

27 May 2020

Government press conference - 26 May

The [press conference](#) was chaired by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock.

The Government confirmed that for the first time since 18 March, there were no deaths from Covid-19 recorded in Northern Ireland the previous day (25 March). ONS figures for the whole of the UK showed the lowest daily number of deaths from Covid-19 for six weeks. The Government outlined [plans to increase the supply of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) which include increasing domestic production and agreeing new deals internationally. Information on research and development into Covid-19 treatments was provided and it was confirmed that [anti-viral drug remdesivir](#) will be made available to patients meeting certain clinical criteria to support their recovery in hospital.

The press conference slides and datasets are available to [view online](#).

As of 4pm on 26 May, the total number of lab-confirmed cases was **265,227**. The daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **2,004**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths was **37,048**, with **134** new deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

National context

Deaths registered

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has [published](#) provisional mortality statistics for the week ending 15 May. People aged 90 years and over continued to suffer the highest number of Covid-19 deaths. The percentage of deaths involving Covid-19 continued to decrease across all English regions.

Adult social care

The Department of Health and Social Care has launched [a new recruitment platform - Join Social Care](#), which aims to speed up adult social care recruitment. Join Social Care is intended to make it easier for care providers to reach people in their local area by allowing candidates to record a video interview and access free training supported by Skills for Care before starting employment.

Coronavirus Grant Funding

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has [updated](#) the data on local authority payments to small and medium businesses up to 26 May. Over £9.9 billion has now been paid out to over 804,000 business properties.

Lockdown lifestyle

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has [published](#) a report on how people spent their time under lockdown (between 28 March - 26 April). The findings cover a number of areas relating to work and recreation habits. They suggest that people with the lowest household incomes typically increased their total time doing paid work. Those with the highest

household incomes continued to work the same amount on average, making a greater switch to homeworking.

PPE waste

The Environment Agency has [updated](#) the Covid-19 regulatory position statement on cleansing and PPE waste at healthcare waste management facilities.

Business loan scheme statistics

The Treasury has [published](#) a new collection of loan scheme statistics, including management information about the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) and Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs).

Environmental influence on transmission of Covid-19

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has [published](#) a research paper on Covid-19 transmission through airborne, droplet and contact routes. It considers the evidence relating to time spent in an environment, distance to the source (2m rule), transmission on surfaces and ventilation as a mitigating factor.

Fire and rescue workforce

To support the fire and rescue service in expanding its response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the National Employers, National Fire Chiefs' Council and Fire Brigades Union have reached an [agreement](#) to enable the introduction of a number of additional activities where needed at local level.

Tax, land and buildings

HMRC has [extended](#) the time limit from the date the decision to opt was made. This now applies to decisions made between 15 February and 30 June.

Access to food

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has [launched](#) a toolkit of communications resources which point people to councils if urgent help is needed to obtain food and no other means of support is available. This may result in an increase in the number of people contacting council helplines. DEFRA's resources aim to supplement the local work councils are already undertaking on access to food for vulnerable people outside the 'shielded group'.

MOT tests

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has [updated](#) the MOT centre and tester guidance to include information on working safely when carrying out MOT tests. In addition, the guidance on MOTs has been [updated](#) with information about what happens if a vehicle fails its MOT during the extension period.

Local context

Outbreak control plan

Hampshire County Council will lead on designing and implementing the area's *outbreak control plan* – the local response to putting measures in place to identify and contain outbreaks of Covid-19 and protect the public's health. The Government has defined the task for upper tier authorities as developing "tailored outbreak control plans, working with local NHS and other stakeholders". This will require "identifying, preventing and containing potential outbreaks in places such as workplaces, care homes and schools" and ensuring that "testing capacity is deployed effectively to high-risk locations".

Through the statutory role of Directors of Public Health and working with Public Health England's local health protection teams, existing health protection plans will be built upon. Measures will be put in place to prevent and contain outbreaks and protect the public's health.

The Government will provide [£300 million](#) to be shared between all local authorities in England to develop and action plans to reduce the spread of the virus in their area.

Work has already started to develop a plan for Hampshire, in close collaboration with Members and key partners - further information will be circulated in due course.

Thank you to Hampshire schools and pupils

"Keep strong, keep smiling – you're a Hampshire hero too!"

The Leader of Hampshire County Council, Keith Mans, and the Executive Member for Education and Skills, Cllr Roz Chadd, are sending a special message of thanks to Hampshire's 175,000 pupils and students. The [video](#) will be promoted on the County Council's social media platforms and is also being shared via schools through the school communications leads.

Care home support

Following the announcement by the Government on 14 May of the [£600 million Infection Control Fund](#). Hampshire County Council has received confirmation of £18.4m of funding to be received in two equal tranches. The funding allocation is based upon the number of care home beds - in Hampshire there are around 13,500 beds across almost 500 care homes.

The funding is conditional on supporting all care homes (for all client types) with reducing the risks of Covid19 transmission. Care homes must complete essential data regularly on a national care tracker system. The money is to be used to support staff wages where individuals are either off sick or self-isolating and to reduce situations where individuals are working across multiple settings.

