

Update from the Mayor of London on COVID 19 - 7 April

- The Mayor is leading a co-ordinated city-wide response to coronavirus, working alongside the Government, the NHS, Public Health England, local councils and other public agencies through the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).
- Sadiq continues to call on all Londoners to follow the instructions to stay at home, unless absolutely necessary, in order to protect the NHS and to save lives. This is particularly important as we approach the bank holiday weekend and predicted warm weather.
- The latest Government modelling suggests that London's NHS hospitals should remain within their surge capacity limits, but the planning for the worst-case scenario continues. The first patients will arrive at Nightingale Hospital at the ExCel Centre today.
- Sadiq is working with local authorities and the Metropolitan Police to keep parks and public spaces in London open for permissible daily exercise if at all possible. However, this will only be possible if Londoners follow the rules, as a small majority clearly did not last weekend. Urgent work is underway to see what additional enforcement can be provided to allow parks to stay open, and Sadiq is urging the Government to provide more clarity to the public on exactly what is and isn't allowed under the rules.
- On Monday, the number of people using the Tube and rail services was down 94 percent compared to the same period last year. Bus travel was down 80 per cent. TfL is running the maximum amount of tube and bus services currently possible – as around a quarter of London Underground staff are currently either sick or self-isolating.
- Tragically a number of London transport workers have already lost their lives as a result of Covid-19 – including a number London bus workers. Sadiq has been clear that transport workers are critical workers – making a heroic effort to support the NHS to save lives. Transport for London is urgently putting in place additional safety measures on the bus network, including an enhanced cleaning regime and an additional protective film over drivers' cabs.
- Earlier in the week, the SCG announced that new Pandemic Multiagency Response Teams (PMART) have been established to handle Covid-19 deaths that happen outside of hospitals - with the aim of reducing pressure on the London Ambulance Service. Each team will involve health services staff to confirm death, police officers to investigate the death and fire service staff who will do the driving. They will be provided with full protective equipment.
- The Mayor continues to put pressure on the Government to ensure all the necessary measures are being put in place to support workers, businesses and families through this crisis. Last week, this included: urging the Prime Minister and the Chancellor to provide more support for the voluntary sector

and charities; putting pressure on the Government to ensure our brave frontline workers have the protection they need to carry out their jobs safely; and writing to the Home Secretary about the potential rise domestic violence while the lockdown measures are in place.

- Sadiq remains in regular contact with key London stakeholders, including business leaders, trade unions, the voluntary sector, faith groups and others, to develop our understanding of what additional support Londoners need through this crisis.

Topical issues

Bus workers lost to Coronavirus

Responding to the news on Saturday 4 April that five London bus workers have lost their lives after testing positive for Coronavirus, the Mayor said:

“I’m absolutely devastated to hear that five London bus workers have lost their lives after testing positive for Coronavirus. My thoughts are with their friends and families at this awful time.

I have been clear that our incredible public transport staff – on the buses, tubes, trams and trains – are critical workers, making a heroic effort to allow our NHS staff to save more lives.”

London Together Last week, Sadiq launched #LondonTogether - a campaign that’s not only about highlighting the positive and inspiring ways Londoners are supporting each other, but a way to help thank our health and care staff, emergency services, key workers and volunteers for everything they are doing. Launching the campaign, he said:

“We are in the grip of a major public health crisis, with all Londoners forced to make substantial changes to their day-to-day lives to help support the NHS and save others.

“But one aspect of life that never changes is the remarkable way Londoners pull together in a time of crisis. From city-wide applause for carers and the NHS, to those delivering food parcels to neighbours, to the millions saving lives by staying home, Londoners are showing why this city is the best in the world.

“When times are rough we see the very best of our city, and these extraordinary acts of charity and empathy show that our sense of community is not confined by walls.

