

COVID-19 update: 26 March 2020

It is essential communities follow the up to date guidance from government and the NHS and that they are not causing unnecessary anxiety and concerns due to misinformation being shared with them, however well meaning. Therefore, please only use the information in the briefing below and/or information and advice from Government or NHS sources.

Key messages for today:

- People can now register to the county's community help hub by calling 01452 583519 Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5pm, as well as online at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/helphub
- Please follow the national advice rearing staying at home unless its absolutely necessary to go out for reason set out in the guidance – this will help manage the spread of Covid-19 and support the NHS and care sector to cope
- If you are a business and need advice and support, please go to the Government's dedicated web pages
- Please take time to look after your mental health – make sure you are keeping your mind and body active
- Remember to keep up the good handwashing and to catch sneezes and coughs in a tissue.
- A dedicated phone line and email address has been set up to help parents with all school related enquiries, including questions relating to Free School Meals. Tel: 01452 426015. Email COVIDSchoolenquiries@gloucestershire.gov.uk

The position in Gloucestershire

- The Strategic Coordination Group (SCG), chaired by Sarah Scott, Director of Public Health at the county council is the multi-agency group consisting of partners from across the county who is leading Gloucestershire's response to Covid-19. The group is currently meeting weekly. It is supported by a "Tactical Coordination Group" (TCG) that is responsible for delivering the actions from the SCG.
- Public Health England (PHE) has formally confirmed:
- 57 cases in the county
- 1 death in the county
- 397 confirmed cases in the South West

UK

Total UK Tests: 90,436

Total UK Cases: 8,077

Total UK Deaths: 442

PHE is now prioritising testing for Covid-19 for those who require hospital care for pneumonia or acute respiratory illness. Wider community testing is no longer happening as a

matter of course but PHE will continue to investigate if there are specific outbreaks, i.e. where several cases are connected, especially in a particular setting such as care homes.

Local updates

- As of this morning Thursday 26 March, 1465 individuals and 119 businesses have made offers of help through the online hub, 348 registered for help and 122 said a neighbour needs support. For those unable to use the online forms we now have a phone line available, 01452 583519. The lines are open Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5pm. Yesterday, we answered 92 calls
- Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) releasing a campaign to raise awareness of scammers exploiting the crisis. More information is available under the 'more information' section on the [community hub](#).
- The NHS has announced some temporary changes to Gloucestershire's Minor Injury and Illness Units (MIUs) in order to strengthen staffing at a smaller number of sites. The inpatient hospital services will be unaffected at this time and kept under review:
 - From today (Thursday 26 March) temporary closures include: The Vale, near Dursley (nearest alternative, Stroud) and The Dilke, near Cinderford (nearest alternative, Lydney)
 - The following MIU will close temporarily from Sunday evening (March 29): Tewksbury (nearest alternatives North Cotswolds, Stroud or Lydney)
 - The following MIUs will be open from 8am until 6pm, seven days a week, from Monday 30 March until further notice: Lydney, Stroud, Cirencester, North Cotswolds, in Moreton-in-Marsh
- NHS has launched local community hubs in health centres and surgeries to support people who need face-to-face support or who have symptoms of Covid-19 in their communities. This aims to relieve the pressure on hospitals and protect NHS staff
- NHS 'Stay home, save lives' campaign launched to encourage people to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives. The campaign materials are now available to download on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#). NHS is also aiming to provide some materials in accessible formats, plus translated versions of the posters and selected social assets in the following languages: Polish, Russian, Welsh, Punjab, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Romanian and Roma (for the Roma travelling community)

Education

- A series of Frequently Asked Questions have been published and a dedicated phone line and email address set up to help parents with all school related enquiries, including questions relating to Free School Meals. Tel: 01452 426015. Email COVIDSchoolenquiries@gloucestershire.gov.uk
- At the current time almost everyone who needs a child care place, has one. Work is ongoing to ensure sufficient places remain although this will become an increasing challenge

- Further guidance has been issued to schools to assist them in the provision and delivery of Free School Meals to eligible children
- More support and guidance is being prepared on deep cleaning as more schools are requesting it as suspected and confirmed cases are reported in schools
- Advice for Parents, Key Workers and Early Years Providers is available on the GCC website Community Hub page <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub/schools-and-key-workers/>
- The requirement for cover over the Easter holiday break and Bank Holiday dates is still being considered in consultation with the Department for Education and further information will follow
- Gloucestershire County Council will pay 90 per cent of schools contracts, including for providers of school transport whilst schools are closed

Latest national guidance

- [PM statement 25.03.20](#) covered new NHS 'army' of volunteers. 405,000 people signed up in 24 hours. They will be: driving medicines from pharmacies to patients; bringing patients home from hospital; making regular phone calls to check on and support people who are staying on their own at home
- [Guidance on vulnerable children and young people](#) - Updated guidance to include additional information on children with education health and care (EHC) plans and children in alternative provision (AP) settings
- [Government to provide free car parking for NHS and social care staff](#)
- [guidance for food businesses](#)
- [Letter regarding the exemption for hotels, hostels and B&Bs to open so they can offer accommodation to key workers and support rough sleepers to keep them off the streets and in suitable accommodation.](#)
- [Updated advice for educational settings, and their students and staff, who are travelling or planning to travel](#)
- [Guidance on the operation of expanded retail discount 2020 to 2021](#), announced at Budget 2020
- [Updated guidance for local government](#) - Added links to: COVID-19 advice for accommodation providers COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable
- [Government launches Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp](#)

- [Temporary changes to the use and supply of denatured alcohol and duty-free spirits, to help businesses who produce hand sanitiser and gel.](#)

Previous Government guidance:

- [Stay at home guidance](#) for households
- [Guidance on shielding and protecting people](#)
- [Social distancing](#) now in multiple languages
- [employers and businesses](#)
- [Mass gatherings](#)
- [residential care provision, supported living provision and home care provision](#)
- [local government](#) including new [public procurement guidance](#)
- [Guidance for businesses and venues subject to closure](#)
- [Guidance on rail emergency measures](#)
- [Guidance on courts and tribunals](#)
- [Guidance to avoid non-essential domestic travel](#)
- All of the above information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- The Department for Education has set up a [helpline](#) offering guidance for anyone with education related questions
- General NHS advice can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

The NHS in Gloucestershire is taking responsible steps to plan ahead and respond to the unfolding Covid-19 situation. Here is a link to the latest information from the NHS on service advice and developments: [NHS update](#)

This will be updated daily, Monday to Friday