

Update from the Mayor of London on COVID-19 – 13 May

- The British public have put in a heroic effort to get us past the peak of Covid-19 - staying at home, maintaining social distancing and going above and beyond to help those in need. **However, we simply cannot afford to be complacent** and must now do everything possible to avoid a disastrous second peak which would be a hammer blow for our NHS and economy.
- The Government's roadmap sets out cautious approach to ease London and the UK out of the current lockdown, while avoiding a disastrous second peak. **But this will only be possible if the evidence shows that it is safe at every stage of the plan.**
- Sadiq's message for Londoners is clear: **Lockdown has not been lifted.** The overwhelming majority of social distancing measures are still in place. We all must continue to play our part and follow the rules to protect our NHS and save lives. [You can read his latest op-ed in the i-paper here.](#)
- Londoners must still stay at home as much as possible and keep a social distance from other people at all times. Public transport must only be used if it is absolutely essential, and everyone must continue to work from home if they possibly can.
- **Sadiq and TfL** are working incredibly hard to prepare our public transport network for the gradual easing of lockdown. Getting Londoners around our city while maintaining social distancing as lockdown is eased will be the **biggest challenge in TfL's history.**
- **The key messages for Londoners on public transport are:** Please do not use public transport unless absolutely necessary – it must now be a last resort. Please walk or cycle if you possibly can. Please wear a non-medical face covering if you have to travel on public transport. All TfL staff and contractors are being provided with basic masks to wear at work. And please do not replace journeys previously made on public transport with car usage – otherwise our roads will immediately become unusably congested and toxic air pollution will increase.
- **We are all going to have to change our behaviour and reimagine how we live in London to keep public transport safe.** If you can work from home you will have to continue doing so for the foreseeable future. Employers and schools will have to change their start times throughout the day to avoid busy peak times on the network – and we are working with the Government to enable this. We will have to spend more of our leisure time in our local areas.
- **TfL is gradually restoring services to as close to pre-COVID-19 levels as possible**, within the constraints imposed by high staff sickness, shielding and self-isolation levels. But we cannot magic additional staff out of thin air. No one should expect to see a swift return to how it was before the crisis. The likely requirements for social distancing will simply make this impossible.
- **To enable this new reality, Sadiq and TfL have launched StreetScape** – the quickest and most ambitious reimagining of London's road network ever. We are putting in place immediate and temporary measures to create new segregated cycle lanes and to widen pavements for socially distant walking. These temporary measures will be reviewed by TfL and could be made permanent.

- **TfL is in urgent negotiations with the Government** to secure a financial deal to enable it to continue operating from next week. Fares revenue makes up around 80 per cent of TfL's operating budget and have reduced by 90 per cent since lockdown began. Covid-19 has caused a £4 billion hole in TfL's budget for this year. The Government has already provided similar funding packages for every other transport operator in the UK – who are all facing the same problems. **Negotiations are ongoing but time is running out.**
- The Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) continues to manage the London-wide response to the crisis, working in partnership with the Government, NHS, local authorities and other public services. The Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience, Fiona Twycross, represents the Mayor at the Strategic Co-ordinating Centre. **If you would like to join the next MP SCG briefing, or to receive more information about the work of the SCG, please contact Ffion.Meagher@london.gov.uk.**
- Today the Mayor wrote to the **Prime Minister** to ask him to take **urgent action to avoid a resurgence of violent crime** as lockdown is eased. He is asking the Prime Minister to lead a cross-sectoral working group to bear down on violence, to **invest in positive opportunities for young people** to participate in as lockdown is lifted and to deliver the promised additional 20,000 police officers across the UK. Last week the Mayor wrote to the **Health Secretary**, Matt Hancock, to seek the Government's urgent action to **introduce routine ethnic data collection within death registrations** in England and on the need for the Government to have a **comprehensive test-trace-isolate programme** in place before any significant easing of restrictions. He also wrote to Rishi Sunak, the **Chancellor** and Alok Sharma, **BEIS Secretary of State**, about the need for **support for small businesses** struggling with rent bills and improving access to coronavirus business support grants. In addition, he wrote to the **Education Secretary** on a number of education issues, including the early years sector, grading of GCSE and A levels and digital inequality.
- The Mayor 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

TFL Plan for Safe Travel

Responding to TfL's plans to help London travel safely – full details below - Sadiq said: "Coronavirus has had a profound impact on public transport in London and will continue to do so long into the future. All public transport providers face huge challenges around social distancing - with the number of passengers TfL can safely accommodate on Tubes and buses reduced by over 85 per cent.

