

Rolling Brief: Covid-19

25 March 2020, 20:00 edition



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Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives

Stay at home

You **must stay at home**, only leaving for the following very limited purposes:

- Shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible.
- One form of exercise a day – for example, a run, walk or cycle – alone or with members of your immediate household.
- Any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
- Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

Protect the NHS

You **must** stay at home to **protect the NHS**:

- The NHS only has a limited number of doctors, nurses and specialist equipment.
- We are working around the clock to increase NHS capacity.
- The more people who get sick, the harder it is for the NHS to cope.
- We must slow the spread of the disease so that fewer people are sick at any one time.

Save lives

You **must** stay at home to **protect the NHS** and **save lives**. The police will have the powers to enforce the following restrictions:

- Dispersing gatherings of more than two people in public, excluding people you live with.
- Issuing fines to anyone who does not comply with these rules.
- Closing shops that are not essential, as well as playgrounds and places of worship.

Recent action we have taken:

- **Instructed** the British people to stay at home – to protect the NHS and save lives.
- **Launched a gov.uk Coronavirus Information service on WhatsApp**. The new free to use service aims to provide official, trustworthy and timely information and advice about coronavirus and will further reduce the burden on NHS services.
- **Exempted** estate agents, lettings agencies and bingo halls from paying business rates this coming financial year. We have already announced that the business rates retail discount would be increased to 100 per cent next year and would be expanded to the hospitality and leisure sectors. We have now gone further – some of the exclusions for this relief have been removed, so that retail, leisure, and hospitality properties that have closed as a result of the Covid-19 restriction measures will now be eligible for the relief.

- **Granted a 6-month [exemption](#) for MOT testing, enabling vehicle owners to travel to work where this absolutely cannot be done from home, or shop for necessities.** All cars, vans and motorcycles which usually would require an MOT test will be exempted from needing a test from 30 March 2020. Vehicles must be kept in a roadworthy condition, and garages will remain open for essential repair work. Drivers can be prosecuted if driving unsafe vehicles.
- **Providing [free car parking](#) for our NHS and social care workers.** These workers will be able to park in on street parking bays and council owned car parks without having to worry about cost or time restrictions.
- **Giving businesses [an additional 3 months to file accounts](#) with Companies House, helping companies avoid penalties as they deal with the impact of COVID-19.** All businesses will be able to apply for a 3 month extension for filing their accounts – with those citing issues around COVID-19 being automatically and immediately granted an extension. Applications can be made through a fast-tracked online system which will take just 15 minutes to complete.
- **Launched a new scheme to recruit [250,000 volunteers](#) who can help the NHS support vulnerable people during the coronavirus pandemic – with 405,000 signing up within the first 24 hours.** These volunteers will be to help up to 1.5 million people who have been asked to shield themselves from coronavirus because of underlying health conditions.
- **[Extended Visas](#) for those who cannot return home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** This will apply to anyone whose leave expired after the 24 January and who cannot leave the country because of travel restrictions or self-isolation.
- **Advised all British tourists and short-stay travellers to [return to the UK now](#).** International travel is becoming more difficult with the closure of borders, airlines suspending flights, airports closing, exit bans and further restrictions being introduced daily. For those who are currently struggling to fly home, the FCO is working around the clock to support all British travellers in this situation come back to the UK.
- **[Protected commercial tenants](#) by ensuring that, if they cannot pay their rent because of coronavirus, they will not be evicted.** These measures, included in the emergency Coronavirus Bill currently going through Parliament, will mean no business will be forced out of their premises if they miss a payment in the next three months.
- **Announced [Emergency Measures Agreements](#), so we can make sure our railways stay open.** These agreements will suspend the normal franchise agreements and transfer all revenue and cost risk to the Government. This will last for an initial period of 6 months, with options for further extension or earlier cancellation as agreed.
- **[Ramped up delivery](#) of Personal Protective Equipment to our frontline medical staff so they are fully equipped to tackle Coronavirus.** From this week, the army will offer its support, with service personnel helping to deliver and distribute urgent PPE supplies, and delivery times are being extended into evenings and weekends where necessary.
- **Unveiled a major new package of measures to [protect up to 1.5 million people in England](#) who are the most vulnerable – enabling them to shield themselves and stay at home.** The people who are at the highest risk of being hospitalised should they contract the virus will be contacted by their GP practice or specialist shortly with detailed advice. In the first instance they will receive a letter this week and, where mobile number is known, the NHS will also send frequent text messages shortly to those in this group.
- **Set out a [Plan for People's Jobs and Incomes](#) to protect jobs, offer more generous support to those without jobs, strengthen the safety net for the self-employed and help people to stay in their homes.** This includes helping pay people's wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – offering grants to employers who promise to retain their staff, covering most of the cost of paying people's wages.

- **Called on 65,000 former nurses and doctors to re-join the NHS to help tackle Covid-19 and save lives.** 11,788 clinicians have signed up to return to the NHS in the first few days of our call.
- **Relaxed competition laws to allow supermarkets to work together to ensure that everyone has access to food and essential supplies when they need them.** Food retailers will now be able to share data on their stock levels, cooperate to keep stores open and share staff, distribution depots and delivery vehicles. This will help keep shops open and staffed and better able to meet high demand.
- **Made it easier for workers to obtain an isolation note, which can be used as evidence for their employer if they have to take more than 7 days off work.** Workers can now obtain an isolation note through the NHS website and NHS 111 online, and then emailed to the user
- **Published the scientific evidence underpinning the Government's advice and approach, so that people can understand why the Government is making the decisions that it is.**
- **Introduced new emergency measures with the energy industry to keep gas and electricity flowing, looking after vulnerable customers who may be in financial difficulty due to Covid-19.** Any household in financial distress will be supported by their supplier so that their energy does not get cut off.
- **Closed schools for the vast majority of children until further notice.** This will mean there will be far fewer children in schools and that will help us to slow the spread of the disease.
- **Introduced emergency legislation including measures to protect renters, so that no one gets evicted if they cannot pay their rent.** Emergency legislation will be taken forward so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a three-month period
- **Increased our testing capacity to 25,000 hospital patients a day.** The Prime Minister and Health Secretary promised industry leaders that they would be given whatever support they need to help government increase testing capabilities across the country.
- **Announced an unprecedented package of Government-backed loans and support for business.**
- **Introduced a three month mortgage holiday for those in difficulty due to coronavirus, so that people will not have to pay a penny towards their mortgage while they get back on their feet.** We are extending the three month mortgage holiday to landlords whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulty due to coronavirus
- **Announced a temporary relaxation of planning rules so that pubs and restaurants can operate as hot food takeaways to serve people having to stay at home.**
- **Spoken to leading manufacturing businesses to call on them to help the UK step up production of vital medical equipment, ensuring our NHS has it what needs to provide care to patients.**
- **The Prime Minister released a joint statement with the other leaders of G7 nations, committing to coordinating the global health response to coronavirus, and continuing to protect jobs, restore confidence and encourage science and research cooperation.**
- **Reaffirmed our commitment to giving councils the support they need to contribute to the national effort, including giving them more flexibility to focus their resources on the response to coronavirus.**

The Prime Minister's Address to the Nation

Issue: On 23 March 2020, the Prime Minister addressed the nation and instructed the British people to stay at home.¹

- If too many people become seriously unwell at one time, the NHS will be unable to handle it - meaning more people are likely to die. So, it is vital to slow the spread of the disease.
- From this evening, the British people must stay at home. The critical thing we must do is stop the disease spreading between households. That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for very limited purposes.
- With the time you buy – simply by staying at home – we are strengthening our NHS, increasing our stocks of equipment, accelerating our search for treatments, and buying millions of testing kits that will enable us to turn the tide on this invisible killer.
- At this time of national emergency: stay home, protect our NHS and save lives.

Stay at home

You must stay at home, only leaving for the following very limited purposes:

- Shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible.
- One form of exercise a day – for example, a run, walk or cycle – alone or with members of your immediate household.
- Any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
- Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

Protect the NHS

You must stay at home to protect the NHS:

- The NHS only has a limited number of doctors, nurses and specialist equipment.
- We are working around the clock to increase NHS capacity.
- The more people who get sick, the harder it is for the NHS to cope.
- We must slow the spread of the disease so that fewer people are sick at any one time.

Save lives

You must stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives. The police will have the powers to enforce the following restrictions:

- Dispersing gatherings of more than two people in public, excluding people you live with.
- Issuing fines to anyone who does not comply with these rules.
- Closing shops that are not essential, as well as playgrounds and places of worship.

¹ Prime Minister's Office, *Speech*, 23 March 2020, [link](#).

The Prime Minister's full address to the Nation:

The coronavirus is the biggest threat this country has faced for decades – and this country is not alone.

All over the world we are seeing the devastating impact of this invisible killer

And so tonight I want to update you on the latest steps we are taking to fight the disease and what you can do to help.

And I want to begin by reminding you why the UK has been taking the approach that we have.

Without a huge national effort to halt the growth of this virus, there will come a moment when no health service in the world could possibly cope; because there won't be enough ventilators, enough intensive care beds, enough doctors and nurses.

And as we have seen elsewhere, in other countries that also have fantastic health care systems, that is the moment of real danger.

To put it simply, if too many people become seriously unwell at one time, the NHS will be unable to handle it - meaning more people are likely to die, not just from Coronavirus but from other illnesses as well. So it's vital to slow the spread of the disease.

Because that is the way we reduce the number of people needing hospital treatment at any one time, so we can protect the NHS's ability to cope - and save more lives.

And that's why we have been asking people to stay at home during this pandemic.

And though huge numbers are complying – and I thank you all - the time has now come for us all to do more.

From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction – you must stay at home.

Because the critical thing we must do is stop the disease spreading between households.

That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for the following very limited purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible
- one form of exercise a day - for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household;
- any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and
- travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.

That's all - these are the only reasons you should leave your home.

You should not be meeting friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say No.

You should not be meeting family members who do not live in your home.

You should not be going shopping except for essentials like food and medicine — and you should do this as little as you can. And use food delivery services where you can.

If you don't follow the rules the police will have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

To ensure compliance with the Government's instruction to stay at home, we will immediately:

- close all shops selling non-essential goods, including clothing and electronic stores and other premises including libraries, playgrounds and outdoor gyms, and places of worship;

- we will stop all gatherings of more than two people in public – excluding people you live with;
- and we'll stop all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, but excluding funerals.
- Parks will remain open for exercise but gatherings will be dispersed.

No Prime Minister wants to enact measures like this.

I know the damage that this disruption is doing and will do to people's lives, to their businesses and to their jobs.

And that's why we have produced a huge and unprecedented programme of support both for workers and for business.

And I can assure you that we will keep these restrictions under constant review. We will look again in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows we are able to.

But at present there are just no easy options. The way ahead is hard, and it is still true that many lives will sadly be lost.

And yet it is also true that there is a clear way through.

Day by day we are strengthening our amazing NHS with 7500 former clinicians now coming back to the service.

With the time you buy – by simply staying at home - we are increasing our stocks of equipment.

We are accelerating our search for treatments.

We are pioneering work on a vaccine.

And we are buying millions of testing kits that will enable us to turn the tide on this invisible killer.

I want to thank everyone who is working flat out to beat the virus.

Everyone from the supermarket staff to the transport workers to the carers to the nurses and doctors on the frontline.

But in this fight we can be in no doubt that each and every one of us is directly enlisted.

Each and every one of us is now obliged to join together.

