

1 May 2020

Government press conference - Thursday 30 April

The [press conference](#) was chaired by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson.

The Government confirmed that the UK is past the peak of infection and announced that a comprehensive plan will be published next week which will detail how the Government intends to stimulate the economy, support children back to school, and enable people to return to work safely. The Government will only enact the plan once their five tests are satisfied and when they are sure that the measures they release will not cause the reproduction rate (R rate) to go over 1.

Sir Patrick Valance confirmed the R rate is currently below 1, with the number of people with the infection, the number of people in hospital and the number of deaths, all decreasing.

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

As of 30 April, the total number of lab-confirmed cases was **171,253**. The daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **6,032**. The total number of COVID-19 associated deaths was **26,771**, with **674** new deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

National context

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government communications

The Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick, has [written](#) to all local government employees in England thanking them for their support during the pandemic, and outlining how council staff can get tested.

NHS-funded nursing care rate

The NHS-funded nursing care standard weekly rate per person for 2019 to 2020 will [increase](#) and be backdated to 1 April 2019. The current rate of £165.56 will increase by 9% to £180.31 for the 2019/20 financial year.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The CQC's chief inspectors have [issued](#) a joint statement outlining their approach to regulation during the coronavirus pandemic.

The CQC has [published](#) a list of the local authorities which have exercised the Care Act 'easements'.

Children and education

The Department for Education has [issued](#) a notice to modify section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014. This amends the duty on local councils to secure special educational provision, and on health commissioning bodies to arrange health provision, in accordance with Education, Health and Care plans. The notice applies from 1 May to 31 May.

Gypsy and Traveller communities

The Minister for Communities, Stephen Greenhalgh, has [written](#) to local authority chief executives to highlight that some members of Gypsy and Traveller communities are likely to be particularly vulnerable to Covid-19. They may need support in accessing basic facilities such as water, sanitation and waste disposal, to enable them to adhere to public health guidelines around self-isolation and social distancing during the outbreak.

Inequalities

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has [published](#) a report which examines whether some ethnic groups more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others. The report brings together evidence on the unequal health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on the UK's minority ethnic groups, presenting information on risk factors for each of the largest minority groups.

Modern slavery identification

The Home Office has [produced](#) a slide which provides information for frontline staff that are not First Responders on how to spot the signs of modern slavery, and what to do if they suspect someone may be a victim. This can be read alongside the Home Office [guidance on support for victims of modern slavery](#).

Green spaces

The Government has [updated](#) the guidance on access to green spaces in line with the latest Cabinet Office guidance.

Groundwater pollution and cemeteries

The Environment Agency has [published](#) guidance for local authorities or other cemetery operators to follow during the coronavirus pandemic. It covers avoiding groundwater pollution when proposing to develop new cemeteries or expand existing cemeteries.

Rugby Football League (RFL)

The Government has [announced](#) that the RFL will receive a £16 million cash injection to safeguard the immediate future of the sport while the season remains suspended, due to social distancing measures.

Lifetime ISA (LISA)

The Treasury has [announced](#) that they will legislate for a temporary reduction in the LISA withdrawal charge to 20% between 6 March 2020 and 5 April 2021 (inclusive). This will mean account holders whose income has been affected by coronavirus and who need to access savings early will only have to pay back any

government bonus they have received but will not pay the additional withdrawal charge of 5%.

Epidemiology surveillance report

Public Health England has [published](#) this week's Covid-19 epidemiology surveillance summary, it is also accompanied by an [infographic](#). The report includes data from a variety of different sources and by combining the data a wider community picture is shown, including a breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and geography. This will inform the national response to the pandemic and assist regional stakeholders in local planning.

Zero rate VAT

The Treasury has [confirmed](#) that from 1 May, personal protective equipment (PPE) purchased by care homes, businesses, charities and individuals to protect against Covid-19 will be free from VAT for a three-month period.

Also [confirmed](#) were plans to remove VAT on e-books and e-newspapers which have been fast-tracked and will come into force tomorrow.

Newly qualified teachers

The Department for Education has [updated](#) the guidance about changes to newly qualified teacher induction during the Covid-19 outbreak. The updated guidance reflects the new regulations.

Covid-19 FAQs

The Cabinet Office has [updated](#) the set of frequently asked questions on what you can and can't do during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Spatial analysis on deaths registered

The Office for National Statistics has [published](#) new statistics on deaths involving Covid-19 by local area and socioeconomic group. The data shows that people living in more deprived areas have experienced Covid-19 mortality rates more than double those living in less deprived areas.

#GivingTuesdayNow

[#GivingTuesdayNow](#) is a new global day of giving and unity that will take place on 5 May – in addition to the regularly scheduled day on 1 December.

[#GivingTuesdayNow](#) is an emergency response to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19.

Closing certain businesses and venues

The Government has [updated](#) the guidance on the closure of certain businesses and venues as part of further social distancing measures to further clarify the requirements of The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

High streets and town centres

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has [confirmed](#) that Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) will receive £6.1 million in response to the pandemic. The money will be paid to local authorities through a section 31 grant to be dispersed to BIDs.

Local context

Supporting vulnerable residents

The HantsHelp4Vulnerable helpline has as of yesterday (30 April) received a total of 7,697 calls and has made a total of 4,199 Local Response Centre referrals. The districts with the highest number of referrals from the contact centre were New Forest (656), Havant (648) and Basingstoke (640). 487 vulnerable people were already receiving support through Adults' Health and Care and 53 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 remain the top two reasons for residents seeking support.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Hampshire County Council has [confirmed](#) that work is continuing on preparations to safely reopen HWRCs in the week commencing 11 May. This date is subject to further guidance expected from the Government next week on travel to an HWRC during the Covid-19 outbreak. When HWRCs re-open, a range of new safety measures will be in place, including social distancing and reduced opening hours, to allow time for staff to thoroughly cleanse sites each day.

Hampshire Highways

The County Council has [confirmed](#) that the Highways teams will soon be out across the county again to deliver a range of work including the resurfacing of roads and footways, and also drainage schemes to make Hampshire's road network more resilient. All highways maintenance work on Hampshire's roads is carried out in line with the Construction Leadership Council's Site Operation Procedures, which is based on Public Health England guidance. The first schemes scheduled to start across Hampshire's districts over the coming weeks are listed in the [press release](#).

Hampshire County Council campaigns

The County Council continues to engage with and inform Hampshire residents on key issues throughout the pandemic. It was encouraging to see the overwhelming support the public have for the Hampshire Highways teams' painted messages on roads outside hospitals and care homes – our Facebook post received around 3,500 likes.

New campaigns will be launched over the weekend, including a social distancing campaign for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum which acknowledges that people are making sacrifices by staying in, but encourages them to keep going. Additionally, a new County Council campaign has launched - a *Smart Living* campaign advising people how they could reduce their food bills and energy usage. View current campaigns on our social media pages, including: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Solent LEP economic recovery plans

Solent LEP has [announced](#) plans for supporting businesses during the recovery period after the Covid-19 pandemic. In their [annual Delivery Plan](#), Solent LEP outline a range of initiatives designed to support businesses to mitigate the impact of Covid-19, including; the [Coronavirus Support Hub](#); a [Crowdfunding Programme](#) and the [Isle of Wight Rural Business Resilience Fund](#). The plan also highlights that they are preparing for the recovery of the Solent economy through 2020 and beyond.

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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