

Update from the Mayor of London on COVID-19 – 6 May

- The Prime Minister is expected to outline the Government's plan for easing lockdown this weekend. The Mayor is being honest and upfront with Londoners that there will be no return to life as it was before the virus, even once lockdown begins to be lifted.
- In particular, there will be huge challenges around running public transport in London while maintaining social distancing. It will be impossible to go back to running the Tube and bus network at full capacity whilst ensuring the safety of staff and passengers. This means that everyone who can work from home will have to continue doing so for the foreseeable future. Working hours will have to be staggered by the Government to avoid busy rush hours. And we will have to take bold action to stop roads being congested by cars. You can read Sadiq's piece today on the future of transport in London [here](#).
- City Hall and TfL have today launched Streetspace LDN, a new plan to fast track the transformation of London's streets to enable millions more people to walk and cycle as part of their daily journeys. This involves temporary measures now that could be made permanent in future. Full details can be found below.
- 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. The SCG held its first briefing with MPs last week. If you would like more information about the work of the SCG or to join a future briefing please contact Ffion.Meagher@london.gov.uk.
- NHS Nightingale Hospital was set up to provide a safety net for critical care beds within London. Over the coming days and weeks, patients will no longer need to be admitted. This is thanks to Londoners following the expert advice and staying at home to slow the spread of the virus. The hospital will be placed on standby, ready to resume operations if needed, and work is underway to consider how the Nightingale's role will further adapt.
- Last week the Mayor wrote to the Home Secretary to express his concerns that the Government's immigration policies are discriminating against BAME and migrant Londoners.
- Sadiq has also announced a new £2.3 million investment to help some of London's most at risk creative and night-time businesses, which are set to be hit particularly hard by the crisis and its economic impact.
- 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

Devolved responsibility

Last week, the M9 group of Mayors met with the Prime Minister, the Local Government Secretary, Robert Jenrick, and the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Simon Clarke.

Following the meeting, Sadiq said: “The Covid-19 crisis has exposed several weaknesses in how our nation is governed, so as we start to plan the nation’s long-term response I am pleased that the Prime Minister has devolved responsibility for recovery to the regions, cities and local authorities.

“London stands ready to lead our city’s economic and social response to coronavirus. I look forward to working with the Government and regions to secure a better future for all, where nobody is left behind.”

A Downing Street spokesperson said: “The Prime Minister thanked the Mayors for their incredible efforts in tackling this unprecedented public health and economic challenge. Clearly, as we get this whole country back on its feet, mayors should be at the forefront of local recovery and the Prime Minister welcomed today’s constructive discussion about what more we can do to support businesses and people in their areas.”

Recovery and economy

Last week, Sadiq wrote an op-ed about what the recovery following this crisis should look like. **You can read the full article in the Evening Standard here: [Sadiq Khan: Now we must ask what kind of future we want](#)**

Support for BAME Londoners

It's become clear that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are being disproportionately affected by the outbreak of COVID-19. The Government has announced a review, but Sadiq is putting pressure on the Government to take immediate action.

Last week, Sadiq wrote to the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, to express his concerns that the Government's immigration policies are discriminating against BAME and migrant Londoners. It is appalling that some migrant patients with pre-existing health conditions are still being charged for vital NHS treatment.

The Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard, recently attended an Emergency Community Conversation, organised by the Ubele Initiative, one of the GLA's Civil Society Roots grantees. She was part of a panel of key figures that discussed the COVID-19 crisis, its impact on the BAME community and what actions are needed. She talked about the importance of not only collecting and publishing ethnicity data, but understanding the socio-economic drivers of health inequalities for ethnic minority communities as part of any inquiry and policy work.

Support for EU Londoners

The Mayor is concerned about the hundreds of thousands of Londoners who have been granted pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and face limitations on their access to benefits. EEA citizens should not need to prove their 'right to reside' in order to access Universal Credit or assistance under homelessness legislation.

Sadiq has urged the Government to extend all non-UK national visas. This would help to support migrant NHS staff and other key workers. He has also said that the Government should also go further and offer full citizenship rights to NHS and Care workers who have risked their lives during the COVID-19 crisis.

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

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.

Face Coverings - The Mayor is pleased that the Prime Minister has finally said that non-medical face coverings will play an important role when the lockdown restrictions are eased.

Emerging evidence from around the world has shown that face coverings can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and Sadiq has been pushing the Government to change its guidance for weeks.

