

Local context

Holi Festival

The County Council is reminding residents to stay safe while celebrating Holi, the ancient Hindu Festival of Colours, which starts on Monday (29 March), marking the end of winter and the arrival of spring.



Community testing

All community testing sites for people without symptoms are now accepting walk-ins, however people can still book an appointment if they prefer. The County Council is producing a leaflet for delivery to district testing sites, to support promotion to local businesses and tradespeople (example below).

Keep  Hampshire
SAFE

NHS
Test and Trace

Free, rapid coronavirus testing

Book today – or just drop in

Your local community testing site is at:
Picket Twenty Sports Ground – Sports Pavilion, Andover

Around 1 in 3 people with coronavirus don't have symptoms, so could spread it without knowing.

Regular testing protects your workforce, your customers and our community.



**For peace of mind – get tested today –
and invite your staff to get tested too**

For more information or if you want to book an appointment
hants.gov.uk/testandtrace



National context

National Covid-19 cases, deaths and vaccines data

The Covid-19 vaccination daily data shows that up to 24 March, a total of **28,991,188** people have received the 1st dose and a total of **2,775,481** people have received the 2nd dose.

As of 4pm on 25 March, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19

was **4,319,128** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **6,397**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **126,445** with **63** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **0.6 – 0.9** and the growth rate range **-6% to -3%** per day as of 19 March.

Communities

Roadmap out of lockdown

From Monday 29 March the rules will change, and:

- people will be able to meet outdoors either in a group of six (from any number of households), or in a group of any size from up to two households (each household can include existing support bubbles, if eligible)
- people will be able to take part in formally organised outdoor sports with any number of people (outdoor sports venues and facilities will be able to reopen)
- childcare and supervised activities will be allowed outdoors for all children
- formally organised parent and child groups will be able to take place outdoors for up to fifteen attendees. Children under five will not be counted in this number

More information is in the [Roadmap out of lockdown](#)

Driving tests

The guidance on driving tests has been [updated](#) to confirm that motorcycle training, bus training and tests, Driver CPC part 4 (practical demonstration) tests, and specialist vehicle training and tests will restart on 29 March, and that motorcycle tests will restart on 12 April.

Covid indemnity for local elections

The Government has [announced](#) that it will indemnify those running this year's local elections from any claims related to Covid (this covers, but is not limited to, a Returning Officer's or Counting Officer's liabilities).

Adults' social care and public health

Vaccination programme

NHS national medical director, Professor Stephen Powis, is [urging](#) anyone who qualifies for the Covid-19 vaccination, but has not yet received one, to book an appointment urgently. Far fewer appointments will be available for first doses from next week as the bulk of available supplies will be directed towards second vaccinations.

Anybody aged 50 or over can book their first dose before 29 March online using the national booking system. People aged 18 and over, who are clinically vulnerable, can also book a vaccination appointment.

Vaccination for undocumented people

The Department for Health and Social Care and the Home Office have [confirmed](#) the Covid-19 vaccine will be available to everyone living in the UK free of charge, regardless of their immigration status, and that no immigration checks will be carried out.

UK Health Security Agency

It has been confirmed that the new UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to plan for, prevent and respond to external health threats such as infectious diseases will be led by Dr Jenny Harries. The Agency will lead on health protection and security activity for England, and will also take over from the PHE and NHS Test and Trace work those organisations already carry out on a UK basis.

Economy, business and finance

Business rates relief

A new Business Rates relief fund of £1.5 billion has been [announced](#) for businesses affected by Covid-19 outside the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors. The funding will be allocated to councils based on the stock of properties in the area whose sectors have been affected.

Insolvency measures

A number of insolvency measures introduced in March 2020, to support businesses during the Covid-19 outbreak have been [extended](#) until June 2021.

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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