The County Council is working with NHS commissioning and provider partners, the Hampshire Care Association, CQC and HealthWatch Hampshire to confirm a comprehensive series of proposals, many of which are already underway. These relate to infection prevention training, identification of a clinical lead for every care home, a named GP and multi-disciplinary support teams, as well as support around business resilience,

PPE supplies and staffing support. Providers have been made aware of the purposes of the grant and the provision for clawback if it is used for unintended purposes.

As part of the overall package of support, **financial allocations** to every care home provider **are being made this week** in line with the grant conditions.

Of the initial £9.2m, 75% must be provided based upon the number of care home beds in an area – this amounts to some £500 per registered bed (£6.9m of the total). Additionally, the remaining 25% can be used based upon local considerations. In Hampshire, 15% of this will be used to support the smaller, less financially secure homes – this equates to a further £1.3m.

As such, £7.9m will be paid, either through electronic bank transfer or via cheque payment, by Friday 29th May - to all care home providers in Hampshire. It is important to note that approx. £350k is being held back, as some providers have registered twice on the national care tracker portal. Work is ongoing with CQC and regional Better Care Fund Support Team to ensure any errors in the national data set are checked to avoid payments being made in error.

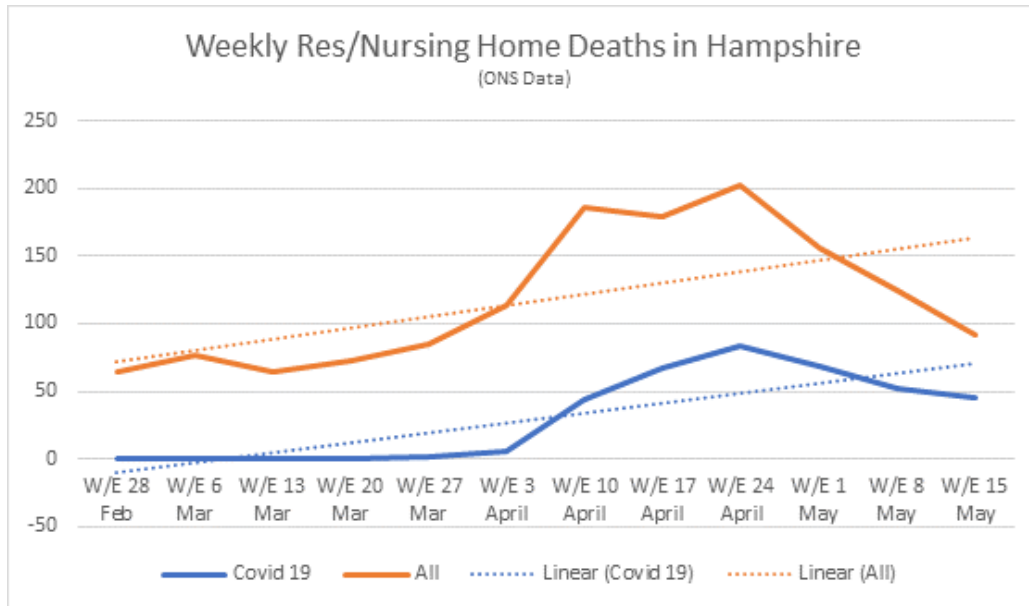
The remaining 10% will be used to fund emergency PPE supplies for the care sector and other emergency support that may be required. Work is currently being undertaken to determine 'free' PPE supplies.

This new funding allocation is in addition to increases already being funded by the County Council - where it commissions care for people and where additional support / capacity has been commissioned by the NHS. Decisions have already been taken on inflationary uplifts and an additional temporary 10% uplift on commissioned care, paid in advance.

Later this week, as a requirement of the grant conditions, a submission will be made to the regional Better Care Fund Support Team, via a letter from John Coughlan (Chief Executive), and an overarching approach will be published on Hampshire County Council's website. A further report on use and impact of the grant will be required by 26th June and a final update in September - once the second tranche has been used / distributed.

Discussions are continuing with a range of representative groups to ensure transparency of the application of this vital sector support.

Deaths in care homes



The above table shows ONS reported data in Hampshire care homes (county footprint). Analysing the data, the Director of Adults' Health and Care, Graham Allen has highlighted that:

Hampshire appears to have seen the peak in mid-April, with deaths reducing each week since then. The key issue is to understand the increased deaths versus expected monthly seasonal deaths and the gap between Covid-19 recorded deaths and excess deaths – essentially the reasons/causes. Some of which we may struggle to ever understand perfectly. We have commissioned further analysis and learning reviews at a whole system level and within Hampshire County Council's Care services. This will take a period of several weeks to initially scope but will be shared with appropriate Member and partner audiences.

For our own Care services, we have seen a total of 194 deaths over the period 1 March until 15 May. This compares to circa 75-100 deaths which would be expected in usual circumstances.

The County Council recognises that each and every death is a personal tragedy and that families have lost loved ones before their time. We extend our deepest condolences to all grieving the loss of a friend or family member.

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/>
- 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>

Deborah Harkin
Assistant Chief Executive