To halt the spread of this disease.

To protect our NHS and to save many many thousands of lives.

And I know that as they have in the past so many times.

The people of this country will rise to that challenge.

And we will come through it stronger than ever.

We will beat the coronavirus and we will beat it together.

And therefore I urge you at this moment of national emergency to stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives.

Plan for People's Jobs and Incomes

Issue: On 20 March 2020, the Chancellor announced our Plan for People's Jobs and Incomes.²

We know people are deeply worried about the Coronavirus – the impact it will have on their jobs, their incomes and their ability to provide for their families. We said we would support the British people – and we meant it. We will do whatever it takes and we will get through this.

Our Plan for People's Jobs and Incomes, will protect people's jobs; offer more generous support to those who are without jobs; strengthen the safety net for the self-employed; and help people stay in their homes.

The Government is standing behind employers – and we are asking that they do their bit and stand behind workers.

- We will help pay people's wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – offering grants to employers who promise to retain their staff, covering most of the cost of paying people's wages.
- We are also deferring the next three months of VAT until the end of the financial year – an injection of over £30 billion of cash to businesses to help businesses pay people and keep them in work.
- We are also acting so that, if the worst happens, there is a stronger safety net to fall back on. So we are increasing Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by £1,000 a year for the next 12 months – that's nearly £7 billion of extra support.

We will ensure people get the support they need to do the right thing, to stay at home, protect our NHS, save lives.

Protecting people's jobs:

- **Stepping in and helping pay people's wages – through a scheme which is one of the most generous of any in the world – paying grants to support as many jobs as necessary.** Any employer in the country – large, small, charitable or for profit – who promises to retain their staff, can apply for a grant to cover most of the cost of paying people's wages. Government grants will cover 80 per cent of the salary of retained workers up to a total of £2,500 a month – above the median income. We will place no limit on these grants. The cost of wages will be backdated to 1st March and will be open initially for at least three months – and we will extend the scheme for longer if necessary.
- **Deferring the next three months of VAT tax, a direct injection of over £30 billion of cash to employers, equivalent to 1.5 per cent of GDP.** That means no business will pay any VAT from now until the end of June, and they will have until the end of the financial year to repay those bills.
- **Extending the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme so that is interest free for twelve months, an extension from the initial announcement of six months.** We have already introduced and announced an extension to the Business Interruption Loan Scheme, which is for small and medium-sized businesses. On Tuesday, the Chancellor expanded the amount that can be borrowed from £1.2 million to £5 million, and we are now extending the time frame of no interest on these loans from six months to twelve months.

Offering more generous support to those who are without employment:

- **Strengthening the safety net for those who need it – increasing Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by £1,000 a year – a cash injection of nearly £7 billion in the welfare system.** We are increasing

² HMT, *Speech*, 20 March 2020, [link](#).

the Universal Credit standard allowance, for the next 12 months, by £1,000 a year. We will also increase Working Tax Credit by the same amount for the next 12 months. Together these measures will benefit over 4 million of our most vulnerable households.

Strengthening the safety net for people who work for themselves:

- **Suspending the minimum income floor for twelve months – meaning self-employed people can now access, in full, Universal Credit at a rate that is equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay for employees.** For the self-employed, we are also deferring income tax self-assessment payments for July until the end of January 2021. We will announce further measures to support self-employed people over the coming days.

Helping people stay in their homes:

- **Providing nearly £1 billion of support for renters, by increasing the generosity of housing benefit and Universal Credit,** so that the Local Housing Allowance will cover at least 30 per cent of market rents in local areas.

Other announcements to support businesses and workers:

We are standing behind businesses:

- **Standing behind businesses small and large – providing a £330 billion package of loans and guarantees – that’s worth 15 per cent of our GDP.** And if demand is greater than the initial £330 billion we are making available, we will go further and provide as much capacity as required. That means any good business in financial difficulty who needs access to cash to pay their rent, the salaries of their employees, pay suppliers, or purchase stock, will be able to access a government-backed loan, on attractive terms.
 - **We will support liquidity amongst large companies,** with a major new scheme being launched by the Bank of England.
 - **We will support lending to small and medium-sized businesses** by extending the Business Interruption Loan Scheme announced in the Budget. This means that, rather than providing loans of £1.2 million, it will provide loans of up to £5 million, with no interest for the first twelve months.
 - **Both of these schemes will be up and running by the start of next week** – and the Chancellor is also taking a new legal power in the Covid Bill to offer whatever further financial support is necessary.
- **Helping all businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors – meaning that none of these companies will have to pay business rates.** All businesses in this sector are exempt from business rates for 12 months – that’s every single shop, pub, theatre, music venue, restaurant, and any other business in the retail, hospitality or leisure sectors. In addition, we will provide small businesses in these sectors with an additional grant scheme of up to £25,000. Any business with a rateable value of less than £51,000 can now get access to a government grant.
- **Exempting estate agents, lettings agencies and bingo halls from paying business rates this coming financial year.** We have already announced that the business rates retail discount would be increased to 100 per cent next year and would be expanded to the hospitality and leisure sectors. We have now gone further – some of the exclusions for this relief have been removed, so that retail, leisure, and hospitality properties that have closed as a result of the Covid-19 restriction measures will now be eligible for the relief.³

³ HMT, *News story*, 25 March 2020, [link](#).

- **Giving businesses an additional 3 months to file accounts with Companies House, helping companies avoid penalties as they deal with the impact of COVID-19.** All businesses will be able to apply for a 3 month extension for filing their accounts – with those citing issues around COVID-19 being automatically and immediately granted an extension. Applications can be made through a fast-tracked online system which will take just 15 minutes to complete.⁴
- **Providing grants to the smallest of businesses of £10,000.** We are providing £10,000 grants to the 700,000 of our smallest businesses.
- **Protecting commercial tenants by ensuring that, if they cannot pay their rent because of coronavirus, they will not be evicted.** These measures, included in the emergency Coronavirus Bill currently going through Parliament, will mean no business will be forced out of their premises if they miss a payment in the next three months.⁵
- **Supporting small and medium-sized businesses to cope with the extra costs of paying Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) by refunding eligible SSP costs.** The criteria for eligible businesses are:
 - The refund will be limited to two weeks per employee who has claimed SSP as a result of Covid-19.
 - Employers with fewer than 250 employees will be eligible.
 - Employers should keep records but should not require employees to provide a doctor's note.
 - The eligible period will commence from the day on which regulations extending SSP come into force.
 - We will work with employers over the coming months to set up the repayment mechanism for employers as soon as possible.
- **Businesses and self-employed people may be eligible to receive support with their tax affairs through HMRC's Time to Pay service.** Arrangements are agreed case-by-case. Businesses can contact HMRC's new dedicated COVID-19 helpline from 11 March 2020 for advice.
- **Relaxing planning rules so pubs and restaurants can operate as hot food takeaways during the coronavirus outbreak.** Planning permission is normally required for businesses to carry out a change of use to a hot food takeaway. The Government has confirmed regulations will be temporarily relaxed to enable businesses to deliver this service without a planning application.⁶

We are standing behind individuals:

- **Introducing a three month mortgage holiday for those in difficulty due to coronavirus – so that people will not have to pay a penny towards their mortgage while they get back on their feet.** We will work with trade unions and businesses to develop new forms of employment support to help protect people's jobs and incomes through this period.
- **Making Statutory Sick Pay available for people diagnosed with COVID-19 or who are self-isolating, helping people with their finances – and a doctor's note can be obtained via NHS 111.** We have already set out that SSP will be available from day one for people who have COVID-19. But the Budget sets out that this will now cover those who are unable to work because they have been advised to self-isolate as well as for people within the same household who display symptoms. Those who are advised to self-isolate will be able to obtain a doctor's note via NHS 111 as medical evidence for SSP.

⁴ BEIS, *Press Release*, 25 March 2020, [link](#).

⁵ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 23 March 2020, [link](#).

⁶ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 17 March 2020, [link](#).

- **Allowing people to obtain a new isolation note online.** Isolation notes will provide employees with evidence for their employers that they have been advised to self-isolate due to coronavirus, either because they have symptoms or because they live with someone who has symptoms. The notes can be accessed through the [NHS website](#) and [NHS 111 online](#), and then emailed to the user (or a trusted friend or family member, or directly to an employer, if someone doesn't have email).⁷

We are making our benefits system more generous and supporting the self-employed:

- **Supporting people who are not eligible for Statutory Sick Pay, like the self-employed, through the welfare system so that nobody is penalised for doing the right thing.** We will make it quicker and easier to access benefits. Those on contributory ESA will be able to claim from day 1, instead of day 8. To make sure that time spent off work due to sickness is reflected in people's benefits, we are also temporarily removing the minimum income floor in Universal Credit. This means self-employed people who fall out of work will still get their full payment. And we are relaxing the requirement for anyone to physically attend a jobcentre – everything can be done by phone or online.
 - **Suspending face-to-face assessments for all sickness and disability benefits for the next 3 months.** This temporary move (effective from 17 March) is being taken as a precautionary measure to protect vulnerable people from unnecessary risk of exposure to coronavirus. We will ensure those who are entitled to a benefit continue to receive support, and that new claimants are able to access the safety net.
 - **Suspending new reviews or reassessments across all benefits for three months.** This includes Universal Credit (UC), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit. Where awards are due to expire, we will be extending end-dates so that claimants continue to receive financial support at their current rate during this period.⁸

⁷ DHSC, *Press Release*, 20 March 2020, [link](#).

⁸ DWP, *Press Release*, 23 March 2020, [link](#).

Keeping the public informed

Issue: On 15 March 2020, the Government announced new daily press conference would be held to keep the public informed on how to protect themselves.⁹

- **We are committed to keeping the public informed every step of the way about what we're doing to fight the spread of coronavirus, when we're doing it and why we're doing it.**
- **The Prime Minister and other senior ministers will hold daily press conferences on coronavirus pandemic, supported by scientific and medical experts including the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser.**
- **At all times we will be led by the science to bring forward the right responses at the right time to this global pandemic.**

We are doing this by:

- **Launching a GOV.UK Coronavirus Information service on WhatsApp – giving people official and timely information and reducing the burden on NHS services.** An automated 'chatbot' service will allow people to get answers to the most common questions about coronavirus direct from government. The service provides information on topics such as coronavirus prevention and symptoms, the latest number of cases in the UK, advice on staying at home, travel advice and myth busting.¹⁰
 - To use the free GOV.UK Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp, simply add 07860 064422 in your phone contacts and then message the word 'hi' in a WhatsApp message to get started.
- **Holding daily press conferences to keep the public informed on Covid-19.** The conferences will be hosted by the Prime Minister and senior Minister, supported by scientific and medical experts including the Chief Medical Office and Chief Scientific Adviser and form part of the Government's commitment to clarity and transparency in order to ensure British people are fully informed about the steps they can take to protect themselves and others.
- **Launching new TV adverts to keep the public informed about the steps they need to take to tackle the spread of Covid-19.** The adverts will feature the Chief Medical Officer and actor Mark Strong, who will explain that individuals will still be asked to self-isolate for seven days from the onset of symptoms, but any individuals in the household will now be asked to self-isolate for 14 days from that moment as well.
- **Publishing the scientific evidence underpinning the Government's response and advice to the coronavirus outbreak.** Transparency is key during times like this, which is why the Government has published the evidence behind its approach, provided by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). The evidence can be viewed online [here](#).¹¹

The Prime Minister is coordinating action across the Government:

- **Setting up four new implementation committees to feed into a new daily C-19 meeting, which will be chaired by the Prime Minister.** The C-19 meeting of key ministers and officials will monitor progress and refine the measures agreed by COBR. The four implementation committees are:
 - **Healthcare.** Chaired by the Health Secretary to focus on the preparedness of the NHS, notably ensuring capacity in the critical care system for those worst affected.