"We will all have to continue playing our part in reducing demand on services by working from home if we possibly can. Please avoid public transport wherever possible. I urge all Londoners to rethink the way they travel. Please avoid peak

times, wear a non-medical covering over your nose and mouth and carry a hand sanitizer. By rapidly rolling out more space for walking and cycling through our London Streetspace plan we are enabling many more journeys to be made through these sustainable means which is crucial to our city's recovery.

"I am pleased that all TfL frontline staff will be offered basic face masks from today. Along with the actions we're asking passengers to take and the introduction of hand sanitizer points in the coming weeks, these additional measures will further protect our heroic staff and passengers at this critical period."

Responding to the Bank of England warning of 'the deepest recession on record', Sadiq said - "Our first priority must continue to be to save lives, but it is already clear that we will require long-term economic intervention from the Government on an unprecedented scale to protect people's jobs and livelihoods and get those who are forced out of work back into employment.

"There is no playbook for how to manage an economic shock of this scale and stop millions of people being pushed into unemployment, poverty and homelessness. It will require innovation and entirely new economic approaches to supporting jobs and livelihoods.

"The Government must of course continue intervening to provide ongoing financial support for businesses, the self-employed and the public and voluntary sector, but we will have to go much further to stop this health emergency turning into a lasting economic catastrophe.

"No options should be off the table to protect jobs and to stop people being pushed into poverty. We will have to consider further steps that would have been unthinkable prior to the crisis.

"And the Government must urgently begin coordinating its economic response with other countries around the world to confront what is clearly a global economic threat."

Addressing Covid-19 inequality - Last week, the Mayor called for ethnicity to be recorded on all death certificates to expose the disproportionate effect that COVID-19 is having on London's BAME communities.

We need urgent action to reveal the true extent of this inequality and have honest conversations about why it is happening, and work hard to tackle these problems. He is calling for greater transparency and is bringing city leaders together to see what can be done.

Sadiq has successfully lobbied Ministers to routinely collect and publish demographics of those dying in hospital and welcomed the Government's review into the disproportionate effect of the virus, but only by adding ethnicity onto death certificates will we be able to get a complete picture of the impact on those from BAME backgrounds.

He has also written to David Isaac, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) chair saying that the organisation has a moral responsibility to urgently carry out a wide-ranging investigation into the worst outcomes for BAME people and whether the disproportionate impact could have been prevented or mitigated. Read more in the Guardian [here](#).

Sadiq highlighted that the ONS statistics published last week, showing that black people are four times more likely to die with COVID-19, expose the grim reality of the significant structural inequalities that have existed in our society for generations. Minority ethnic Londoners are more likely to work in lower paid jobs, live in overcrowded accommodation and suffer from underlying health conditions, and this is clearly putting them at greater risk from coronavirus. The Government cannot simply ignore this and Ministers must bring about fundamental change that puts the wellbeing and welfare of everyone first.

VE Day

To commemorate VE Day, the Mayor supported a special one-off concert from behind closed doors at the Royal Albert Hall with Katherine Jenkins on May 8. you can re-watch the special performance [here](#).

City Hall Action

Emergency response

The Mayor established a **Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)** to manage London's immediate response to the pandemic. He asked John Barradell, the Chief Executive of the City of London Cooperation, to chair the SCG, and his Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience, Fiona Twycross, to act as his representative on the group.