Transport

TfL is working on a comprehensive plan for when the lockdown is eased. Sadiq has said:

“Data shared with the Government demonstrates the huge challenges of running public transport while maintaining social distancing, once a phased exit from lockdown begins.

“There will be no swift return to life as it was before Covid-19. Everyone who can work from home will have to continue doing so for the foreseeable future, working hours will have to be staggered by the Government to avoid busy rush hours, and we will have to take bold action to stop roads being congested by cars and enable many more people to walk and cycle to work.

“The sooner the Government sets out the details of how it will ease lockdown when the time is right, and agrees a proper funding package for TfL, the sooner comprehensive plans can be put in place to allow everyone who needs to get to and from work to do so as safely as possible.”

Testing for TfL Staff - TfL staff and their household members are able to book a test through the new national website at <https://self-referral.test-for->

coronavirus.service.gov.uk/. Employers can also refer staff for a test if they or a member of their household are self-isolating. They can select a home test kit or go to one of the regional drive-through centres or mobile facilities.

Public transport and recovery – The Deputy Mayor for Transport, Heidi Alexander, wrote an article for On London last week about London, public transport and the recovery. She highlighted that we'll need to re-fashion London's transport system post-lockdown, working in partnership with the Government and the public.

In the article, Heidi explains why it's vital that the Government's decision-making is informed by an understanding of what London's transport system will and won't be able to deliver if social distancing measures remain in place. **You can read Heidi's full article here: [Given the right support we can re-fashion London's transport systems, post-lockdown.](#)**

Streetspace LDN – If social distancing is to be maintained on the public transport network, up to eight million journeys a day will need to be made by other means. But London's road to recovery cannot be clogged with cars so we need to give Londoners the space to walk and cycle as part of a greener, cleaner, healthier future.

TfL and City Hall are currently working on a solution - the Mayor's Streetspace plan, which will fast track the transformation of London's streets to enable millions of more people to safely walk and cycle as part of their daily journeys.

The Streetspace plan will repurpose traffic lanes and parking spaces for temporary cycle lanes and widen footways to enable safe social distancing. A strategic cycling network will be built with temporary materials, new routes will be created to reduce crowding on underground lines, traffic lights will be altered to reduce waiting times at crossings, and roads will be restricted to buses and bikes at certain times of the day.

These measures will reduce the risk of exposure to the virus whilst travelling and are unparalleled in a city of London's size. They are designed to serve the unprecedented levels of walking and cycling that we expect to see following the end of the lockdown. Early TfL modelling has revealed that there could be more than a tenfold increase in kilometres cycled, and up to five times the amount of walking compared to pre-COVID levels if demand returns.

You can read Will Norman, London's Cycling Commissioner's blog on Streetspace LDN here: [Mayor's Streetspace Plan could see cycling increase tenfold post-lockdown.](#)

The Met Police & LFB

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.

Support for victims of domestic violence – On Saturday 2 May, the Government announced £76.4m of funding to help charities support survivors of domestic and sexual abuse. It will support vulnerable children and their families and victims of modern slavery.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: “We know that tragically for some people during the pandemic home is not a safe place. We’ve seen around the world that lockdown measures can lead to an increase in domestic abuse incidents, and here in the capital we have seen a surge in calls to helplines and a rise in incidents.

“At the start of the lockdown I wrote to the Home Secretary to highlight these concerns, and I am glad the Government has listened to my calls for urgent action to support specialist frontline services as they are placed under additional pressure. It is vital that every possible support is given to victims who need to access safety.”

London Fire Brigade delivering medicine and food to London’s most vulnerable - 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.

While delivering vital medicine and food, crews are also giving fire safety advice at people’s front doors, while remaining at a safe distance.

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

Covid-19 Housing Delivery Taskforce update – The Covid-19 Housing Delivery Taskforce, chaired and convened by the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, Tom Copley, met for the first time last week. The taskforce brings together the leaders from London’s housing industry – including councils, construction, unions and housing associations - to work together to ensure that the housing sector recovers from the Covid-19 crisis. It aims to speak with one voice to influence the Government and ensure the best possible outcomes for London.

Tom Copley has called for London to do more than just ‘bounce back’, but to improve social and other genuinely affordable housing delivery after the pandemic. It is essential that planning starts now to ensure London recovers as quickly as possible and the sector continues to deliver the homes Londoners need at pace and at scale.

