

## Briefing Note 03 - COVID-19 Guidance

As at 09:00 Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020

### 1. Headline developments announced on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

	Item	Source
A	Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE): Publication of expert Coronavirus advice	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response">https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response</a>
B	Package of temporary financial support measures announced by Chancellor to help people and businesses	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses</a>
C	Cafes, pubs, restaurants, gyms and leisure centres must be closed to reduce social gathering	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51981653">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51981653</a>
D	UK: 177 dead (+33) 3,983 tested positive (+714)	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public</a>

### 2. Key Sources of Government Advice

Document	
A	<b>Coronavirus: action plan – A guide to what you can expect across the UK (3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020)</b> <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869827/Coronavirus_action_plan_-_a_guide_to_what_you_can_expect_across_the_UK.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869827/Coronavirus_action_plan_-_a_guide_to_what_you_can_expect_across_the_UK.pdf</a>
B	<b>World Health Organisation Advice</b> <a href="https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019">https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019</a>
C	<b>NHS Health Advice</b> <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/</a>
D	<b>Social Distancing and Protecting Older People and Vulnerable Adults</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults</a>
E	<b>Guidance for schools and local authorities on maintaining educational provision</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision</a>
F	<b>Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE): COVID-19 guidance</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response">https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response</a>
G	<b>Support for Businesses and people</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses</a>

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### 3. Commentary

Health advice remains unchanged with hand-washing and personal hygiene being the key countermeasures to reduce the spread of the virus, together with

- Self-isolation
- Household isolation
- Social distancing

The government has published over 30 detailed reports issued by its expert advisory group known as SAGE - which stands for the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies. This is in response to requests for transparency relating to scientific evidence and modelling which underpins government decision making and its Coronavirus strategy. For example, SAGE plays a key role in giving advice about the potential impact of social distancing on reducing the spread of the virus. There is a lot of detail contained in the various reports which can be viewed through the weblinks shown on page one of this Briefing Note at 2(F): 'Key Sources of Government Advice'.

Public transport has been reduced but will continue.

Schools closed yesterday, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March.

The Chancellor announced a package of temporary measures to support public services, people and businesses through this period of disruption. They include:

- a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme - the government said it will pay 80% of wages for employees who are not able to work, up to £2,500 a month.
- deferring VAT and Income Tax payments
- a Statutory Sick Pay relief package for SMEs
- a 12-month business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure business in England
- small business grant funding of £10,000 for all businesses in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief
- grant funding of £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme offering loans of up to £5 million for SMEs through the British Business Bank
- a new lending facility from the Bank of England to help support liquidity among larger firms helping them bridge Coronavirus disruption to their cash flows through loans
- the HMRC Time To Pay Scheme

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