

21 May 2020

## Government press conference - 20 May

The [press conference](#) was chaired by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden.

The Government outlined the Covid Alert Level System and what Staying Alert means in practice. The Government announced that to enable national gratitude to be shown to the everyday heroes of the Covid pandemic, the Queen's birthday honours list will be delayed until the autumn. It was also confirmed that the Queen has approved a knighthood for Captain Tom Moore for his fundraising achievement.

The amount of money raised for charities was outlined and the Government confirmed that the dedicated support scheme for small and medium sized charities - the £200 million [Coronavirus Community Support Fund](#) - will open for applications this week. It was announced that the Government are releasing £150 million from dormant accounts to help social enterprises get affordable credit to people who are financially vulnerable and support charities tackling youth unemployment.

The Government announced they are establishing a [renewal taskforce](#) which will aim to support the recreation, creative and leisure sectors "bounce back".

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

As of 4pm on 21 May, the total number of lab-confirmed cases was **250,908**. The daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **2,615**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths was **36,042**, with **338** new deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

## National context

### Supporting wellbeing in schools

The Department for Education has [updated](#) the guidance on supporting wellbeing to include information on staying in contact with and identifying staff who need additional support.

### Advice for parents

The Department has also updated advice for parents and carers [looking after primary school children](#) and supporting the [home learning of secondary school](#) children.

### Best practice in schools

Example of best practice have been [published](#) for remote education from schools and academies across England.

### University students

Guidance has been [updated](#) for higher education providers to include information on students wishing to leave their student accommodation or return to collect their belongings.

## Adult social care

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has [published](#) an insight into adult social care during the Covid-19 pandemic, the first in a series intended to highlight Covid-19 related pressures on the areas it regulates. This document draws on information gathered through direct feedback from staff, people receiving care and care providers, and the CQC's data collection from services who provide care for people in their own homes.

## Infection prevention and control precautions

Public Health England has [updated](#) the advice on appropriate infection prevention and control precautions for stepdown in hospital or discharge to home or residential settings.

## Informing DHSC of the death of a worker in social care

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has [issued](#) guidance for employers (local authorities and social care providers) to tell the department about the death of an employee or volunteer in social care.

## Changes to the Care Act 2014

The Department of Health and Social Care has [updated](#) the guidance on changes to the Care Act 2014 to add local MPs to the list of people to whom the decision to exercise Care Act easements should be communicated. Information is also added on how to find out details of which local authorities are operating under easements.

## VAT from donated PPE

The Government has [announced](#) that VAT collected on donated personal protective equipment (PPE) between 1 March and 30 April will be given to charities supporting the NHS and care workers. The Government introduced a temporary zero rate of VAT on PPE on 1 May.

## Epidemiology surveillance

Public Health England has [published](#) the weekly Covid-19 epidemiology surveillance summary. The report includes data from a variety of different sources: community, primary care, secondary care, virology and mortality surveillance data. Combined, these sources show a wider community picture including a breakdown by age, gender, and geography which will help plan the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

## Competition and consumer problems

The Competition and Markets Authority has [published](#) a second update from its Covid-19 Taskforce, which monitors and responds to competition and consumer problems arising from the pandemic.

## Clear growth fund

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has [announced](#) a new £40 million Clean Growth Fund. The fund is launched as a venture capital vehicle to accelerate early-stage green businesses.

## Hidden Harms Summit

The Prime Minister hosted the [Hidden Harms](#) virtual summit today at which representatives from government, law enforcement, victims' charities, front line practitioners and the private sector will drive forward action to support victims of crimes such as domestic abuse, sexual violence, child sexual abuse and modern slavery. The summit is in response to the unique challenges victims have faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Government has announced that they will spearhead a new codeword scheme for domestic abuse victims, which will allow people in urgent or immediate danger to get help from shop workers by using a specific phrase that staff will be trained to identify.

