

Update from the Mayor of London on COVID-19 – 24 June

- As the financial impact of COVID-19 on London's public finances has become clearer, the Mayor has warned that he will be left with no choice other than to make significant cuts across the Metropolitan Police, the London Fire Brigade, Transport for London and the Greater London Authority - unless the Government urgently acts to support local and regional authorities across the UK.
- Overall, the GLA Group faces a £493m budget shortfall over the next two years as a result of an unprecedented loss of business rates and council tax income. The Mayor has today announced a consultation on relocating City Hall. The move would save £55m over five years and savings would be used by the Mayor to protect front-line public services and to invest in London's economic recovery.
- The Mayor will do everything in his power to persuade ministers not to force another era of austerity on local and regional government and to protect frontline services. He has said that it's only right that he volunteers for an immediate pay cut, continues not to take any pension contributions and freezes the salaries of his political appointments at City Hall.
- More of the Mayor's focus is now on the economic and social recovery. We're beginning to see the true scale of the economic challenge ahead, with over a million Londoners currently on the Government's furlough scheme. Sadiq is doing everything in his power to prepare London for the difficult road ahead, but it's clear the Government has a historic responsibility to ensure that nobody is left permanently unemployed or homeless, or pushed into poverty as a result of this virus. Sadiq will continue to put pressure on the Government to live up to its responsibility to invest in the economic recovery, prevent mass unemployment and support those who need to re-skill to get back into work.
- The London Transition Board, set up to coordinate London's shift from lockdown to recovery, and the London Recovery Board, which is co-ordinating the planning for London's future post-COVID-19, are both up and running and working to support London out of the crisis. Full details on the latest meetings can be found below.
- Lockdown measures continue to be eased, with the re-opening of shops across London giving a major boost to many struggling retailers. Shops have put in a whole host of measures to keep their staff and customers safe, but Sadiq has made an urgent call for the Prime Minister to follow the example of countries around the world and make the wearing of face coverings mandatory for customers in shops and other confined public spaces where it isn't possible to keep a safe distance. This would help to slow the spread of the coronavirus.
- Sadiq continues to be 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

Call for face coverings in shops to become mandatory

Last week, the Mayor made an urgent call for the Government to make the wearing of face coverings mandatory for customers in shops and other confined public spaces.

Writing to the Prime Minister, Sadiq said that the wide use of face coverings is increasingly important as lockdown restrictions are eased, with scientific evidence showing that they can help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

World Health Organisation (WHO) guidance recommends the use of face coverings in a wide range of public settings, and a number of European countries, including Austria, France, Germany, Portugal and Spain, have already mandated their use in shops and other public spaces. For more information, see [here](#).

Mayor to consult on relocating City Hall to protect funding for front-line services

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has today announced a consultation on plans for the Greater London Authority to leave the current City Hall building next year and move its headquarters to The Crystal building in the Royal Docks.

The move would save the GLA Group £55m over five years and would help the Mayor both to protect front-line services as much as possible from cuts and to invest in jobs, skills provision and other initiatives to aid the economic recovery from Covid-19.

The lease for the City Hall building was granted in 2001 for 25 years, but it allows for a 'break' in the contract after 20 years, in December 2021 - the first and only chance the GLA has to consider leaving. Notice has to be given this year and a decision is needed by September so there is time to plan and carry out the move.

The City Hall building currently costs the GLA £11.1m a year in rent to private landlords Kuwaiti-owned St Martin's, service charges and rates. By contrast, The Crystal is already owned by the GLA and its "outstanding" rating for environmental sustainability means its running costs will be lower than the current City Hall.

The GLA moved into the current City Hall building in 2002 as part of the regeneration of the More London area near London Bridge. With this regeneration work now complete, moving the seat of London's government to the Royal Docks could have a similar impact on a much larger regeneration project in East London, which is set to lead to 25,000 new homes and the creation of 60,000 new jobs within the next 20 years, supported by the arrival of the Elizabeth line.

The Mayor will now begin a formal consultation on this proposal with the London Assembly, UNISON, PCS, the Chairs of GLA and Mayor's Office for Policing and

Crime (MOPAC) staff networks, and all GLA and MOPAC staff. These consultations will last for six weeks.

Read more [here](#).

Mayor commits to pay cut as he outlines almost £500m cost of Covid-19

The Mayor has warned that he will be left with no choice other than to make significant cuts across the Metropolitan Police, the London Fire Brigade, Transport for London and the Greater London Authority - unless the Government urgently acts to support local and regional authorities across the UK.