⁹ Prime Minister's Office, *Press Release*, 15 March 2020, [link](#).

¹⁰ Cabinet Office, *News story*, 25 March 2020, [link](#).

¹¹ Government Office for Science, *News Story*, 20 March 2020, [link](#).

- **General Public Sector.** Chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to look at preparedness across the rest of the public and critical national infrastructure.
- **Economic and business.** Chaired by the Chancellor, with the Business Secretary as deputy chair, to consider the economic and business impact and response, including supply chain resilience. It will also coordinate roundtables with key sectors.
- **International.** Chaired by the Foreign Secretary, to consider our international response to the crisis through the G7, G20 and other mechanisms, and the UK five-point plan.¹²

¹² Prime Minister's Office, *Press Release*, 17 March 2020, [link](#).

Launching NHS Volunteers Responders

Issue: On 24 March 2020, the Health Secretary launched NHS Volunteers Responders, seeking 250,000 volunteers to help the NHS for shopping, delivery of medicines and to support those who are shielded.¹³

- In these extraordinary times, it's essential that we all pull together as part of the national effort to protect the most vulnerable, reduce pressures on our NHS and care system and save lives.
- That is why we are seeking 250,000 volunteers to help up to 1.5 million people who have been asked to shield themselves from coronavirus because of underlying health conditions. Help from volunteers has the potential to make a real difference to some of those most affected by this outbreak – from delivering essential prescriptions to calling to check on the wellbeing of those self-isolating.
- The whole country is coming together to help one another – and, through this national effort, we can truly make a difference.

We are doing this by:

- **Launching a new scheme to recruit 250,000 volunteers who can help the NHS support vulnerable people during the coronavirus pandemic.** These volunteers will be to help up to 1.5 million people who have been asked to shield themselves from coronavirus because of underlying health conditions. They will be asked to do simple but vital tasks, including:
 - Delivering medicines from pharmacies;
 - Driving patients to appointments;
 - Bringing them home from hospital;
 - Or making regular phone calls to check on people isolating at home.
- **Within the first 24 hours, 405,000 people have answered the call to be an NHS volunteer.** The target of 250,000 volunteers has already been surpassed – showing just how much the British public want to help and are pulling together in the national effort.¹⁴
- **People can become an NHS Volunteer Responder and join the NHS's trusted list of volunteers by visiting goodsamapp.org/NHS and adding their details to the NHS section.** GoodSam is a great way to connect volunteers with people in need quickly and safely and the Government is urging people who can to register today, support our NHS and help vulnerable people shielding at home.

Q: What is the criteria for volunteers?

Volunteers must be 18 or over, and fit and well with no symptoms. Those in higher-risk groups (including those over 70, those who are pregnant or with underlying medical conditions) will be able to offer support by telephone. Patient transport drivers will require an enhanced DBS check and will receive guidance to do this role safely.

Q: Will volunteers be social distancing?

Safety of volunteers is a priority. The majority of tasks can be undertaken while social distancing and volunteers will receive guidance.

¹³ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 21 March 2020, [link](#).

¹⁴ Matt Hancock, *Twitter*, 25 March 2020, [link](#).

Supporting the NHS

Issue: During the Budget, the Chancellor announced an initial £5 billion response fund to ensure the NHS and public services have the resources they need to tackle Covid-19.

- **The over-riding object is to protect life and protect our NHS – we have a plan, based on the expertise of world-leading scientists, and we have already bought valuable time for our NHS to prepare.**
- **We are taking all of the action necessary to ensure the NHS has what it needs to deal with Covid-19. This includes an initial response fund of £5 billion and additional funding for research into test and surveillance around the virus.**
- **The NHS will be at the frontline of our efforts against Covid-19, and we will ensure that whatever it needs, it will get.**

We are doing this by:

- **Providing any extra resource the NHS needs to tackle the virus.** We have created a new £5 billion Initial COVID-19 Response Fund so the NHS can treat coronavirus patients; councils can support vulnerable people; and ensure funding is available for other public services.¹⁵
 - **Providing £1.3 billion to help the NHS discharge patients who no longer need care more quickly, freeing up vital space.** Of the £5 billion we are providing, £1.3 billion will be used to enhance the NHS discharge process. This will help to free up 15,000 hospital beds across England and ensure more staff have capacity to treat people needing urgent care, including those being cared for with coronavirus.¹⁶
- **Working with British manufacturers to support the production of essential medical equipment for the NHS.** The Prime Minister has spoken with manufacturers, including Unipart Group, and called on them to support the nationwide effort to fight the virus. We are asking businesses to support with the production of equipment such as ventilators for the NHS.
- **Ensuring NHS workers have the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need.** Over the weekend more than 200 organisations, including all NHS hospitals, received fresh supplies of facemasks and other PPE along with ambulance trusts and other NHS organisations. From this week the army will play its part, helping to distribute and deliver urgent PPE supplies to the frontline.
 - **Delivering more than 15 million face masks to the NHS in just two days.** This is on top of the 24.6 million gloves and 1.9 million eye protectors that were delivered in a single day (Tuesday 24 March).¹⁷
- **Ensuring the NHS has the support and the people it needs to fight the virus.** We have called for extra NHS staff to help the fight against Covid-19, including retired doctors, nurses and final year students joining frontline services. 5,500 final-year medics and 18,700 final-year student nurses will move to the frontline to help our efforts.
- **Increasing our testing capacity to 25,000 hospital patients a day.** The Prime Minister and Health Secretary promised industry leaders that they would be given whatever support they need to help government increase testing capabilities across the country. The increased capacity is expected to be ready within 4 weeks, with highest-priority cases being tested first.¹⁸

¹⁵ HMT, *Budget 2020*, 11 March 2020, [link](#).

¹⁶ DHSC, *News Story*, 19 March 2020, [link](#).

¹⁷ DHSC, *Twitter*, 25 March 2020, [link](#).

¹⁸ DHSC, *News Story*, 18 March 2020, [link](#).

- **Bolstering NHS 111 to provide advice to people who need it.** While people with mild symptoms should not call NHS 111, we need to make sure the service is available for those who need it, with severe symptoms or if they are not getting better after 7 days. Around 500 additional call handlers have already been trained to staff the NHS 111 service, representing an increase of 20 per cent. In addition, the new NHS 111 online service is also available to provide advice and will free up call handlers' time, so they are able to prioritise those experiencing symptoms.¹⁹
- **Opening a new hospital – a temporary hospital – the NHS Nightingale Hospital at the ExCel centre in London to provide support for thousands more patients.** The NHS Nightingale Hospital will comprise two wards, each of 2,000 people. With the help of the military and with NHS clinicians, we will make sure that we have the capacity that we need so that everyone can get the support that they need.
- **Researching the virus to look for cures and better testing methods.** We have provided £40 million of new funding to enable further rapid research in COVID-19, with the aim of increasing the capacity and capability of testing and surveillance.²⁰
 - **The first British patient has been put into a randomised trial for a treatment of coronavirus.** Experts are rapidly getting a better understanding of coronavirus, and how to treat it. Trials of a possible vaccine are expected to start within a month.²¹
 - **Working to bring forward a brand-new type of antibody test – which can tell people if they've had the virus and are immune.** More testing is critical to stopping this virus and getting life back to normal as soon as possible. We're in negotiations for a brand new type of antibody test – which can tell if a person has had the virus and is immune. We will buy hundreds of thousands.²²
 - **Investing £20 million to discover breakthroughs that will help the UK respond to Coronavirus and future pandemics, and save lives.** We are backing the UK's leading clinicians and scientists to map how the virus spreads and behaves by using whole genome sequencing – which will help guide treatments in the future and see the impact of interventions.²³
- **Working with international partners to tackle the virus.** We will provide a contribution of up to £150 million to the International Monetary Fund's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust, to help the effort to stop further transmission, including into the UK.²⁴
- **Placing up to 20,000 Armed Forces personnel at a higher state of readiness to support our vital public services, if required.** Up to 10,000 personnel are being placed at a higher readiness, so they are able to assist with supporting public services. This is on top of the 10,000 already held at higher readiness.
- **Training 150 military personnel to drive oxygen tankers in order to support the NHS.** These personnel began training on Monday 23 March 2020 - ensuring that the NHS always has the resources it needs to deliver world class care to those most in need.
- **Providing free car parking for our NHS and social care workers.** These workers will be able to park in on street parking bays and council owned car parks without having to worry about cost or time restrictions.²⁵

Conservative record on the NHS:

¹⁹ Hansard, 9 March 2020, WQ25187, [link](#).

²⁰ HMT, *Budget 2020*, 11 March 2020, [link](#).

²¹ PA Media, *Twitter*, 19 March 2020, [link](#).

²² Matt Hancock, *Twitter*, 19 March 2020, [link](#).

²³ DHSC, *Press Release*, 23 March 2020, [link](#).

²⁴ HMT, *Budget 2020*, 11 March 2020, [link](#).

²⁵ Robert Jenrick, *Twitter*, 25 March 2020, [link](#).

- **Opening extra hospital beds at a record rate this winter – made possible by 8,700 extra nurses working across the NHS.** There were over 1,000 more hospital beds open over winter this year than last year.²⁶
- **Providing the biggest cash boost in history for the NHS and enshrining that increase in law, to safeguard it for future generations.** We are investing an additional £33.9 billion in frontline NHS services every year by 2023-24, the largest and longest funding settlement in the history of the NHS.²⁷
- **Building 40 new hospitals and upgrading 20 more, ensuring extra funding for the NHS goes straight to the front line.** We are providing £2.7 billion to build 6 new hospitals straight away and seed funding for another 34 more to be built by the end of the decade, as well as £1.8 billion for 20 hospital upgrades and a further £200 million for new MRI and CT scanners across the county.²⁸
- **Delivering on our promises with £5.4 billion more for the NHS and health service – writing the cheque for 50,000 more nurses and 50 million more GP surgery appointments per year.** We have already started the process of enshrining our record cash boost into law, but will now go further by investing £5.4 billion in this Parliament to support the recruitment, retraining and retaining of 50,000 more nurses, including a new nursing maintenance grant for all nursing students.²⁹
- **Delivering more doctors and nurses since last year.** In November 2019 (the latest month for which statistics are available) there were 5,305 more doctors in the NHS than a year earlier – an increase of 4.4 per cent and of 344 from the previous month. The latest data also shows we have record numbers of nurses working in our NHS – up by over 8,000 on the same time last year. Since 2010, we have delivered over 20,000 more doctors, 18,500 more nurses, midwives and health visitors, and 4,900 more paramedics.³⁰

²⁶ Hansard, 26 February 2020, WQ18448, [link](#).

²⁷ HMT, *Spending Round 2019*, 4 September 2019, [link](#); Hansard, 7 January 2019, Vol.652 Col.62, [link](#).

²⁸ DHSC, *News Story*, 30 October 2019, [link](#); DHSC, *Press Release*, 29 September 2019, [link](#); DHSC, *Press Release*, 5 August 2019, [link](#).

²⁹ HMT, *Budget 2020*, 11 March 2020, [link](#).

³⁰ DHSC, *News Story*, 27 February 2020, [link](#); NHS Digital, *Workforce Statistics*, 27 February 2020, [link](#).