The SCG has a physical base at London's temporary Strategic Coordinating Centre, with daily calls and meetings to manage the varied elements of the emergency response. The key issues the SCG is addressing are changing frequently as the situation develops.

The current strategic focus is now on lockdown release, testing, PPE, mortality management, economic impacts and mental health and wellbeing. Other issues being managed include NHS surge capacity, shielding, volunteering, testing and food poverty.

Health

Face Coverings – Sadiq welcomes the Government's decision to issue guidance asking people to wear non-medical face coverings in enclosed public spaces where they can't socially distance. This is something he and others have been pushing the Government to change the guidance on and could help slow the spread of infection.

Sadiq will continue to ask all Londoners using public transport to use a non-medical covering over their nose and mouth for the entirety of their journey in order to help protect other passengers. See [the Mayor of London's social channels](#) for helpful tips and guidance on how to best use protective face coverings.

Testing - The Mayor has been clear that testing on a large scale is key to tackling the spread of the coronavirus – and that the Government's response has been far too slow. It's simply unacceptable that testing levels, particularly amongst our vital frontline workers, has been consistently so low.

Now that the number of tests being conducted is rising, it's important that the process is as convenient as possible for key workers and others. We have already seen that increasing lab capacity is no use if people cannot access the tests, particularly in London where only half of all householders have a car.

It is also critical that a successful test-track-trace programme, similar to those used in internationally, must be implemented as soon as possible before any significant easing of restrictions.

Transport

TfL has been supporting the national effort to reduce the spread of coronavirus, working with the Government and other agencies to reduce ridership on the transport network to help the NHS and save lives. This means that TfL is currently facing a substantial reduction in income over a period of months. TfL is working closely with the Government and is in constructive discussions over the support that can be made available. A successful conclusion to these discussions is now urgent.

Face coverings - The latest Government advice is that, although face coverings are unlikely to prevent you from getting the virus, they could help prevent you from giving it to others. Face coverings are particularly important where 2m social distancing is hard to maintain.

As the Mayor has set out, Londoners are being asked to play their part in the national effort against the virus and wear facial coverings whenever travelling on public transport or by taxi or private hire vehicle. This could help reduce the rate of infection. From Monday 11, TfL front line staff, cleaners, and London's bus drivers are being offered face masks should they wish to use them.

As travel restrictions begin to be lifted, all taxi and private hire companies are being asked by TfL to put protective measures in place including ensuring face coverings are worn by drivers.

TfL plans to help London travel safely - Following the Government's announcement on how restrictions on movement will gradually start to be eased, TfL announced further plans to help London travel safely and sustainably.

TfL is working to gradually build up service levels to where they were before the pandemic and will return the number of buses and trains running to as close to 100 per cent as soon as possible. TfL is working closely with staff and the trade unions

with the intention of, by 18 May, increasing service levels to around 85 per cent on the bus network, at least 70 per cent on the Tube and London Overground (in line with national rail services), 80 per cent on the DLR and a full service on TfL Rail.

London Underground is aiming to restore the Circle Line and to re-open some of the 37 stations that have been closed for several weeks. However, some stations will stay closed for now so that staff can be deployed to help manage any congestion at busier stations. Some stations with lift-only access may need to remain closed as social distancing is not possible.

Enabling national requirements to maintain 2 metres distance between passengers wherever possible will require significant changes to the way people travel around London. TfL will only be able to safely carry around 13-15 per cent of the normal number of passengers on the Tube and bus networks even when 100 per cent of services are operating once again over time.

Transport providers, borough councils, schools, businesses and Londoners all have a vital role in achieving a safe re-start, working with Government to meet a travel demand challenge that far outstrips the challenge experienced during the 2012 Olympic games.

During that period, it was necessary to reduce normal travel demand by 20 per cent to keep travel safe. Now, demand will have to be reduced by more than 85 per cent compared to normal to enable social distancing to be maintained wherever possible.

TfL has outlined advice for Londoners to assist them to make the changes necessary which can be found [here](#).

Streetspace update – Last week, the Mayor launched StreetSpace to fast-track the transformation of streets by reallocating road space for walking and cycling.