Tom is clear that the public sector must play a key role in this. Having begun to rebuild their house building capacity, supported by the Mayor, London's councils are in a much stronger position to support this recovery than they were 12 years ago. For full details, see [here](#).

Support for rough sleepers – Last week, Tom Copley wrote to the Minister for Rough Sleeping to outline concerns about the impact of the coronavirus on rough sleepers. Currently, around 1,200 rough sleepers are accommodated in the GLA-procured hotels and other emergency accommodation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many more in similar accommodation procured directly by London boroughs. Some of these people include those who have previously consistently refused to engage with support services. Tom is clear that we must not lose this once in a lifetime opportunity to tackle rough sleeping in the capital.

Respective rough sleeping teams, along with borough, health and voluntary sector colleagues, are now working on the next steps needed to ensure no one is discharged to the streets.

Support for Rough Sleepers

As of the night of Sunday 3rd May, 1,132 rough sleepers were safely accommodated in hotels to enable them to follow self-isolation guidance. Along with rough sleepers accommodated in self-contained units, 1,192 rough sleepers were accommodated on Sunday night.

Business & employment

Deputy Mayor for Business, Rajesh Agrawal, wrote in City AM last week about how London's dynamic economy will return. He said that we need to do all we can to keep our small businesses afloat so that when the lockdown is eased, they are ready to bring back the jobs that so many Londoners rely on.

Despite the Government's financial support schemes, many still face the worrying prospect of paying rent and other bills without a steady source of revenue. He highlighted the Mayor's new crowdfunding initiative – Pay It Forward London – aimed at helping members of the public support businesses which are currently struggling.

Other cities including Barcelona, Budapest and Los Angeles have reached out to us to explore if a similar scheme would help their businesses, which are also facing significant disruption and an uncertain future.

You can read his full article [here](#).

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 1 May, £52,792 has been paid forward by 902 members of the public with 98 live projects.

Growth Hub support for businesses update - The Mayor's London Growth Hub brings together a wide range of expertise and advice into one place and is delivered in partnership with London Economic Action Partnership, the local enterprise partnership for the capital.

Through the Growth Hub we're offering a range of one-to-one support, from videocalls to webinars, to help businesses through the crisis. London Growth Hub advisors have held over 560 one-to-one calls with businesses seeking support since the start of the crisis. The phone line capacity has been increased to deal with COVID-19 related queries and assist businesses – including advisors focused specifically on construction.

Support for vulnerable Londoners, the Voluntary and Community Sector and Charities

The London Community Response Fund update - The London Community Response fund – a new emergency support fund to help London's voluntary and community organisations – has awarded grants to over 300 organisations in the first two waves. The money is being used for food, essentials and crisis response.

The Fund now stands at over £16m, including £5m from the Mayor.

While the £750m Government package of support for the voluntary sector is welcome, it does not go far enough. The Mayor is continuing to call on the Government to do more.

Culture and Creative Industries

COVID-19 is having a catastrophic impact on London's culture, creative industries and night-time economy. Many artists and performers are self-employed and unable to benefit from the Government's support programmes, productions have been cancelled and ticket income has collapsed.

According to a Creative Industries Federation survey, 50 per cent of organisations will go out of business by the end of June. It is also likely that many venues, theatres, film productions, concerts will be unviable for as long as social distancing is required.

Sadiq continues to call on the Government to do much more to provide the support the sector needs to protect its future.

The culture and creative industries are incredibly important to London and will be integral in its recovery after this crisis. The industries are worth £52 billion to the capital's economy a year and account for one in six jobs.

Culture at Risk Business Support Fund – Last week, the Mayor launched a £2.3 million Culture at Risk Business Support Fund to support London's creative and cultural industries. Funds will go to the most fragile parts of the creative economy, those most at risk of falling into administration and unable to benefit from

government schemes - grassroots music venues, LGBTQ+ venues, artist workspaces and independent cinemas across the capital.

City Hall is working in partnership with the Music Venue Trust, LGBTQ+ Venues Forum, Creative Land Trust and BFI to distribute the funds quickly and to those in most need.

As well as this support fund, the Mayor is helping arts and cultural businesses through:

- Pay It Forward London
- The London Community Response Fund, which is supporting voluntary and charitable organisations.
- Support for the Museum of London and East Bank.
- The promotion of innovative culture online, including through Virtually London with London & Partners
- The expansion of the Culture at Risk office to offer help and advice to venues and creatives
- And support for the Music Venue Trust's UK-wide #SaveOurVenues campaign to help support live music venues and studios.