Protecting people in social care

Issue: On 13 March 2020, we offered updated guidance to people working and living in social care.³¹

- **Elderly people and those with underlying health conditions are much more likely to develop serious complications from Covid-19.**
- **The Government has published guidance which sets out that anyone with symptoms should not visit care homes or vulnerable people, while those receiving care should be isolated in their rooms if they have symptoms of Covid-19.**
- **This will be a challenging time for people living and working in care, but we are working closely with industry experts to do everything we can to limit the impact of Covid-19 has on the most vulnerable.**

We are doing this by:

- **Providing £1.6 billion to local authorities to bolster their response to Covid-19, including social care.** Of the £5 billion we announced for the NHS and public services, £1.6 billion will go to local authorities to help them respond to other Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver. This includes increasing support for the adult social care workforce and for services helping the most vulnerable, including homeless people.³²
- **Publishing new guidance for adult social care in relation to Covid-19.** The guidance covers a variety of scenarios relating to care homes, staff, and providers who care for people in their own homes to ensure older people and those with pre-existing conditions and care needs who receive support are best protected.
- **Working with the NHS and care providers to make sure people can stay in their communities wherever possible.** Building on existing strong local relationships, the NHS will work with care providers where necessary to make sure people have the best possible care and remain in the community.
- **Working with local councils to prioritise people who are at the highest risk.** Councils have been told to map out all care and support plans to prioritise people who are at the highest risk and contact all registered providers in their local area to facilitate plans for mutual aid.

³¹ DHSC, *News Story*, 13 March 2020, [link](#).

³² DHSC, *News Story*, 19 March 2020, [link](#).

Protecting rail services for passengers

Issue: On 23 March 2020, we announced emergency measures to support and sustain necessary rail services for key workers.³³

- **In these uncertain times, the railway has an important role to play in ensuring Britain's critical workers can travel and that vital supplies can get to where they are needed.**
- **That is why train operators are moving onto Emergency Measures Agreements, enabling greater flexibility and transferring revenue and cost risk to the Government so we can guarantee our railways stay open. We have also agreed with the rail industry to reduce train services across the country to reflect lower passenger demand, while keeping vital rail services running, so that people who need to can still get to work.**
- **Tackling this virus will require a concerted national effort and will mean changes in all of our lives, but we will ensure that people who need it still have access to the public transport they need.**

We are doing this by:

- **Introducing Emergency Measures Agreements, so we can make sure our railways stay open.** These agreements will suspend the normal franchise agreements and transfer all revenue and cost risk to the Government. This will last for an initial period of 6 months, with options for further extension or earlier cancellation as agreed.
- **Providing greater flexibility to the train operators and the Government, making sure the railway can continue to react quickly to changing circumstances.** By suspending the normal franchise arrangements, we will ensure vital services continue to operate for critical workers who are keeping the nation running and that we are able to reinstate a normal service quickly when the situation improves.
- **Minimising disruption to the rail sector in the long term, guaranteeing that services and staff can be sustained over this difficult period.** Suspending the usual financial mechanisms will not only guarantee that services can be sustained over this difficult period, it will also provide certainty for staff working on the railways, many of whom are working hard every day in difficult conditions to make sure we keep the railway running.
- **Ensuring that hardworking commuters - who have radically altered their lives to combat the spread of coronavirus, are not left out of pocket.** Anyone holding an Advance ticket bought before today will be able to refund it free of charge, while the Government advises against non-essential travel. All season ticket holders can claim a refund for time unused on their tickets in the usual way. Ticket holders should contact their retailer or train operator for details.
- **Reducing rail services to reflect lower demand and protect railway workers, while ensuring that people in the NHS and key industries can still get to work.** Rail services will be gradually reduced from Monday 23 March and kept under review, with operators providing clear communications to ensure passengers who need to travel are well-informed of the changes.

Q: Isn't this renationalisation?

No – this is a short-term measure, which has only been implemented because of the unprecedented economic challenges we face. The Emergency Measures Agreement will keep the railway running for key workers, plus fee-free refunds for all advance tickets passengers.

³³ DfT, *News Story*, 23 March 2020, [link](#).

Protecting the most vulnerable

Issue: On 21 March, the Government announced measures to protect England's most vulnerable.³⁴

- **Our top priority is public safety and making sure that those most at risk from the virus continue to get the support they need throughout this period.**
- **That is why we have urged up to 1.5 million people who are considered to be extremely vulnerable to stay at home for at least 12 weeks – and have introduced a range of measures to ensure they have the support they need. This will significantly reduce the risk of them ending up in hospital with complications – helping us protect our NHS and save lives.**
- **We will ensure that vulnerable and older people in our society are left in no doubt of their importance to us and our determination to protect them as best we can. More people will be required to be by themselves at home. While they are on their own, let's guarantee that they are never alone.**

We are doing this by:

- **Urging up to 1.5 million of England's most vulnerable people to stay at home for at least 12 weeks.** The people who are at the highest risk of being hospitalised should they contract the virus – such as those with specific underlying health conditions – will be contacted by their GP practice or specialist shortly with detailed advice. In the first instance they will receive a letter this week and, where mobile number is known, the NHS will also send frequent text messages shortly to those in this group.
- **Introducing a new Local Support System to make sure those individuals self-isolating at home and who are without a support network of friends and family will receive basic groceries and medicine.** The Government is working with a partnership of the groceries industry, local government, local resilience and emergency partners, and voluntary groups, to ensure that essential items can start to be delivered as soon as possible to those who need it. The people identified as the most vulnerable in their communities will be contacted directly – including in person where necessary – as a priority.
- **Setting up a helpline for the most in need of support.** This will help to ensure people know exactly how to care for themselves and others in the coming months.
- **Full guidance is available online from Public Health England.** This includes the full list of conditions considered to be in the extremely vulnerable category, and advice for family members, friends and carers. A link to the guidance can be found [here](#).
- **Launching a 'TechForce 19' challenge, providing £500,000 of funding for technology companies who come up with digital solutions to support those who need to stay at home.** Funding of up to £25,000 per company is available. The programme is looking for digital solutions that can be launched in the next few weeks, and could include providing remote social care and improving mental health support.³⁵
- **Launching a new scheme to recruit 250,000 volunteers who can help the NHS support vulnerable people during the coronavirus pandemic.** These volunteers will be to help up to 1.5 million people who have been asked to shield themselves from coronavirus because of underlying health conditions. They will be asked to do simple but vital tasks, including:
 - Delivering medicines from pharmacies;
 - Driving patients to appointments;

³⁴ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 21 March 2020, [link](#).

³⁵ DHSC, *News Story*, 23 March 2020, [link](#).

- Bringing them home from hospital;
- Or making regular phone calls to check on people isolating at home.

Supporting self-employed workers

Issue: On 20 March 2020, the Chancellor strengthened measures to help those who are self-employed.³⁶

- **We know people are deeply worried about Coronavirus – the impact it will have on their incomes and their ability to provide for their families.**
- **The Chancellor has outlined an unprecedented package of measures to protect jobs and incomes as part of the national effort in response to coronavirus. This includes strengthening the safety-net for the self-employed, who will benefit from a relaxation of the earnings rules under universal credit and deferring income tax self-assessment payments due in July 2020. We have always said we will go further where we can and will set out further steps in the coming days.**
- **In total we are providing nearly £7 billion of extra support through our welfare system to protect people's incomes – so people have the support they need during this difficult time.**

We are doing this by:

- We have already made access to both Universal Credit and ESA more generous and accessible – for example by increasing the UC allowance by £20 per week.
- We have temporarily removed the 7 waiting day requirement in ESA and we have relaxed Universal Credit's Minimum Income Floor for all self-employed people.
- We are also deferring income tax self-assessment payments from July to January next year to help those who are self-employed.

Providing self-employed people with a safety net:

- **Supporting people through the welfare system so that nobody is penalised for doing the right thing.** We will make it quicker and easier to access benefits. Those on contributory ESA will be able to claim from day 1, instead of day 8. And we are relaxing the requirement for anyone to physically attend a jobcentre – everything can be done by phone or online.
- **Suspending the minimum income floor for twelve months – meaning self-employed people can now access, in full, Universal Credit at a rate that is equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay for employees.** For the self-employed, we are also deferring income tax self-assessment payments for July until the end of January 2021.
- **Strengthening the safety net for those who need it – increasing Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by £1,000 a year – a cash injection of nearly £7 billion in the welfare system.** We are increasing the Universal Credit standard allowance, for the next 12 months, by £1,000 a year. We will also increase Working Tax Credit by the same amount for the next 12 months.

Supporting small businesses:

- **Providing grants to the smallest of businesses of £10,000.** We are providing £10,000 grants to the 700,000 of our smallest businesses.
- **Deferring the next three months of VAT tax, a direct injection of over £30 billion of cash to employers, equivalent to 1.5 per cent of GDP.** That means no business will pay any VAT from now until the end of June, and they will have until the end of the financial year to repay those bills.

³⁶ HMT, *Speech*, 20 March 2020, [link](#).

- **The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme will now be interest free for twelve months, an extension from the initial announcement of six months.** We have already introduced and announced an extension to the Business Interruption Loan Scheme, which is for small and medium-sized businesses. On Tuesday, the Chancellor expanded the amount that can be borrowed from £1.2 million to £5 million, and we are now extending the time frame of no interest on these loans from six months to twelve months.

Helping people with the cost of living during this time:

- **Introducing emergency legislation to protect renters, so that no one gets evicted if they cannot pay their rent.** Emergency legislation will be taken forward as an urgent priority so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a three-month period. As a result of these measures, no renters in private or social accommodation needs to be concerned about the threat of eviction.³⁷
- **Announcing nearly £1 billion of support for renters, by increasing the generosity of housing benefit and Universal Credit,** so that the Local Housing Allowance will cover at least 30 per cent of market rents in local areas.³⁸
- **Introducing a three month mortgage holiday for those in difficulty due to coronavirus – so that people will not have to pay a penny towards their mortgage while they get back on their feet.** We will work with trade unions and businesses to develop new forms of employment support to help protect people's jobs and incomes through this period.³⁹
- **Introducing new emergency measures with the energy industry to keep gas and electricity flowing, looking after vulnerable customers who may be in financial difficulty due to Covid-19.** Any household in financial distress will be supported by their supplier so that their energy does not get cut off.⁴⁰

³⁷ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 18 March 2020, [link](#).

³⁸ HMT, *Speech*, 20 March 2020, [link](#).

³⁹ HMT, *Speech*, 20 March 2020, [link](#).

⁴⁰ DBEIS, *Press Release*, 19 March 2020, [link](#).

