meeting yesterday (25 March), members [agreed](#) five critical areas for international action: support countries most at risk and help to fund the WHO's £71bn requirement; work together to produce medication and vaccines; protect global production and supply chains; keep global travel routes open and; stand up to protect democracies against dis-information.

Following the virtual summit of G20 leaders today (26 March) the Prime Minister [announced](#) £210m of new UK aid funding to find a coronavirus vaccine.

Education

The Education and Skills Funding Agency published updates for [local authorities](#), [academies](#) and [further education providers](#) on funding allocations for 2020 to 2021.

The Department for Education has published [updates](#) relating to governance in maintained schools and academy trusts in England.

Hotel accommodation for vulnerable people

The Homelessness Minister has sent a [letter](#) to hotel chief executives regarding an exemption to allow hotels, hostels and B&Bs to remain open to provide accommodation for key workers and vulnerable people, including people experiencing homelessness. In the letter he highlights that the [guidance for accommodation providers](#) has been updated to make the exceptions clear.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The DBS Chief Executive has released a [statement](#) highlighting that DBS will prioritise applications for DBS checks for those who are assisting in responding to the emergency. They are aiming to carry out checks within 24 hours. The role of DBS is to ensure they provide employers and voluntary organisations with adequate information, to enable them to make safer recruitment decisions.

Tradespeople

The Government has provided clarification on the advice for tradespeople. Currently, work carried out in people's homes by tradespeople can continue, provided that the tradesperson is well and has no symptoms, and the [social distancing guidance](#) is followed. No work should be carried out in any household which is isolating or where an individual is being shielded, unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household, where the tradesperson is willing to do so.

Planning

The Chief Planner at the MHCLG has provided advice regarding coronavirus in his [newsletter](#). He asks that authorities take innovative approaches to continue services. The Planning Advisory Service have pulled together a [series of resources](#), including Frequently Asked Questions, for planners thinking about how to change services in response to the outbreak and to share good practice.

Fraud control

The Cabinet Office has published [guidance](#) on fraud control in emergency management for leaders and fraud experts in government bodies and local authorities that are administering emergency programmes on behalf of the UK Government.

Employers do not have to report gender pay gaps

Enforcement of the gender pay gap reporting deadlines are [suspended for this reporting year \(2019/20\)](#). The decision means there will be no expectation on employers to report their data.

Broadband

Ofcom has launched [guidance](#) on getting the most out of your broadband and mobile connection. Also, the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has created a dedicated critical issues email - telecoms.covid@culture.gov.uk

Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman [has announced](#) that all casework activity where that work places an administrative burden on councils or social care providers is temporarily suspended.

Police given new powers

The government has made [new public health regulations](#) strengthening Police enforcement powers in England, to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

Local context

Shielding arrangements

Letters have been sent nationally to all those identified by the NHS as extremely vulnerable and needing to isolate for at least 12 weeks. These individuals are required to register with a national system to confirm their needs for food, medication and other support - which are not being met by their own family and friends. For those with no such reliable support, once registered, they will receive food deliveries through a national coordination mechanism.

Additionally, all residents in need of support, will be able to contact the new Coronavirus Vulnerable Adults Hampshire Helpline which will be operational shortly. Complementary to the national mechanism, this has been commissioned by the County Council to provide an initial point of contact to understand people's needs and signpost them to the most relevant source of support.

Residents who are in need of basic support, such as essential food or household suppliers, or who are at risk of loneliness, will then be directed to one of Hampshire's 11 Local Response Groups. These Local Response Groups will be based in the heart of communities, bringing together public and voluntary sector professionals, across district and boroughs, with local volunteers, to co-ordinate support at a neighbourhood level.

Residents with more complex needs will be triaged to a specialist team of professionals within Hampshire County Council.

Social distancing animation

Hampshire County Council has produced a new animation informing residents why everybody must all follow the social distancing guidance. It will be promoted across all social media channels and is available to view now on [YouTube](#).

Non-essential construction and maintenance work suspended

The County Council's Property Services team is working with contractors to ensure essential maintenance and support services continue in order to keep buildings operating safely and effectively but is suspending all non-essential maintenance works until a review of activity is completed. [Press release](#) contains more details.

Rights of way

Hampshire residents and visitors are reminded in a [press release](#) to observe the [Government's social distancing guidelines](#) when in the countryside. People are being urged to use public outdoor spaces and local rights of way sensibly, to respect private land and avoid narrow pathways.

E-book for children

The County Council is sharing a [free e-book](#), written by a Southampton nurse, for parents and carers to read with younger children to help them understand coronavirus and the rules they must follow to stay safe. The e-book will be promoted by the Library Service on social media.

Additional links

- Hampshire County Council webpages on coronavirus (including links to press releases): <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus>
- Latest information on coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- NHS information on coronavirus: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Q&A from Public Health England on coronavirus: <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>
- Guidance for local government: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government>
- County Councils Network (CCN) coronavirus information pages: <https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/coronavirus-information-for-local-authorities/>
- Local Government Association (LGA) councillor guidance: <https://www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-outbreak-councillor-guidance>