



Dear resident

On Monday, the Prime Minister set out the government's plans on how the country would come out of lockdown. With a steady reduction in the number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases there will be some easing of national restrictions which will begin in March.

This is good news, along with the great work the NHS is doing with the roll out of vaccinations meeting the targets for priority groups. It means we can look forward to returning to some level of normality soon.

From Monday 8 March, schools will reopen, you'll be able to meet with one other person outdoors for recreation and exercise, and care homes will allow one regular visitor. The government may announce further easing of restrictions from the start of the Easter holidays (Monday 29 March) – depending on the number of COVID-19 cases. Until then the 'stay at home' rule continues to apply.

I am really pleased to see how well the NHS's vaccination programme is going in Hillingdon. There has been a high take up of the COVID-19 vaccine and I would like to thank all staff and volunteers for the fantastic work they are doing. You can read how well the borough is doing below.

When you're invited to get your vaccine, please don't hesitate – COVID-19 vaccinations are safe, effective and the best way to protect yourself and others from falling seriously unwell. Thank you to the thousands of residents who have already had their first dose of the vaccine, and if you are still waiting for yours, the NHS will contact you when it's your turn.

Community testing remains a vital tool in our efforts to reduce the number of cases. Even if you have no symptoms, you could have the virus. I encourage everyone – particularly if you need to leave home for work – to get tested regularly using our COVID-19 testing sites for people without symptoms. It's quick, easy and free with results usually within an hour. Details on where and how to book are detailed below.

While this is all promising news, it is still crucial to follow the rules, including washing your hands, wearing a face covering and keeping a safe distance.

For yourself, those you care about, and our borough I encourage everyone to do their bit to keep us all safe.

Thank you

Easing of restrictions: What's changing?

From 8 March -

- Schools and colleges reopen
- Recreation or exercise with your household or one other person outside of your household will be allowed outdoors
- Care home residents can have one regular visitor



If cases continue to drop the government may allow the following stages:

• From 29 March -

- Six people from different households to meet outside, including in private gardens
- Outdoor sports such as grassroots football and tennis/basketball courts could reopen

• April 12 -

- Non-essential retail and leisure facilities could reopen e.g libraries, gyms, hairdressers

• May 17 -

- Two households can mix indoors
- Cinemas, hotels, performance and sporting events can reopen (social distancing will still apply and capacity limits for large events)
- Weddings can continue with up to 15 people, with receptions and funerals up to 30 people

• June 21 -

- All legal restrictions could be lifted with social distancing being reviewed

[Find out more about the roadmap to ease restrictions](#)

Schools are safe to reopen

Teaching staff have done an exceptional job in moving learning online while accommodating children of key workers and vulnerable children. We'd like to thank them for their hard work over what has been a challenging year.

Schools are the best place for children, for their development and education. We've been working with headteachers and schools to make sure the reopening of schools is safe for pupils, staff and parents.

When you are dropping off your child, please follow social distancing guidelines and the safety measures put in place by your child's school.





More than 63,000 residents vaccinated

Thank you to everyone who has received their COVID-19 vaccine.

Our partners at the NHS and our local CCG continue their efforts to make sure as many people as possible receive their vaccine.

So far, 63,034 people in Hillingdon have been vaccinated (as of Wednesday 24 February). That accounts for most residents in all priority groups.

You will be invited by the NHS to book an appointment when it's your turn to receive the vaccine. This will either be a phone call, text or letter.

If you've had your vaccine, we'd love to hear your story.

[Find out more and submit your story](#)



Get tested! It's as important as ever to get tested

Even if you don't have COVID-19 symptoms, it's vital to get tested, to help break the chain of infection. That's why we've opened even more testing sites across Hillingdon.

Getting tested is easy, fast and free. All you need to do is book a free 10-minute slot and take a swab of your throat and nose - you'll usually get your results within an hour.

If you test negative you should continue to follow government guidelines and keep yourself protected by washing your hands regularly, wearing a face covering, and keeping a safe distance from others.

If you test positive you must self-isolate and follow NHS guidelines. If you have any COVID-19 symptoms, you must book a test via the NHS. You may also be eligible for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment.

[View our testing sites and book your test](#)

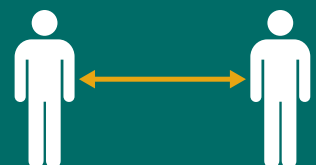
Protect yourself and others



Wash your hands
often for at least 20
seconds using soap and
water or sanitiser



Cover your face
on public transport and
in enclosed public
indoor spaces



Keep your distance
(2 metres or 1 metre
where this isn't possible)

Use our library click and collect service for some Easter reading

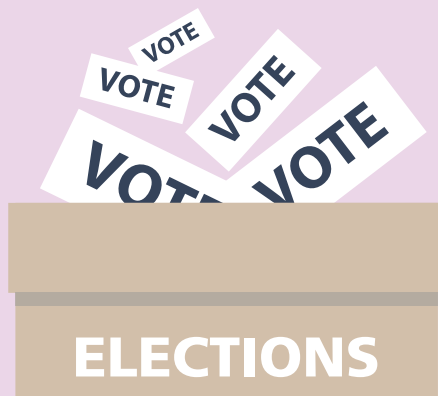
Libraries across Hillingdon remain closed under the revised lockdown restrictions announced this week. However, residents still can access a range of services online. You can use our 'reserve and collect' service at selected libraries to collect and drop off items from the foyer – you must wear a face covering unless exempt.

Our 'select and collect' service remains available if you know beforehand what you'd like to read. Simply call or email your local library with your request, based on genre, author or subject and our team will choose the books and let you know when they're ready to pick up.

For residents with no or limited access to IT equipment, computers are available for essential use (not leisure) at Uxbridge Library and Botwell Library. Sessions are limited to 40 minutes per user, per day, and face coverings must be worn unless you're exempt. Call to pre-book your session.



[Find out more](#)



Fancy working at the May elections?

This May, there's a brilliant chance to see first-hand behind the scenes of the elections process, while also earning a little extra money.

The council's Electoral Services team is accepting applications now for anyone interested in working as a poll clerk or presiding officer at the mayoral election, taking place on Thursday 6 May.

Training will be provided for both roles, and there's no previous experience needed for the poll clerk positions.

The safety of staff and voters at polling stations is paramount, so you can be reassured that measures will be in place to ensure the safest possible working conditions, too.

The deadline for applications is Sunday 28 February.

[Find out more and apply](#)



Still time to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme

EU, EEA or Swiss citizens and their families can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) to continue living and working in the UK following Brexit.

From the applications processed in the UK so far, 97% have been granted settled, or pre-settled status. So, don't miss the deadline to apply on 30 June 2021.

Find out more by visiting the government's dedicated EUSS webpage www.gov.uk/eusettlementscheme