Passing emergency legislation

Issue: On 25 March 2020, our emergency legislation to strengthen the Government's coronavirus response plans received Royal Assent.⁴¹

- **We are doing everything we can to protect lives and support the NHS, guided by the best scientists and clinicians in the world.**
- **The new Emergency Coronavirus Act will help the Government to protect life and the nation's public health, and ensure NHS and social care staff are supported as they deal with significant extra pressure.**
- **The measures in the Bill are temporary, proportionate to the threat, will only be used when strictly necessary and will be in place for as long as required to respond to the situation. By planning for the worst and working for the best, we will get through this.**

The emergency law deals with five elements:

- **Containing and slowing the virus.**
- **Easing legislative and regulatory requirements.**
- **Enhancing capacity and the flexible deployment of staff across essential services.**
- **Managing the deceased in a dignified way.**
- **Supporting and protecting the public to do the right thing and follow public health advice.**

We are doing this by:

- **Allowing retired NHS staff to return to work.** Powers within the Act will allow recently retired NHS staff and social workers to return to work without any negative repercussions to their pensions. NHS staff will also be covered by a state-backed insurance scheme to ensure they can care for patients if, for example, they are moving outside their day-to-day duties.
- **Reducing administrative burdens to help doctors discharge patients more quickly.** Paperwork and administrative requirements will be reduced to help doctors discharge patients more quickly when clinically appropriate, to free up hospital space for those who are very ill.
- **Making it easier to volunteers and help the NHS respond to this virus.** Volunteers will have extra employment safeguards, allowing them to pause their main jobs for up to 4 weeks while they help care for patients in the health and care system, and will receive a flat rate of compensation to mitigate lost earnings and expenses.
- **Ensuring older and more vulnerable people receive the best care available.** Changes to councils' duties under the Care Act will enable them to prioritise people with the greatest care needs and make the best use of the adult social care workforce.
- **Allowing police and immigration officers to support and enforce public health measures.** This will include powers to detain people and put them in appropriate isolation facilities if necessary to protect public health.

⁴¹ DHSC, *News Story*, 17 March 2020, [link](#).

- **Making arrangements for statutory sick pay for those self-isolating without symptoms from day one.** SSP will be made available from day one for both people off work with Covid-19 symptoms, and also for those who are unable to work because they are self-isolating on PHE advice.
- **Allowing small businesses to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay payments from HMRC.** SMEs will be able to reclaim the costs of providing SSP. The refund will be limited to two weeks per employees who has claimed SSP as a result of Covid-19.
- **Allowing more phone or video hearings for court cases.** This will help stop the spread of the virus in courts. All court trials underway should proceed as planned, unless those involved are showing symptoms consistent with Covid-19 or are self-isolating. The minority of Crown Court cases that have been listed for trial but which have not yet commenced, and which are also expected to last for more than three days, will be postponed.
- **Working as one United Kingdom to fight the spread of this virus.** The Bill allows the four UK governments to switch on these new powers when they are needed and, crucially, to switch them off again once they are no longer necessary, based on the advice of the four Chief Medical Officers.

Q: Will these measures be in place for two years?

We recognise the importance of parliamentary scrutiny and have heard concerns about the need for period reviews of the Act, which is why we have also included a provision to require the House of Commons to renew the legislation every six months.

Closing schools

Issue: On 18 March 2020, the Education Secretary announced schools would be closed for the vast majority of pupils until further notice.⁴²

- **We will now close schools for the vast majority of pupils until further notice.**
- **In order to allow health and other critical workers to continue working, their children, and those who are vulnerable, will continue to attend school.**
- **Closing schools for the vast majority will help in our efforts slow the spread of the virus.**

We are doing this by:

- **Closing schools for the vast majority of children until further notice.** This will mean there will be far fewer children in schools and that will help us to slow the spread of the disease.
- **Continuing to provide school places for the children of key workers to ensure our NHS and vital services continue to have the workforces they need.** We need health workers and other critical workers – from police officers to supermarket delivery drivers– to keep going to work. So schools are being asked to make provision for the children of these people. These measures are crucial to make sure the critical parts of the economy keep functioning and public services keep functioning.
- **Looking after the most vulnerable children.** Schools will also be asked to make provision for vulnerable children. For those children who rely on free school meals we will ensure that meals and vouchers are available.
- **Asking private providers to follow the Government's actions.** We are asking nurseries and private schools to follow the Government's lead in closing except for the children of key workers.

Children should not be looked after by older grandparents or relatives who may be particularly vulnerable to the virus.

A list of key workers, whose children will continue to attend school, can be found [here](#).

Supporting children on free school meals:

- **Ensuring no child has to go without food while their school is closed or if they are self-isolating at home.** Schools will be able to provide meals or vouchers for supermarkets or local shops, which can be sent directly to families who are either self-isolating at home or whose schools are closed on government advice.⁴³
- **Helping families with increased costs.** The total value of vouchers offered to each eligible child will exceed the rate the Government pays to schools for free school meals, recognising that families will not be buying food in bulk and may therefore incur higher costs.
- **Making the process of providing meals to pupils eligible for free school meals as easy as possible for schools.** Effective immediately, schools will be able to order vouchers directly from supermarkets or shops in their communities to be emailed or printed and posted to families, and they will have their costs covered by the Department for Education.

⁴² DfE, *News Story*, 18 March 2020, [link](#).

⁴³ DfE, *Press Release*, 19 March 2020, [link](#).

- **Giving headteachers the power to decide what's best and most appropriate for their local area.** Government guidance states that schools can choose to support eligible children however they believe is most appropriate and headteachers can decide which of the available options will be best for families in their area.

Working with teachers, universities and pupils on the issue of exams:

- **Working with the exam regulator, exam boards and teachers to provide grades to students whose exams have been cancelled.** Ofqual will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade to each student which reflects their performance as fairly as possible, and will work with the exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students. The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.⁴⁴
- **Ensuring this year's cohort of students aren't disadvantaged by not sitting exams in the summer.** The aim is to provide these calculated grades to students before the end of July. In terms of a permanent record, the grades will be indistinguishable from those provided in other years.
- **Giving students the chance to an exam in the autumn if they want to.** If students don't feel that correct process has been followed in their case, they will be able to appeal. In addition, if they do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam at the earliest reasonable opportunity.
- **Asking higher education providers not to change their offers to students for two weeks to maintain stability.** We are asking providers to refrain from changing their offers made to undergraduate students for the next two weeks, such as converting conditional offers to unconditional offers or changing entry requirements. This is because a small number of universities have changed a significant proportion of their offers to undergraduate students from 'conditional' to 'unconditional' to secure their attendance for the academic year.⁴⁵

Q: Will teachers still get paid?

Yes. Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year – regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. This means they can continue to pay their staff.

Q: What will happen with exams?

We will not go ahead with primary assessments or GCSEs, AS Levels or A Levels this summer and we will not be publishing performance tables for 2020. The aim is to make sure pupils receive their grades in August as normal, with a thorough appeals process. Grades will be calculated based on a range of data including mock exams and teacher assessment.

⁴⁴ DfE, *Press Release*, 20 March 2020, [link](#).

⁴⁵ DfE, *Press Release*, 23 March 2020, [link](#).

Supporting homeowners and renters

Issue: On 17 and 18 March 2020, we announced support to homeowners, renters and landlords who may be impacted by coronavirus.⁴⁶

- **No one who has been impacted by coronavirus should have to worry about getting back on their feet – including homeowners, renters and landlords.**
- **We have announced a package of measures to help these people. No homeowner in difficulty due to coronavirus will have to worry about their mortgage. No renter who has lost income due to coronavirus will be forced out of their home, nor will any landlord face unmanageable debts.**
- **These changes will protect all renters and private landlords ensuring everyone gets the support they need at this very difficult time.**

We are doing this by:

- **Introducing emergency legislation to protect renters, so that no one gets evicted if they cannot pay their rent.** Emergency legislation will be taken forward as an urgent priority so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a three-month period. As a result of these measures, no renters in private or social accommodation needs to be concerned about the threat of eviction.⁴⁷
- **Announcing nearly £1 billion of support for renters, by increasing the generosity of housing benefit and Universal Credit,** so that the Local Housing Allowance will cover at least 30 per cent of market rents in local areas.
- **Introducing a three month mortgage holiday for those in difficulty due to coronavirus – so that people will not have to pay a penny towards their mortgage while they get back on their feet.** And in the coming days, we will go much further to support people's financial security. We will work with trade unions and businesses to develop new forms of employment support to help protect people's jobs and incomes through this period.
- **Extending the three month mortgage holiday to landlords whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulty due to coronavirus.** This will alleviate the pressure on landlords, who will be concerned about meeting mortgage payments themselves, and will mean no unnecessary pressure is put on their tenants as a result. At the end of this period, landlords and tenants will be expected to work together to establish an affordable repayment plan, taking into account tenants' individual circumstances.

⁴⁶ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 18 March 2020, [link](#).

⁴⁷ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 18 March 2020, [link](#).

Managing pressures on the food supply chain

- **We know people are concerned about pressures on the food supply chain during this difficult time.** People are allowed to leave their homes to shop for essentials, such as food and medicine, but this should be as infrequently as possible.
- **We are working closely with representatives across the food supply chain, together with local authorities and charities, to ensure that people will have continued access to food, and we have made changes so that supermarkets can replenish their shelves more quickly.**
- **Together with the food industry, we will do everything we can to rise to the challenge ahead and ensure food stocks keep flowing.**

We are doing this by:

- **Working closely with the retail industry to establish any additional support they may need.** The Environment Secretary is speaking regularly with industry, including the British Retail Consortium, to determine what additional support the Government can provide. Under discussion are additional measures to support the continued flow of groceries into our shops and steps to ensure people staying at home can get the food and groceries they need.
- **Closely monitoring the resilience of food retailers' supply chains.** UK retailers already have highly-resilient supply chains, and they are working around the clock to ensure people can access the products they need. Food supply into the UK has continued, and we are monitoring the situation very closely to ensure this continues and will provide an update if anything changes.
- **Relaxing competition rules to enable supermarkets to work together on their Coronavirus response.** We have temporarily relaxed elements of competition law to enable supermarkets to work more closely together to ensure people can access the products they need. Food retailers will now be able to share data on their stock levels, cooperate to keep stores open and share staff, distribution depots and delivery vehicles. This will help keep shops open and staffed and better able to meet high demand.⁴⁸
- **Announcing measures to support supermarkets and keep the supply of food flowing.** We have issued guidance to local authorities advising them to extend the hours that deliveries can be made to supermarkets and other food retailers, making it easier for shelves to be replenished. The Transport Secretary has also authorised a temporary relaxation of the rules on drivers' hours, so they can continue to deliver vital goods to shops across the country and meet the increased demand for home deliveries.

Conservative record in this area:

- **Listening to concerns raised by industry and taking action to support their preparations.** Measures that we have announced, enabling food retailers to pool resources, increase the frequency of deliveries to their stores and move stocks more quickly from warehouses across the country to replenish their shelves, were introduced after discussions between the Environment Secretary and leading supermarkets, and will ensure retailers can respond to increased consumer demand for certain products, such as hygiene products.

Q: Should people stockpile basic goods?

No. The UK's major supermarkets last weekend issued a rallying call for everyone to play their part in the national effort to this response by looking out for their friends, family and neighbours. They are asking everyone to shop as they normally would and to pull together to support those staying at home.

⁴⁸ DEFRA, *Press Release*, 19 March 2020, [link](#).

Supporting rough sleepers

Issue: On 17 March 2020, we announced £3.2 million in emergency support for rough sleepers during the coronavirus outbreak.⁴⁹

- **Public safety and protecting the most vulnerable people in society from coronavirus is our top priority.**
- **We have announced an initial £3.2 million to ensure councils are able to put emergency measures in place to help rough sleepers to successfully self-isolate. It is a first step to ensure local authorities and frontline services are fully prepared with emergency measures in place.**
- **Combating this virus will require a huge national effort. We must do all we can to save lives, protect the NHS and keep the most vulnerable people in our society safe.**

We are doing this by:

- **Providing £3.2 million to help rough sleepers, or those at risk of rough sleeping, to successful self-isolate.** The funding will be available to all local authorities in England and will reimburse them for the cost of providing accommodation and services to those sleeping on the streets to help them successfully self-isolate.
- **Supporting local authorities to put emergency measures in place to deal with the spread of coronavirus.** The funding is an initial step and the Government will continue to work closely with local authorities to keep this under review and ensure people have access to the support they need.
- **Helping shelters and hostels with the latest advice on tackling coronavirus.** Public Health England has released guidance for providers of hostels and day centres on how to handle suspected cases of coronavirus to assist staff and visitors in dealing with the impact of the virus.

