

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 information on the publication of regulations for the flexibility of local authority meetings, Care Act easements, personal protective equipment (PPE), school appeals and sharing patient information.

The briefing will also provide an update on local issues including supporting our vulnerable residents, the local PPE campaign, tonight's *Clap for our Carers* and County Councillor grants for local projects, organisations and initiatives.

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

Today's conference was chaired by Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock.

The Government confirmed that frontline staff will be provided with PPE and today published [revised guidance](#) on the use of PPE by health and social care workers.

It was announced that the Government will write off £13.4bn of historic NHS debt to ensure that the NHS can deal with the pandemic and has stronger foundations for the

future. It was also announced that £300m funding will be made available for community pharmacies.

The Government also explained the specific challenges regarding testing; the low number of diagnostic labs at the start of the outbreak; a shortage of materials including swabs and reagents; and a lack of public confidence in the tests.

Testing will now be prioritised for patients "for whom the result of the test is the difference between life and death". Testing will also be expanded to NHS staff and to critical key workers. A five-pillar testing strategy was announced – including an overall goal of reaching 100,000 tests per day by the end of the month.

Prof Steve Powis, National Medical Director of NHS England, presented the updated COBR charts showing the current position. Slides and datasets to accompany coronavirus press conference are [available online](#).

Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings

The Government has issued regulations that will give local authorities greater flexibility in the conduct of meetings, including allowing members to attend remotely and for remote public and press access to those meetings.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 will [come into force](#) on 4 April and will apply to meetings that are required to be held before 7 May 2021. The Explanatory Memorandum can be [read here](#).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Government has published [revised guidance](#) on the use of PPE by health and social care workers in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. The guidance has been updated to reflect the evolution of the pandemic and the changing level of risk to healthcare workers' exposure. It supersedes previous PPE guidance. The Government has also published a series of [new tables](#) describing PPE use across different clinical scenarios and settings.

The Department of Health and Social Care has issued a [letter](#) from the Chief Commercial Officer to health and care sector providers providing an update about access to medical supplies and equipment during the coronavirus response. The National Supply Disruption Response helpline is available for providers who have

an urgent requirement for PPE, which they are unable to secure through their usual channels - 0800 915 9964.

Care homes

New [guidance](#) has been published on how to protect care home residents and staff during the coronavirus outbreak and how to admit new residents safely.

UK Economy and society

The ONS has published the [first release](#) of a new, weekly bulletin containing [data and experimental indicators](#) about the current condition of the UK society and economy and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Business rates

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has updated [guidance on the operation of expanded retail discount](#) to confirm the Government's assessment that the expanded retail discount is not state aid, and that local authorities should therefore award relief to all eligible properties.

Early years and childcare provision

The Government has [updated guidance](#) for local authorities, early years settings and childminders about childcare provision following the outbreak of coronavirus. The updates clarify the income support available and the requirements for providing safe, quality care for vulnerable and critical workers' children.

European Funds

A new set of [questions and answers](#) on the coronavirus response has been published for the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). Other information is collected on their [webpage](#), which aims to keep European Structural and Investment Fund partners informed on developments.

Pensions

The Pensions Regulator and the Financial Conduct Authority, supported by The Money and Pensions Service, are urging savers to take their time and visit the [Pensions Advisory Service website](#) for pensions guidance before making any decisions about their retirement savings. They are also advising people to visit the [ScamSmart website](#) to learn how to protect themselves from pensions scams.

Information for farmers, landowners and rural businesses

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has [published information](#) for farmers, landowners and rural businesses. Farm visits, including inspections, are to be paused for three weeks and the RPA are considering their approach to future visits in line with developing national public health guidance.

Adult social care

The Department of Health and Social Care has published [guidance for local authorities](#) which sets out how to use the new Care Act easements, created under the [Coronavirus Act 2020](#).

School admissions and appeals

The Department for Education (DfE) has advised the LGA that, given the current restrictions, they do not consider it sensible to go ahead with admission appeal panels. The DfE are working on emergency regulations and guidance to establish alternative arrangements. They plan to provide an update for local authorities and admission authorities ahead of primary school National Offer Day (16 April).

Sharing patient information

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has [issued four notices](#) under the Health Service Control of Patient Information Regulations 2002 requiring local authorities, healthcare organisations, GPs, NHS England, NHS Digital and arm's length bodies to share information to support efforts against coronavirus.

Local context

Support for vulnerable residents

The County Council's Coronavirus helpline – Hantshelp4vulnerable – received 236 calls by the end of its first full day of operations (1 April), 37.5% of which were from residents identified by the Government as 'extremely vulnerable'.

A short [animation](#) raising awareness of the new service is being promoted on social media.

To date, the County Council has received data on 4,973 people registered as 'extremely vulnerable', 2,417 of which indicated they needed food when completing the national Government form. A full list of residents in this category is expected by the end of the week. The County Council continues to proactively contact this cohort to ensure that urgent needs are met, working through Local Resource Centres, where necessary.

Hampshire County Councillor grants

Hampshire County Council has increased the annual grant available for local projects, initiatives and organisations allocated by each county councillor, and brought forward the window for applications in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. Grants are available of between £100 and £10,000 and the scheme is now open. A [press release](#) has been published on the County Council website.

Clap for our carers

Tonight at 8pm the nation will come together as part of the Clap for Our Carers campaign to recognise the efforts of frontline carers and NHS workers fighting the coronavirus pandemic. The County Council will promote a mini broadcast from the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Councillor Liz Fairhurst, on [Twitter](#).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service are coordinating a [local campaign to collect PPE](#) for Hampshire key workers. They are asking companies to donate any spare PPE (such as nitrile gloves, plastic aprons, eye protection, face masks, alcohol gel and cleaning wipes). Companies who are able to help are asked to email COVIDdonations@hantsfire.gov.uk

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>