This is using methods including street furniture changes, extended pavement areas, bus stop alterations and extended cycle lanes.

For example, temporary barriers and social distancing signage are being used to double the size of pavements on high streets in Brixton, Camden and Stoke Newington and temporary cycle lanes on Euston Road.

Business & employment

Responding to Tuesday's statement by the Chancellor that the Government's furlough scheme will be extended till October, the Mayor said:

"I welcome the Government's decision to extend the job retention scheme until October. I have said repeatedly that this crisis will require long-term economic intervention from the Government on an unprecedented scale.

"I also welcome the changes that will allow people to return to work part time, helping the economy recovery and allowing people to return the workplace where it can be done safely.

"The Chancellor has said that from August employers will have to share the cost of continuing the job retention scheme. We await more details of what these requirements will be, but businesses across the capital face an extremely difficult few months ahead.

"Even if workers in some sectors return to work over the coming weeks, substantial parts of the economy will remain in lockdown. And for many parts of the retail, culture and hospitality sectors it will be a long time before they see the levels of cashflow they need to pay their staff."

Additional support for business - Last week, the Mayor wrote to the Chancellor and BEIS Secretary of State about the need for support for small businesses struggling with rent bills and improving access to coronavirus business support grants.

Pay it Forward update - The Pay it Forward campaign, in partnership with Crowdfunder to assist SMEs with cashflow issues, is live. The programme is aimed at helping Londoners support businesses which are currently struggling in industries such as hospitality, retail and leisure. As of 11 May, £93,000 has been paid forward by 1,600 members of the public with 122 live projects.

The Met Police & LFB

Changes to enforcing social distancing - While the Prime Minister has set out details of changes to social distancing rule, further details are still awaited on the detail of these changes and how they will be enforced. We understand that new regulations will be laid before Parliament this week, setting these changes out in more detail.

It is vital that the public have absolute clarity on what activities are permitted and the police are given guidance on how to enforce this. Policing representatives have already raised concerns around a lack of clarity in the changes to social distancing. For instance, the Police Federation National Chair, said on 11 May: "colleagues on the frontline have to know what is expected of them as there is confusion. The announcement was very broad and there must be crystal clarity".

Support for victims of domestic violence – Last week, the Mayor announced a new £1.5 million City Hall investment to fund emergency accommodation for domestic abuse survivors. The new funding will also help enable victims to access specialist support, food and medicines. Sadiq’s emergency response alone has already secured accommodation for 82 victims across the city, needing to flee home. This is in addition to the £5m made available by Sadiq to the London Community Response Fund, to support the work of charities.

The new fund comes on top of the £59 million the Mayor has invested in tackling violence against women and girls.

General Crime - There has been a considerable drop in overall crime during the lockdown. The Met has reported a reduction in total notifiable offences and the Met Commissioner has said that ‘knife crime has dropped considerably’ in the same period. However, there are concerns that we could see an increase in fraud, domestic abuse and online abuse. The Met is aware of these issues and have been working proactively to address them.

London Fire Brigade - Firefighters are continuing to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus by delivering medicines, care packages and food to vulnerable Londoners who are being shielded.

Firefighters are also helping to get vital protective equipment to frontline health staff. The Brigade’s Operation Seacole has so far helped deliver over two million items of essential PPE. Local arrangements between London fire crews and the NHS are assisting those in hospitals and care homes.

Firefighter volunteers are also supporting the London Ambulance Service as drivers and Pandemic Multi-Agency Response Teams (PMART) to deal in a dignified way with suspected victims of COVID-19 who die in their homes.

Housing - support for rough sleepers, renters and owners

Recovery and Good Growth - The impact of COVID-19 has thrown into stark relief the inequalities caused by our existing housing crisis. When we start to emerge from this pandemic, we must be ready to adapt to new demands and set new, better standards.

London’s Deputy Mayor for Housing, Tom Copley, has written a piece about how we need to think hard about what the coronavirus impacts mean for the city’s housing needs and future ‘good growth’. You can read it [here](#).