“These acts of kindness can make a big difference, and if we stay home, look after one another and follow the advice of the experts, we will beat this virus in London, together.” **You can read Sadiq’s full article in The Independent [here](#).**

Repatriation

Following the Government's announcement last week of a new partnership with British airlines to repatriate people who are currently stranded overseas, Sadiq wrote to the Foreign Secretary to urge him to confirm the details of flights as quickly as possible.

He raised the issue of Assembly Member Navin Shah, who has been stranded in India. In the letter, Sadiq also called for urgent confirmation that EU citizens living and working in the UK (regardless of whether they have applied for settled status), as well as non-EU residents with proof of residence, will be able to benefit from the Government's repatriation scheme.

Own language resources

The GLA has collated the most helpful links to own language resources related to COVID-19 from the Government, the WHO and Doctors of the World. The resources have been translated into languages including Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Urdu and Welsh. The page can be [found here](#).

Londoners can find contact details of translation services in their local area by entering their postcode into the [advice and support section of the EU Londoners Hub](#).

City Hall Action

Health

Our most immediate priority is to buy our heroic NHS the time it needs to save as many lives as possible. The biggest threat to life will come if our hospitals become overwhelmed – as we have seen with tragic consequences in Italy and Spain – with too few beds and not enough equipment to treat severely ill patients.

That's why Mayor is using every opportunity to urge Londoners to follow the rules, which means staying at home apart from the very few exceptions the Government has outlined.

Hospitals across London are working together to organise critical care for patients with COVID-19. They are getting extremely busy, but based on the Government's current projections, and if people continue to follow the rules, the NHS believes they should be able to remain within their capacity limits in London.

Last week, Sadiq went on a virtual tour of the new NHS Nightingale, which will initially provide up to 500 beds equipped with ventilators and oxygen. It could eventually be expanded to 4,000 beds – the equivalent of eight district general hospitals.

You can read Sadiq's article about his virtual tour of NHS Nightingale on the Metro here: [I went on a virtual tour of NHS Nightingale and saw the true scale of the fight ahead](#)

PPE and Testing

The Government still needs to do much more to increase testing for our key workers and to ensure staff have the necessary equipment to do their jobs safely. Sadiq wrote to the Health Secretary last week, calling on the Government to ensure that all relevant key workers are prioritised for testing. And while he welcomed the Government's action to get additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to frontline workers, he raised concerns about the right PPE still not reaching key workers quickly enough.

Transport

The majority of Londoners are listening to the latest rules. This has resulted in the number of people using the Tube and rail services in London plummeting by well over 90 per cent compared to the same time last year.

This is essential to ensuring that vital workers in the NHS and other critical services can get to work safely. Sadiq has been clear – only key workers should be using public transport and everyone else should be doing the right thing by abiding by the rules.

With a significant proportion of frontline Tube staff now off work, including those sick or self-isolating, TfL isn't currently planning to run any more services. TfL staff are working incredibly hard to provide safe transport for critical workers and those making non-essential journeys are putting themselves and others at risk.

TfL is working to get a clear message across to customers who are still traveling when it's not absolutely essential. This includes:

- Translating key messages into 16 other languages for posters
- Working with boroughs to communicate targeted messages, such as local foreign language radio stations.
- Putting new posters up at approximately 30 'hotspot' stations discouraging all but essential travel and asking essential workers to avoid peak times.
- Installing a new queueing system in five of London's busiest stations, with British Transport Police (BTP) support.
- Installing signage to show customers where to stand to maintain social distancing at 10 of the busiest stations, with the intention to roll out more.
- Monitoring crowding at London Underground stations served by shuttle services and running additional through trains where possible (at North Acton to date).
- Ensuring BTP are present at key stations to help remind customers of the Government's rules.

Parking charges - Car parking charges on TfL estate for NHS and healthcare workers are not being enforced.

Construction workers - Working with utility companies, telecoms providers and the broader construction sector, City Hall is aiming to minimise construction work across

London and to stagger site start times to help reduce the number of people using public transport in London.