Londoners did the right thing to tackle COVID-19 by following the rules, staying at home and helping to save lives. But now the Government is punishing them with a new era of austerity at the worst possible time – just when we need to invest in the recovery.

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on London's public finances which were in great shape before the pandemic. But overall, the GLA Group - The Metropolitan Police, the London Fire Brigade, Transport for London and the Greater London Authority - faces a £493m budget shortfall over the next two years as a result of TfL's fares income dropping by more than 90 per cent and an unprecedented loss of business rates and council tax income, caused by COVID-19. This is hitting every local authority in the country

Sadiq will do everything in his power to persuade ministers not to force another era of austerity on local and regional government. He feels that it is only right that he volunteers for an immediate pay cut, continues not to take any pension contributions and freezes the salaries of political appointments at City Hall.

Sadiq has written to the Chancellor about the need for urgent financial support. For full details, see [here](#).

City Hall Action

Transition and Recovery

The London Transition Board – The London Transition Board, set up to coordinate London's transition from lockdown to recovery from COVID-19, met for the first time on 9 June – jointly chaired by the Mayor and Robert Jenrick, the Secretary of State for MHCLG.

The board will provide strategic direction for the next phase of the response to COVID-19 as London begins to reopen its economy. The board, made up of senior leaders from across London, will focus on the safe reopening of businesses, transport and the use of public space, and the challenges faced in health and social care.

The board agreed to the set-up of a new London Transition Management Group, which will report directly to the London Transition Board and coordinate and provide updates on the work being done by different agencies and sub-groups. It will respond to any subsequent waves of infections, should they arise, and incorporates the Strategic Co-ordination Group emergency planning arrangements set up in March. The Transition Management Group is expected to be formally stood up in the coming weeks when the SCG chair is satisfied that the lockdown easing measures being implemented by the Government are well-established.

The London Recovery Board - The London Recovery Board, which will co-ordinate the planning for London's future post-COVID-19, met for the first time on 4 June. The board, co-chaired by the Mayor, and the Chair of London Councils, Cllr Peter John, is supported by a recovery taskforce which is working in partnership with local authorities, health and care bodies, business groups, trade unions, the voluntary sector, academia, the national Government and other bodies.

It will oversee London's wider economic and social long-term recovery, developing a strategy and plan of action, which focusses on leading to a greener, more equal and better future.

Read more [here](#).

Transport

Mandatory face-coverings on public transport – As of Monday 15 June, those who are able to must wear face coverings when travelling on public transport. This is making our network safer for everybody – particularly when maintaining social distancing is more difficult.

A small number of passengers are not required by law to wear a face covering, this includes children under the age of 11 and people who cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness, impairment or disability. TfL have designed a face covering exemption card, available [here](#) for people to print and carry or wear, or to show on a smartphone.

Service levels - As restrictions are being eased and more Londoners start returning to their workplaces, we can expect an increase in footfall across the transport network. To meet this additional demand, TfL has been working extremely hard to build services back up to normal levels.

Last week more than 90 per cent of scheduled weekday services were operating in the peak and this will continue to increase as more staff return from illness or isolation. Passengers may need to allow extra time for their journeys as TfL is implementing a queuing system at stations to help manage social distancing safely.

Temporary changes to the Congestion Charge is vital to secure, safe and green recovery - The latest data shows that even with the Congestion Charge back in place and many people still working from home, there are as many cars in the congestion charge zone as there were before lockdown began.

Temporary changes to the Congestion Charge, which were required by the Government as part of the TfL funding deal, will help to ensure London's recovery from the pandemic is not restricted by cars and congestion. You can find full details about the temporary changes, which could see trips taken by car fall by a third and pollutant emissions reduced by up to 11 per cent, [here](#).

Santander Cycle scheme expanded - TfL has set out plans to expand the Santander Cycles scheme to keep up with unprecedented demand. For full details on where the new docks will be located, please see [here](#).

StreetSpace update - Three rounds of StreetSpace London funding have been granted to help keep our roads free from congestion. The funding is supporting 508 projects worth £22m across 24 boroughs with 114 low traffic neighbourhoods, 154 school streets, 202 changes to town centre and 38 strategic cycling schemes.

Health

Lockdown – The Mayor is concerned by the recent comments from Neil Ferguson that the number of coronavirus deaths in the UK could have been halved if lockdown had been introduced a week earlier. Sadiq was finally invited to Cobra for the first time on 16 March and by this time it was clear the rate of infection in the capital was far greater and spreading far quicker than anywhere else in the country. The Mayor believes that the Government should have put in place widespread social distancing rules immediately, rather than waiting until the following week.