Environment

Air Quality – The levels of the harmful gas nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) at some of London's busiest roads are on average about half of what they were before the lockdown.

This is in addition to the significant reductions delivered by policies including the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), which contributed to a 44 per cent reduction in roadside NO₂ in the central zone prior to lockdown.

Parks and green spaces – The GLA continues to work with boroughs, other park managers and MOPAC to ensure consistency on borough closures and the approaches being taken to manage these spaces. Guidance on using parks and green spaces has been prepared with these organisations to ensure the core messages are communicated as widely as possible. This is available on the GLA website and is updated as required

Skills and Education

Skills - The GLA is supporting London's adult skills sector through the current COVID-19 classroom closures. Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe wrote to London's skills providers on 31 March confirming measures the GLA will take 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 also continue to encourage online provision, including co-funding the Keep London Learning portal, to enable some continuity for London learners.

Youth services - We continue to provide support for youth organisations that are helping vulnerable Londoners. The Mayor's Peer Outreach Team have recorded a series of Instagram clips in partnership with the Consumer Action Group. These give practical advice for young people on their employment rights, finances, and coping with extreme hardship.

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 Digital Access Scheme for school children.

London Learning at Home - The Mayor has launched London Learning at Home to bring together the city's free learning and cultural resources that children can access from home. Parents, carers and teachers can easily search for resources by age range, subject, key stage and level of adult supervision needed. The new initiative will help young Londoners to still feel connected to the incredible people, places and culture of their city www.london.gov.uk/learning-at-home

International Cooperation

Discussing lockdown easing criteria with Mayors of other major cities – The Mayor continues to speak to Mayors around the world about how London and other cities are fighting the virus and what is working elsewhere.

On 29 April, the Mayor participated in a video conference with other Mayors that was convened and hosted by the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Michael Müller, and joined by the Mayors of Istanbul, Prague, Budapest, Madrid, Tashkent, the Governor of Jakarta and the Deputy Mayors of Los Angeles, Brussels and Mexico City (NB: all of these cities have longstanding partnership agreements with Berlin).

The Mayors discussed the importance of non-medical face coverings when social distancing is not possible and exchanged views on the necessary criteria for easing lockdowns - with low infection rate, contact tracing and sufficient levels of PPE for care settings common to each city. The Mayors of Prague and Budapest specifically raised London's work with rough sleepers and the Pay It Forward campaign respectively, citing these as inspiration for similar efforts in their own cities.

Covid-19 Public Engagement on Talk London

Talk London is an online community where Londoners can have their say on London's big issues like housing, the environment, transport, safety, jobs and more. The team gather people's opinions to help steer the policy decisions of the future.

- In the last 10 days, City Hall's Talk London community has gained **4,113 new members** and 25,295 unique site visitors. We now have more than 54 thousand members.

An analysis of the Talk London discussion on parenting has shown that:

- Parents are struggling to juggle working from home with home schooling, and many are exhausted.
- Parents with children with special educational needs are finding this period particularly hard and report that they don't have enough access to support for schooling or the well-being of their children.
- People are concerned that some children may be more disadvantaged than others during this time.
- They would like more structured classes in core subjects to be delivered via Teams, Zoom or TV.
- Some have proposed that to aid the return to school when lockdown is eased that pupils return for limited hours, spread over the day and with a focus on core subjects, to enable social distancing at school and on public transport.

Media, social media

- Sadiq's article in the Evening Standard on London's recovery from the coronavirus crisis can be read here: [Now we must ask what kind of future we want](#)
- Sadiq's latest #LondonTogether video can be seen [here](#).
- Will Norman, London's Cycling Commissioner wrote about London's radical solution to travelling around London, Streetspace LDN. you can read his article here: [Mayor's Streetspace Plan could see cycling increase tenfold post-lockdown.](#)

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:

- **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.
- **Proud to care** – The care sector needs workers more than ever to provide essential care and support to elderly and vulnerable people during the outbreak. The Proud to Care website has collated vacancies for care workers, care managers, social workers, occupational therapists, chefs and cleaners. Please help promote the Proud to Care website where the vacancies are listed [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](#).
- **How to cope with bereavement and grief during the coronavirus outbreak** - Support is available for those who have not been able to say goodbye to loved ones they've lost to Covid-19. Find the GLA's list of charities, helplines and online advice [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](#).**