Support for Nightingale Hospital – TfL is running a dedicated shuttle bus service for staff travelling to and from the new NHS Nightingale hospital. They are working closely with NHS Nightingale to ensure appropriate transport provision is in place to ensure an excellent public transport service to the site as more patients are transferred there over coming weeks.

The Met Police & LFB

Social distancing – The Mayor is working with the Metropolitan Police Commissioner on how the Government's rules are enforced. The Met Police is taking a common-sense approach by firstly engaging Londoners to explain the latest instructions and only using the new powers available as a last resort. But he has been clear – the Met will use the new powers if absolutely necessary, as the purpose is to help save lives.

The Deputy Mayor for Policing, Sophie Linden, has issued a statement to remind Londoners of the Government's rules regarding social distancing in public spaces, which will only stay open if the rules are followed. The full video can be [watched here](#).

Domestic Violence – The Mayor wrote to the Home Secretary last week to raise concerns about a potential rise in domestic violence during this crisis. There have already been reports from police forces and charities around the country that they are experiencing an increase in calls relating to domestic abuse.

Sadiq called on the Government to take urgent action to ensure everything possible is being done to provide help to victims and to the staff providing crisis support. He has welcomed the Home Secretary's comments that the victims of domestic abuse will not be forgotten, but he has highlighted several measures that could be taken to deliver on that promise, including: a co-ordinated response to ensure all services related to violence against women and girls receive sufficient support; cross-government communications aimed at victims and perpetrators; and the urgent convening of a national working group to introduce extra support for victims.

In London, the Mayor has invested a record £59m to help tackle violence against women and girls. But we also need more help from the Government to ensure vital services have the capacity and resources to deal with any rise in cases over the coming weeks.

London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service partnership – the London Ambulance Service and the London Fire Brigade have announced a new partnership to boost the COVID-19 emergency response, which will see firefighters helping with a number of roles across the ambulance service.

Support for rough sleepers and housing tenants/owners

Last night (Monday 6), 897 rough sleepers were safely accommodated in hotels, to enable them to follow Public Health and other Government guidance regarding self-isolation. Along with rough sleepers accommodated in self-contained units as part of our overall service offer, 950 rough sleepers were accommodated on Monday evening.

Sadiq welcomes that the Government has announced a three-month mortgage repayment holiday, a ban on evictions and rent flexibility, but wrote to the Government requesting they ensure that:

- mortgage holidays are passed on to tenants;
- the welfare benefits system is set up to cover, in full, the rents of private tenants unable to pay then due to COVID-19;
- the Bedroom Tax is suspended; and
- the Mayor is given flexibility in allocated funding from the Affordable Homes Programme in order to best support the sector at this time.

Business & employment

Sadiq continues to speak with business leaders – both large and small - to hear their concerns and what needs to be put in place to protect employers and workers.

Pay it Forward - The GLA is working on a “Pay it Forward” Crowdfunder campaign to assist SMEs with cashflow issues that should go live within two weeks.

SME support – A meeting of the Local Enterprise Partnership for London (LEAP) was held last week to discuss options for immediate additional support for London’s business. The LEAP agreed that the Mayor’s team should progress work to repurpose £1m of Growth Hub and LEAP Core Funds to provide additional support and advice capacity to SMEs.

Business Impacts subgroup of the Strategic Coordination Group – The Mayor continues to receive information and briefings through the Business Impacts subgroup of the Strategic Coordination Group that has been set up with representatives from across industry including CBI, FSB, LCCI, TechUK, TUC, the Creative Industries Federation amongst others.

Growth Hub Website - The COVID-19 page on the Growth Hub website is being frequently updated with more FAQs and more information. There are now over 10 factsheets and guides on the Hub for businesses and London Growth Hub advisors have held over 290 interactions to date with businesses where COVID-19 and related support schemes were discussed. You can access the Hub [here](#).

