

Local context

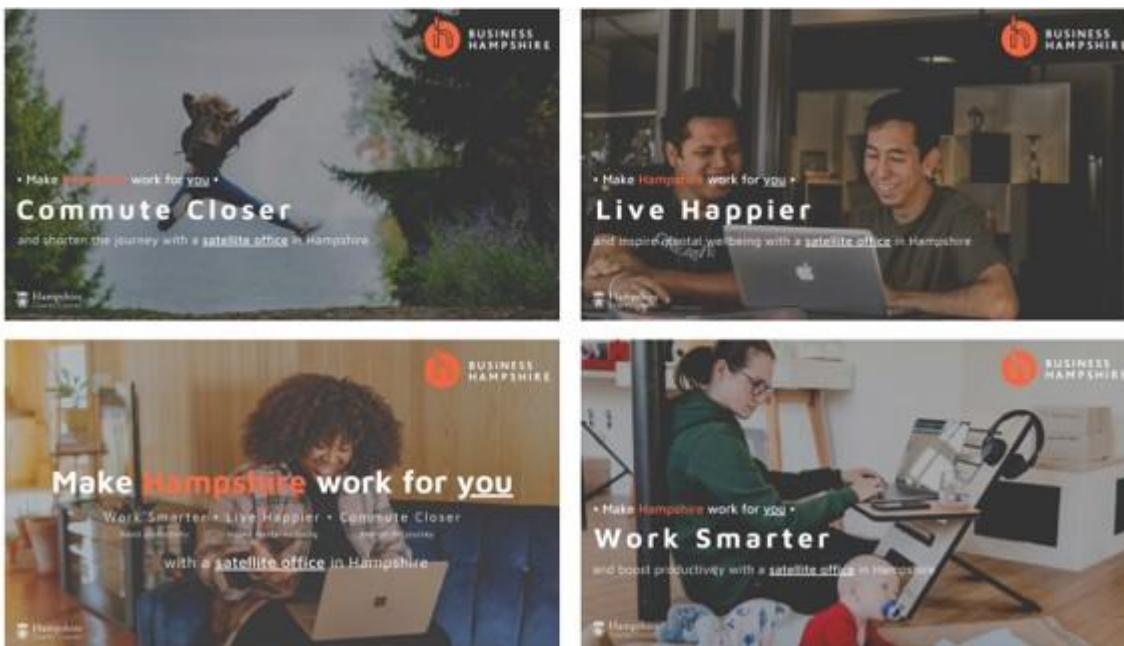
Pre-election period of restricted activity

The pre-election period for the County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and in some areas, District, Borough, City, Parish or Town elections taking place on 6 May, begins in Hampshire on Monday 22 March. During this ‘pre-election period’, the County Council will continue to publicise business-as-usual activities through the normal channels.

To ensure that the Covid-19 briefing is in line with official guidance and recommended pre-election practise, from Monday 22 March until Friday 7 May, it will only report ongoing Covid-19 council business and factual national information regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

Economic recovery

The County Council’s economic development service, Business Hampshire, in collaboration with local authority partners, has [launched](#) a campaign to highlight the benefits of working locally to encourage London-based businesses to establish satellite offices in the county. The campaign, Make Hampshire work for you, invites commuters to ‘Work Smarter – Live Happier – Commute Closer’.



Clarence Unit

The County Council has [confirmed](#) that a Gosport nursing home, the Clarence Unit, established in June 2020 as part of a unique collaboration between social care and Health in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, will receive funding for a further 12 months. This follows a decision by Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Councillor Liz Fairhurst.

'connect4communities' programme

Hampshire County Council has [welcomed](#) additional funding announced by the Department for Work and Pensions as part of their extended Winter Grant Scheme. The ‘connect4communities’ programme, an initiative developed by Hampshire County Council in collaboration with partners, has been allocated - £1,007,725.

In the [press release](#), Councillor Patricia Stallard, Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services and Young People is quoted: “people in our communities have been hit particularly hard by the

Covid-19 crisis and have been unable to afford basics like food and fuel. This extra money means we can once again offer help and support, such as Free School Meal vouchers to children and young people in need, while they are on holiday for Easter.”

For more information please see the County Council’s [press release](#) and the Government’s [news story](#).

Gosport and Hythe ferries

Recognising the effect that lockdown has had on passenger numbers and the viability of the Gosport and Hythe’s ferry services, Hampshire County Council has [agreed](#) further funding support for each service. The decision follows a previous one-off funding package in 2020. The County Council will make additional monthly payments (£15,000 for Gosport Ferry, and £7,500 per month for Hythe Ferry), subject to match funding being confirmed by other local authorities.

Covid-19 vaccination

Hampshire County Council is [urging](#) people who are in receipt of carer’s allowance, and anyone providing unpaid substantial care to someone who is at increased risk of Covid-19, to come forward for their vaccination.



Keep Hampshire SAFE

COVID-19 VACCINES.

