

Local context

Covid Winter Grant Funding

The County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People, Councillor Patricia Stallard, today (30 November) [approved](#) the system to distribute Hampshire's allocation from the Government's Covid Winter Grant funding (£2.898m) in order to support vulnerable households between December 2020 and March 2021.

To develop Hampshire's approach, a wide variety of stakeholders were consulted to ensure that existing local provision and local need was identified, risks in respect of duplication of funding were addressed, and emerging ideas understood. This engagement has resulted in a multi-faceted offer, under the programme name of '**Connect4Communities**'.

Hampshire County Council will implement a **food voucher scheme** to support vulnerable children, young people and their families during the school Christmas holidays. To ensure support is delivered to a wide range of vulnerable households, the following groups will be eligible:

- All families whose children are eligible for free school meals;
- Children being supported by a social worker;
- Children receiving early help services from the County Council's Family Support Service;
- 2-4-year-olds accessing childcare and eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium; and
- 16-18-year-olds who were previously eligible for free school meals.

Nurseries, pre-schools, childminders, schools, and colleges will be the distributors of the vouchers. Each eligible household will receive a voucher per child worth £15 per week which can be used at a range of supermarkets. It is estimated that the vouchers will help feed 34,620 children in Hampshire.

Additionally, the County Council will provide schools and colleges with a **discretionary grant fund**. These grants will help support families who may not be immediately eligible for the voucher scheme but find themselves struggling financially; for example, where a parent has lost their job due to Covid-19. Schools can use these grants to help families with food and other support such as paying fuel bills.

For more information, please see the Covid Winter Grant decision report and decision record on the [County Council's website](#), in addition a [press release](#) will be issued.

Kickstart Tourism Grants

Enterprise M3 (EM3) LEP has [announced](#) that they have further funding available for eligible SMEs in EM3 LEP working in the Visitor Economy (Kickstart Tourism). Funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), eligible SMEs can access grants of between £1,000 £3,000 (up to £5,000 in exceptional circumstances) for specialist advice or equipment/technology.

The funding aims to support SMEs affected by Covid-19 to respond to the immediate challenges they face and to adapt, diversify or repurpose to strengthen their capacity to recover. Ultimately, the project objective is to support the economy by helping SMEs to recover and rebuild, safeguarding jobs and opportunities for the future. The application window opens today (30 November) for one week. For more information, see the [EM3 business grants webpages](#).

Wellbeing app

Mental health charity, Solent Mind, has [launched](#) a new free wellbeing app. The tool has been designed to support people to look after their own mental wellbeing and contains advice and guidance as well as mindfulness exercises, healthy eating tips and positive news stories. The app aims to provide an accessible

route for people to access support to maintain their mental health throughout the pandemic, it also allows the charity to further their reach and support more people remotely. For more information, see [Solent Mind](#) and the app is available for download from [Google Play](#) and the [App Store](#).

National context

Communities

Christmas guidance

The Cabinet Office has [issued](#) new guidance for the Christmas period. The guidance outlines what people can and cannot do throughout December and includes guidance on travel, events, shopping, visiting friends and relatives and going out to pubs and restaurants.

Retail Christmas opening hours

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has [announced](#) that retailers will be able to extend their daily opening hours from Monday to Saturday in the run up to Christmas and in January.

Children and education

Covid workforce fund

The Department for Education has [announced](#) that schools and colleges facing the greatest combined staffing and funding pressures will be able to claim via a new short-term Covid workforce fund, with detailed guidance due to be published shortly.

2021 exams

The Social Mobility Commission has [made](#) a series of recommendations towards plans for next year's exams in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Adults' social care and public health

REACT study

Interim results from the seventh report of one of the country's largest studies into Covid-19 infections have been [published](#) today by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI. Interim findings show a 30% fall in infections nationally between 13 and 24 November, with 96 people per 10,000 infected.

Medicines manufacturing fund

The Government has [announced](#) a new £20m fund to manufacture medicines and diagnostic equipment in the UK. The Medicines and Diagnostic Manufacturing Transformation Fund will aim to increase the capacity and resilience of the country's medicines and diagnostics manufacturing supply chains.

Moderna Covid-19 vaccine

The Government has [secured](#) seven million doses of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine, which will be available in Europe possibly by spring 2021. To date, the UK has secured early access to over 357 million vaccines doses through agreements with several separate vaccine developers at various stages of trials.

Vaccines Minister

The Government has [announced](#) the appointment of Nadhim Zahawi to a newly created position as minister in charge of Covid-19 vaccines deployment at the Department of Health and Social Care. Zahawi will also continue in his role as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Vitamin D

The Department of Health and Social Care has [announced](#) that all care homes will automatically receive a provision of vitamin D for their residents, while individuals on the clinically extremely vulnerable list will receive a letter inviting them to opt in for a supply to be delivered directly to their homes. While research into the link between vitamin D and Covid-19 is ongoing, the advice from PHE is for everybody to take

10 micrograms (400 IU) of vitamin D a day between October and early March to keep bones and muscles healthy.

Economy, business and finance

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

HMRC has [confirmed](#) that the online service for the third SEISS grant is now available.

National Covid-19 data

As of 4pm on 30 November, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19 was **1,629,657** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **12,330**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **58,448**, with **205** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **0.9-1.0** and the growth rate range is **-2% to 0%** per day as of 27 November.

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/>
- 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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