Reopening Construction sites - The Mayor supports work on construction sites restarting where developers and contractors are confident that Public Health England guidance can be and is followed on-site. However, he is concerned about increased demand on the public transport network, and is advocating for construction firms to put in place alternative and sustainable travel plans for their staff, and calling for new temporary rules around construction site opening times.

Support for Rough Sleepers - As of the night of Sunday 10 May, 1,187 rough sleepers were safely accommodated by the GLA in hotels to enable them to follow self-isolation guidance. Along with rough sleepers accommodated in self-contained units, 1,248 rough sleepers were accommodated on Sunday night.

Private Renting – The Mayor is calling for ‘triple lock’ protection from eviction for private renters. This includes:

- increasing welfare benefits so that they can cover any shortfalls in the rents of private tenants unable to pay them due to COVID-19 – including refugees, asylum seekers and those with no recourse to public funds;
- changing to eviction proceedings to prevent landlords evicting tenants for arrears accrued as a result of COVID-19 when the suspension on eviction proceedings is lifted; and
- Scrapping Section 21, preventing landlords using this ‘no-fault’ route to evict tenants.

Communities, support for vulnerable Londoners, the Voluntary and Community Sector and Charities

Home Office’s no recourse to public funds (NRPf) policy High Court ruling - Sadiq welcomed the High Court’s ruling that the Home Office’s denial of benefits to migrant families is unlawful. This hostile policy puts the lives of countless Londoners at risk, especially in this current pandemic. Sadiq will continue to call on the Government to suspend NRPf immediately and make welfare support accessible to struggling families now.

Notting Hill Carnival – The tough decision has been made that this year’s Carnival will not take place on the streets of Notting Hill as it has done for over 50 years. Sadiq has said that while it is a great shame that Carnival will not be celebrated on our streets this year, the Board has made the right decision to change the format of this year’s event for the good of everyone’s health.

We will work with the community to celebrate carnival in a creative and safe way, keeping carnival’s unifying spirit alive, and look forward to when we can unite again on the streets of London.

Culture and Creative Industries

COVID-19 is having a catastrophic impact on London’s culture, creative industries and night-time economy which are worth £52 billion to the capital’s economy a year and account for one in six jobs.

Sadiq continues to call on the Government to do much more to provide the support the sector needs to protect its future, and recently launched a £2.3 million Culture at Risk Business Support Fund to support the sector.

The Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries is hosting roundtable discussions focused on exit from lockdown and the impact for each of the creative sub-sectors, including performing arts, fashion, music, film, TV and games.

Environment

Parks and green spaces – Over the warm bank holiday weekend, the Mayor continued to spread the stay at home message in order to protect Londoners.

Waste and recycling - On 5 May, Defra published guidance on the re-opening of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). It advised that local authorities can open if they think it is appropriate and that staff and people using the centres are safe. Despite some media coverage Defra have *not* ordered any local authorities to re-open HWRCs. The GLA and London Waste and Recycling Board (LWARB) provided input to the Defra guidance and maintain that HWRCs should remain closed until boroughs feel they can operate them safely in line with government guidance.

StreetSpace - With London's public transport capacity potentially running at a fifth of pre-crisis levels, millions of journeys a day will need to be made by other means. If people switch only a fraction of these journeys to cars, London risks grinding to a halt, air quality will worsen, and road danger will increase.

One of the key pillars of the Mayor and TfL's StreetSpace programme is to reduce traffic on residential streets, creating low-traffic neighbourhoods right across London to enable more people to walk and cycle as part of their daily routine, as has happened during lockdown. See [here for more details](#) on how StreetSpace plans to improve London's air quality and environment.

Environmental charities - The GLA surveyed a range of London environmental NGOs in late April to gauge the impact of COVID-19. Responses indicated that it is having a significant negative impact on their income and financial viability. 57% of organisations are anticipating a drop in income of over 25% this year, with most organisations anticipating the biggest financial impacts in 3-6 months' time and beyond.

