

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

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Where can I get the latest Leeds City Council advice about Coronavirus?

Visit <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/coronavirus> for all service changes and updates, health advice and guidance, and how to get or offer support in the community
Visit <https://news.leeds.gov.uk/> for all the latest official media releases from the council

How do I sign up for email updates from Government about Coronavirus advice?

You can sign up via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/email-signup?link=/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

How many cases of Coronavirus are in Leeds?

Information on the number of cases can currently be accessed on [this page](#).

What should someone do if they need think they need medical help for Coronavirus?

Please check the official NHS guidance on the [NHS COVID-19 webpages](#).

Can people still go to see their GP?

Face to face appointments are being reduced. If someone needs to contact a GP, they should not go into the surgery in person. Instead they should go through the surgery's website, or by phone. The GP surgery will then give advice about what to do. A phone or video call with a GP, nurse or healthcare professional may be booked. People will only be asked to visit the surgery if absolutely necessary.

Where can I find the latest guidance for Local Government?

Here is a link to all the national government [guidance for local government](#).

Where can I get advice about stopping the spread of Coronavirus?

The official NHS advice is available on the [NHS COVID-19 webpages](#).

How long does someone with Coronavirus symptoms have to stay at home for?

The official Government guidance is available here: [Staying at home, for households with possible COVID-19 infection](#).

When are people allowed to leave their home?

The Government has published the following [frequently asked questions](#) to help you understand and answer questions from other people about what they can and can't do.

In short, individuals are only allowed to leave their home for the following, very limited, purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible
- one form of exercise a day - for example, a run, walk or cycle - alone or with members of their household
- any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- travelling to and from work, but only where they cannot work from home

Where can I get advice about social distancing and the most vulnerable groups?

The official Government guidance is available here: [Social distancing to protect vulnerable groups](#).

Who can I contact if I have any concerns over Domestic Violence?

In an emergency ring 999. Ring 101 at other times.

<https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/domestic-abuse-contacts> has a range of number, both local and national, as well as other useful links.

Who should people contact if they need care support or help during social isolation?

Leeds City Council has joined forces with Voluntary Action Leeds and a network of other local charities to deliver care to anyone in need across the city. Call **0113 378 1877** to be matched with a Volunteer who can help.

Who should people contact if they want to volunteer to help?

Leeds City Council has partnered with Voluntary Action Leeds to introduce a coordinated approach to volunteering during COVID-19. Anyone wishing to help is asked to email volunteering@val.org.uk or call 0113 297 7920. Training will be provided so volunteers meet safeguarding standards.

Who do I contact if businesses are not adhering to Government advice?

- To report a licensed premise that is still open (excluding takeaways as they can continue to function) email entertainment.licensing@leeds.gov.uk
- To report any retail shops still open when they shouldn't be email: epteam@leeds.gov.uk.
- To report ice cream vendors who are still operating: markets@leeds.gov.uk
- Further useful guidance can be found at: [further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance](#)

Can residents still call the Contact Centre?

The Contact Centre is operating normal office hours, weekdays 9am to 5pm, except Wednesdays when we're open from 10am. This excludes bank holidays. Here is a list of contact numbers for specific services so you can channel customers to them during this difficult time: [Contact Numbers](#)

How can residents contact their local councillor?

We recommend residents contact their councillor through email, by phone or through social media. Councillor contact details can be found here:

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=WARD&VW=LIST&PIC=0>

In addition ward level Council Facebook groups have been created solely to respond to the virus for every ward in the city. These are easy to search for and locate on Facebook.

Can leaflets still be delivered?

There is no specific government guidance on this in relation to COVID-19. Our Public Health and Health and Safety colleagues have considered this. The evidence suggests a theoretical risk but how contagious this is to the individual handling the

leaflet is not known. This means leaflet distribution becomes a calculated risk between potential transmission from a leaflet and the benefit of informing those most in need of the essential services and support available. In the circumstances, you should err on the side of caution and only do leaflet dropping where you believe it to be essential and the only option, for example for people who do not have regular internet/social media access. If you do choose to use leaflets, the main thing is handwashing and this guidance [decontamination in non healthcare settings](#), combined with [social distancing](#). Elected members should also follow the normal guidance for their own safety.

Do Members need a Letter of Identification when assisting their constituents?

