

While we continue to look after our most vulnerable residents, with COVID 19 restrictions starting to be relaxed the emphasis of the work being carried out is moving to promote recovery and to do everything possible to get the local economy working again.



We will be writing to every business in our districts to make them aware of our plans and the help we can offer working with our Town and Parish Councils.

Do Business with Confidence

We wanted to update you on what is happening with our "Confidence" campaign to drive forward with the economic recovery within our district.

Working together, South Norfolk, Broadland and Breckland councils have developed a wide-ranging plan to ensure our economy recovers from the impact of Covid as quickly as possible. At the heart of this, in the first instance, is supporting local businesses of all types and helping them sustain jobs within our communities.

The brand for the campaign is "Confidence" as that is what is key to driving our economy in the coming months. Businesses having the confidence to trade and shoppers having the confidence to spend their money locally rather than online.

In the coming week we will be writing to businesses outlining our overall package of work which includes:

- Advice and support for every business that wants it.
- Helping shops and the hospitality sector re-open in a clean, safe and vibrant environment.
- Regulatory support and advice regarding social distancing and other Covid19 related issues.
- Financial support including the discretionary business support grant.

Even as our plans have been in development, we have wasted no time in talking to our communities and acting on what they have said. One example of our early work includes the offer of proactive support for businesses in Acle. Members of the Economic Growth team have contacted the respective businesses and asked what we can do to help them through this crisis. As a result of these discussions we will hopefully enable officers to secure improvements to the entrance and visibility of the industrial estate at Damgate Lane. Officers will also explore the possibility of new signage which can hopefully be funded via the Council's business grants.

In our market towns, like Harleston, we are looking to introduce; car parking assistance to facilitate social distancing, street marshals to assist with new pedestrian routes, way marking and on street signage, directions arrows and markings on pavements and hand sanitiser units to help create a clean, safe and vibrant environment.

Just a few examples of the bespoke support the team can offer businesses who want help at this time, and we will be liaising with countless others over the coming days, weeks and months. Please tell us about any business you know in your area who we could help in a similar way.

On Monday next week our "Shop with Confidence" campaign, launches. This is all about giving people the confidence to leave their homes and once again go about their normal business in our shops right across the district, including our market towns.

In the past couple of weeks we have been working with our county and town council partners across the respective Districts to look at widening pavements, introducing measures to facilitate social distancing and, in some instances, closing certain streets to ensure a clean, safe and vibrant shopping experience.

I know many of you are already working with our teams to support businesses in your areas. The support being offered takes on many different forms and as more information becomes available please continue to pass this to your local community.

Business grants

We are continuing to support our local businesses and have already paid out more than £50 million in grants. Our discretionary grant scheme will be opening next week, hopefully allowing us to help businesses that did not qualify for the previous grants.

Mandatory Business Rate Grants	BDC		SNC	
	Value	No of Grant Payments	Value	No of Grant Payments
Total Processed				
Small Business Rate Relief £10k Grants	16,750,000	1,675	19,480,000	1,948
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure £10k Grants	2,360,000	236	2,850,000	285
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure £25k Grants	4,275,000	171	5,225,000	209
	23,385,000	2,082	27,555,000	2,442

Estimate of Total Potential Claims (this number changes as properties are identified as eligible)				
Small Business Rate Relief £10k Grants	18,190,000	1,819	22,180,000	2,218
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure £10k Grants	2,360,000	236	2,940,000	294
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure £25k Grants	4,325,000	173	5,250,000	210
	24,875,000	2,228	30,370,000	2,722

Number Unpaid				
Small Business Rate Relief £10k Grants		144		270
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure £10k Grants		0		9

Retail, Hospitality and Leisure £25k Grants		2		1
		146		280

Percentage Paid				
Small Business Rate Relief £10k Grants	92%	92%	88%	88%
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure £10k Grants	100%	100%	97%	97%
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure £25k Grants	99%	99%	100%	100%
	94%	93%	91%	90%

Grant Paid on Account	26,242,000	30,838,000
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Supporting our residents

The chart below gives a breakdown of the cases that we have responded to through the Hub by our own staff and the local networks of community volunteers.

