

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's Councillor's guide to service changes during the coronavirus pandemic

All you need to know is available on our dedicated coronavirus web page:

<https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Useful links

Visit the NHS for information about the virus and advice on what to do:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Public Health England: For guidance about coronavirus (COVID-19) for health professionals, businesses, schools and other organisations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

Guide to employers and businesses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-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>

Guide on staying at home and away from others:

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

Changes to services and information for residents

Bins recycling and rubbish

- The council has suspended its garden waste collection service for the time being. It has pledged to keep this matter under continuous review and will resume the service as soon as it possibly can.
- Customers will be advised through the usual media channels (and using email where addresses have been supplied) of the resumption of the service.
- The council is diverting its staff to ensure the refuse (black bin) and recycling (blue lidded bin) collections services continue as normal and are unaffected by this change.
- The council is unable to arrange refunds to garden waste subscribers but it will extend customers' garden waste subscriptions automatically to cover the time the service is not running to ensure customers are not left out of pocket. Customers are advised there is no need to contact the council to arrange this, this will be done for them.
- The council apologises for the inconvenience and will restore the service as soon as possible. In the meantime, residents are asked to store or compost their garden waste at home. Advice on composting is available online at www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/compost
- Our large item collection service is temporarily suspended until further notice.
- Leicestershire County Council has announced the closure of all recycling and household waste sites/tips until further notice.
- Our clinical waste service will continue to run on a Wednesday, but will be on a fortnightly basis from 1 April until further notice.

Council tax

In response to concerns over paying council tax during the coronavirus pandemic, residents, who pay their council tax over 12 months can ask to switch to 10 monthly payments and those who pay over 10 months can ask to move their payment break to earlier in the financial year. The total bill remains the same.

Some people may also qualify for Council Tax Support. We have an existing scheme which means people who qualify can receive up to an 88 per cent discount on their council tax bills.

The Government has also announced that in light of the coronavirus pandemic, working age people receiving council tax support will also get up to another £150 off their council tax bills. If you pay less than £150 a year at the moment, then you will pay nothing. If you currently receive council tax support, this latest reduction will be applied automatically.

Find out more, how to apply these changes and apply for Council Tax Support. Visit www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/coronacounciltax

Housing

As we support our partner agencies in dealing with the implications arising from COVID 19, we have are limiting our Allocations Service. This is in order to help house some of the patients being discharged from hospital to create capacity for CV-19 hospital admissions.

Council housing repairs

Unfortunately due to recent events concerning efforts to isolate the Covid19 virus, all non urgent repairs are now on hold. We are still operating a response to Urgent and Emergency work at present. Tenants have been notified and any non-urgent work will be rescheduled as soon as we return to normal service.

Events

In line with government guidelines, council events for April and May have been cancelled. Events scheduled to take place later in the year will be reviewed on a rolling basis in line with current government advice.

Elections

Local, mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2020 are postponed

Markets

In line with government guidance, a limited food only market is taking place in Hinckley on the usual Friday, Saturday and Mondays each week. This may change at short notice based on any related announcements from central government. Stalls are being spaced and staff are ensuring that social distancing is being observed. Stallholders are not currently paying for pitches, this is being offered as a service for residents who prefer to shop outside of supermarkets.

Moving home

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) has issued guidance on home-moving during COVID-19 for home buyers and renters. The key message is to delay, where possible

Other information

Visiting the Hub and the Atkins Building

To protect residents and staff the Hinckley Hub is now open to visitors with pre-appointments and emergencies only. If you have, or need a pre-arranged appointment or an emergency please call 01455 238141. Our 24-hour payment line is 01455 619617

- If you have an appointment with Citizens Advice please call 0300 330 1025
- The Atkins Building's registrar service is open by appointment only until further notice. The Atkins Gallery is currently closed to the public.

Council meetings

All meetings are being cancelled in light of current government advice, with the agreement of the meeting Chair. Please see the calendar of council meetings for the most up to date information.