Conservative record on ending rough sleeping:

- **Providing £643 million over the next four years to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.** The funding committed as part of the coronavirus response is in addition to the £492 million committed in 2020 to 2021 to support the government's ambition to end rough sleeping in this Parliament, a £124 million increase in funding from the previous year. This forms part of £643 million in funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next four years.
- **Reducing rough sleeping, which has now fallen for two years in a row.** We have commissioned an independent review of our Rough Sleeping Strategy by Dame Louise Casey and will expand the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and Housing First Initiative, which have proven successful. Rough sleeping in areas where the RSI is active fell by a further 12 per cent last year, ahead of the national average fall of 9 per cent - the second annual fall in a row. For 2020-21, funding for the Rough Sleeping Initiative will be joined with the Rapid Rehousing Pathway and rise to £112 million – an uplift of £26 million.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 17 March 2020, [link](#).

⁵⁰ MHCLG, *Press Release*, 27 February 2020, [link](#); *Hansard*, 28 January 2020, HCWS69, [link](#).

Coordinating a major volunteering push

Issue: On 18 March 2020, the Culture Secretary announced a major volunteering push to help support people through Covid-19.⁵¹

- **The British public, alongside our brilliant charities and volunteers, are already rising to the challenges presented by Covid-19, and supporting each other through this challenging time.**
- **We know many people want to do more to help those who are more vulnerable, which is why we will work with the charity sector to channel this outpouring of support to where it's most needed.**
- **By coming together as a society, and with the Government doing whatever it takes to support people, businesses and public services, our country will get through this period.**

We are doing this by:

- **Working with the civil society sector to galvanise volunteers and coordinate help to those who need it most.** We are working with groups including National Emergencies Trust, the National Council of Voluntary Organisations and the British Red Cross.
- **Bringing together civil society leaders to ways to support the Government's response to Covid-19.** The Civil Society Minister chaired a forum of 40 leaders from across the civil society sector last week, where representatives from charities, disability groups, faith-based groups and the voluntary sector discussed their response plans to the Covid-19 outbreak and their willingness to support the Government's efforts.

Conservative record on civil society:

- **Launched the Civil Society Strategy, promoting a positive and fairer society.** This 15 year strategy is designed to build stronger communities by bringing together businesses, charities and the public sector.⁵²
- **Launched our first Loneliness Strategy, helping people to build connections within their communities.**⁵³
 - **Empowering GPs to refer patients experiencing loneliness to community activities and voluntary services, providing a vital lifeline for some of the most vulnerable in society.** By 2023, all GPs in England will be able to refer patients to community workers offering tailored support to help people improve their health and wellbeing, instead of defaulting to medicine.
 - **Increasing funding for the number of community spaces available, making sure everyone has a place to go.** £1.8 million will be used to increase the number of community spaces available, transforming underutilised areas for local people. This comes on top of £20 million we announced for charities and communities groups to expand their programmes which bring people together.
 - **Working with businesses to support their employees' health and social wellbeing, ensuring nobody is left behind.** We have introduced the first ever Employer Pledge, with 21 high-profile businesses and organisations, covering 800,000 employees, already committing to take action to support their workers.

⁵¹ DCMS, *Press Release*, 18 March 2020, [link](#).

⁵² DCMS, *Press Release*, 8 August 2018, [link](#).

⁵³ DCMS, *Our Civil Society*, 25 October 2019, [link](#).

Leading international efforts

Issue: On 16 March 2020, all G7 leaders including the Prime Minister participated in a call to discuss international efforts.⁵⁴

- **The United Kingdom is playing a crucial role in leading the international response to Covid-19 – ensuring we can make a very real difference to countries which are most vulnerable to the disease.**
- **We are in close contact with our counterparts, around the world, in the G7 and the G20 – and the Prime Minister will continue this engagement to ensure a coordinated global response to the outbreak. In the Budget, the UK showed leadership by providing up to £150 million to support the economies of developing countries affected by the virus.**
- **We want fellow leaders to support the WHO response, provide funding and expertise for research to help develop a vaccine and drive forward support to mitigate the economic impacts of the crisis.**

We are doing this by:

- **Engaging with world leaders to ensure a coordinated global response to the outbreak.** The Prime Minister is continuing to speak to world leaders, including President Trump, Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Abe, Prime Minister Conte and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.⁵⁵
- **Providing up to £150 million to the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Fund to support developing countries affected by Covid-19.** Up to £150 million of new UK Aid will go towards helping developing countries deal with the short term economic disruption caused by coronavirus, allowing them to focus their spending on tackling the outbreak.⁵⁶
- **Investing £91 million in the research of vaccines and diagnostic tests, as part of our commitment to the international response.** We are investing UK aid and using the best of British expertise and science to find new ways to vaccinate against, treat and diagnose the virus, and to support global efforts to prevent further outbreaks around the world.

Conservative record on leadership abroad:

- **Committing to spend 0.7 per cent of our Gross National Income (GNI) on Overseas Development Assistance.** In 2013 we were the first G7 country who achieved our aid target and in 2015 we enshrined this target into law. In 2018, we were one of only four EU member states to reach the 0.7 per cent target.⁵⁷
- **Responding to conflict, disease and instability overseas, stopping issues from abroad arriving on our shores.** We are at the forefront of the humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria, committing £2.8 billion since 2012, and are curbing outbreaks of deadly diseases amongst the Rohingya refugees and helping developing countries enhance their resilience to disasters and disease.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Prime Minister's Office, *Press Release*, 15 March 2020, [link](#).

⁵⁵ Prime Minister's Office, *Press Release*, 15 March 2020, [link](#).

⁵⁶ DfID, *Press Release*, 11 March 2020, [link](#).

⁵⁷ House of Commons Library, *The 0.7% aid target: June 2016 update*, 20 June 2016, [link](#); European Commission, *Press Release*, 11 April 2019, [link](#).

⁵⁸ DfID, *Press Release*, 9 March 2019, [link](#); DfID, *Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19*, 11 July 2019, [link](#).

Good news: How our country is coming together

- **Within the first 24 hours, 405,000 people have answered the call to be an NHS volunteer.** The target of 250,000 volunteers has already been surpassed – showing just how much the British public want to help and are pulling together in the national effort.⁵⁹
- **Tesco announced it would hire 20,000 additional temporary workers. At Tesco, we're working around the clock to help ensure families have access to the shopping items they need.** Tesco are bringing in up to 20,000 new colleagues to work their stores for at least the next twelve weeks – and have already received 140,000 views on their Tesco Careers page.⁶⁰
- **Asda pledged millions of pounds of support to help the needy and vulnerable access food supplies during the coronavirus crisis.** Asda donated £5m to food banks and community charities, to help provide over 4 million meals to families in poverty. The supermarket will also give a further 3,000 charities access to free food over the next three months.⁶¹
- **The Indigo Trust pledged £2.5m to philanthropists to keep charities going through Coronavirus pandemic.** The Trust will be giving £1m to the Trussell Trust to support running foodbanks nationwide, £1m to National Emergencies Trust to support their Coronavirus Appeal and £500,000 to the Oxfordshire Community Foundation for organisations in area.⁶²
- **A doctor in Wales has worked with a local engineering company to create a ventilator to help people breath and which cleans rooms of viral particles.** The ventilator took three days to design and has already successfully treated a Covid-19 patient, and has now been backed by the Welsh Government. 100 will now be produced per day.⁶³
- **UK chemicals manufacturer INEOS announced it would build a hand sanitizer plant in the North East within 10 days to produce a million bottles of hand sanitizer a month.** The factory will be near Middlesbrough and supply hospitals, schools, places of work, pharmacies and supermarkets.⁶⁴
- **A Welsh company has designed a snood with anti-viral coating that can kill coronavirus and protect people working on the frontline in the NHS.** The company hopes to make as many as a million-a-week and plans to reserve part of that stock for the NHS.⁶⁵
- **Almost 12,000 doctors and nurses have returned to work in the NHS.**⁶⁶
- **A new hospital is to be established at the Excel centre – the Nightingale Hospital – with capacity for 4,000 people.**⁶⁷
- **Between 23-24 March, 7.5 million pieces of personal protective equipment were shipped across the country, with support from the military.** A hotline for people to call if they need it has been established.⁶⁸

⁵⁹ Matt Hancock, *Twitter*, 25 March 2020, [link](#).

⁶⁰ *Tesco*, 20 March 2020, [link](#).

⁶¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 21 March 2020, [link](#).

⁶² *Daily Telegraph*, 21 March 2020, [link](#).

⁶³ *BBC News*, 24 March 2020, [link](#).

⁶⁴ *Reuters*, 24 March 2020, [link](#).

⁶⁵ *BBC News*, 24 March 2020, [link](#).

⁶⁶ Matt Hancock, *Press Conference*, 24 March 2020, [archived](#).

⁶⁷ Matt Hancock, *Press Conference*, 24 March 2020, [archived](#).

⁶⁸ Matt Hancock, *Press Conference*, 24 March 2020, [archived](#).

Party campaign issues

Issue: On 13 March 2020, the Government announced it was postponing all elections due to be held in May 2020 for one year.⁶⁹

- **In the weeks ahead, it's right that local authorities can focus on their vital role in delivering public services.**
- **That's why the Government took the decision to reschedule local, mayoral, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections until May next year.**
- **We will continue to work with councils across the country to ensure they have the support they need at this difficult time.**

We are doing this by:

- **Postponing elections until May 2021, to ensure local authorities can focus on delivering vital local services in the months ahead.** By postponing the elections for a year, we can respect the annual cycle of local government.⁷⁰
- **Acting on the advice of the Electoral Commission to postpone May's elections.** It said: 'We've written to the UK government to recommend that the May polls be postponed ... This is due to growing risks to the delivery of the polls and to mitigate the impact on voters, campaigners & electoral administrators'⁷¹
- **Other political parties have backed our decision to postpone local elections:**
 - **Labour's Shadow Communities Secretary Andrew Gwynne said:** '[Postponing] is the right answer... I'm pleased common sense has prevailed and we can get on with tackling the virus'⁷²
 - **Acting Liberal Democrat Leader Sir Ed Davey said:** 'It is the right decision to delay local elections'⁷³

Issue: The Conservative Party has advised that Associations should cancel their AGMs.⁷⁴

- Following earlier advice that AGMs may be delayed, the Party is now advising that all AGMs should be cancelled for the time being.
- Our current advice is that AGMs must take place by the end of June. If there are further updates to this, they will be communicated via email.

Issue: The Conservative Party has formally suspended all face to face campaign, including literature delivery.⁷⁵

- Public safety has and will always remain our top priority. Following announcements from the Government, we are formally suspending face to face campaigning, including literature delivery.
- You may wish to direct your volunteers and activists towards digital communication methods that will keep people safe.

⁶⁹ Robert Jenrick, *Twitter*, 13 March 2020, [link](#).

⁷⁰ *BBC News*, 13 March 2020, [link](#).

⁷¹ *The Independent*, 13 March 2020, [link](#).