Letters for volunteers (with VAL) will be produced as a means of identification. However, Councillors should carry their photographic LCC ID, which we understand from WYP would be sufficient should they be challenged. This could of course change should additional stringent measures come into play.

Where can I get advice for people who have lost work and are struggling with debt?

The best single place for up to date advice about who to contact is [Leeds Money Information Centre](#). This lists the latest position for all the services in the city and has a range of useful phone numbers

What information can I access on benefits and wider financial support?

A benefits calculator is available here: [Benefits Calculator](#) this reflects the recent changes to Universal Credit and Employment and Support. In addition the following link provides useful information on employment and benefits: [Coronavirus pandemic response and key information](#) for people concerned about how it will affect their benefits and job income.

What support is there for residents struggling to pay their Council Tax bill?

The Council is delivering a supportive approach to all Council Tax payers, encouraging them to contact the Council at the earliest opportunity if there are any issues which may impact on ability to pay. We will discuss their circumstances and where appropriate agree a payment plan. If the impact on their income is such that they have eligibility for Local Council Tax Support we will advise/support their claim as required to ensure that people are getting the support they are entitled to before arranging payment breaks etc. Residents should be encouraged to use these contact details: 0113 222 4404 or www.leeds.gov.uk/contact-us

What support is available for Businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Please signpost any business looking for advice to the LEP in the first instance. As well as providing a wide range of links and information on its website, businesses in Leeds City Region concerned or affected by Coronavirus can contact the LEP business support team directly. Full contact details for that team can be found on [the LEP business support site](#).

In addition to this we also have [dedicated pages on our own website](#) which provides information specifically relating to Leeds. This is being updated on a regular basis and covers a broad range of issues including support for the self-employed and small and medium sized businesses, along with links to further sources of

information and support. Communication with key business representative groups is regular and ongoing, and we are aiming to collate information in specific sectors within the local economy with a view to delivering targeted support.

There is also a dedicated national helpline to help businesses and self-employed individuals - 0800 0159 559.

Grants of £10,000 are available to businesses in receipt of small business rate relief and up to £25,000 for those in receipt of the expanded retail relief. These will also be awarded to those eligible without the need for an application and it is anticipated that the grants will start being issued in early April.

For information on Business Rates email Business.rates@leeds.gov.uk. However, please be aware that the business rates team is extremely busy implementing the above measures and is therefore struggling to respond to individual enquiries at the moment.

Can businesses such as domestic cleaners continue to operate in people's homes?

Individuals are only allowed to leave their home for the following, very limited, purposes:

- Shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible
- One form of exercise a day - for example, a run, walk or cycle - alone or with members of their household
- Any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- Travelling to and from work, but only where they cannot work from home

The householders and the cleaner may wish to consider:

- Do they feel that continuing to clean the house could be considered an essential reason for the cleaner to leave their home under social distancing guidelines?
- If there is agreement that the cleaner is to continue it will be important to ensure that social distancing (staying 2 meters away from other people) and strict hand hygiene procedures are followed. These include – handwashing with soap/gel before entering and after leaving the home.

There is very specific guidance available for businesses on the Public Health England website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance#work-carried-out-in-peoples-homes>. Domestic cleaning services are not included in the list of businesses that must close.

2. A recently released Frequently Asked Questions document covers what 'What you can and can't do'. This can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do#im-not-a-critical-worker-and-i-cant-work-from-home-what-should-i-do>

3. Social distancing guidance states that individuals should only leave their home for the following very limited purposes

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

- shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible
- one form of exercise a day - for example, a run, walk or cycle - alone or with members of their household
- any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- travelling to and from work, but only where they cannot work from home

What support is available for self-employed people, including taxi/private hire drivers?