People providing substantial unpaid care to someone at increased risk of coronavirus could be eligible for a vaccine **now**

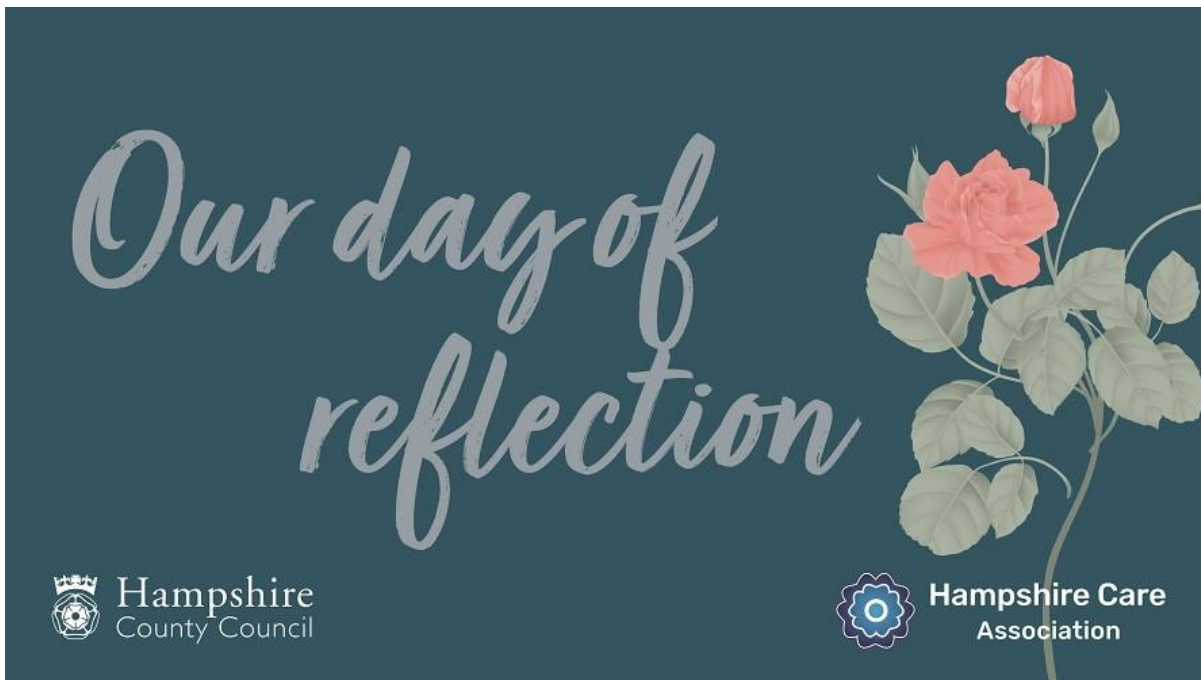
Call **0333 370 4000** to check if you can book your vaccine today

Open 9am-5pm Monday-Friday – calls charged at local rate

SAFE. EFFECTIVE. LIFE SAVING.

Day of Reflection

On Tuesday 23 March, many of the County Council’s adult care services will be marking 12 months since the start of the pandemic by observing a minute’s silence at 12 noon. This will be followed by commemorative activities within the Authority’s care homes and other care services. County Councillors and stakeholders are invited to join this moment of silence to reflect on the past year, remember the lives lost, and thank those who care for others. For more information, please see the [press release](#).



National context

National Covid-19 cases, deaths and vaccines data

The Covid-19 vaccination daily data shows that up to 17 March, a total of **25,735,472** people have received the 1st dose and a total of **1,879,054** people have received the 2nd dose.

As of 4pm on 18 March, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19 was **4,280,882** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **6,303**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **125,926** with **95** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **0.6 – 0.9** and the growth rate range **-6% to -3%** per day as of 19 March.

Communities

Jobcentres

The Department for Work and Pensions has [confirmed](#) that from 12 April, jobcentres in England, Scotland and Wales will return to their pre-lockdown opening hours.

Broadband

The Government has [confirmed](#) the first phase of its plans for expanding the coverage of high-speed gigabit broadband in hard-to-reach areas. **Hampshire** is listed as being in the second phase, with more details about procurement for the second phase expected to be announced in June 2021.

Children and education

SEND inspections

Ofsted has [confirmed](#) that revisits to areas with a written statement of action will start from April 2021, and full inspections will resume from June 2021 at the earliest.

Adults' social care and public health

Shielding advice

The Government has [announced](#) that clinically extremely vulnerable people will no longer be advised to shield from 1 April 2021, as infection rates and hospitalisations continue to fall. Letters to people on the shielded patient list with [updated guidance](#) will be sent over the next two weeks.

NHS and social care funding

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has [announced](#) a £7 billion package for health and care services to support the next phase of the NHS response to Covid-19, it comprises:

- £6.623 billion new funding for the NHS. £594 million made available for hospital discharge includes £59 million that was agreed separate to and outside of the £6.623 billion new funding.
- £202.5 million new funding for the infection control fund in adult social care.
- £138.7 million for rapid testing in adult social care from existing Test and Trace funding.
- £87 million to provide enhanced discharge from inpatient mental health care, funded from the £500 million for mental health recovery and NHS workforce announced at Spending Review 2020.

Contain framework

DHSC has [updated](#) the Covid-19 contain framework following the announcement on 22 February of an extra £400 million funding for the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to cover further public health activities from 1 April 2021.

Testing and vaccination during Ramadan

The British Islamic Medical Association have [confirmed](#) the view of the majority of Islamic scholars is that taking polymerase chain reaction or lateral flow device tests during Ramadan does not invalidate the fast.

Self-isolation compliance visits

The Home Office has [launched](#) a procurement exercise for contractors to carry out further visits on those who have a duty to quarantine following international travel. Contractors will carry out compliance visits and, if they find individuals are not quarantining at home as required, they will pass on the relevant information to the police, who will assess and can issue a fixed penalty notice if necessary.

Testing and vaccination during Ramadan

The British Islamic Medical Association have [confirmed](#) the view of the majority of Islamic scholars is that taking polymerase chain reaction or lateral flow device tests during Ramadan does not invalidate the fast.

Antibodies

Public Health England has [published](#) new findings showing that an estimated 76% of 70 to 84-year-old blood donors had antibodies against Covid-19 by early March.

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>

Deborah Harkin
Assistant Chief Executive