

National context

Government's press conferences over the weekend (25 - 26 April)

On Saturday (25 April), the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, delivered an update on the government and law enforcement response to coronavirus at the daily press conference, the full transcript can be [viewed online](#). The Government outlined the support available for victims of domestic abuse and highlighted that the *You Are Not Alone* campaign has had 98 million online views.

Although new provisional data from Police shows an overall fall in crime during the coronavirus outbreak - the Government stated that they are working to stop criminals from exploiting and capitalising on the crisis.

On Sunday (26 April), the Environment Secretary, George Eustice, chaired the press conference, the full transcript can be [viewed online](#). The Government confirmed that the episode of panic buying, as seen at the start of the outbreak, has now subsided and food availability has returned to normal levels. Measures have been put in place to support the shielded group and 500,000 food parcels have now been delivered.

As of 9am on 26 April – 543,413 people had been tested, 152,840 of whom, tested positive. 15,953 people are currently in hospital – and there have been 20,732 deaths in hospitals.

Prime Minister's statement

Upon returning to Downing Street this morning (27 April), the Prime Minister made a [statement](#) confirming that the Government cannot yet set out how “fast or slow or even when changes [to the current measures] will be made”. He explained that the Government would be saying much more about this in the coming days.

Planning

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) has [compiled](#) a range of information and guidance for planning committees and councillors to utilise during the pandemic, including briefings, FAQs and videos.

Fixed penalty notices

The ACRO Criminal Records Office has been designated by the Government to administer fixed penalty notices issued by police officers to members of the public.

In line with the Regulations, ACRO will transfer the payments they receive to the respective, appropriate local authority (upper tier) where each fine is issued. ACRO has [written](#) to Chief Finance Officers setting out the process.

Cremation

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has notified local authorities in England that the emergency clauses (para 5.31-5.38) within the [Process Guidance Note Statutory Guidance for Crematoria](#) have now been activated. These paragraphs are issued as a precautionary measure in the event of a national emergency giving rise to mass fatalities. They cover good practice on supplies, calling upon trained staff and managing staff shortages, planning for potential breakdowns and mitigating air emissions.

Domestic abuse

A [report by the Home Affairs Select Committee](#) - Home Office preparedness for Covid-19: domestic abuse and risks of harm within the home - has found that calls and contacts to the national domestic abuse helpline run by the charity Refuge were 49% higher in the week prior to 15 April than the average prior to the pandemic.

Child vulnerability

The Children's Commissioner has [published](#) new analysis of the extent of child vulnerability during the pandemic. The [local area profiles of child vulnerability](#) indicate how many vulnerable children there are in each local authority area, and highlight groups at heightened risk during the coronavirus emergency.

Testing

The Department of Health and Social Care has [confirmed](#) that mobile testing units, operated by the Armed Forces, will travel around the UK to increase access to coronavirus testing. The new mobile units will travel to frontline workers in settings including care homes, police stations, prisons and fire and rescue services.

Following the Government announcement that 18,000 contact tracers, including 3,000 health professionals, are to be deployed, Public Health England has [written](#) to Directors of Public Health with details of the tracing programme. The Association of Directors of Public Health, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and the LGA are all helping to design the approach across the country.

In the coming weeks, NHSX will [launch](#) a contact-tracing app which people can use to alert others who may have been exposed so they can take action to protect themselves.

Parks

The Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick, has [thanked](#) councils for ensuring that the majority of parks remain open to residents to use for exercise. The Government confirmed that around 340 parks and green spaces across the country reopened following the Community Secretary's request at last Saturday's Downing Street press conference (18 April).

Parental leave

The Government [announced](#) that furloughed workers planning to take paid parental or adoption leave will be entitled to pay based on their usual earnings rather than a furloughed pay rate.

Shielding guidance

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has [updated](#) its guidance on shielding clinically vulnerable people for councils, Local Resilience Forums and other local delivery partners. The Department has also [issued](#) a national shielding helpline council briefing.

Communication in hospitals

A new collection of [digital flashcards](#) have been made freely available, to address the problems healthcare workers wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) were having communicating with deaf, blind and critically ill coronavirus patients. CARDMEDIC is aiming to provide its flashcards in 30 different languages in the coming weeks and is also developing an app which will include illustrations and videos for British Sign Language.

One minute silence - #neverforgotten

A one minute silence is due to be held tomorrow (28 April) at 11am. The event has been organised as part of a collaboration between public service trade union Unison, the Royal College of Nursing and the Royal College of Midwives.

The event coincides with International Workers' Memorial Day, an annual event that pays tribute to workers who have lost their lives or become unwell or injured due to their work. It is understood that the Prime Minister will be observing the minute's silence and is encouraging other public sector workers to take part.

Local context

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Hampshire County Council has received a further delivery of PPE from the Government today (27 April). 55,000 face masks were expected - 6,000 were delivered.

Mental wellbeing

Hampshire County Council is [reminding](#) residents that looking after their mental health is more important than ever, as many lives have changed during the coronavirus pandemic. The Executive Member for Public Health, Councillor Judith Grajewski, suggests that as a first step, residents may wish to look at [Every Mind Matters](#) (EMM) which is backed by the NHS and gives expert advice for coping during the current crisis. The EMM webpages also include an easy to follow guide for those who are feeling worried or anxious about coronavirus, this includes tips to help manage such feelings and links to practical resources and useful helplines.

Urgent dental care services

NHS England and NHS Improvement have made significant changes to the delivery and operation of dental services in the South East region. Across every NHS region a Local Urgent Dental Care system has been created to provide care for people with urgent and emergency dental problems. Urgent Dental Care centres (also known as hubs) have been set up to meet the distinct needs of people with urgent dental care needs during the current pandemic including: COVID-19 patients, those being shielded and those identified as vulnerable. There are 36 Urgent Dental Care Centres/Hubs located in the South East so far, locations include: Basingstoke, Winchester, Gosport, Fareham, Cowes, Portsmouth and Southampton. The precise locations are not publicised as access is by appointment only following patients being triaged by a dentist first.

A patient with an urgent or emergency dental condition should contact a dental practice for a telephone assessment of their dental needs. This could either be the dental practice they normally attend or an NHS practice near their home. Outside of usual surgery hours, patients should contact their local out of hours emergency dental service which can be found via NHS111.

NHS 'Open for business'

The NHS are nationally and locally running a campaign to address the issue of a decrease in people accessing NHS services for a range of conditions that are not related to coronavirus. The impacts appears to be as follows: adults and children attending A&E for urgent and emergency medical issues; cancer patients attending their ongoing treatments; and expectant mothers attending for regular scans. The campaign aims to remind people that if they need medical help, the NHS is still there for them – GP practices can be contacted online or by phone, the NHS 111 online service is available to those in need of urgent help, and people in serious or life threatening emergencies must still dial 999. Everyone must go to hospital if told to do so.

Health services have transformed to support patients during the outbreak. For example, at the Emergency Department at Southampton General Hospital, all patients who self-present, or are referred by their GP are now assessed in the marquee outside of the department. Adult patients attending the emergency department with minor injuries are now diverted to urgent treatment centres at the Royal South Hants and Lyminster hospitals.

Additional links

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- 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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