

National context

Government's daily press conference

The press conference was chaired by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock.

The Government reported the latest coronavirus figures –137,700 tests, 38,168 tests returned positive and 3,605 deaths.

The construction of two further Nightingale Hospitals in Bristol and Harrogate was confirmed by the Government.

Drugs and treatments for coronavirus are being intensively researched in the UK and the Government noted that the UK is a world-leader in clinical trials and at delivering such trials at record pace. It was confirmed that three trials have been established on the effectiveness of existing drugs being repurposed for the treatment of COVID-19. The Government appealed for more patients to volunteer to take part in the trials.

The Government instructed people to continue to follow the social distancing measures despite the warmer weather predicted for this weekend. Social distancing measures cannot be relaxed, and people were reminded to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

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

Business

The Chancellor has [announced further support](#) for both small and large firms affected by coronavirus by extending the current loan scheme and announcing a new scheme to provide government backed loans for large business - Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

The Government has updated the business support grant funding [guidance for local authorities](#) to include grant funding allocations by local authority.

Technology and research focussed businesses can [apply](#) for a share of a £20 million fund to develop new ways of working and help build resilience in industries such as delivery services, food manufacturing, retail and transport, as well as supporting people at home.

Education

Ofqual has set out [details about how GCSEs](#), AS and A levels will be awarded this summer and published [further guidance](#) for teachers, students, parents and carers.

The Department for Education has updated the [operational guidance](#) for further education providers on maintaining education and skills training provision to reflect the latest government guidance.

Economy

The House of Commons Library has published an [economic update](#) which summarises available evidence suggesting that the UK economy has entered a recession.

Food redistribution

The Government has [announced](#) a £3.25 million fund for food redistribution organisations to help reduce food waste and redistribute up to 14,000 tonnes of surplus stock during the coronavirus outbreak.

Bus routes

A [new funding package](#) for bus operators was revealed to keep key routes running for passengers who rely on the bus network for essential journeys. New funding of up to £167 million will be paid over 12 weeks under the new COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant.

Community pharmacies

The Department of Health and Social Care has [confirmed](#) that community pharmacies are receiving an advanced funding injection of £300 million. This will support them to continue providing critical services to protect community health, including supplying medicines and providing medical advice to patients.

Community health services

NHS England and NHS Improvement have updated the [guidance](#) setting out which community health services should stop, partially stop or continue during the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance applies to local authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS England.

Nightingale Hospitals

The first of the Government's emergency field hospitals, to treat coronavirus patients, opened in the ExCel centre in east London today. The NHS chief executive, Sir Simon Stevens, has [confirmed](#) two further Nightingale Hospitals will be built at the University of the West of England in Bristol and the Harrogate Convention Centre. Others are due to open in Birmingham, Manchester, Belfast, Glasgow and Cardiff.

Heritage emergency fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has [announced](#) £50 million of funding to help heritage organisations at risk of financial crisis due to coronavirus. Grants will be between £3,000 and £50,000 and will be open to organisations across the full breadth of heritage, including historic sites, museums, libraries, parks and gardens.

Building safety

A series of measures were [announced](#) to improve building safety for new and existing buildings. In addition, the Government's declared that work to remove unsafe cladding from buildings is critical to public safety and must remain a priority.

Local context

Support for vulnerable residents

The County Council has received the complete list from NHS Digital of all Hampshire residents identified as 'extremely vulnerable'. Activity is ongoing to approach these residents proactively, signposting them to sources of support including Hantshelp4vulnerable. Since Tuesday, the call centre has received 480 contacts.

The short [animation](#) which provides information and advice for vulnerable residents on coronavirus and how to access support now includes audio. The County Council will continue to promote this video through its social media channels.

Schools remaining open during Easter holidays

Hampshire County Council is [reminding](#) key workers that schools, early years' educators and nurseries will be open throughout the school Easter holidays, including Good Friday and Easter Monday.

County Council officers will be available to help parents who are critical workers and are having difficulty accessing school aged childcare over the Easter holiday. These parents should email epinfocell@hants.gov.uk or, for pre-school care childcare@hants.gov.uk

National Autism Week

During National Autism Week, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People, Councillor Patricia Stallard, and the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Councillor Liz Fairhurst, have sent a joint letter to local papers across Hampshire. The letter highlights the difficulties which children with autism may be experiencing during the coronavirus outbreak. For information and resources on supporting people with autism, please visit [Autism Hampshire's website](#).

Hampshire Cultural Trust (HCT)

HCT has launched a new blog, [Culture on Call](#), which aims to bring culture and communities together during the coronavirus outbreak. The blog will feature insights into local history, craft and activity ideas and will highlight interesting objects from their collections.

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/>

- Q&A from Public Health England on coronavirus:
<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>
- 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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For any queries, please contact coronavirus.memberqueries@hants.gov.uk

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