

Update on fighting coronavirus in Buckinghamshire



Dear Resident,

We are starting to move more towards our 'new normal' now and I wanted to update you on what this means in Buckinghamshire.

For example, over the coming days, as shops begin to reopen, you'll see more signage and guidance in our town centres for example; more on that below. There is also information about where to wear face coverings. This is especially important on public transport and our school buses.

It's a relief to us all to start doing some of the things we haven't been able to for a long time now, but I do just want to remind everyone that to control the virus we must all keep a safe distance from other people outside our household wherever possible. And never forget the basics - keep washing hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds; alternatively use hand sanitiser when out and about.

The government's website has some good advice about social distancing and [how to stay alert and safe.](#)

Town Centres

We expect more people to start coming back into our town centres soon as **more shops and businesses start trading again from next Monday (15 June)**. We have been working in partnership with our local businesses and communities to make sure this can happen as safely as possible. We aim to keep the changes to a minimum; however, things will look and feel a little different to help people keep a safe distance from each other when they're visiting our high streets.

In many places, you're likely to see markers on the pavements, one-way pedestrian routes and directional signage to help remind you to take care, stay safe and to guide you. We're working with local businesses and town and parish councils to do our best to make sure that people can get into towns and move around them safely.

We'll be sharing more detailed information about the arrangements we're putting in place shortly.

There is also some good advice on the government's website about [how to stay safe when out of your home](#).

Parking restrictions to be reinstated

With shops and businesses opening next Monday, we expect traffic levels to increase. This means that we will need to take action to prevent anti-social or dangerous parking such as that on single yellow lines. **Therefore, we will be [reinstating all on-street parking enforcement from Monday \(15 June\)](#).** Restrictions have been relaxed since 27 March to allow key workers easier access, but from Monday parking enforcement on single yellow lines, loading bays, limited waiting areas and residents' bays will restart.

We really want to help our shops and high streets prosper again so we aren't bringing back parking charges yet. **All Buckinghamshire Council on-street parking and car parks will remain free** for a while longer, so I would really encourage you to take advantage of this and visit the shops or other local businesses.

Face coverings and safe transport

We are asking bus passengers and parents of children using school transport to be prepared with suitable face coverings for when new government rules come into force next Monday (15 June).

From this date **all passengers on public transport will need to wear a face covering**. This isn't the same as a surgical mask that you might see healthcare workers wearing. It is simply a fabric covering for the nose and mouth that helps someone who is infected but hasn't got symptoms from spreading coronavirus to others.

With some secondary pupils due to start back at school from next week, we expect there to be more people using public transport and school buses. Because social distancing is difficult on public transport we would ask as many children as possible to walk or cycle to school, or to be taken by car. But where the school bus is the only option, please can you try to make sure your child has a face covering, though no child will be refused transport if they do not have one.

The government has got more advice on [how to wear and how to make a cloth face covering on its website](#).



Plan your journey

If you have no alternative to using public transport, it really helps if you plan your journey ahead. Can you avoid peak times? If you're coming into a town centre, can you get off the bus a stop or two early to keep numbers lower at the bus stations?

If you have a concessionary bus pass, please note that travel time limitations will start again from Monday (15 June), meaning it won't be free to travel before 9am anymore from this date.

Household waste collections

I'm delighted to be able to tell you that waste collection services from outside people's homes are now fully back up and running for the first time since the coronavirus outbreak. I thank you all very much for bearing with us, and our crews who were working under difficult circumstances. We have had reduced staffing numbers alongside a big increase in the amount of waste being produced with so many more people staying at home. I want to pay testament to our staff who've worked so hard to keep the service going and to get it fully reinstated.

It means that all Buckinghamshire Council's household waste collections are operating as normal; **household waste collections, garden 'green waste', recycling, food waste, bulky waste collections and bin deliveries.**

If you can continue to help by flattening excess cardboard and placing it neatly by the recycling bin if it won't fit in, that would be appreciated. We would also ask that, where possible, you bring your bins in as soon as you are able to once they've been emptied, so they aren't blocking walkways for any longer than necessary.

Household Recycling Centres 'new normal'

As I was able to tell you last week, all of our Household Recycling Centres are now fully reopen and are operating their usual summer opening hours. I did want to remind you of the new practices now in place at all sites, as this is our 'new normal' mode of operating and we expect it to be in place for the foreseeable future.

Because of the social distancing requirements, sites can only provide half the usual number of parking spaces. It really helps therefore if people can come at quieter times and it will also save time if rubbish is sorted beforehand to shorten each visit.

I want to thank everyone using the sites for their ongoing patience. Please come back another time if the queues are so long that they could cause a traffic hazard.

We are currently publishing waiting times for each site online, so [do check online before you visit](#) by clicking on the link to the site you're intending to come to.

Coronavirus testing

More temporary coronavirus mobile testing sites are in Buckinghamshire this week. One is in Aylesbury today and tomorrow (Tuesday and Wednesday) and another is arriving in High Wycombe from Thursday.

Anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus (fever, persistent cough or change in or loss of smell or taste) is eligible for a test, regardless of their age (in England and Wales).

Find out more about testing and how to book [via the government's website](#).

All tests have to be booked – you cannot 'drop in' for a test.

Worried about a vulnerable friend, relative or neighbour?

Our Adult Social Care team is checking in with all vulnerable residents we are aware of by making many regular phone calls and by supporting in other ways too. Please tell us if you know of someone who might need our help by calling the Adult Social Care team on **01296 383 204**.

Please also carry on using our [online community hub](#) for details of how to find support in your local area.

Manage your health at home

The NHS has launched a new 'Health at Home' webpage so people can easily get NHS help and support when at home. The **Health at Home** page has information like how to contact your GP, order repeat prescriptions, manage long-term conditions and advice on looking after your mental and physical wellbeing.

Find out more at the [Health at Home website](#).

Support for carers

The coronavirus pandemic has been hard for many of us in different ways. Carers may have found life especially difficult during recent months. Many may be under extra strain due to some usual support services having to change or temporarily close. Some people may have taken on new caring roles during the pandemic and might be trying to juggle these new responsibilities with other commitments.

It's Carer's Week this week, and we want to say thank you and recognise the tremendous work of all of our carers in Buckinghamshire who may be caring for their loved ones. **If you are caring for someone and want to find out how to get help, support or information then take a look at [the Carers Bucks website](#).** You can also find specific advice for carers about coronavirus on their website.

TAKE TIME TO RELAX

This can help with difficult emotions and worries, and improve your wellbeing. Relaxation techniques can also help deal with feelings of anxiety. This is a lovely [breathing exercise](#) that you can do to help you relax.



#ProudofBucks

Lockdown has been tough on us all in many different ways, but throughout I've found all our **#ProudofBucks** stories immensely uplifting. These have been the many tales of how our communities - businesses, individuals and other organisations - have pulled together to help each other and to support those most in need.

I'm delighted to be able to tell you that we have now launched our **#ProudofBucks** blog, a digital time capsule that showcases all of these stories. We are in the process of publishing these fantastic tales and will keep adding new ones that come into us!

So [check out the blog](#), celebrate all that's good about Buckinghamshire and don't forget to send us your own stories of how we've been responding to this crisis. Use the **#ProudofBucks** hashtag on our social media channels, ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#)), or email us at communications@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Or follow and 'applaud' the blog - it's a great read!

Stay safe, stay well and stay alert!

Martin Tett

Leader of Buckinghamshire Council



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