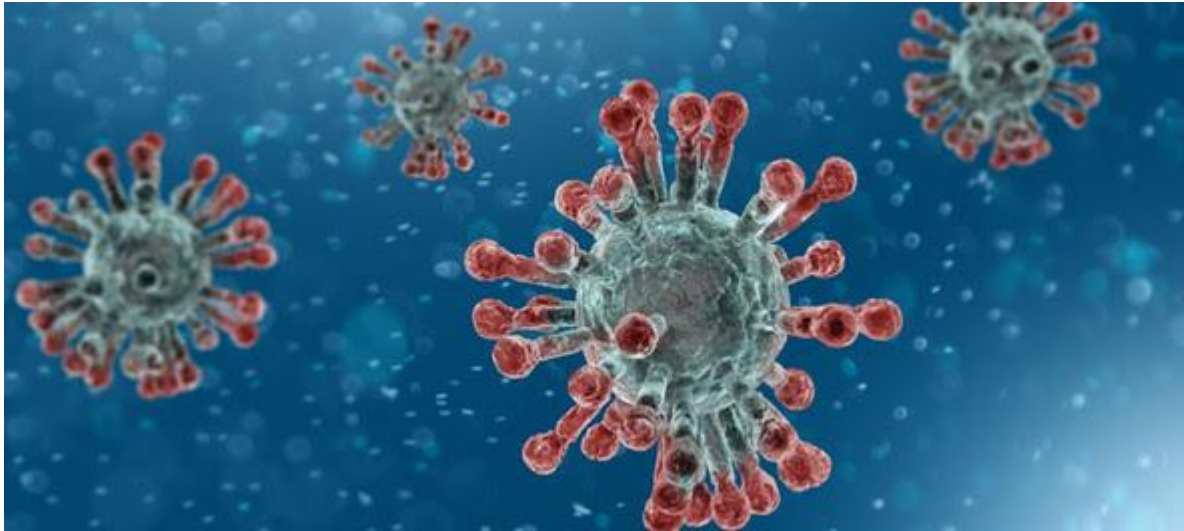


MALVERN HILLS

DISTRICT COUNCIL

EMAIL NEWS

How we are responding to the coronavirus outbreak



We know this is a very uncertain and challenging time. We want to reassure you that all levels of government, national and local, are working with the NHS and Public Health to keep people safe and support you to get through this crisis.

We have plans in place to maintain our essential services during the outbreak, such as waste and recycling collections. To do this we may have to stop doing certain things over the next few weeks and months depending on the spread of the virus and how it affects our staffing levels.

To keep you updated we have created a dedicated [coronavirus information page](#) on our website which will have the latest information about disruption to our services and how you can access financial and other support for you and your families.



What is coronavirus (Covid-19)?

Covid-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus.

You should stay at home if you have either:

A high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)

A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

You can find more advice using the links below.

[What to do if you have symptoms?](#)

[Advice on staying at home \(self-isolating\)](#)

[Advice on social distancing](#)

[Worcestershire County Council coronavirus information page](#)

Support for individuals

The Chancellor has tonight announced the Government will pay up to 80 percent of the wages of staff who are not working, up to £2,500 a month.

The scheme, open to any employer in the country, will cover the cost of wages backdated to March 1 and will be open before the end of April for at least three months.

There's no limit on the funding available for the scheme. The Government has said it will pay to support as many jobs as needed.

We have no information about how payments will be made yet but it is likely HMRC will be responsible.

Council Tax

If you are in financial hardship as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak then we would advise you to consider making a claim for Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance or Council Tax Support.

More information is available on the Government's [coronavirus and claiming benefits](#) page.

You can also spread your Council Tax payments over 12 months instead of ten.

Please contact our Revenue and Benefits team for more information by emailing revenues@southworcestershire.gov.uk or call 0300 456 0560.

The service is extremely busy at the moment so please bear with us if we cannot respond straight away.

Support for businesses

The Government has announced a package of support measures for businesses to help them through the outbreak. This includes new announcements made tonight including VAT deferral.

We are still waiting for information from the Government about some of the schemes announced.

Our [Business Advice and Support](#) page has more information and we will update it with the latest information as soon as we have the detail.

Waste and recycling

We have a plan in place to maintain our waste and recycling collections throughout the duration of the outbreak.