Headline Figures:

In the period 23rd March to 24th May the Hub has co-ordinated the following:

2,652 Prescription collections and deliveries

1,161 Residents' shopping undertaken and delivered

403 Families in immediate food poverty provided with food

173 people have called with complex needs. These often involve debt, immediate risk of homelessness, domestic abuse, common mental health problems and other vulnerabilities. These cases are sent to our Community Connector Team who explore the issues with the resident and arrange links to the relevant specialist Hub partners.

'Other' cases shown in the chart above include situations as diverse as a resident with Covid 19 who had run out of paracetamol and lived alone (paracetamol delivered inside two hours) and a family in lockdown struggling on a low budget to occupy their children (a wide selection of books, craft materials and activity packs delivered that day).

Hardship:

The issue of food poverty is enduring. The chart below shows the number of families provided with food just by our own Hub. A further 147 were provided for by delivery through the food banks.

In the previous week there had been in excess of 600 calls to the Hardship helpline administered by our Benefits Team. There is a clear need in terms of the gap between families losing their earned incomes and establishing payment through universal credit. There is another cohort of need in those that are furloughed on low incomes, having taken a 20% reduction in income.

It is anticipated that we will see a further spike in need in July/August as a revision in the furlough regulations may well result in increased unemployment.

Volume of Calls into the Hub:

The last three weeks has seen a plateau in contacts with the Hub. This plateau however still represents an increase of 150% in contacts when compared with 'business as usual' The nature of the contacts remains representative of a high degree of immediate need.

Virtual meetings

Our next Planning / DMC meetings will be live streamed and will include public speaking. The dates for the meetings are:

SNC - 1st, 16th and 29th July

New LGA workbook

The LGA has produced a new workbook that contains transferable learning that has been acquired from the experience of living through the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as new skills and ways of working which will resonate with whatever 'new normal' the country and local government finds itself in.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-leadership-workbook-cabinet-members>

From Monday 1st June

- 1) Nurseries and other early years settings and reception, year one and year six in primary schools will reopen in a safe way;
- 2) Outdoor retail and car showrooms, where social distancing is generally easier, will reopen; and
- 3) Up to six people will be able to meet outside (in parks, gardens and other private outdoor space) - provided those from different households continue strictly to observe social distancing rules by staying two metres apart.

Please note that those who have been asked to shield themselves should continue to do so.

From Monday 15th June

- 1) Secondary schools will begin to provide some face-to-face contact time for years 10 and 12; and
- 2) The government intends to reopen other non-essential retail - but only provided the five tests are still being met and shops have been made Covid secure.

Further social distancing guidance will follow in the coming days - please visit the Coronavirus FAQs page for updates: <https://bit.ly/CV19FAQs>

Supporting our communities

Although the initial peak has passed the team in the Help Hub is still responding to many more calls than would be normal for this time of the year.

Most calls are still for help with deliveries of prescriptions, but the number of genuine hardship and domestic abuse cases is increasing. We are also expecting an increase in debt issues as some people move into their fourth month without pay.

Supporting businesses

On Monday non-essential retail will again be able to open across our districts.

Our teams have been working closely with town councils, traders and business groups to ensure our market towns and other retail areas are ready for this and footfall returns to normal as quickly as possible.

With a focus on keeping people safe, the aim has been to create vibrant, attractive shopping areas where people can shop safely, and traders can confidently do business.

Plans for each town are attached.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible out and about in our market towns on Monday supporting our shops and the "Shop with Confidence" campaign.

To bring all this fruition in such a short timeframe is quite an achievement. It is, however, only one part of our Do Business with Confidence campaign, through which we aim to support every business and every job possible.

Businesses have been written to and our dedicated helplines are already taking calls.

Support we are able to offer includes:

- Dedicated advice and support for every business that wants it.
- Regulatory support and advice regarding social distancing and other Covid19 related issues.
- Financial support including the discretionary business support grant.
- Helping shops and the hospitality sector re-open in a clean, safe and vibrant environment.

With shops reopen our focus will increasingly turn to ensuring every sector of our economy receives the support it needs to thrive as restrictions are lifted.

Please continue to flag this support to businesses in your communities.

More financial support available for businesses and charities

The Local Discretionary Grant scheme will see businesses and charities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic receive a share of £1.22 million of central government money.