⁷² Andrew Gwynne, *Twitter*, 13 March 2020, [link](#).

⁷³ Liberal Democrats, *Twitter*, 13 March 2020, [link](#).

⁷⁴ Alan Mabbutt, *Update from the Organisation Department*, 19 March 2020, [archived](#).

⁷⁵ Darren Mott, *Campaigning*, 17 March 2020, [archived](#).

- This is a time for looking out for each other, for our neighbours, friends and family. Please encourage able supporters to ring around vulnerable or elderly members and check on their health and wellbeing.

Advice for MPs

Issue: On 16 March 2020, Parliament issued updated guidance for MPs.⁷⁶

- **Parliament has stopped all non-essential visitor access to both Houses and introduced overseas travel restrictions in order to preserve the operation of Parliament.**
- **With the nation currently facing extremely challenging circumstances due to coronavirus, steps have been taken to allow Parliament to continue to fulfil its important constitutional duties.**

Steps taken to preserve the operation of Parliament

- MPs, Peers, Parliamentary staff and other members of the Parliamentary community will continue to be able to work on the Estate where necessary, but are being strongly encouraged to work from home where possible.
- All visitor access to the Parliamentary Estate has now stopped. Access will be restricted to passholders and those on essential Parliamentary business.

Access to the Parliamentary Estate

The access measures include:

- All non-essential access to both Houses will stop from Tuesday 17 March.
- There will be no access to the public gallery.
- The Education Centre will be closed and school visits will cease from Tuesday 17 March.
- Members tours for constituents will be stopped.
- No new banqueting bookings will be accepted. Existing bookings taking place from Monday onwards are to be cancelled but deposits will be refunded.
- No new commercial tour bookings will be accepted. Existing bookings taking place from Monday onwards are to be cancelled but tickets will be refunded.
- Members of the public wishing to enter the Parliamentary Estate solely to view Westminster Hall will not be admitted.
- Mass lobbies (which usually take place in Westminster Hall or in the larger committee rooms) will not be facilitated during the period.

Select committee witnesses will be unaffected. Witnesses will need to show the invitation sent to them by the Committee's staff.

Holding surgeries

- The Conservative Party is advising that all surgeries (both MP and council) should now take place over the phone.

Parliamentary travel

⁷⁶ UK Parliament, *Update on Coronavirus*, 16 March 2020, [link](#).

The Parliamentary authorities strongly discourage Parliamentary travel to other countries, and ask Members, committees, APPGs, and partner organisations to assess the risk of visits on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether any delegates fall within vulnerable groups.

Constituents who can support the national effort

- If MPs have businesses in their constituencies who may be able to support our national effort for ventilator production, they should ask them to contact 0300 456 3565 or ventilator.support@beis.gov.uk.
- If MPs have businesses in their constituencies who may be able to help with other aspects, whether it be with property, logistics, food supply or other equipment, they should ask them to contact gcfccovid19enquiries@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

Other useful numbers

- The Government has created a new landing page for all coronavirus queries, covering: businesses; health; employees; travel; workers; staying safe. The first port of call for queries on these matters is: www.gov.uk/coronavirus.
- **Business support/ventilators:** 0300 456 3565
- **HMRC:** 0800 015 9559
- **Universal Credit:** 0800 328 5644
- **School closures:** 0800 046 8687
- **NHS:** Only call 111 if you cannot get help online at 111.nhs.uk

Annex 1: How to access government financial support

This information has been provided by HM Treasury, and is available online at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/873676/Covid-19_fact_sheet_18_March.pdf

INFORMATION FOR INDIVIDUALS

If you think you are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), please read the following information:

You can get £94.25 per week Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you're too ill to work. It's paid by your employer for up to 28 weeks.

If you are self-isolating because of COVID-19:

From 13 March, you can now claim SSP. This includes individuals who are caring for people self-isolating in the same household and therefore have been advised to do a household quarantine. To check your sick pay entitlement, you should talk to your employer, and visit <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay> for more information.

- **When does SSP apply?** The government is legislating for SSP to be paid from day 1, rather than day 4, of your absence from work if you are absent from work due to sickness or need to self-isolate caused by COVID-19. Once the legislation has been passed, this will apply retrospectively from 13 March. You should talk to your employer if you are eligible for SSP and need to claim.
- **Do I need a sick note?** From Friday 20 March onwards, those who have COVID-19 or are advised to self-isolate will be able to obtain an "isolation note" by visiting NHS 111 online and completing an online form, rather than visiting a doctor. For COVID-19 cases this replaces the usual need to provide a "fit note" after seven days of sickness absence. Isolation notes will also be accepted by Jobcentre Plus as evidence of your inability to attend.
- **What if I am self-employed or not eligible for SSP?** If you are not eligible for SSP – for example if you are self-employed or earning below the Lower Earnings Limit of £118 per week – and you have COVID-19 or are advised to self-isolate, you can now more easily make a claim for Universal Credit (UC) or new style Employment and Support Allowance. For more information on how to claim, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-style-employment-and-support-allowance>.
- **What if I am self-employed and receiving Universal Credit?** If you are self-employed and receiving Universal Credit and you have COVID-19 or are advised to self-isolate, the requirements of the Minimum Income Floor will be temporarily relaxed. This change took effect on 13 March and will last for the duration of the outbreak, to ensure that self-employed UC claimants will receive support.

If you need to claim Universal Credit but have COVID-19 or are self-isolating, you will now be able to claim and to access advance payments upfront without needing to attend a Jobcentre Plus. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit> for more information.

If you are eligible for new style Employment and Support Allowance, it will now be payable from day 1 of sickness, rather than day 8, if you have COVID-19 or are advised to self-isolate.

If you think you may need financial support from your Local Authority in England, you may be entitled to support from the £500 million Hardship Fund:

All councils have their own schemes providing support to working age council tax payers. The level of support is decided by the council, taking account of local circumstances, but will provide a reduction on council tax bills to lower income households, taking account of income and savings.

Billing authorities will also want to establish their own local approach to using any remaining grant to assist those in need, as part of wider local support mechanisms. These may include, but are not restricted to:

- council tax relief using existing discretionary discount/hardship policies
- provision of support outside of the council tax system through Local Welfare or similar schemes
- offering a higher level of council tax reduction for working-age Local Council Tax Support recipients whose annual liability exceeds £150.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties meeting your mortgage repayments because of COVID-19, you may be entitled to a mortgage or rental holiday for 3 months. This includes if you are a landlord whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19. If you are a tenant experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19, the government will ensure you do not face the threat of eviction for at least 3 months:

- The government has agreed with mortgage lenders that they will offer repayment holidays of 3 months to households in financial difficulty due to COVID-19.
- This will also apply to landlords whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19.
- The offer of a payment holiday can be made available to customers who are up to date with payments and not already in arrears.
- Customers who are concerned about their current financial situation should contact their lender at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss if this is a suitable option for them.
- Emergency legislation will be taken forward so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a 3 month period. This applies to private and social renters.
- At the end of this period, landlords and tenants will be expected to work together to establish an affordable repayment plan, taking into account tenants' individual circumstances.

If you are experiencing difficulties paying back personal loans or credit card bills as a result of COVID-19, you should read the following information:

- The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) called on lenders to use flexibility built into their rules to support consumers, taking into account customers' individual circumstances. Many major lenders have already made statements to this effect.
- If you are experiencing difficulties paying back loans or credit card bills because of COVID-19, you should talk to your lender.
- If you agree a payment holiday with your lender, they should record these in such a way that will not impact on your credit score.

INFORMATION FOR BUSINESSES

If you are a small- or medium-sized business, you may be entitled to reclaim the costs of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for sickness absence due to COVID-19:

- This refund will cover up to two weeks' SSP per eligible employee who are either ill or been told to self-isolate because of COVID-19. This is in line with the recommended isolation period. Guidance on self-isolation can be found here: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19.
- Employers with fewer than 250 employees will be eligible. The size of an employer will be determined by the number of people they employed as of 28 February 2020.
- Employers will be able to reclaim expenditure for any employee who has claimed SSP (according to the new eligibility criteria) as a result of COVID-19.
- Employers should maintain records of staff absences, but employees will not need to provide a GP fit note.
- The eligible period for the scheme began on 13 March.
- The government will work with employers over the coming months to set up the repayment mechanism for employers as soon as possible. Existing systems are not designed to facilitate employer refunds for SSP.

Some businesses, including nurseries, in England will be eligible for a Business Rates holiday for 1 year from 1 April 2020:

- If you are currently receiving the retail discount for your Business Rates bill, you will receive a revised bill with 100% relief shortly.
- If your business occupies a property in the retail sector with a rateable value of £51,000 or more, or if your business occupies a property in the leisure or hospitality sectors you may also be eligible for the 100% discount on your business rates bill.
- You will shortly hear from your Local Authority. If you have any questions, you should contact your Local Authority.
- If you are a nursery, you will be entitled to the 100% relief for the next year. You should contact your Local Authority for more information.
- Guidance for Local Authorities will be published by MHCLG by 20 March.

If your business is eligible for small business rate relief or rural rate relief in England, you are entitled to a one-off cash grant of £10,000:

- If your business is in the retail, hospitality or leisure sector in England, then you may also be entitled to a cash grant. If you have a property with a rateable value of less than £15,000 then you will be entitled to a grant of £10,000, whether or not you are entitled to small business rate relief or rural rate relief. If you have a property with a rateable value of between £14,999 and £51,000 then you will be entitled to a cash grant of £25,000.
- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will provide guidance for Local Authorities on how to administer these grants shortly.
- If you are an eligible business, your Local Authority will then be in touch in the coming weeks to provide details of how to claim this money.

If your small-or medium-sized business in England is facing cash flow issues as a result of COVID-19, please read the following information:

- A new temporary Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, delivered by the British Business Bank, will launch at the start of next week to support businesses to access bank lending and overdrafts.
- The government will provide lenders with a partial guarantee of 80% on each loan to give lenders further confidence in continuing to provide finance to SMEs.
- The government will not charge businesses or banks for this guarantee, and the Scheme will support loans of up to £5 million in value. The first 6 months of these loans will be interest-free, as the Government will cover these payments.
- Businesses will be able to get finance under the scheme from a large number of providers, including the main high street banks, as of next week.
- Businesses will remain responsible for repaying any facility they take out.
- For further information, please visit: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme-cbils/>.

If you are a large business facing cash flow issues as a result of COVID-19, you may want to read the following information:

- Companies commonly sell short term debt ('commercial paper') to the market. This is a quick and cost effective to raise working capital.
- The new COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility means that the Bank of England will buy short term debt from companies.
- This will support companies which are fundamentally strong, but have been affected by a short-term funding squeeze, enabling them to continue financing their short-term liabilities. It will also support corporate finance markets overall and ease the supply of credit to all firms.
- Further details can be found here in the exchange of letters between the Governor of the Bank of England and the Chancellor, found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/launch-of-covid-19-corporate-financing-facility-ccff>.

If you are self-employed or own a business and you are concerned about not being able to pay your tax bills because of COVID-19, you may be eligible for support through Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) Time to Pay service:

- If you think you or your business is eligible for support through Time to Pay, you can call the following helpline number to get practical help and advice: 0800 0159 559.
- These arrangements are agreed on a case-by-case basis and are tailored to individual circumstances and liabilities.
- For more information, please check the HMRC site here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-helpline-to-support-businesses-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19>.