- The government has introduced a new self-employed income support scheme in the form of a taxable grant worth 80% of your average earnings over the last three years, up to £2,500 a month. This scheme will be in action for at least three months and will be extended if needed. You can access it if you earn up to £50,000 and the majority of your income is from self-employed work.
- Details about this scheme can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme.
- They say if you are eligible, HMRC will get in touch with you so there is no need to call them.
- As a council, we are working hard to further ease the financial difficulties for self-employed people where possible. We have automatically extended all taxi and private hire driver, vehicle and operator licences that are due to expire before the end of June. If we need to, we will extend this further.
- We have also asked the government for permission to delay the implementation of the Clean Air Charging Zone until further notice and we have suspended repayments for taxi and private hire owners who have received an interest-free loan. We are still accepting and continuing to pay grant payments for those vehicle owners switching to cleaner vehicles.
- Things are changing on a daily basis, and as the government develops its response to the pandemic, the following contacts for businesses and self-employed people in Leeds are in place:
 - For more information regarding business support we are directing businesses to:
 - <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/coronavirus/business>
 - <https://www.the-lep.com/business-support/covid-19-support-for-businesses/>
 - Enquiries to Leeds City Council regarding business rates should be sent to Business.rates@leeds.gov.uk
 - A dedicated national helpline has also been set up to help businesses and self-employed individuals - 0800 0159 559.
- If someone needs work straightaway, many supermarkets and care providers are in great need of additional staff to make an immediate start. For information about care vacancies email wecareacademy@leeds.gov.uk. Most major supermarkets are recruiting too, so visit their individual websites for information on how to apply.

What support is there for someone sleeping rough or homeless?

If no other options are available, alternative emergency accommodation will be sourced to support and limit the further spread of COVID 19. If housing assistance is

required 'here and now' please contact: Emergency Accommodation Team for support and advice via Leeds Housing Options 0113 222 4412 or Out of hours service 07891 273939.

If you are concerned about someone who appears to be living on the street then this should be reported through street link through the following link:

<https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

Can residents still access the Choice Based Lettings system?

Housing Leeds has made the decision to suspend lettings to Council homes via the Choice Based Letting system.

- All Council homes advertised on the Leeds Homes website on 25 March will be withdrawn and will no longer be available for bidding.
- Where an applicant has already been offered a Council home in a previous bidding cycle, this offer will be honoured, but there may be some delays in the home becoming available. If applicants have been offered a home, an officer will make contact with them to discuss their individual circumstances and will offer further advice and support. In most cases we will encourage applicants to delay their move if the applicant does not very urgently need to move. We will support any applicants affected by self-isolation and delay viewings and sign up until an applicant is no longer self-isolating and strict social distancing measures have been lifted. Where it is agreed to delay the tenancy start date, the applicant will not be expected to pay rent until the delayed tenancy start date.
- There will be no bidding cycle for the next few weeks. The Leeds Homes website will be updated with any changes and all applicants with a live application will be contacted to advise when the next bidding cycle will start.
- Only in very exceptional, critical circumstances will new allocations and lettings be made, where there is a serious risk to personal health and safety. All allocations and lettings will be made via an urgent referral from another service – hospital, social worker, support agency – and considered via a Direct Let Panel.

What will happen to Council housing repairs?

The Council has moved to an 'essential' only repairs service. For the foreseeable future the council will only deliver repairs and maintenance that if not done, are likely to jeopardise the health or safety of tenants and/or other householders. The individual needs of tenants and any vulnerability issues will be factored into determining the repair priority.

Is there any advice for Landlords and Tenants?

MHCLG has published [non-statutory guidance for landlords and tenants](#). The Home Office has also confirmed that landlords and employers will not be required to see original documents during the coronavirus outbreak. Instead, scanned documents will be accepted to prove someone has a right to rent or a right to work.

What is happening with Asylum Accommodation?

It has been announced that individuals and families will not have to leave asylum accommodation once their claim or appeal has been decided for the next three months, with a review in June. Reporting requirements and interviews have also been postponed.

What support is there for key workers' childcare?

Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

It is really important that we all work together to stop the Covid-19 virus from spreading, and children staying at home helps to do this. For the majority of children this is the safest place to be.

The city's schools are still open and in the main are providing schooling for key worker children and young people.

Emergency childcare support needed as a result of the pandemic can be requested via the following link: <https://forms.leeds.gov.uk/RequestForSupport/>

The Government has provided guidance on [Maintaining educational provision](#) and [Closure of educational settings - guidance for parents and carers](#).

What is happening with Free School Meals in Leeds?

Yes the Council has a plan in place to deliver 14,000 meals every day for means tested free school meal children. These will be available through 28 hubs across the city with established distribution points for each school to have their allocation collected from these sites or delivered directly where this is proving hard to arrange. The provision includes catering for all children who may have a special dietary requirement. The Government has also launched a voucher scheme for schools providing free school meals with weekly shopping vouchers worth £15 to spend at supermarkets while schools are closed due to coronavirus

Has public transport been affected by the Covid-19 outbreak?

