

Jeremy Hunt's Daily Coronavirus Update 1 June 2020

Welcome to my twice weekly South West Surrey COVID-19 response email. As of today, we have a total of 274,762 positive cases of COVID-19 with sadly 38,489 confirmed deaths in the UK. There are 2,924 confirmed cases in Surrey and **303 confirmed cases in Waverley**. All figures were accurate as of 11am this morning.

As of today, groups of six or more may meet in private gardens and public places. Two-metre social distancing should be followed at all times. To find out what you can and cannot do, please follow these [FAQ's](#).

Happy Monday to everyone as schools start to go back (for certain year groups) and social distancing regulations begin to be relaxed. This is going to be a nail-biting time for the government as there is clearly no scientific consensus as to whether the timing is right (Public Health Directors added their voice to concerns this morning) and there appear to be some teething problems with the new track and trace system. But the government now has the capacity to do 200,000 tests a day which is important not just for track and trace but because it starts to make possible weekly testing of NHS and care home staff. The two things that matter most now are to improve the speed of testing turnaround to 24 hours (promised to me by the PM last week) and high levels of compliance with the quarantining requirements of track and trace e.g. that people who have been near someone with corona do actually self-isolate for 14 days.

Dentists I know from my inbox how much of a relief the announcement about dentists opening will be to many - not least dentists themselves who have been struggling financially without the easy access to the furlough scheme available to others because they also do NHS work. NHS England has now written to all practices last week detailing how to resume services from the 8th of June. Clinics will have to adhere to strict measures involving the highest PPE and social distancing practices to qualify for reopening. Remember you can get emergency dental work right away from the NHS if you have a horrible toothache.

Socially Shielding. Also good news for the 2.2 million people who have been socially shielding for the past 12 weeks who will [now be able to go outside](#) accompanied by a carer/relative if necessary. Those living alone can meet with someone from another household while maintaining social distancing. This will come as a huge relief to people who - unlike many of us - have not been able to enjoy walking/running/cycling in the beautiful Surrey countryside in the last 12 weeks.

SAGE Paperwork. The scientific advisory group for emergencies (SAGE) published a raft

of documents on Saturday including the minutes of meetings that were held early on during the pandemic response. What comes through in these papers is the way advice changed as our information about the pandemic changed. Track and trace was not properly discussed until the end of April which was surely a big oversight - but a thoughtful article by Sir Patrick Vallance in yesterday's [Telegraph](#) explains the uncertainties involved in making scientific recommendations. The Guardian has good write up and breakdown of the vital advice and the key dates [here](#).

For the most up to date details on what you can and cannot do please read these [FAQ's](#)

The key number to remember is 0300 200 1008 the Surrey Helpline run by Surrey County Council (Mon-Fri 8 am to 6 pm & Sat-Sun 10am to 2pm) - please call if you are struggling with getting the shopping, social isolation or know someone vulnerable who is.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN WESTMINSTER

The House Returns. The Commons is scheduled to sit this afternoon for the first time in a week and there is a big argument about how we are actually going to vote because remote voting - for now - has been stopped. Given it worked before (and there are lots of MPs in the 'shielding category') I have quite a lot of sympathy for asking MPs to turn up in the chamber to speak or ask questions - sitting well apart - but allowing remote voting. You can stay up to date with what's going on in the house [here](#).

Emergency Budget. The Chancellor is planning an emergency budget to be held sometime in the week beginning the 6th July. If all goes to plan fighting the virus our next big focus will be the economy and avoiding a tsunami of unemployment as the furloughing scheme is gradually withdrawn. It is expected to have three key elements: funds to retrain workers laid off when the furlough scheme ends; enormous extra infrastructure spending; and a plan to help British-based technology firms.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN SOUTH WEST SURREY

Community recycling centres back to normal Today you can take most non-commercial recycling back to the community recycling centres and not just black bags as it has been to date. Your local MP is plotting his upcoming trip to get rid of three months of Amazon packaging. Details on the Surrey website [here](#).

NHS Seacole. The NHS Seacole Centre at Headley Court has begun taking its first patients and was visited yesterday by NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens. The centre is the first of its kind in England and will be used as a temporary service for local patients who are recovering from Covid-19 and who no longer need care in an acute hospital, or those who have the virus and can no longer cope with their symptoms at home.

National Volunteering week. This week is national volunteering week and it's never been more important to say thank you to our amazing community volunteers. They have been essential in supporting the local community during this challenging period. To find out how to pay tribute to our local heroes visit the NCVO [website](#).

I have been compiling a list of local groups working to support vulnerable residents. You can view them on this [link](#).

THE ECONOMY AND JOBS

The Furlough Scheme. At Friday's Downing Street briefing the Chancellor laid out what changes he's making to the [extended furlough scheme](#). For June and July, the programme will continue as it previously has been with the government paying 80% of wages (up to £2,500) and the employer not paying any of the cost. From the 1st June though employees will be able to bring back furloughed staff part-time and in this case the business must pay for any hours the employee works. In August companies will be asked to pay National Insurance and private pension contributions. In September companies will be asked to pay 10% of the furlough wage and then 20% in October after which the scheme will then close. This is actually the most generous employee support scheme in the world and will hopefully mean we avoid mass unemployment. It will be interesting to compare what happens here to the US where they have not had a similar scheme.

Self Employed Support. Also on Friday the Chancellor announced that he would be [extending the self-employed income support scheme](#) through to the end of October. A lump-sum payment will be made to anyone who applies to the scheme. To keep parity between this and the furlough scheme, those eligible will receive 70% of their average earnings - down from the 80% which has currently been made available.

WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON

National Trust. In line with guidance the National Trust has started a gradual reopening of its gardens, outdoor estates and countryside car parks. To enable social distancing visitors

must pre-book a timeslot via the Trust's website – a list of properties currently open is available [here](#), with new sites added each Friday. Winkworth Arboretum not on the list yet I'm afraid.

And finally, my sincere thanks must go to those fire fighters currently working hard to overcome the fire on Thursley Common.'

Any opinion expressed in this Email is not necessarily that of the Party and may be personal to the sender.

Promoted by Sean Donovan-Smith on behalf of Jeremy Hunt MP and South West Surrey Conservatives, all at 2 Royal Parade, Tilford Road, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6TD.