

## Local context

### Community Champion Programme

Hampshire County Council is launching a new Community Champion Programme which aims to tackle health inequalities by finding people who can help members of their community to pursue healthier lifestyles.

The role of a Community Champion is to talk to other local people and share information about support networks and respond to concerns. They will promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and highlight risk factors that can lead to heart and respiratory diseases. Champions will also play an important role in encouraging people to participate in their communities to avoid isolation.

Anyone aged 18 and over living in the Hampshire County Council local authority area can sign up to the Community Champion Programme. For more details visit the [Hampshire Community Champion Programme page](#) on the County Council's website.

### Supporting healthier lifestyles

The County Council is offering free support to residents who are seeking help to lose weight by providing a 12-week programme in partnership with Weight Watchers (WW). The support includes virtual coaching, online workshops and on-demand fitness classes.

In Hampshire, it is estimated that two-thirds of the population have excess weight and nearly one fifth are not active enough for good health. Living with excess weight puts people at greater risk of serious illness or death from Covid-19, with risk growing substantially as body mass index increases. More information is available in the [press release](#).

In addition, this No Smoking Day (10 March), the County Council is encouraging smokers to seek support to quit. Smokefree Hampshire, the County Council's funded stop-smoking service, offers practical solutions, including switching to e-cigarettes, support online, by telephone or via an app, to help people stop smoking. More information is available at [www.smokefreehampshire.co.uk](http://www.smokefreehampshire.co.uk)



### Patient Support Hub

University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust has [announced](#) that vulnerable patients will be given extra support in the community through its Patient Support Hub. The Hub, which was established during the first wave of Covid-19 initially to support patients who were shielding, has grown into a wider support network which brings together volunteers and community

providers to focus on patients' wider needs. Funded by the Southampton Hospitals Charity, the National Lottery and NHS Charities Together, the project now offers services including delivery of food parcels and shopping, collection of prescriptions, befriending and signposting to other services in the community. More information is available in their [press release](#).



## National context

### National Covid-19 cases, deaths and vaccines data

The Covid-19 vaccination daily data shows that up to 8 March, a total of **22,592,528** people have received the 1<sup>st</sup> dose and a total of **1,181,431** people have received the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.

As of 4pm on 9 March, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19 was **4,228,998** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **5,766**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **124,797** with **231** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **0.7 – 0.9** and the growth rate range **-5% to -3%** per day as of 5 March.

## Communities

### Local elections

A [new statutory instrument](#) has come into force which amended relevant parts of the Coronavirus (Wearing a face covering) regulations and the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) 2020. This mandates the wearing of face coverings at polling, count and postal vote opening venues at the local elections. The amendment confirms that this cannot be used to prevent an entitled voter from voting. The amendment also allows campaigning activities to take place for election purposes.

### Shared and overcrowded housing

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has [issued](#) new guidance which explains the additional steps people should consider to reduce the risk of catching or passing on Covid-19 in the home. It is particularly aimed at people who live in:

- accommodation with shared facilities, such as a block of flats
- overcrowded accommodation
- shared accommodation

### Evictions ban

MHCLG has [announced](#) that the ban on commercial evictions will be extended to 30 June and the bailiff enforced eviction ban extended to 31 May to protect residential tenants.

# Children and education

## School testing

Most secondary schools and colleges in England have seen high student uptake of on-site Covid-19 LFD tests, a survey has suggested. A [snap poll](#) of 700 headteachers, by the Association of School and College Leaders, found 54 per cent reported a take-up of between 90 per cent and 100 per cent for rapid Covid-19 tests.

## Safeguarding and remote education

The Department for Education (DfE) has [updated](#) the guidance on safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic.

# Adults' social care and public health

## Unpaid carers

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has [updated](#) the guidance for anyone who provides unpaid care for a friend or family member, with new guidance for those under 25 (young carers and young adult carers).

NHS England also [published](#) a standard operating procedure aimed at supporting unpaid carers to access the Covid-19 vaccination as part of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's priority cohort 6.

## British Sign Language

The Government has [published](#) British Sign Language videos related to the vaccination programme. The leaflets on which these videos are based on are also available to [download](#) and paper copies are also available to order.

## Vaccine hesitancy

New research [published](#) by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggests that younger adults, Black or Black British adults, renters, lower earners and those living in the most deprived areas are more likely to be hesitant about Covid-19 vaccinations. Ninety-four per cent of those surveyed by the ONS were positive about the vaccine, up from 78 per cent in December 2020 when data was first collected.

## NHS text alerts

In a bid to boost vaccine uptake, the NHS has [announced](#) they will begin sending text messages to almost 400,000 people aged 55 and over and 40,000 unpaid carers, with a weblink so they can reserve a Covid-19 vaccination appointment. Reminders will then be sent every two to three weeks to encourage people to get their vaccine if they have not taken up the offer.

## Lateral flow tests

DHSC has [announced](#) that new analysis of community testing data shows lateral flow tests to have a specificity of at least 99.9% - meaning fewer than one false positive is found in every 1,000 lateral flow tests carried out.

## Voice data study

DHSC is [seeking](#) volunteers to take part in a study which will explore how algorithms can use voice data, including cough recordings, to detect Covid-19.

# Economy, business and finance

## Impact of Covid-19 on local authority finances

The National Audit Office has [published](#) a report about the financial impact of Covid-19 on local authorities. It suggests that the Government's support to local authorities during the pandemic has averted system-wide financial failure. However, the financial position of the sector remains a concern and authorities are setting budgets for 2021/22 with limited confidence.

# Environment, transport and travel

## Disposing of Covid-19 waste

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has [updated](#) the guidance on how to dispose of waste during the Covid-19 outbreak including face coverings, personal protective equipment and waste from lateral flow device test kits.

## Additional links

- NHS information on the Covid-19 vaccination programme: [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://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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