

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

Briefing for County Councillors



This briefing will focus on the announcements made at today's press conference and will include government updates and guidance on support for rough sleepers, business support, green spaces and the housing market. The briefing will also provide an update on local issues including support for Hampshire's most vulnerable residents, Isle of Wight ferry routes, waste and day centres.

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](#)

Edition No. 17

27 March 2020

National context

Government's daily press conference

Michael Gove chaired the daily press conference after it was confirmed earlier today that the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, both tested positive for coronavirus.

Mr Gove said that the rate of infection in the UK has been doubling every three to four days and confirmed that today the UK has seen a surge in the number of confirmed cases and deaths. He highlighted that the figures are a powerful reminder of the need for everyone to act in order to slow the spread of the virus and strengthen the NHS.

He also announced that a new alliance of businesses, research institutes and universities have come together to boost testing capacity for frontline workers. The antigen testing, which tests whether people already have the virus will be immediately trialled for people on the frontline. The testing will be dramatically scaled up next week.

Head of NHS England, Simon Stevens, stated that hospital services have been reconfigured, with 33,000 hospital beds now available to treat coronavirus patients.

The go-ahead has been given for two further NHS Nightingale hospitals - at the Birmingham NEC and the Manchester GMEX – and that further such hospitals will follow.

Support for rough sleepers

The Minister for Homelessness has [written](#) to all local authority chief executives setting out the principles of protecting individuals facing homelessness from coronavirus. In the letter, he states that it is imperative rough sleepers and other vulnerable homeless people are supported into appropriate accommodation by the end of the week.

Housing market freeze

New [guidance on home moving during the coronavirus outbreak](#) has been published. It advises parties involved in home moving to adapt and be flexible to alter their usual

processes. Home buyers and renters should, where possible, delay moving to a new house.

How to help safely

The Government published new [guidance on how to help safely](#) which is aimed at people who are providing essential support to friends, family and neighbours who are in isolation.

Green spaces

New [guidance on access to green spaces](#) has also been published, setting out how people should use outdoor spaces for exercise. The guidance highlights that people should always stay local and only go outside alone or with members of their own household.

Transport

The Government has written to all bus operators and local transport officers in councils setting out the measures to support vital local bus service providers so that they can continue to serve communities after the pandemic.

Food regulation

The Food Standards Agency has published [guidance](#) and frequently asked questions setting out how councils should approach the deferral of planned interventions until 17 April. The deferral applies in respect of all feed controls, food hygiene controls and food standards controls.

Producing hand sanitiser and gel

HMRC have produced [guidance](#) on temporary changes to the use and supply of denatured alcohol and duty-free spirits, to help businesses who produce hand sanitiser and gel.

Annual leave

Regulations are to be [amended](#) to allow workers to carry up to four weeks of unused annual leave into the next two leave years.

Business support packages

The Government and [British Business Bank](#) have issued further guidelines regarding the [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#), providing clarification on the subject of personal guarantees.

Job Retention Scheme and Self-employment Income Support Scheme

New [guidance for employees](#) and [guidance for employers](#) on the Job Retention Scheme has been published – the scheme allows employers to use a portal to claim for 80% of furloughed employees' usual monthly wage costs.

[Guidance](#) has also been published for the Self-employment Income Support Scheme as announced by the Chancellor yesterday evening (26 March).

Local context

Helping Hampshire's most vulnerable residents

The County Council's Director of Adults' Health and Care, Graham Allen, is leading on local support through a Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW) Local Resilience Forum workstream, for individuals who are identified as vulnerable.

A new Coronavirus Hampshire Helpline – *Hantshelp4vulnerable* – is due to launch shortly. This will provide a central point of contact for information and advice as well as practical support to residents who do not have trusted friends, family and neighbours they can ask for support.

Individuals will be directed to the County Council's specialist support team, or one of several district-based Local Response Centres. The Response Centres will bring together professionals and local volunteers to provide help, such as with access to food and basic household supplies, as well as social contact for those at risk of loneliness.

In the meantime, anyone in need of urgent assistance over the weekend that cannot be met through existing support networks, can contact the County Council's Adult Social Care Service on 0300 555 1386. This number should **only** be used by people who are without food or need **urgent assistance**.

Hampshire volunteer handbook

Community First has produced resources to support individual volunteers and voluntary groups to provide help for vulnerable residents safely during the Coronavirus pandemic. Resources include a volunteer handbook, guidance on handling money and risk assessment templates. This local guidance aligns with recent [government advice on safe volunteering](#).

Connect to Support

[Connect to Support Hampshire](#) which provides general information for all Hampshire residents to help manage their own, or a loved one's care, support and wellbeing - is now linking residents to useful advice and resources specifically related to Coronavirus and self-isolation. The *Connect to Support Hampshire* website also provides listings for community groups and services across Hampshire.

Day centre and respite services to be closed

In support of the latest government guidance to stay at home, the County Council has this week temporarily closed its day centre and respite services for people receiving adult social care support and their informal carers. The County Council is currently advising adult social care service users and their carers of these changes. Press release to be issued on the County Council's [website](#).

Birth registrations

Following national guidance on the Coronavirus outbreak, the County Council are [suspending birth registrations](#) until further notice. New parents can register their baby with a GP, without a birth certificate.

Government to suspend competition law to support Isle of Wight ferry routes

The Government is [temporarily suspending](#) competition law to allow ferry operators in the Isle of Wight to work together and maintain a crucial lifeline between the island and the mainland during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Household waste and recycling centres (HWRCs)

The County Council is providing advice and helpful tips for residents on how to reduce waste and what to do with waste that cannot be avoided. Residents are reminded that [Household Waste Recycling Centres are closed](#) until further notice.

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>