

Briefing Note 02 - COVID-19 Guidance

As at 09:00 20th March 2020

1. Headline Developments announced on 19th March 2020

	Item	Source
A	Coronavirus Bill published	https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0122/20122.pdf
B	Interest rates cut to 0.1%	https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/boeapps/database/Bank-Rate.asp
C	Testing of UK vaccine in April	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51966721
D	UK: 144 dead, 3,269 tested positive	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

2. Key Sources of Government Advice

Document
Coronavirus: action plan – A guide to what you can expect across the UK (3rd March 2020) 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
World Health Organisation Advice https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
NHS Health Advice https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/
Social Distancing 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
Guidance for schools 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

3. Commentary

Health advice remains unchanged with hand-washing and personal hygiene being the key countermeasures to reduce the spread of the virus. The symptoms affect the lungs and airways and have been summarised as:

- A cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever

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Guidance of measures to stop the spread of the virus are being reinforced by:

- Self-isolation
- Household isolation
- Social distancing

Public transport in London has been reduced and this is being extended to some rail services across the country.

Schools close from today. The government has announced that children of key workers may continue going to school. In summary these are:

- NHS staff
- Social care workers
- Schools and nursery staff
- Police officers
- Court staff
- Religious staff
- Journalists
- Some government employees
- Delivery workers
- Supermarket staff
- Army and Ministry of Defence personnel
- Firefighters
- Prison and probation staff
- Transport workers
- Infrastructure workers – includes gas and electricity
- Some financial services staff

Additional emergency legislation in the form of the Coronavirus Bill was published by Parliament on 19th March. The 329-page Bill contains a wide range of emergency powers which may be used as and when necessary when it becomes law. MPs will next consider the Bill at the second reading on Monday 23 March 2020.

The Prime Minister optimistically suggested that if all the measures that have been introduced make an impact that the UK may 'turn the tide' on the virus in 12 weeks. This should be viewed as a rallying call for individuals to follow advice rather than any evidence-based statement. He was rather less convincing when challenged about this!

Prepared by Tony Thompson
20th March 2020 @ 09:00 hours
(+44) 7706 112416
tony.thompson@otho.uk