During the subsequent COBRA meeting of Friday 20 March, where it was decided pubs, restaurants and gyms would be ordered to close, the initial proposal was that they would be asked to close on Saturday at noon. The Mayor and some others at COBRA argued that they should be closed straight away, on Friday evening, which was eventually agreed. Throughout that weekend, Sadiq was urging Londoners to 'stay home', even before the full lockdown announcement on Monday evening.

All organisations will need to be open to reviewing the decisions it has made responding to the COVID-19 so that everyone can learn the appropriate lessons in order to improve our response to similar outbreaks in the future. Once this crisis is over there will need to be a full public Inquiry into all the decisions made during the pandemic and why the UK had such a high death rate.

Test and Trace – Figures show that around a quarter of people who tested positive for the coronavirus nationally could not be reached by the NHS Test and Trace service or refused to hand over their contact details.

While it is encouraging that the vast majority of people are participating and playing their part, the Mayor is concerned that the service is still unable to trace the contacts of a quarter of people who are testing positive. Analysis suggests this gap was mainly due to the service being unable to reach those whose "contact details were unavailable or incorrect" or where there has been no response to text, email and call reminders.

As we ease out of lockdown and re-open the economy, it is essential that the test, track, isolate and support system is completely operational. The Government still needs to get a proper grip of the system and ensure all the necessary resources are in place.

Business & employment

Furlough scheme – Sadiq has called for a targeted extension of the coronavirus Job Retention Scheme beyond the end of lockdown to avoid a sudden surge in unemployment.

Sadiq has also called for further devolution of skills funding, and extensive investment in job creation schemes in the long-term to ensure marginalised communities are not being left behind in the recovery from Covid-19.

Data for the CJRS scheme, published by the Government and analysed by the Greater London Authority (GLA), shows 1.07 million workers across London have been furloughed – with a disproportionately high number in areas that have seen the greatest rise in the benefit claimant count.

It also shows the number of furloughed workers in the capital is higher than any other region of the UK and accounted for 12 per cent of the national total. The top five UK constituencies for the number of furloughed workers are all in London: West Ham (29,300), Tottenham (25,400), East Ham (24,000), Feltham & Heston (23,500) and Brent Central (23,300).

Supporting the Economy - Sadiq spoke to Bloomberg TV about London's economy and the threat of a recession turning into a depression if the Government does not act. We need urgent investment and an active industrial strategy, and we need them now. It's the only way that businesses will get the support they need. You can watch the interview [here](#).

Reopening of shops on 15 June – Sadiq has highlighted that while the reopening of non-essential shops has undoubtedly been welcome news for retailers and their workers across the capital, things will not be returning to normal. It is essential that re-opening is done in a way that doesn't risk the health of customers, staff and Londoners more widely.

People must continue to avoid public transport and shop in their local area as much as possible, and businesses and local authorities will need to work together to ensure that appropriate queuing and social distancing measures are strictly adhered to. It is vital that staff and customers have absolute confidence that the required health and hygiene protections are fully in place as shops re-open.

All premises will need to carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, this will include defining the maximum number of customers that can reasonably follow social distancing at the venue.

Pay it Forward update – Case studies of how the Pay it Forward scheme is helping London businesses affected by COVID-19 are detailed on the GLA website. They

include the restaurant, Fallow, which raised over £8,000 thanks to over 100 backers through Pay it Forward. They have used the funding to reopen the restaurant as a takeaway shop, support suppliers and staff and service the local community. Find out more [here](#) and [here](#).

London Growth Hub update – Over 1,000 businesses have already benefitted from one-to-one advisory sessions since the COVID-19 crisis began.

The Met Police & LFB

Face covering enforcement – Regarding the now mandatory use of face coverings on public transport, it is expected that enforcement will be very much a last resort.

From Monday 15 June, hundreds of officers from the Met and the British Transport Police, as well TfL's own enforcement officers, have been helping customers to comply with the new requirement, explaining what they are and helping them to access one of the free face coverings TfL is providing during the introductory period.

They are also explaining to customers how everyone on the network benefits from the widespread use of face coverings. Once TfL is confident customers understand the new requirements, enforcement, which may include being refused entry or being fined, will commence. This is expected to be a last resort as most Londoners will want to do the right thing and keep themselves and others safe.

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

The London Fire Brigade is now winding down its PPE distribution network, having delivered over 10 million items of PPE to 33 local authority centres and London partners including police services and Transport for London. The NHS supply chain is now able to take over LFB operations, with final handover expected to take place in the first week of July.

