



## Briefing Note 08 - COVID-19 Guidance

As at 09:00 Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### 1. **Headline developments announced on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

	Item	Source
A	Coronavirus Act 2020 received Royal Assent and is now law	<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/pdfs/ukpga_20200007_en.pdf">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/pdfs/ukpga_20200007_en.pdf</a>
B	Guidance for UK businesses trading internationally	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses-trading-internationally">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-uk-businesses-trading-internationally</a>
C	Government launches Coronavirus Information service on WhatsApp	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-coronavirus-information-service-on-whatsapp">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-coronavirus-information-service-on-whatsapp</a>
D	Call for new ideas for rapid sanitising of ambulances	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-call-for-rapid-sanitising-technology-for-ambulances?">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-call-for-rapid-sanitising-technology-for-ambulances?</a>
E	New guidance poster for schools and other educational settings	<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875550/COVID19_Guidance_Education-1_1_.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875550/COVID19_Guidance_Education-1_1_.pdf</a>
F	Business Rates: Expanded Retail Discount 2020/21 – Coronavirus Response Guidance for Local Authorities	<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875613/Expanded_Retail_Discount_Guidance_25.03.20.doc.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875613/Expanded_Retail_Discount_Guidance_25.03.20.doc.pdf</a>
G	Letter to hotels, hostels and B&Bs permitting them to open to provide accommodation to key workers and rough sleepers	<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875654/Luke_Hall_MP_-_Letter_to_Hotel_Chief_Executives.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875654/Luke_Hall_MP_-_Letter_to_Hotel_Chief_Executives.pdf</a>
H	<b>UK statistics:</b> 463 dead (+41) 9,529 tested positive (+1,452)	<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</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 on social distancing and for vulnerable people</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people</a>
F	<b>Guidance for schools and other educational settings</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings</a>
G	<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>
H	<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>
I	<b>Guidance for employees, employers and businesses</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19</a>
J	<b>Measures to protect people at higher risk from Coronavirus</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19</a>
K	<b>Guidance on home care provision</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-home-care-provision">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-home-care-provision</a>
L	<b>Mental health helplines</b> <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/</a>
M	<b>Guidance on children and young people under 25</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people</a>
N	<b>Guidance on temporary closure of schools in England</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing</a>
O	<b>Essential travel guidance</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-essential-travel-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-essential-travel-guidance</a>

P	<p><b>Compliance advice for businesses and other venues directed to close</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-and-other-venues-subject-to-further-social-distancing-measures/businesses-and-other-venues-subject-to-further-social-distancing-measures">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-and-other-venues-subject-to-further-social-distancing-measures/businesses-and-other-venues-subject-to-further-social-distancing-measures</a></p>
Q	<p><b>Emergency measures for railways to ensure continuity of operations and ticket refunds</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-ensures-ticket-refunds-and-protects-services-for-passengers-with-rail-emergency-measures">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-ensures-ticket-refunds-and-protects-services-for-passengers-with-rail-emergency-measures</a></p>
R	<p><b>Stay at home guidance</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance</a></p>
S	<p><b>Easy-read guide on protecting extremely vulnerable people – also known as ‘shielding’</b></p> <p><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875126/Easy_read_guidance_on_shielding_March_2020.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875126/Easy_read_guidance_on_shielding_March_2020.pdf</a></p>

### 3. Commentary

The Coronavirus Act 2020 is now law. It was fast-tracked through the House of Lords and received Royal Assent. The 358-page Act contains a wide range of powers and will remain in force for two years, with a review after six months.

The government launched a free Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp. The automated service will provide information on topics such as coronavirus prevention and symptoms, the latest number of cases in the UK, advice on staying at home, travel advice and what it describes as ‘myth busting’. To use the service, you must add 07860 064422 in your phone contacts and message the word ‘hi’ in a WhatsApp message to get started. You cannot call this number and any messages you send will not be read by a person. The WhatsApp service will allow the government to send messages to all opted-in users if required.

Companies House has closed its contact centre to protect the welfare of its employees. Anyone who needs to contact Companies House is asked to email [enquiries@companieshouse.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@companieshouse.gov.uk). If the coronavirus outbreak has affected your company and you need more time to file your accounts, you can apply for a three-month extension.

The government has updated its travel advice for children under 18. It advises against any domestic and overseas trips organised by educational settings.

The Prime Minister made a statement which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-coronavirus-25-march-2020>

The Royal Voluntary Service launched a scheme to recruit 250,000 NHS volunteer responders to support the NHS and a link to the how to volunteer is here: <https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/>. Over 500,000 have registered. Tasks include driving medicines from pharmacies to hospitals, taking patients home from hospital, and making telephone calls to check on and support people in their homes.