

Local context

End of shielding from April 1

Hampshire residents who are at increased risk of Covid-19 are being [urged](#) to take extra precautions when shielding advice ends tomorrow (1 April).

From 1 April, guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable is changing in line with the [Government's roadmap out of lockdown](#) and a cautious easing of restrictions over coming months. Shielding is coming to an end, and updated advice covering socialising, travel and going to work and school has been issued for people on the shielded list. However, while those who were formerly shielding can begin to follow the national restrictions alongside the rest of the population, they are being strongly urged to observe social distancing, stay at home as much as possible and take extra precautions to keep themselves safe.

Education Covid-19 testing over Easter

The County Council is communicating to schools, staff, parents and pupils the importance of continued Covid-19 testing throughout the Easter holidays and into the summer term. Over the holidays, twice weekly Covid-19 testing should continue at home. Tests will need to be done before returning to secondary school or college for the summer term, either the night before, or morning of the first day back, to find and isolate any positive cases. A press release will be issued tomorrow (1 April) on the [County Council's website](#).

National context

National Covid-19 cases, deaths and vaccines data

The Covid-19 vaccination daily data shows that up to 29 March, a total of **30,680,948** people have received the 1st dose and a total of **3,838,010** people have received the 2nd dose.

As of 4pm on 30 March, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19 was **4,341,736** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **4,040**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **126,670** with **56** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **0.7 to 0.9** and the growth rate range is **-5% to -2%** per day as of 26 March.

Communities

Open letter urging Black Britons to take the Covid-19 vaccine

Sir Lenny Henry has [written](#) an open letter encouraging Black Britons to take the Covid-19 vaccine. Signed by high-profile names, the letter encourages Black adults in the UK to get vaccinated when they are invited. The letter has also been turned into a short film which was aired on television is also available to [watch online](#).

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

The Commission's report into racial and ethnic disparities in the UK has been [published](#) today (31 March). The report outlines a series of [24 recommendations](#) to the Government, grouped into 4 broad themes, build trust; promote fairness; create agency; achieve inclusivity. Among other issues, it considers disparities in health, and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on some ethnic minority groups.

Prison visits

The information and guidance about visiting prisons in England and Wales has been [updated](#), saying prisons will resume social visits when it is safe to do so.

Small marriages and civil partnerships

The guidance for people planning to get married or form a civil partnership in England has been [updated](#) to reflect changes in national restrictions which came into effect on 29 March. Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are no longer limited to exceptional circumstances. Receptions and celebrations are still not permitted, but small gatherings can take place in line with social contact limits.

Children and education

Summer schools programme

Guidance has been [issued](#) which contains details of the summer schools programme for secondary schools including funding, requirements for running a summer school and best practice evidence.

Subject reviews and reports

From April, Ofsted has [confirmed](#) that it will publish a series of subject reviews and reports, taking a 'state of the nation' look at curriculum quality across primary and secondary schools. It is hoped that these reports will help inform schools as they make decisions about helping children and young people catch up.

Adults' social care and public health

Visiting care homes

The Better Care Fund has [created](#) two new animations, explaining how current Covid-19 care home visiting arrangements work, the benefits they bring for all parties and what to do when visitors or staff test positive.

Advice for smokers and vapers

The Government's advice for smokers and vapers has been [updated](#) in line with most recent evidence review.

Surge testing

The Government has [confirmed](#) that working in partnership with the local authority, additional testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed in an area within the BL5 postcode in Bolton, where one case of the Covid-19 variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

WHO-convened COVID-19 origins study

A joint statement on the Covid-19 origins study convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) has been [issued](#).

Confirmatory PCR testing

Confirmatory PCR testing is to be reintroduced for all positive rapid results tests to allow positive cases to be traced sooner and help stop the spread of variants in the UK.

Office for Health Promotion

A new Office for Health Promotion has been [announced](#) to lead national efforts to improve the nation's health. This is part of the reform of the public health system in England, which includes the creation of two new agencies that will, in the main, take the place of PHE. These are the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Office for Health Promotion (OHP). These two agencies will absorb most of the work currently undertaken by PHE but some PHE functions will move elsewhere.

Infection Control and Testing Fund

The latest allocations and guidance on this fund have been [published](#) (Hampshire County Council has been allocated - £9,594,556).

Environment, transport and travel

Managing beaches, the countryside and coastal areas

The guidance for the owners and operators of beach, countryside and coastal destinations during the Covid-19 pandemic has been [updated](#) to reflect latest restrictions, and with additional resources.

Highways England advice

Highways England has [issued](#) vehicle safety checking advice to those who haven't driven for a while due to lockdown.

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>

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