

9 June 2020

Government press conference - 8 June

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

The Government outlined the latest Covid-19 data which shows that the number of new cases is falling, there is a continued fall in the number of hospital admissions and the number of people in hospital with the virus. The number of deaths yesterday was 55 – which is the lowest since 21 March, however on the basis of typical weekly fluctuations it is expected to rise again. Data also shows that the number of people dying in care homes is falling.

The Government confirmed that David Pearson will chair the new National Covid-19 Social Care Support Taskforce. The taskforce will oversee delivery of the next phase of the plan for social care, ensuring care homes have the resources required to continue to control the virus. It was announced that from 8 June [all adult care homes will be able to order the whole care homes testing service](#) for residents and staff, regardless of whether residents have symptoms.

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

As of 4pm on 8 June, the total number of lab-confirmed cases was **287,399**. The daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **1,205**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths was **40,597**, with **55** new deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

National context

Black Lives Matter

The Prime Minister yesterday [delivered a speech](#) on Black Lives Matter. The Prime Minister recognised the emotion that has been triggered by the death of George Floyd in the US. He outlined that the UK has made “great strides” but highlighted that there is much more to do in eradicating prejudice and creating opportunity. He urged citizens to “work peacefully, lawfully, to defeat racism and discrimination wherever we find it...as we put Britain back on its feet.” However, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the effort that the nation has collectively made to fight the virus the Prime Minister condemned those who have “flouted the rules on social distancing” and others who may have broken the law.

Summer exams

Ofqual has [updated](#) the guidance for schools, students and parents on how GCSE, AS, A level, vocational and technical qualifications will be graded and awarded in summer 2020.

Wider reopening of schools

The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, made a [statement](#) today on the wider opening of education and early years settings. He said that it is not possible to welcome all primary school children back to school for a full month before the summer. The Government will continue to work with the sector on the next steps, and would like to see schools that have the capacity to bring back more children in small class sizes, to do so if they are able to before the summer holidays.

Prevalence of Covid-19 in schools

The Department of Health and Social Care has [announced](#) that a new voluntary Covid-19 study will assess and monitor the prevalence of the virus among pre-school, primary and secondary school pupils and teachers. The initial phase will collect data from up to 100 schools from across England – **including two schools in Hampshire.**

Attendance in education and early years settings

The Department for Education has [published](#) a summary of attendance in education and early years settings up to 4 June.

Business loan schemes

The Treasury has [published](#) updated data for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Future Fund Scheme.

Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has [updated](#) the guidance on the Discretionary Grant Fund which supports small and micro businesses that are not eligible for other grant schemes. They have confirmed that to be eligible the business should have ongoing fixed property-related costs, and occupy property (or part of a property) with a rateable value or annual mortgage/rent payments below £51,000.

Employment Related Securities

HMRC has [issued](#) the June bulletin on employment related securities which contain information on how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the Enterprise Management Incentive, Save as you Earn, Company Share Option Plans and Share Incentive Plan.

Social housing

The Regulator of Social Housing has [published](#) the [results](#) of its second monthly survey of housing associations and local authorities about how they are coping with the Covid-19 pandemic. The sector is generally reporting that it is continuing to maintain service delivery for emergency repairs and key health and safety checks, and that some of the challenges that it is facing have begun to ease.

Funding for debt advice providers

The Treasury has [announced](#) a £37.8 million support package for debt advice providers so they can continue to provide essential services to help more people who are struggling with their finances due to Covid-19. The Money and Pensions Service, will oversee the allocation of the funds, including to charities, for debt

advice and other money guidance services. They will set out the process for allocating funds in the coming weeks at www.maps.org.uk.

European Structural and Investment Funds

The Government has [updated](#) a series of documents and updates regarding the 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESF) Programme and the response to Covid-19. In particular, the ESF Q&A has been updated.

HMRC contact

HMRC has [updated](#) the guidance on recognising genuine contact from HMRC and spotting phishing. Information has been added about SMS text messages for Tax credit.

Farmers

The Rural Payments Agency has [updated](#) the guidance for farmers, landowners and rural businesses and has confirmed that the Rural Payments helpline will be open on 13 and 14 June.

Local context

Concessionary travel

Hampshire County Council has [confirmed](#) that concessionary travel times for older people to travel free on Hampshire's buses will revert to the normal 9:30am start on Monday 15 June. As capacity on public transport is limited, this change is to help manage demand with social distancing in place as more people return to work and may need to use public transport.

Restrictions on times older people could use their bus passes were first lifted on 20 March to enable travel to supermarkets earlier in the day and access dedicated shopping hours while national travel restrictions on all but essential travel were in place.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

A [new booking system for Hampshire's HWRCs](#) will take effect from Monday 15 June, with residents able to book at 30-minute slot when the booking system goes live on Thursday 11 June.

From 15 June, all HWRCs will revert to their normal summer opening hours of 9am until 6pm, seven days a week. Anyone wishing to visit a site will need to book a slot in advance. People will be able to book a 30-minute slot up to 48 hours in advance. Bookings can be made online at: www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling. Telephone bookings, for those without access to the online system, can be made by calling 023 8017 9949.

Anyone wishing to book a slot will need to provide their name, car registration and, for online bookings, an email address. Bookings will be limited to one slot per household per week. More information about using the HWRCs is [available online](#).

New Forest fire risk

The New Forest National Park Authority is [urging](#) retailers across the New Forest to remove disposable barbecues from sale. It also calls for a continued ban on fires

and barbecues in the open countryside of the National Park. This comes as large numbers of disposable barbecues have been unsafely used while the New Forest is at extreme risk of fire. Multiple fires have had to be put out in recent weeks and numerous areas of scorched earth have been left across the protected habitats.

Pennington Infant School

A pupil at Pennington Infant School in Lymington was confirmed over the weekend to test positive for Covid-19. Public Health England has liaised with the school and, having carried out a detailed risk assessment, has advised the school that only those in the pupil's school 'bubble' need to self-isolate for 14 days. In view of this guidance, the headteacher plans to open again on Wednesday (10 June) for children in the rest of the school after a deep clean. Parents and carers have been [informed](#) of the situation by the head teacher.

Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT)

BCoT has recently been identified as one of twenty schools and colleges to be EdTech Demonstrators by the Department of Education. BCoT's use of technology, which was funded by EM3 as part of its [Pathway to Virtual Campus](#) project, has allowed students to continue their education during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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>

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