This will restrict their ability to support the capital's environment and Londoners' wellbeing. Additional government support for civil society for cashflow and core costs is required on top of the existing NGO package. Organisations were also concerned about access to grant funding to support the delivery of environmental outcomes.

Skills and Education

Skills - The GLA is supporting London's adult skills sector through the current COVID-19 classroom closures, including through tailored funding support. We also continue to encourage online provision, including co-funding the Keep London Learning portal, to enable some continuity for London learners.

Education – The Mayor has written to the Secretary of State for Education to request further support for early years settings, additional guidance for teachers making grade predictions to help overcome unconscious bias, and to accelerate and expand the roll out of the Government's digital access scheme for school children.

Latest figures, from 25 boroughs, show that only 21 per cent of London's early years settings are open. There must be greater financial support from the Government for nurseries and childminders. The Government must look to the future and secure the financial sustainability of a vital sector in education that is essential to our recovery through a government-funded Recovery Fund which helps nurseries and childminders get back on their feet. We cannot allow a crisis in childcare, which prevents parents being able to return to work, to undermine the successful easing of lockdown.

The Government needs to urgently provide teachers with further guidance on how to ensure more accurate exam predictions to reduce inconsistencies across schools and pupils. Given the concerns about unconscious bias it is vital that the Government provides clear information on the grading appeals process that is easy for both students and parents to understand.

Digital devices and a reliable broadband connection are more important than ever. The Government needs to do whatever it can to accelerate the rollout of digital devices to Year 10 students and we need this offer to be widened across secondary school and beyond so that all of London's children can access the tools they need to continue their education during school closures.

International Cooperation

Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force - Last week, C40 launched a new Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce that will help city leaders develop plans for an economic recovery that avoids a return to 'business as usual,' and will instead build a better, more sustainable and fairer society.

Along with a host of other Mayors of C40 cities, Sadiq has endorsed the Statement of Principles that will guide the Task Force's joint strategy, saying:

"I welcome the united effort by C40 Mayors to ensure that recovery from COVID-19 is sustainable and confronts the climate crisis. These are testing times for all of us. I want to reaffirm London's commitment to working with our friends and partners overseas to limit the impact of this pandemic as much as possible, but also to build a better future.

"Covid-19 has exposed the inequality in our society and deep flaws in our economy, which fail people from deprived communities more than anyone else. We need to come out of this embracing a new normal and with a renewed drive to address the climate emergency.

"I will do all I can to harness Londoners' ingenuity to create a better, greener and more equal city." You can find more information about the Taskforce [here](#).

Media, social media

- On Monday, Sadiq spoke to national media, responding to the Government's latest lockdown measures. He appeared on [BBC Breakfast](#), [Sky News](#) and the Today Programme.
- Sadiq spoke to Harpers Bazaar about his experiences of self-isolating [here](#).
- Sadiq's latest #LondonTogether video can be seen [here](#).
- London's Deputy Mayor for Transport, Heidi Alexander, wrote about her experiences cycling in London on twitter. You can read her thread [here](#).

What you can do to help

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

- **Mental health** – Mental health experts have gathered free advice on the GLA website to help those who may feel more down or anxious than normal. The tips can be accessed [here](#). Help with how to cope with bereavement and grief during the coronavirus outbreak can be found [here](#).
- **Pay it Forward** - Business owners should visit www.london.gov.uk/payitforward and see how Pay it Forward could help them make their way through the challenges we now face as a city.
- **London Learning at Home** - The Mayor has launched London Learning at Home brings together the city's free learning and cultural resources that children can access from home. It can be accessed [here](#).
- **Guidance and support for renters and landlords** - The GLA has collated advice for renters and landlords on their rights during coronavirus. Please help share the page which may provide support for those seeking it - it can be accessed [here](#).
- **Volunteering** - [The GLA Coronavirus volunteering portal](#) remains live with updated opportunities for Londoners to safely volunteer.
- **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](#).**
- **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, 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](#).**