In order to do this we may need to stop other services such as litter picking, street cleaning, emptying public litter bins, clearing fly-tips etc. This will depend on how many staff we have off sick or self-isolating at any one time.

Our [waste and recycling page](#) will contain information on disruption to services. Please also encourage people to sign up to our [email alerts service](#) to receive the latest information to your inbox.

Disposal of waste for people/households with symptoms of coronavirus

Please put used tissues and disposable cleaning cloths in rubbish bags. Then put the bag into a second bag and tie it securely. Store it for three days before putting it in your black bin.

If on a sack collection follow the same process and store bags separately from bags of standard household waste for three days. They can then be put out for collection together on your usual collection day.

You can dispose of other household waste as normal.

Housing

Our housing team is still available to support people in need but they are very busy. As a result we are prioritising those with an emergency need.

There is a delay to allocating housing currently as Housing Associations are not operating as normal.

If you are renting and are worried about making payment, please speak to your landlord or Housing Association as soon as possible. The Government is introducing additional protections for renters to ensure they cannot be evicted as a result of hardship caused by the outbreak.

You can find more information on our [Housing pages](#).

We will receive additional money from the Government to support rough sleepers (see announcement [here](#)) - 60 to 70 percent of which suffer from a respiratory condition. We are working with our outreach team to identify what measures are needed to support this group of people.

You can help by reporting people you see sleeping rough via [Streetlink](#)

We will continue to open our emergency shelters during periods of extreme cold weather.

Planning

The Government has asked us to maintain the planning system as far as possible.

There may be a delay to registering and approving planning applications due to staff absence caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. Please bear with us during this period.

Planning Committee meetings will be streamlined and public speaking has been suspended for the time being. You are instead urged to make written representations. Visit our [planning committee page](#) for more information.

The Northern and Southern Area Planning Committees have been combined into one single planning committee until further notice.

We have relaxed restrictions on the movement of food and other essential supplies to help supermarkets and retailers stock shelves.

Pubs and restaurants can also temporarily offer a takeaway service to help get food out to vulnerable people.

Leisure centres

The Government has told all gyms and leisure centres to close as soon as possible but by midnight tonight (Friday, 20 March 2020).

Tourist Information Centres

The TIC in Upton will close at the end of opening hours on Friday, 20 March. The TIC in Malvern will close at the end of opening hours on Saturday, 21 March. People will still be able to make phone and email enquiries through our website www.visitthemalverns.org

We have cancelled all events planned for May including the Water Festival and Food Festival. The What's On section of www.visitthemalverns.org has more details of other cancelled events.

Community support

We are working with community groups, the voluntary sector, parish and town councils to support the most vulnerable in our society during the outbreak.

There are five ways you can help your community:

Take care of yourself and stay healthy – wash your hands and follow advice on self-isolation or social distancing

Call, chat and check – swap phone numbers with your immediate neighbours, check on neighbours and loved ones - particularly if they are vulnerable - help provide them with food and other essentials, alert relevant organisations if you are concerned about their welfare

Be kind and think of others – Don't bulk buy. There are plenty of supplies for everyone if people just buy what they need. Use local community information groups on social media to share information, offer surplus supplies of essentials to those in need and avoid wasting food.

Get online to stay in touch – use your phone, video calling and social media to stay in touch with people, especially if you are self isolating

Share accurate advice and information – do not speculate or scaremonger. It only heightens people's anxiety. Use reputable news sources as a source of information, the Government website or the NHS website.

Volunteer to help

If you want to help volunteer to deliver food and supplies to elderly and vulnerable people then please email Community Action Malvern & District at info@communityaction.org.uk

This includes the Tenbury area.

I am elderly or vulnerable and in need of help and support

Please ring Community Action Malvern & District on 01684 892381 and leave a message with a phone number and what your need is. Someone will then be in touch with you.

You can also download our good neighbour postcard and post it through the doors of people who are elderly or vulnerable and need additional support with shopping or accessing other essentials.

There is also a poster you can put up around your community.

[Good Neighbour Postcard](#)

[Here 2 Help Poster](#)

Our councillors are also working hard in their community to support people and will be aware of local support available in their ward. [Find your local councillor](#) by using our postcode search.