## Social housing

The Regulator of Social Housing has [published](#) the latest quarterly survey results of private regulated providers' financial data. The results suggest that the social housing sector was in a good financial position at end of March 2020 but faces considerable challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Bereavement scheme

The Home Office has [announced](#) that the bereavement scheme has been extended to the families and dependants of NHS support staff and social care workers who die as a result of contracting Covid-19.

## Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill

The Government yesterday (20 May) introduced the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill in Parliament. The Bill will put in place a series of measures to amend insolvency and company law to support business to address the challenges resulting from the impact of Covid-19.

## Help to Buy: Equity Loan

Home England has [updated](#) its Covid-19 information page for Help to Buy: Equity Loan customers.

## British Travellers

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has [updated](#) the guidance for British people who are currently travelling abroad and are unable to return home due to the pandemic. The guidance includes new information for some countries with which the FCO has agreed to automatically extend visas if it is not possible to return.

## Coronavirus workforce data collection

The Local Government Association (LGA) has [published](#) the results of its first collection of council workforce data during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

The results show that a total of 16% of councils reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff, meanwhile, 76% of councils reported recruiting additional staff.

## Department for Transport statistical publications

The Department for Transport has [published](#) a list of regular statistical productions and the changes to them in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Local context

### School attendance

Schools, early years educators and nurseries in Hampshire remain open to look after children of key workers and vulnerable children. The number of children in education settings fluctuates daily. Yesterday (20 May) there were 7,400 children in school which is 4.1% of the school aged population. 31% of those children that have a social worker were in school last week.

### Support for social care providers

Hampshire County Council has produced a [Covid-19 resource pack for social care providers](#) which has been sent to all social care providers and circulated among partners for wider distribution. The online resource contains a wealth of useful information on issues such as access to personal protective equipment, free online training and the specialist support available to care homes.

### Supporting vulnerable residents

The HantsHelp4Vulnerable helpline has, as of today (21 May), received a total of 11,265 calls and has made a total of 5,329 Local Response Centre referrals. The districts with the highest number of referrals from the contact centre were: New Forest (866), Basingstoke (830) and Havant (815). The district with the lowest number of referrals is Test Valley (249). 679 vulnerable people were already receiving support through Adults' Health and Care and 66 individuals were referred to the Adults' Health and Care brokerage team, which sources care (domiciliary, residential and nursing) for eligible clients. Help with food shopping, and prescriptions consistently remain the top two reasons for residents seeking support.

### Extended opening hours at all Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Hampshire County Council has [announced](#) that the opening hours at all of our HWRCs will be extended to 6pm from Saturday 23 May, to allow more people to use the facilities. Residents are being reminded to really consider if they do need to take their waste to an HWRC as significant traffic queues continue to impact on local people as well as having a detrimental impact on local businesses. Further information on new measures in place at Hampshire HWRCs is available on the [waste services webpage](#).

### New walking and cycling route in East Hampshire

Work is due to start on 1 June to upgrade the cycle, footway and highway infrastructure at two locations along the C114 Camp Road/High Street in Whitehill and Bordon. Across Hampshire, there has been a dramatic drop in traffic as people's lifestyles and work patterns have changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, with many people walking and cycling more. This scheme is part of a range of travel and transport improvements to support the successful regeneration of Whitehill and Bordon. A [press release](#) with more information is published online.

## Big Lottery Funding

The Big Lottery Community Funding – Reaching Communities England – now focuses on funding projects and organisations helping communities through the Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that most funding will be between £10,000 and £100,000 and to cover six months of expenditure. More information is available on their [webpage](#) and proposals can be sent to: [Londonandsoutheastteam@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](mailto:Londonandsoutheastteam@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk).

[Community First](#) are able to support local organisations to apply.

## Citizens' Advice Hampshire

Citizens' Advice Hampshire has shared an [infographic](#) with partners which shows their work in the region. Between 1 March and 19 May they have helped 16,843 clients across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Region, of these 9,661 have been helped with Universal Credit claims, 9,042 with other benefits issues and 6,062 with employment issues.

## 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>

**Deborah Harkin**  
**Assistant Chief Executive**