Commissioner's statement on the third anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire - London Fire Commissioner, Andy Roe said on June 14:

"Today is the third-year anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire and across the London Fire Brigade we will be stopping to pause, reflect and remember the 72 lives that were lost. The suffering and tragedy of that night will never be forgotten by any of us.

"Our thoughts remain firmly with the families and loved ones of those that died, with the survivors of the fire and with the whole Grenfell community as it continues to show strength, resilience and dignity in the face of such a terrible loss."

Housing - support for renters and rough sleepers

'We now have a unique opportunity to end rough sleeping in London for good'

The Mayor wrote an op-ed in City AM about London's world-leading efforts to accommodate nearly 1,400 rough sleepers in London hotels during the pandemic, which has potentially saved many lives. He highlights that in London, only around three to four per cent of rough sleepers tested have been COVID-positive. By contrast, testing in emergency shelters in San Francisco saw 66 per cent test positive.

However, unless further measures are now taken by the Government — and extra funding made available — many non-UK nationals will be forced back onto the streets. This would be a disgraceful outcome, blowing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to achieve a major and lasting reduction in rough sleeping in London, as well as across the rest of the country.

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

Protection for renters –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.

Support for Rough Sleepers - As of the night of 16 June, 1,249 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, 1,292 rough sleepers were accommodated by Mayoral services that night.

As the lockdown eases, charities and outreach workers will be implementing the Mayor's ‘In For Good’ principle wherever possible - providing an offer of support to everyone in the hotels with the aim that no-one needs to return to rough sleeping when they leave.

However, many of those accommodated risk being forced back onto the streets because of lack of support from central Government, including immigration policies which mean many who have been helped have no recourse to public funds, or are EEA nationals without residency rights. Ministers must act and not blow this opportunity to reduce rough sleeping in London. This could be done by suspending both the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition and the Habitual Residence Test, so that European Economic Area citizens do not need to prove their “right to reside” in order to access benefits, which will help them to cover basic living and housing costs.

Additional help should also be provided so that non-UK nationals are able to easily access specialist independent immigration advice. This would maximise the chances of those in emergency accommodation resolving their immigration status and improving their longer-term housing options.

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

Windrush Day: To mark Windrush Day, the Mayor is urging the Government to learn the lessons of the Windrush scandal and take steps to end the 'hostile environment' faced by immigrants for good. He is demanding that Ministers help Londoners secure their immigration status by cutting extortionate immigration and citizenship fees and improving funding for the advice and support sector.

The Mayor has provided £310,000 to boost the capacity of London's immigration advice sector. The funding is being used by Justice Together, a collaboration of independent funders, to help widen access to free legal advice and strengthen the campaign for lawful and fair immigration and asylum processes.

New cross-Governmental commission on BAME groups - Responding to the Government's announcement about establishing a "new cross-Governmental commission to look at what's going on with BAME groups", the Mayor said:

"I welcome the promise from the Prime Minister that the Government will look at discrimination in our public institutions. It is very clear that we still have a lot of work to do to root out racism, discrimination and inequality from our public institutions and from our society.

"But the truth is we already know what action is needed from many race reviews past – the Government should be taking that action now.

"There are far too many minority ethnic groups who experience barriers to success – we need stronger action from Government to tackle those barriers so that all our communities are able to thrive equally and fully"

Culture and Creative Industries

COVID-19 is having a catastrophic impact on London's culture, creative industries and night-time economy, which are worth £58.4 billion to the capital's economy a year and account for one in six jobs. The London Creative Industries are predicted to have a GVA shortfall of £14.6bn in 2020. This represents a 25 per cent fall in GVA in London and is 51 per cent of the total UK wide GVA shortfall.

The London creative industries are predicted to lose 112,400 jobs in 2020 (the most of any region), which is one in six jobs in the sector (16 per cent). According to London Theatre, 70 per cent of theatre or production companies will go out of business by the end of the year.

The Mayor has called on the Government to do much more to provide the support the culture and the creative industries need to protect their future, and recently launched a £2.3 million Culture at Risk Business Support Fund to support these sectors. This fund has made its first awards, with 15 independent cinemas - Lexi, Genesis, Catford Mews, Rio, Rich Mix, and the Phoenix - set to receive funding. However, bridge funding from the Government is urgently needed for the

parts of the creative economy not able to open safely with social distancing to ensure their survival.

The all-party Treasury Select Committee has recommended that the Government supports more than 1 million people through the cracks in the COVID-19 income support schemes. The trade union for broadcasting, entertainment, communications and theatre (BECTU) has reported that 1 million UK freelancers are not eligible for Government support. More than 150 MPs and peers have called on the Government to safeguard the theatre industry.