Yes, as a result of the measures introduced by Government to restrict movement and encourage social isolation, public transport services have been substantially reduced. We are strongly urging people to consider whether their journey is essential and to follow the Government's guidelines to stay at home unless:

- you are travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home
- for medical reasons
- shopping for basic necessities

Bus and rail operators are running emergency timetables focused on ensuring key workers can get where they need to go as reliably and safely as possible.

For regular updates to bus and rail services and emergency timetables see: wymetro.com/plan-a-journey/travel-news/bus-travel-alerts/service-updates/

Are Park and Ride sites open?

In line with the significant reduction in the number of people travelling into Leeds, it is with regret that both Park & Ride sites are closed. The Council has however suspended charges in its car parks and for on street parking bays to give priority to key workers.

Are Community Hubs open?

Community Hubs and Libraries are closed for normal business. Merrion, Armley, Dewsbury Road and Armley remain open for prearranged collection of food parcels

and for Credit Union. Credit Union are open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Any other enquiries should be made via the Contact Centre where the face to face team are ringing residents back to answer their enquiries. Residents can use borrow box to download on line books.

What has happened to Community Centres?

Community centre bookings have been cancelled and are being refunded. Consideration is being given locally to whether the centres can provide useful space, for example for feeding locally.

Are parks still open?

Car parks at parks and open spaces have been closed. Playgrounds and outdoor exercise equipment have also been closed off. Parks themselves are currently open.

Are Museums and Galleries still open?

All museums and galleries in Leeds have been closed since 17th March. The Museum's Service is providing content about artefacts on social media.

Are Leisure Centres open?

All Leisure Centres have been closed since 17th March.

What is happening with Weddings at Leeds Town Hall?

All weddings booked up to the end of April have been cancelled with a refund. The option to cancel with a refund is being offered to weddings booked after the end of April.

What is happening with funerals?

The Government has published guidance for care of the deceased. This aims to ensure everyone stays safe and prevent the risk of infection from COVID-19. It has been drafted in consultation with faith leaders, who have worked with MHCLG and PHE to ensure their communities are protected and understand why some changes are needed to funerals and mourning rituals in this difficult time. It describes that: the number of mourners attending funerals should be restricted, so a safe distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) can be maintained between individuals. Ideally, only members of the deceased person's household or close family members should attend; any individuals displaying symptoms of coronavirus should not attend; those attending the funeral will need to adhere to social distancing at all times, including when travelling to and from the funeral; mourners are strongly advised not to take part in any rituals that bring them into close contact with the body of a person who has died from or with symptoms of coronavirus.

Why are grass verges still being cut?

- Grass cutting is undertaken under contract by an external organisation rather than directly by LCC so decisions are not solely for the council. Under current Government guidance it is able to continue.
- The Government have specifically identified businesses that should not operate. These are businesses which fall under specific categories and are principally businesses which facilitate mass gatherings of members of the public or personal contact with people e.g. clubs, restaurants, bars, hair

dressers, gyms etc. The overwhelming majority of businesses do not fall under these categories and the guidance therefore indicates that these businesses should continue to operate but on the following basis:

- Where staff can work from home they should do so
- If staff are themselves vulnerable or they live with a vulnerable person they should be sent home
- All other people should attend their normal work where it is safe to do so and as long as social distancing can be implemented.
- Grass cutting can't be done from home, however, it can be done by operating social distancing.
- From a grounds maintenance perspective if this activity was stopped we would have a number of challenges to deal with in the future e.g. long grass that will become increasingly difficult to maintain when we resume as we are now entering the peak growing season; it will create opportunities for fires; and it will create site issues for drivers

What is the position with infant feeding and Coronavirus?

The following link provides details from UNICEF on infant feeding: infant [UNICEF factsheet](#).

Where can I obtain a copy of the Stay at Home message in a language other than English?

The [migrant info hub](#) has translations of the Stay at Home messages, as well as lots of other useful information and resources to help migrants, and those supporting them.

Is the Stay at Home message available in sign language?

Home isolation resources in British Sign Language are now available on the [NHS Campaign Resource Centre](#).