Rent relief for residents of ArchCo - Following Sadiq’s letter to the Managing Director of ArchCo, the UK’s largest SME landlord, calling on them to match TfL’s offer to commercial tenants, they have announced that they will be offering three months’ rent relief to SME tenants affected by COVID-19.

Self-employment - We are concerned that many of the 800,000+ Londoners in self employment will not be eligible for support under the scheme announced by the Government, including over 100,000 who have become self-employed in the last year, as well as directors of small companies paid by dividend. The Mayor is making the case to government for expansion of the scheme to ensure all those who need support are covered.

Ongoing work to support London's businesses includes:

- Identifying sector-specific issues where London Growth Hub support could be utilised through direct delivery or funding to partners to increase existing support capacity.
- Repurposing available GLA funds to provide emergency grant or loan funding to London's small businesses and sole traders.

Support for vulnerable Londoners

Food poverty - Sadiq has made an appeal to Londoners to help support those at risk of food poverty in the capital, backing the Evening Standard's *Food For London Now* campaign.

Many food banks have been forced to close because of a shortage of food, money and volunteers. More than 400,000 children and 1.5 million adults in London lived in food insecurity before this crisis, and many relied on food banks every day. Sadly, these numbers will only increase as a result of coronavirus.

You can read Sadiq's piece about food poverty in the Evening Standard here: [Food For London Now: Let's support Londoners at risk of food poverty, says Sadiq Khan.](#)

Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector and Charities

Last week Sadiq wrote to the Chancellor to renew his calls for emergency funding to help charities. The issue was also raised directly on a call with Number 10.

He warned that London's charities "are becoming more stretched each day" as they respond to the coronavirus crisis, with the NCVO reporting that the sector could lose £4.3bn of income in the coming 12 weeks.

To help address the shortfall, Sadiq has launched a new emergency support fund, which now stands at over £8m, to keep organisations affected by the crisis afloat.

Sadiq welcomes the inclusion of charities and other civil society organisations in the Government's measures to protect salaries and to prevent redundancies, but he is clear that more must be done to ensure the charitable sector has access to the same amount of financial support as the business sector. He has added his voice to the over 300 MPs and peers, of all parties, who are asking the Government to protect the charity sector's ability to operate during this difficult period.

You can read the full letter [here](#).

Volunteer support - The Mayor has provided a special section of the London.gov.uk website to help link organisations in need of volunteers with individuals wanting to sign up to help, and this week volunteers from the Mayor's volunteering programme, Team London, signed up to help induct NHS staff at NHS Nightingale's education centre at the ExCeL centre.

Culture, sport and major events

The Mayor's Culture at Risk office has been strengthened to provide additional advice and signpost culture and creative businesses to existing support. City Hall is working with Government, local authorities, businesses, landlords and others to ensure that as many night time businesses as possible can survive through this period.

License fee and the late-night levy – The Night Czar Amy Lamé wrote to London boroughs last week, seeking their help in supporting London's night time businesses during this critical time. The Mayor and Amy are asking all local authorities in London to consider providing their licensed premises with a licence fee holiday for 12 months. This could include suspending the collection of annual licence fees and late-night levy fees where applicable, which would mirror the business rates holiday for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses.

Environment

Parks and green spaces – Parks are a lifeline for many Londoners and the Mayor wants them and other green spaces to stay open for people to be able take necessary exercise. But that will only be possible if everyone follows the rules to stay at home and not leave unless it's absolutely necessary.

The vast majority of Londoners are following the rules, which is easing the pressure on our NHS, but there were some instances over the weekend, such as at Brockwell Park, where people were clearly sunbathing and congregating in groups. The Met Police is working in collaboration with local authorities, who are out at parks across London, speaking to Londoners and urging them to follow the social distancing rules.

The GLA has updated the guidance for London's parks and green spaces for Londoners based on the latest rules from the Government ahead of the Easter weekend which can be accessed [here](#).