The scheme is aimed at small businesses and charities who were unable to apply for previous coronavirus business support grants.

Many small businesses, micro businesses and charities who are able to demonstrate they have suffered a severe loss of income due to the Covid-19 crisis will be able to apply for the grants through our Councils' websites, provided they meet criteria set by the Government and the Councils.

Businesses and charities able to apply for the grant include:

- Businesses with fixed property-related costs
- Those who have suffered a major loss in income
- Regular market traders with fixed building costs

- Businesses who use shared office or work spaces (such as serviced offices)
- Bed and breakfasts who pay Council Tax instead of business rates
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief
- Business sectors that are important to the local economy

Businesses who have previously received cash grants as support during the Covid-19 crisis will not be eligible to apply.

So far we have been contacted by 147 businesses, 78 from Broadland and 69 from south Norfolk

PM's statement at coronavirus press conference (10th June)

As per the PM's statement on Wednesday evening, the government is satisfied that all five tests are still being met and we can proceed with the following further adjustments to the lockdown in England.

As confirmed by the Business Secretary earlier this week, shops in England selling non-essential goods will be able to reopen from Monday 15 June. It is vital that establishments ensure they are meeting Covid Secure guidelines before they reopen. Full details of workplace guidance can be found here: <https://bit.ly/CV19WorkingSafely>.

From this weekend, single adult households - adults living alone or single parents with children under 18 - are allowed to form a "support bubble" with one other household. All those in a support bubble will be able to act as if they live in the same household - meaning they can spend time together inside each others' homes and do not need to stay 2 metres apart. If any member of the support bubble develops symptoms, all members of the bubble will need to follow the normal advice on household isolation.

Because the risk of transmission is lower outdoors; from Monday, outdoor attractions where people can stay in their cars, such as safari parks and drive-in cinemas will be allowed to open.

Finally, places of worship will open for individual prayer this weekend.

As set out in the government's roadmap, the next set of changes - Step 3 - will not begin until 4 July at the earliest, as the evidence allows.

Coronavirus FAQ on what the public can and can't do

The FAQ document on what the public can and can't do during the coronavirus outbreak has been updated to reflect the latest announcements.

FAQ document: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

Coronavirus Impact Business Survey

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has published the survey data on how DCMS Sectors are responding to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Survey data: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-coronavirus-impact-business-survey>

£300 million funding allocation

In a written statement the Health Secretary confirmed how the £300 million of funding to support test and trace services will be allocated to councils across England.

The funding will help local communities develop and implement plans to reduce the spread of coronavirus in their area and has been allocated to councils based on need.

This includes additional funding for communities with lower incomes and higher demand for local healthcare settings.

Data on the spread of the virus will be shared with councils through the Joint Biosecurity Centre to inform local outbreak planning, so teams understand how the virus is moving.

A new National Local Government Advisory Board has been established to work with NHS Test and Trace. This will include sharing best practice between communities across the country.

Work to share lessons learned is being led by a group of 11 councils from across the UK, representing rural and urban areas, who have volunteered to help localise planning.

Allocations: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2020-06-10/HCWS281/>

Be wary of recent increases in scam emails being sent to local authorities.

During the recent Covid-19 situation, there has been a marked increase in the number of scam emails being sent to individuals and organisations across the UK. It is important that we are vigilant against these sorts of emails, so please bear the advice below in mind when reading emails from unknown senders. Scammers will often send emails to well-known organisations and or companies but will also use individual's details that are openly available on the Internet.

To stay safe, people should:

Pay attention to the name and email address: does it look unusual or strange?

Look at the spelling, grammar and tone of the email: This can often give away that the email is not from a genuine sender.

Be very wary of requests for action: Never click on links or open attachments in unexpected emails. Also never agree to make purchases or to send/transfer money if approached in this way.

Is the sender of the email trying to rush you to doing something? Stop and take 5 minutes to consider this - scammers will attempt to make the issue sound extremely urgent hoping that the recipient will respond before checking it out. A genuine sender won't mind waiting to give you time to stop and think.

Contact the sender by another method: If the email looks like it comes from someone you know, give them a call or send them a text to check out the claims in the email. If it comes from an organisation or company, contact them through their customer service number or a related app from the organisation or company if possible - never use the details given in the email as they could also be fake.