If you own a pub that serves food or a restaurant in England, you will be able to operate a hot food takeaway to serve people staying at home, without going through the usual planning process:

- The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will shortly legislate to bring forward a temporary Permitted Development Right to allow for change of use from A3 (Restaurant) and A4 (Pub) to A5 (Hot Food Takeaway).
- The intention is that once the legislation has come into force a pub or restaurant will be able to notify their Local Authority that they are now operating as a takeaway without any prior approval.

If you contract your services to large- or medium-sized organisations outside of the public sector you should read the following information:

- The government announced on 17 March that the reform to the off-payroll working rules (commonly known as IR35) - that would have applied for people contracting their services to large or medium-sized organisations outside the public sector - will be delayed for one year from 6 April 2020 until 6 April 2021.
- Business and individuals do not need to take any action.

If the only barrier to your business making an insurance claim was a lack of clarity on whether the government advising people to stay away from businesses, rather than ordering businesses to shut down, was sufficient to make a claim on business interruption insurance:

- The government's medical advice of 16 March is sufficient to enable those businesses which have an insurance policy that covers both pandemics and government ordered closure to make a claim - provided all other terms and conditions in their policy are met. Businesses should check the terms and conditions of their specific policy and contact their providers if in doubt.
- However, most businesses have not purchased insurance that covers pandemic related losses. As such, any affected businesses should note the government's full package of support, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and business rates holiday.

Annex 2: Government and NHS guidance

Coronavirus homepage

- The Government has created a new landing page for all coronavirus queries, covering: businesses; health; employees; travel; workers; staying safe. The first port of call for queries on these matters is: www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Guidance on staying at home and away from others

New rules on staying at home and away from others

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the government is now (23 March 2020) introducing three new measures:

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes.
2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces.
3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public.

Every citizen must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them – including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

These measures came into effect on Monday 23 March. The Government will look again at these measures after three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

Staying at home

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons.

- **Shopping for basic necessities**, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
- **One form of exercise a day**, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
- **Any medical need**, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
- **Travelling to and from work**, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

These four reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

These measures must be followed by everyone. Separate advice is available for individuals or households who are isolating, and for the most vulnerable who need to be shielded. Where parents do not live in the same household, children under 18 can be moved between their parents' homes.

The Government has also identified a number of critical workers whose children can still go to school or their childcare provider. This critical worker definition does not affect whether or not you can travel to work - if you are not a critical worker, you may still travel to work provided you cannot work from home.

Critical workers and parents of vulnerable children may leave the house to take children to and from school or their childcare provider.

Closing non-essential shops and public spaces

To reduce social contact, the Government has ordered certain businesses and venues to close. These include:

- **pubs, cinemas and theatres.**
- **all retail stores selling non-essential goods** - this includes clothing and electronics stores; hair, beauty and nail salons; and outdoor and indoor markets, excluding food markets.
- **libraries, community centres, and youth centres.**
- **indoor and outdoor leisure facilities** such as bowling alleys, arcades and soft play facilities.
- **communal places within parks**, such as playgrounds, sports courts and outdoor gyms.
- **places of worship**, except for funerals attended by immediate families.
- **hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, campsites, caravan parks, and boarding houses for commercial/leisure use**, excluding permanent residents, key workers and those providing emergency accommodation, for example for the homeless.

Other businesses can remain open and their employees can travel to work, provided they cannot work from home.

Stopping public gatherings

To make sure people are staying at home and apart from each other, the Government is also **stopping all public gatherings of more than two people.**

There are only two exceptions to this rule:

- **where the gathering is of a group of people who live together** - this means that a parent can, for example, take their children to the shops if there is no option to leave them at home.
- **where the gathering is essential for work purposes** - but workers should be trying to minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace.

In addition, the Government is stopping social events, including weddings, baptisms and other religious ceremonies. This will exclude funerals, which can be attended by immediate family.

Going to work

As set out in the section on staying at home, people can travel to and from work, but only where the work they do absolutely cannot be done from home.

With the exception of the organisations covered above in the section on closing non-essential shops and public spaces, the Government has not required any other businesses to close – indeed it is important for business to carry on.

Employers and employees should discuss their working arrangements, and employers should take every possible step to facilitate their employees working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working.

Sometimes this will not be possible, as not everyone can work from home. Certain jobs require people to travel to their place of work – for instance if they operate machinery, work in construction or manufacturing, or are delivering front line services.

If you cannot work from home then you can still travel to work, provided you are well and neither you nor any of your household are self-isolating. This is consistent with advice from the Chief Medical Officer.

Employers who have people in their offices or onsite should ensure that employees are able to follow Public Health England guidelines including, where possible, maintaining a 2 metre distance from others, and washing their hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds (or using hand sanitiser gel if soap and water is not available).

Work carried out in people's homes, for example by tradespeople carrying out repairs and maintenance, can continue, provided that the tradesperson is well and has no symptoms. Again, it will be important to ensure that Public Health England guidelines, including maintaining a 2 metre distance from any household occupants, are followed to ensure everyone's safety.

No work should be carried out in any household which is isolating or where an individual is being shielded, unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household, such as emergency plumbing or repairs, and where the tradesperson is willing to do so. In such cases, Public Health England can provide advice to tradespeople and households.

No work should be carried out by a tradesperson who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild.

As set out in the section on closing non-essential shops and public spaces, the Government has ordered certain businesses and venues to close. The Government has set out guidance on which organisations this requirement covers. Advice for employees of these organisations on employment and financial support is available at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus).

At all times, workers should follow the guidance on self-isolation if they or anyone in their household shows symptoms.

Delivering these new measures

These measures will reduce our day to day contact with other people. They are a vital part of our efforts to reduce the rate of transmission of coronavirus.

EVERY CITIZEN IS INSTRUCTED TO COMPLY WITH THESE NEW MEASURES.

The Government will therefore be ensuring the police and other relevant authorities have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings where people do not comply.

They will initially last for the three weeks from 23 March, at which point the Government will look at them again and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

Annex 3: Useful links

Coronavirus homepage	–	www.nhs.uk/coronavirus www.gov.uk/coronavirus
Guidance for Members of Parliament	for of	https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2020/march/uk-parliament-coronavirus-update/
Guidance for staying at home		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection
Guidance for social distancing and for vulnerable people		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults
Guidance for educational settings	for	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19
Guidance for staff in the transport sector		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-staff-in-the-transport-sector/covid-19-guidance-for-staff-in-the-transport-sector
Guidance for freight transport industry		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-freight-transport
Guidance for residential care	for	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-residential-care-provision
Ethical framework for adult social care		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ethical-framework-for-adult-social-care
Guidance for supported living provision	for living	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-supported-living-provision
Guidance on home care provision		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-supported-living-provision
Guidance for households with a possible infection	for	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance
Guidance for cleaning of non-healthcare settings		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings
Guidance for hostel or day centres for people rough sleeping		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-services-for-people-experiencing-rough-sleeping
Guidance for mass gatherings		https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-mass-gatherings
Guidance for prisons and other places of detention		https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-prisons-and-other-prescribed-places-of-detention-guidance
Guidance on prison visits		https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons

Guidance of shipping and sea ports	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-shipping-and-sea-ports-guidance
Guidance for health professionals	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance
Guidance for health care professionals – Primary care	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wn-cov-guidance-for-primary-care
Guidance for health care professionals - Infection and prevention and control	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control
Guidance for health care professionals – First responders	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders
Guidance for health care professionals – Investigation and initial management of possible cases	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-initial-investigation-of-possible-cases
Guidance for health care professionals – Ambulance trusts	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-ambulance-trusts
Guidance for health care professionals – Clinical diagnostic laboratories	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-guidance-for-clinical-diagnostic-laboratories
Guidance for health care professionals – Healthcare providers with a case in their family	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-healthcare-providers-who-have-diagnosed-a-case-within-their-facility
Guidance for adult social care	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-adult-social-care-guidance-to-protect-the-most-vulnerable-against-covid-19
Guidance for employees, employers and businesses	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19
Guidance on Immigration	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-immigration-guidance-if-youre-unable-to-return-to-china-from-the-uk
Guidance for Courts and Tribunals	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation
Guidance for use of rapid tests in community pharmacies or at home	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-rapid-tests-for-use-in-community-pharmacies-or-at-home
NHS England advice for Clinicians	https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/
Guidance on hospital discharge service requirements	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-hospital-discharge-service-requirements
Guidance for UK Businesses	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses

Guidance on impact on UK seafarer services	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/min-611-mf-guidance-and-information-to-follow-in-the-event-of-covid-19-outbreak-impacting-uk-seafarer-services
Guidance for Local Government	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government
Guidance to Planning Inspectorate	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-inspectorate-guidance
Guidance on Radioactive waste management	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/radioactive-waste-management-and-covid-19
Contingency and emergency planning for Traffic Commissioners	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-commissioners-contingency-and-emergency-planning-covid-19
Guidance for Cruise ship travel	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cruise-ship-travel
Maritime and Coastguard Agency: Approach to survey and certification of vessels	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/min-612-mf-coronavirus-covid-19-mca-approach-to-survey-and-certification-of-uk-vessels
Guidance for Individuals and Businesses in Wales	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-wales
Guidance on Driving Tests	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-driving-tests-and-theory-tests
Guidance for Companies House customers, employees and suppliers	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-guidance-for-companies-house-customers-employees-and-suppliers
Failure to File Company accounts due to virus	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-if-your-company-cannot-file-accounts-with-companies-house-on-time
Healthcare for UK nationals visiting EU	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-residents-visiting-the-eueea-and-switzerland-healthcare
Healthcare for UK nationals visiting Ireland	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-uk-nationals-visiting-ireland
NHS entitlements for migrants (updated with Coronavirus)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide
Guidance on Reporting Notifiable diseases	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/notifiable-diseases-and-causative-organisms-how-to-report
Position Statement of the Groceries Code Adjudicator	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gca-position-statement-on-current-supply-arrangements
FCO Travel Advice	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus

Guidance for British people travelling and living overseas during the coronavirus pandemic	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus#when-youre-abroad
Guidance for those visiting the UK from China who cannot travel home	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-immigration-guidance-if-youre-unable-to-return-to-china-from-the-uk
Statutory Sick Pay (updated with Coronavirus)	https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay https://www.gov.uk/employers-sick-pay
ESA (updated with Coronavirus)	https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/your-esa-claim
PIP (updated with Coronavirus)	https://www.gov.uk/pip/how-to-claim
Universal Credit (updated with Coronavirus)	https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim
Support for those affected: 2020 Budget	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19
Guidance if you cannot pay your tax bill on time	https://www.gov.uk/difficulties-paying-hmrc
Guidance to Parents and Carers on School Closures	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers
Guidance on providing education and childcare for the children of key workers	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision
Guidance for schools and other educational settings	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19
Free School meals guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance
Guidance on procurement policy	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0120-responding-to-covid-19
Guidance on procurement policy (supplier relief)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0220-supplier-relief-due-to-covid-19
Relaxation of driver's hours rules for these delivering essential items	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/temporary-relaxation-of-the-enforcement-of-the-drivers-hours-rules-delivery-of-essential-items-to-consumers
Guidance on clinical trials concerning Covid-19	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/clinical-trials-applications-for-coronavirus-covid-19

Guidance on managing clinical trials	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-clinical-trials-during-coronavirus-covid-19
Guidance on Business Rates – expanded retail discount	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-retail-discount-guidance
Guidance on the Coronavirus bill – what will it do?	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-what-it-will-do
Guidance for mass gatherings	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-mass-gatherings