

## National context

### Government's daily press conference

The press conference was chaired by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Alok Sharma.

The Government reported the latest coronavirus figures – 341,551 people have been tested, of whom 108,692 have tested positive. There have been 14,576 deaths in hospitals.

The Government announced that a new Vaccine Taskforce will drive forward, expedite and coordinate efforts to research and then produce a coronavirus vaccine. It will be led by chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, and deputy chief medical officer, Professor Jonathan van Tam, and made up of experts from across government, academia and industry. 21 new research projects combating coronavirus will receive government funding from a £14 million investment fund to rapidly progress treatments and vaccines.

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

### NPCC guidance on leaving the place where you live

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has [published](#) a practical guide as to what might and might not constitute a 'reasonable excuse' to leave the place where you live under Regulation 6 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020.

### Mental wellbeing

Public Health England's [Every Mind Matters](#) platform has launched new advice focused on looking after people's mental wellbeing during the coronavirus pandemic. It has been updated after new data shows more than 4 in 5 people are worried about the effect that coronavirus is having on their life, with over half saying it was affecting their wellbeing and nearly half reporting high levels of anxiety.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are supporting Every Mind Matters and have narrated a new short film to be broadcast across national TV channels from Monday 20 April.

Voluntary and community sector organisations can now apply for a [Coronavirus Mental Health Response grant](#). The Government has awarded £5 million and grants of £20,000 or £50,000 are available for projects lasting up to 12 months.

### Office of the Public Guardian

The Office of the Public Guardian has published new guidance which includes advice on being a [deputy or attorney during the coronavirus outbreak](#), on making and registering a [lasting power of attorney \(LPA\)](#) during the coronavirus outbreak, and [short-term options for health, welfare and financial decisions](#).

### Testing

The Department of Health and Social Care has [announced](#) that access to testing for those with symptoms of coronavirus will be extended across England to include additional frontline workers and symptomatic members of their household. Frontline workers now eligible for testing includes the police, the fire service, frontline 'benefits' workers and those working with vulnerable children and adults.

## Shielding

Public Health England has [updated](#) the guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from coronavirus.

## Fraud and cybercrime

The Charity Commission has [issued](#) an alert to charities to be extra vigilant to criminals who are exploiting the spread of coronavirus in order to carry out fraud and cybercrime.

## Social housing

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has [issued](#) the first of their short monthly surveys via an online data collection portal [NROSH+](#). The responses, alongside other information, will help the RSH to identify where there may be challenges and what potential assistance might be necessary.

## Fishing

The Government has [announced](#) a £10 million fund for England's fishing and aquaculture sectors. More than 1,000 fishing and aquaculture businesses in England will receive direct cash grants through a fisheries support scheme and financial support will be made available to projects which assist fishermen to sell their catch in their local communities.

## Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme

The Chancellor has [announced](#) that the government-backed loan scheme for large businesses affected by coronavirus has been expanded to cover all firms. All viable firms with a turnover of more than £45 million will now be able to apply for up to £25 million, and firms with a turnover of more than £250 million will be eligible for up to £50 million.

## Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The Chancellor has [announced](#) that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be extended by one month to reflect continuing social distancing measures.

HMRC has [published](#) guidance for employers outlining how to calculate 80% of their employee's wages, National Insurance Contributions and pension contributions if they have furloughed staff due to coronavirus. The online service to claim will be available on 20 April 2020.

## Self-employment

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has [released](#) an overview of coronavirus and self-employment across the UK, looking at the industrial, occupational, geographic and demographic characteristics of those who are self-employed.

## Companies House

Companies House has [announced](#) changes which will help businesses avoid being struck off the register as they deal with the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

## Training

Health Education England is [offering](#) bespoke training modules for staff temporarily switching roles during the crisis, aimed at redeployed staff including health care professionals and care workers. The training, delivered mainly via webinars and podcasts, covers areas including advanced respiratory management and infection control.

## Fire service

The National Employers, National Fire Chiefs Council and Fire Brigades Union have agreed a [further tripartite statement](#), adding three more areas of work to the [original agreement](#) reached on 26 March. Firefighters will now be able to assist with antigen testing, transportation of NHS

outpatients to appointments or to receive urgent care and with providing instruction to others on non-blue light ambulance driving.

## Support for bus and lorry drivers

The Government has [announced](#) that it will be easier for bus and lorry drivers to renew their expiring driving licences. Under the scheme, drivers will be able to receive a temporary 1-year licence, providing they do not have any medical conditions that affect their driving and their current licence expires in 2020.

## Relaxation of EU and GB drivers' hours

The Government has [updated](#) the guidance on the temporary relaxation of the enforcement of the drivers' hours rules. The relaxations are not limited to specific sectors or journeys.

## Food hygiene

The Food Standards Agency has [issued](#) guidance to assist consumers to maintain good food hygiene during the coronavirus outbreak.

## Local context

### Hampshire's vulnerable children

Children considered to be vulnerable and therefore, offered a school place during the coronavirus outbreak, include those who have a social worker, either because they have a child protection plan in place or are looked after by the local authority. It also includes children who have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for their specific needs. In Hampshire, around 13% of children receiving social care and around 3% of children with an EHCP have been attending school during the Easter holidays.

### National primary school offer day

All parents in Hampshire, who applied on time for a school place for their children to start school in September 2020 at age 4, were sent the outcome of their application by Hampshire County Council on national offer day yesterday (16 April).

In the current coronavirus pandemic, parents of children starting school in September 2020 are advised to wait to be contacted by the school about how to present their proof of address and children's birth certificate. [Press release](#) published online.

### Physical Distancing

The County Council is [urging](#) residents and businesses to remember that the coronavirus restrictions and guidelines are designed to protect vulnerable people. "Hampshire County Council urges residents and businesses to follow not only the regulations restricting trading and gatherings, but also the spirit of the guidance set out regarding the need for physical distancing during coronavirus.

### Volunteers in Hampshire

Hampshire CVS network has [thanked](#) the almost 4,000 volunteers that have signed up to help in a range of new and existing frontline projects supporting vulnerable people across Hampshire. Hampshire CVS network is encouraging organisations in Hampshire who require coronavirus response volunteers to visit their [website](#) to find the contact details of their local CVS organisation who will be able to match community groups with local volunteers.

### Universities

Universities across the UK are making substantial contributions to the national effort against the coronavirus outbreak – the combined efforts form part of the national [#WeAreTogether](#) campaign.

The [University of Southampton](#) is working with drug development company, Synairgen, to understand more about the virus and are trialling an inhaled drug that could prevent Covid-19 worsening in those most at risk.

Experts at the University of Southampton are also modelling the effectiveness and timing of Covid-19 interventions for different regions of the world. The research is helping the World Health Organization and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control with response efforts.

The [University of Portsmouth](#) is helping to meet demand for essential PPE and are making face shields to protect healthcare professionals on the front line. Over 2,000 shields have been supplied to Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth and other NHS Trusts. A further 1,500 face shields are being made for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Constabulary.

[Solent University](#) has donated over 4,000 pairs of disposable gloves to the London Ambulance Service and is offering the use of its staff car parks and sports halls for vital equipment storage.

## 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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