

Local context

Older Person's Bus Passes

The County Council has [announced](#) that from 25 January, the start time restrictions will be lifted so older person's bus passes can be used at any time. This temporary change to the scheme is intended to continue until schools reopen to all students. Residents who have a disabled person's bus pass can already use these at any time, seven days a week. It is anticipated that the extension should support older people travel to early morning vaccination appointments, and to travel at quieter times for essential journeys e.g. food shopping.

Temporary mortuary

The temporary mortuary located in Winklebury, Basingstoke, will become operational on 21 January. It will support the four major NHS hospital mortuaries in the wider Hampshire region, as well as local funeral directors, by providing temporary additional accommodation of hospital and community deaths.

The decision to make the site operable has been made by specialists on behalf of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum to ensure additional capacity is immediately available, to ease current and anticipated pressures within the sector. The Winklebury site was selected because of its central county location, its proximity to good transport links, and the nature and size of the space itself.

Next of kin will be advised if their loved one is being accommodated temporarily at the facility and support and guidance will be made available to them from a dedicated Bereavement Services team on site.

Supporting vulnerable children

The County Council has [confirmed](#) that extra funding, worth more than £320,000, will be made available for childcare, voluntary and charitable organisations to provide activities and food for vulnerable Hampshire children during the February half term. The additional funding has been allocated to the existing Community Grants scheme, which is part of the 'connect4communities' programme. In the press release, Councillor Patricia Stallard, the County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People explained: "Owing to the current national lockdown restrictions, we are unable to deliver the holiday playscheme in the half term as originally planned under our 'connect4communities' programme. However, to make sure we can still provide support to households who would have benefited from the scheme, we have extended the 'connect4communities' Community Grants criteria to enable local organisations to apply for the money instead, so they can operate similar activity and food schemes in their area."

National context

National Covid-19 cases, deaths and vaccines data

The NHS Covid-19 vaccination daily data shows that within the reporting period 8 December 2020 – 17 January 2021, a total of **3,985,579** people have received the 1st dose and a total of **434,125** people have received the 2nd dose. In the South East, a total of **647,182** people have received the 1st dose and a total of **75,366** people have received the 2nd dose. The data, including the weekly statistical release, is available to [view online](#).

As of 4pm on 19 January, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19 was **3,466,849** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **33,355**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **91,470**, with **1,610** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **1.2- 1.3** and the growth rate range **+2% to +5%** per day as of 15 January.

Communities

Small marriages and civil partnerships

The Government has [updated](#) the guidance for people planning to get married or form a civil partnership in England to reflect the national lockdown.

Local Plans

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has [urged](#) councils to continue to advance Local Plans through to adoption by the end of 2023 to help ensure that the economy can rebound strongly from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Children and education

National free school meal voucher scheme

The national free school meal voucher scheme went [live](#) on Monday (18 January). Schools can place orders for supermarket gift cards on behalf of the parents and carers whose children are eligible for benefits-related free school meals, to cover the period between 18 January and 12 February (4 weeks).

Asymptomatic testing for staff in schools

The Government has [published](#) guidance on rapid asymptomatic testing for staff in primary schools, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools.

Daily contact testing

Public Health England and NHS Test and Trace have [released](#) a new position on daily contact testing as a replacement for self-isolation in secondary schools and colleges. The Government has accepted their recommendation to pause this programme. There is no change to the main rollout of regular testing in schools and colleges.

Adults' social care and public health

Vaccination data

Directors of public health (DPHs) will now receive data on the number of vaccines administered locally. The data includes daily and cumulative total vaccination events by first and second doses and by the higher risk cohorts within the local authority area. DPHs and their teams have been asked not to share this data currently, as it is provisional.

Vaccination for unpaid carers

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is working to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the vaccination of unpaid carers. This will include clarity on definitions, eligibility and the process for unpaid carers to access vaccination as a guide to support local implementation.

Vaccination for community based social workers

The Minister for Social Care, Helen Whately, has [written](#) to local authority chief executives and directors of adult social services outlining plans for getting the Covid-19 vaccine to social care workers based in the community.

Vaccination for supply chain workers

DHSC has [announced](#) that up to 2,000 people working in roles crucial to the continuity of the Covid-19 vaccine supply chain will be offered vaccines to help ensure the UK gets the doses it needs.

Indemnity support

In a [written statement](#) to Parliament on indemnity in care settings, the Minister for Covid-19 Vaccine Deployment, Nadhim Zahawi, set out the intention to develop "targeted and time-limited state-backed indemnity" for CQC registered care homes unable to secure sufficient indemnity cover to be approved as a

'designated setting' able to accept care home residents who are Covid-19 positive on discharge from hospital.

CovidEmergency

The NHS Confederation has launched a [#CovidEmergency campaign](#) to promote greater understanding and awareness of the severity of the challenge facing frontline services.

Antibody study

The latest antibody data has been [published](#) from the Covid-19 Infection Survey. The data shows that 12.1 per cent of people had antibodies in December, equating to around 1 in 8 people.

Economy, finance and business

Zoo Animals Fund

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has [announced](#) that the deadline for applications for the £100m Zoo Animals Fund has been extended until 26 February.

Support for fishing businesses

Defra has [announced](#) funding of up to £23 million, to support fish export businesses which have been most adversely affected by both the pandemic and the challenges of adjusting to new requirements for exporting.

Prompt Payment Code

The Government has [confirmed](#) changes to strengthen Prompt Payment Code, aiming to ensure larger companies pay their suppliers on time. The tougher rules come as the Government looks to increase powers of the Small Business Commissioner to protect jobs and growth during recovery from the pandemic.

House prices

HM Land registry has [issued](#) the UK House Price Index for November 2020 which shows that on average, house prices have risen 1.2% since October 2020 and there has been an annual price rise of 7.6%, which makes the average property in the UK valued at £249,633.

Environment, transport and travel

Self-isolation

Yesterday (19 January), the Government [updated](#) the guidance on how to self-isolate when arriving in England. The update includes information about pre-departure testing, closing 'travel corridors' and additional travel restrictions for a number of countries.

Additional links

- NHS information on the Covid-19 vaccination programme: www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination
- 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/>
- FAQ from the Cabinet Office:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>
- PPE guidance hub: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>
- 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>

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