A group of those responsible for some of London's key public open spaces - including representatives from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, the Open Spaces Department of the City of London corporation and the Royal Parks – wrote an open letter to Londoners urging them to abide by the Government rules. It can be read [here](#).

Water fountains - All Mayor of London / Thames Water public water fountains have been closed and the installation of new ones in London has been paused. Thames Water are prioritising essential services to ensure Londoners have an uninterrupted supply of drinking water. It's hoped that the fountains will be back up and running very soon. See more information [here](#).

Waste and Recycling - London's councils, and those responsible for collecting and processing our recycling and waste, are working hard together to provide the best possible service while we are dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. The GLA's advice to Londoners on maintaining recycling services during the crisis has gone out via the London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB). Please share with any constituents who may be concerned, the full advice can be found [here](#).

Skills and Education

The GLA is supporting the adult skills sector in London.

The Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills, Jules Pipe, met college principals on 2 April to discuss the measures the GLA is taking to provide them with funding stability - some of which go further than the Government's offer to providers outside London.

The GLA's commitments have been well-received by the sector. We are also encouraging providers to offer whatever provision they can online to enable continuity for learners.

International Cooperation

Information sharing – Sadiq joined 45 other Mayors on a conference call to discuss international cooperation between cities and the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and agreed to share information on best practice.

City Hall is also in regular contact with cities, such as LA, New York and Paris, to share information, ideas and lessons about what can be done to support people through this difficult time.

Media, social media

- Sadiq posted a video on Friday evening launching the #LondonTogether campaign, which celebrates and shines a spotlight on inspirational stories and acts of kindness in London. You can [watch the video here and follow the campaign hashtag #LondonTogether on social media](#).
- You can read Sadiq's article in The Independent about the new #LondonTogether campaign [here](#).
- Sadiq took part in #ClapForCarers on Thursday 2 April to thank our incredible NHS workers for their hard work at this difficult time. You can see his video [here](#).
- Sadiq appeared on [GMB, the Today Programme and 5 Live on Wednesday April 1](#) about transport in London amid the Coronavirus crisis.
- Sadiq showed his support for the #EveryDayCounts campaign by writing to the Chancellor to save our charities and voluntary sector which are being hit hard by the impact of COVID-19. See [here](#).

- Sadiq wrote in The Metro about his virtual tour of NHS Nightingale and the volunteers who agreed to help at the hospital: [I went on a virtual tour of NHS Nightingale and saw the true scale of the fight ahead.](#)

Marketing

#LondonTogether - Wembley Park has shown its support for the #LondonTogether campaign by lighting up Bobby Moore Bridge, Olympic Way. You can see the images [here](#).

What you can do to help

City Hall is hard at work, developing and establishing new structures to support Londoners and to improve the city's resilience at this difficult time. You can help by promoting these services:

- **Volunteering** - There is a lot of need for volunteers in London at a local level, particularly around food banks. Please do encourage constituents to visit [the GLA Coronavirus volunteering portal](#).

The portal will connect people with:

- Their local volunteer centre or CVS
 - Their local authority who will also be coordinating offers of help from volunteers
 - Local COVID-19 mutual aid groups
- **Employment Rights Hub** - Many people are concerned about the financial impact of self-isolating or taking time off work. The Mayor's Employment Rights Hub has the latest information about what people are entitled to. **You can access, and point those who may be concerned, to the Hub [here](#).**
 - **Free advice from the Good Growth Hub** - The COVID-19 page on the **Growth Hub** website has been updated with more guidance and information. There are now over 10 factsheets and guides on **the Hub which can be accessed [here](#).**
 - **Information on COVID-19 for non-UK nationals** - City Hall's EU Londoners Hub has specific information for non-UK nationals on how they can access to healthcare, visas and immigration, the EU settlement scheme and employment rights and how they are affected by the crisis. **The Information on COVID-19 for non-UK nationals page can be accessed [here](#).**