The Mayor has announced a new Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm to ensure London's public realm reflects the capital's achievements and diversity. The Commission will focus on increasing representation amongst Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, women, the LGBT+ Community and disability groups.

Environment

The Mayor is helping to get London moving sustainably by:

- Making central London the world's largest car-free zone of any capital in the world
- Widening pavements and trebling cycle lanes
- Opening up our world-famous bridges and streets
- Expanding the Santander Cycles hire scheme
- And keeping our commitment to improve air quality.

Air quality update - Following the decision to go into lockdown, traffic levels on TfL roads fell by as much as 60 per cent and harmful nitrogen dioxide dropped by around 50 per cent on some of London's busiest roads. But as the capital starts to get moving, traffic and pollution are now starting to rise.

The Mayor's air quality programme, including the introduction of the ULEZ, had already contributed to a reduction of 44 per cent in roadside nitrogen dioxide in central London. It has been reintroduced to reduce congestion and pollution and help tackle the climate emergency.

Skills and Education

Education – schools across every borough in the capital are now teaching more children and many nurseries are reopening. It is critical to have kids in school because each day away widens existing inequalities, but it's got to be safe to do so. Schools and nurseries across London are doing all they can to make their environments safe, and the Mayor wants to salute our incredible teachers and early years practitioners who have been working hard to support children throughout the Covid-19 crisis.

The Mayor continues to raise his concerns over the limitations of the Government's offer of devices and support for those children who are not in school. In London, we need the digital access scheme to be rolled out across secondary schools and beyond so that children can access the tools they need to continue their education.

Many boroughs are reporting that the number of devices allocated to them is not meeting the demand. Further issues have arisen relating to deployment and IT support, with other significant concerns around the length of licensing and data.

In response to Covid-19, the London Grid for Learning, which was set up by local authorities in 2001, has tendered for up to 2m devices nationally to save schools money and ensure continuity of education provision. This process has secured device prices from the tech sector that represent a significant saving over current market prices, with entry level laptops available with significant savings. More information can be found at devices.lgfl.net

International Cooperation

Most recently, the Mayor participated in two international Mayoral video conferences as part of his ongoing commitment to international cooperation between cities in the fight against COVID-19.

On 2 June, the Mayor gave one of the four keynote speeches at the *Cities Against COVID-19 Global Summit 2020*. This week-long global online summit was organised and hosted by the Mayor of Seoul and joined by Mayors and senior representatives of cities around the world. During this event, the Mayor affirmed London's commitment to future close cooperation with Seoul and a network of other major cities on a coordinated response to future pandemics.

On 3 June, the Mayor also participated in a moderated discussion on how COVID-19 will change the future of European cities, which was part of the programme of the 30th Anniversary of Polish Local Government. This was hosted by the Mayor of Warsaw and joined by two other signatories of the Pact of Free Cities – the Mayors of Prague and Budapest – as well as the Mayor of Stockholm and President of Eurocities, Anna Koenig Jerlmyr. The discussion focussed on the capacity for cities to respond to crises like the coronavirus pandemic, and the need to maintain solidarity between cities in Europe in the future. You can watch the discussion [here](#).

Media, social media

- London's cycling commissioner, Will Norman, spoke to BBC Breakfast about the new cycling lanes, pavement space and changes to residential roads being implemented as part of StreetSpace London. You can watch [here](#).
- A wide-ranging interview with Sadiq appeared in the Sunday Times where he discussed the impact of COVID-19, the need for the Government to avoid a new era of austerity and how we must unite peacefully behind causes like Black Lives Matter to fight against structural injustices. You can read the interview [here](#).
- Sadiq wrote in City AM about how we have a unique opportunity to end rough sleeping for good. You can read and share the article [here](#).
- TfL shared a blog with their top tips for cycling this National Bike week. You can read and share them [here](#).

- Sadiq spoke to [BBC Breakfast](#), [ITV London](#) and the [Today](#) programme ahead of the weekend's protests to warn people to stay at home.
- Sadiq wrote in the Metro to urge Londoners to stay at home instead of protesting last weekend due to the threat of extreme far-right wing violence and the ongoing risk of COVID-19. You can read it [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 helped us collate advice on the GLA website to help those who may be feeling down or anxious. The tips can be accessed [here](#). It also includes information on how to access services if Londoners need support with their mental health. 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, which 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 the coronavirus crisis. Please help share the page, which 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, including the Government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, which is now open for applications. **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](#).**