

## Local context

### National Careers Week

For National Careers Week (1-5 March), Hampshire County Council is encouraging young people to access its comprehensive set of careers advice and information online. Created in response to Covid-19 and the introduction of remote schooling, Hampshire Futures' Digital Careers Resources are openly available and contain a wealth of support, information and signposts to experts who can help young people find the right course, apprenticeship or job.

Additions and special online events funded or provided by Hampshire Futures taking place during Careers Week include:

- Opening of registration for the [Virtual Careers and Apprenticeship Show](#);
- Update of [Flying Start Hampshire](#) to help and support Year 11 students as they prepare for their next steps;
- Online launch of Your Future, Your Choice, an interactive booklet to support Year 13 students with their transition from college or sixth form.

More information is available in the [press release](#), and the Digital Careers Resources are available on the [Hampshire Futures](#) website.

### Budget and council tax precept 2021/22

At the meeting of the County Council yesterday (25 February), budget plans for the upcoming financial year were agreed. These see funding focused on the county's ongoing work in tackling Covid-19, support for vulnerable children and adults, and key investments in Hampshire's roads and infrastructure to support economic recovery, as well as climate change mitigation.

The County Council agreed the council tax precept for Hampshire for 2021/22. The annual council tax charge for a Band D property will be £1,350.45 – an increase of £1.23 per week, equating to 4.99%, of which 3% is for adults' social care – a Government request.

For more information, please see the [press release](#) and the [revenue and capital budget for 2021/22](#).

### Hampshire's voluntary and community sector

The County Council has [confirmed](#) that £459,870 in grant funding has been allocated to Hampshire's voluntary and community sector to enable them to continue supporting people facing difficulties because of Covid-19.

The grant is part of the £480 million Contain Outbreak Management Fund given to local authorities by the Department of Health and Social Care to help reduce the spread of Covid-19 and support local economies and public health. The funding will be awarded to the Hampshire Councils for Voluntary Services Network who will use it to facilitate activities run by local organisations.

### Student parties

Hampshire Constabulary has [reported](#) that twenty-seven people have been reported for summons in relation to £800 fixed penalty notices following two student parties in Portsmouth and Southampton this month. They are reminding people that while a roadmap to exiting this period of national restrictions has been announced by the Government, the current Health Protection Regulations are still in place until the restrictions are lifted - anyone who does not follow the regulations faces enforcement action. Hampshire Constabulary note that they have good links with

partners at the universities in the area, and while having to take enforcement action is disappointing, most students across Hampshire have observed the current national restrictions.

## Vaccinations for people with a Learning Disability

Hampshire County Council has confirmed that following the Government [announcement](#), everyone with a Learning Disability in Hampshire will be vaccinated as a priority group from Monday 1 March. The County Council anticipates that vaccination of this group of people will be complete by the end of March. Eligible people are being asked to wait to be contacted – people living in 24-hour care will be contacted by their GP or the Primary Care Networks and those who live with family or without 24-hour support, will be contacted by Hampshire County Council.

## Keep Hampshire Safe campaigns

Two new Keep Hampshire Safe campaigns launched this week - a [community testing campaign](#) which aims to encourage those going out to work to get regularly tested with the free rapid testing scheme, and targeted vaccinations digital advert (image below) which aims to reassure residents on the safety of getting the Covid-19 vaccination.

Offline, the 'Do the right thing' campaign with posters at bus stops, road signs, digital sheets at supermarkets and shopping centres, and a radio advert, will come to an end this weekend as the new 'Keep going' spring campaign launches next week. The 'Keep going' campaign will aim to encourage everyone to continue following Covid-safe behaviours as the Government's roadmap progresses, and especially after receiving the vaccine.



## Hampshire Music Service

The County Council's Music Service has produced a staff performance to show that they are ready to resume teaching when restrictions are lifted. The performance features teachers from the Service's new primary school rock project, [Rock 2 the Beat](#), which offers group tuition on guitar, bass, drums and vocals. Watch the virtual performance of Queen's 'The Show Must Go On' [online here](#).

# National context

## National Covid-19 cases, deaths and vaccines data

The Covid-19 vaccination daily data shows that up to 25 February, a total of **19,177,555** people have received the 1<sup>st</sup> dose and a total of **736,037** people have received the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.

As of 4pm on 26 February, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19 was **4,163,085** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **8,523**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **122,415** with **345** 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 -2%** per day as of 26 February.

## Communities

### 2021 elections

The Director for Constitution at the Cabinet Office has [written](#) to Returning Officers acknowledging that staffing of polling stations, count locations and other electoral locations, and identifying suitable venues to host them, are two major delivery challenges for the elections on 6 May. The letter also sets out a proposal for three sources of staff that can be accessed to help support elections: Civil Servants, the National Citizen Service Network, and customers of Jobcentres.

### Next Steps Accommodation Programme

The Government has [updated](#) the guidance on the Next Steps Accommodation programme. The update includes guidance for councils and private registered providers on letting accommodation funded through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme.

### Digital Lifeline Fund

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has [announced](#) that a new £2.5 million Digital Lifeline fund has been created to support people with learning disabilities on low incomes. 5,000 internet tablets preloaded with data and free support will be made available from March 2021.

## Children and education

### Exams and assessment

The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, [delivered](#) a statement to Parliament on education catch up plans and on how qualifications in England will be awarded this summer. In summary,

- GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded this year using teacher assessed grades based on a range of evidence;
- Different approaches for the three groups of vocational and technical qualifications with various routes of awarding;
- other general qualifications will be awarded through alternative arrangements;

results days for GCSE, A level and some vocational qualifications will take place in the week of 9 August – moved forward from the week of the 23 August – to allow additional time for appeals

# Adults' social care and public health

## Coronavirus alert level

Yesterday (25 February), the four UK Chief Medical Officers and NHS England Medical Director [recommended](#) that the UK alert level should move down from level five to level four.

## Surge testing

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has [announced](#) that, working in partnership with councils, additional surge testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed to targeted areas within Buckinghamshire, Lambeth and the London Borough of Ealing, where the variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

## New government campaign

The Government yesterday (25 February), [launched](#) a new national campaign encouraging people to 'keep going' and 'stay at home'. The campaign aims to remind people that everything they are doing is helping stop the spread of the virus.

## REACT study

Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI [published](#) results from the latest significant study into Covid-19 infections in England. Findings from the study show 13.9% of the population in England had antibodies against Covid-19. The findings also show high confidence levels in the vaccine with over 90% of those surveyed reporting that they would be willing to accept, or had already had, a vaccination.

## Health inequalities

The second quarterly report on progress to address the findings of Public Health England's (PHE) review into disparities in the risks and outcomes of Covid-19 has been [published](#). It outlines the progress the Government has made in understanding the drivers of these disparities for ethnic minority groups and how they have changed between the first and second waves of the virus.

# Economy, business and finance

## Workplace testing

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has [written](#) to all businesses registered in England about free Covid-19 tests for staff who cannot work from home.

## Additional links

- NHS information on the Covid-19 vaccination programme: [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://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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