Community Houses

In line with current government advice, Barwell, Earl Shilton and Gwendoline Community Houses have cancelled all group activities until further notice. However, the Community House Team is still available to provide support, advice, signposting and food vouchers. Please call 01455 255942/941 for more information.

Pub/restaurant/café delivery services

Planning rules are being relaxed to allow restaurants, cafes and pubs to run as takeaways for up to 12 months. Businesses who wish to do this, need to notify our planning team with a proposed start and end dates for new use.

Hinckley Leisure Centre

Hinckley Leisure Centre is operated by Places Leisure on behalf of the Borough Council. The facility is closed until further notice in line with government guidance.

Are parks still open?

For now parks are open for very limited daily exercise, once a day only. No gatherings are permitted. Following the government's latest advice, we have closed all play areas, ball courts and outdoor gyms we manage until further notice. The tennis courts and bowling green at Hollycroft Park are also closed.

Are libraries open as usual?

No, all Leicestershire libraries are closed until further notice. Updates will be shared on Leicestershire Libraries social media channels and the Leicestershire County Council website. Community managed libraries may also close. Please check their websites for further information. The library service has advised that all items currently on loan will not be due for return until 1 May 2020; however this will be reviewed if necessary. A digital library service is accessible to library members.

Support for residents

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council has launched a Resident Support Scheme to support

borough residents most in need of extra help during the coronavirus outbreak, including those self-isolating.

The service will prioritise those people who have no one else to help and who are the most vulnerable, for example those over the age of 70, those with an underlying health condition, individuals who are on their own and feeling isolated and families that are struggling to cope. Assistance can be given to:

- Link people into local support networks where these are in place.
- Help with emergency food access and ongoing shopping assistance
- Advise on collection of prescriptions and other essentials
- Social contact for those who are lonely
- Advice on financial help for those who are worried about their personal finances
- Advice on how to look after your health and wellbeing whilst self isolating.

If you are self-isolating or know somebody who is and has no or limited support networks such as friends, family or neighbours please call 01455 238141 or visit: www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/coronasupport

People are encouraged to use the online services in the first instance to help with the high volume of calls.

What support is there for older people?

- Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland has launched a dedicated Coronavirus Helpline 0116 299 2239, open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm to support the most at risk in our communities, to help deliver practical and emotional support to local older people.
- The Silver Line also offers a free, 24 hour confidential helpline for older people 0800 4 70 80 90.

Volunteering

Anyone interested in volunteering can register with Next Generation, who is already working with registered charities and organisations in the area. Visit www.nextgenhinckey.org or call 01455 632984.

Help and advice for businesses

Information to support businesses on our website:

https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/info/200379/help_and_advice_for_businesses/1630/coronavirus_-_business_rates_support_and_advice

Our teams are busy identifying businesses that meet the criteria for each scheme and whether we already hold bank details for these businesses – if we do hold up-to-date bank account details we will use those details to make the grant payments as soon as possible. Staff have been re-deployed to make calls to businesses we do not hold bank details for to give them information to enable them to upload their bank details to a secure link. Payments began from the 1 April, when central government funding was made available to us in order to make these payments.

If you are a business, we strongly encourage you to register for e-billing to get this information to us: <https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/mybusinessrates>

For general enquires about business rates in relation to government announcements for grants and reliefs please email: covid19businessrates@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

The expanded retail discount 2020/21 and nursery discount are effective from the 1 April 2020.

Package of measures set out by the Chancellor

The Chancellor has set out a package of temporary, timely and targeted measures to support public services, people and businesses through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19. In summary:

- A 12 month business rates 'holiday' for all retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses in England. This is known as expanded retail discount
- A 12 month business rates 'holiday' for children's nurseries
- Small business grant funding of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief
- Grant funding of £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses for properties with a rateable value between £15,001 and £51,000

More information for businesses:

https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/info/200379/help_and_advice_for_businesses/1627/coronavirus_covid-19_support_for_businesses