

Extension for discretionary business grant scheme

We have extended the deadline so more businesses can apply for a government funded grant scheme.

More than £50m has been distributed to 5,000 firms across the borough since the start of the pandemic.

The extension pushes the deadline for the latest tranche of funding back until the end of June, as the original window only gave businesses two weeks in which to apply.

For more details click [here](#).

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Business/Business-Support/COVID-19-Discretionary-Business-Grant.aspx>

Wigan Pride

Wigan Pride is going digital this year. The online event, which celebrates diversity and reminds us of the importance of equality, is on Friday 26th June.

The event starts at 6pm and will feature music, entertainment, speeches and short films.

To watch it go to Wigan Pride's Facebook page [here](#).

<https://www.facebook.com/OfficialWiganPride>



Alert level

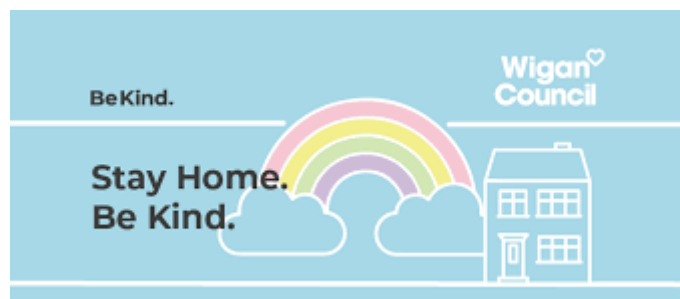
The Covid-19 alert level for the UK has been lowered from Level 4 (epidemic is in general circulation; transmission is high or rising exponentially) to Level 3 (epidemic is in general circulation).

The chief medical officers for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland say the move reflects the steady decrease in cases but have urged caution in that it does not mean the

pandemic is over.

“The virus is still in general circulation, and localised outbreaks are likely to occur,” the CMOs said.

“We have made progress against the virus thanks to the efforts of the public and we need the public to continue to follow the guidelines carefully to ensure this progress continues.”



On Monday thousands of people across Greater Manchester will be returning to work as many businesses, shops and services reopen. It might be the first time in a while you have had to travel any distance and it's important that you feel confident and safe when you do.

To make sure you can protect yourself and others around you, we want to give you the information and options you need to make smart travel choices - so our transport network is as safe as possible for those who people who rely on it.

In line with Government advice, our ask is that people continue to stay at home as much as possible and avoid public transport - unless it's absolutely necessary - and to cycle, walk or drive outside peak hours if possible. That way we can make sure the limited capacity we have across the bus, tram and train networks are preserved for people who don't have another option.

If you do have to travel by public transport, you **must wear a face covering. It will be your responsibility to provide this.**

Safe cycling and walking

- If you can, walk and cycle for more journeys. One third of all journeys in Greater Manchester under 1km are made by car – that's about a five-minute bike ride, or 10-minute walk.
- We're expanding Greater Manchester's bike loan scheme and relaunching cycle

training for those who need to build confidence on their bikes.

- To make walking and cycling safer we've put in a bid to government for £21.5m to install 200km of protected cycle lanes and traffic calming measures and to increase access to bikes.

See more on cycling and walking

Safe driving

- If you drive to work, plan ahead, leave extra time and avoid the morning and afternoon peaks if you can. Car parks may be busier than usual, particularly in Manchester city centre.
- You may see changes in road layouts due to the temporary cycling and walking measures introduced by local councils, as well as ongoing improvements to the road network.
- There are likely to be more people travelling on foot and by bike, particularly less experienced cyclists, so please take extra care and be considerate of everyone on the roads.
- Driving safely reduces pressure on our emergency services and the NHS.

Safe public transport

- If you have to travel by public transport **from Monday 15 June, you must wear a face covering. It will be your responsibility to provide this** and can be a simple scarf or bandana. There are exemptions for children under the age of 11 and students travelling on dedicated school bus services, people who have trouble breathing, carers and anyone whose condition means they are unable to wear a face covering.
- Please keep your distance from others, clean your hands frequently and use contactless payment.
- Please plan your journeys in advance and download transport operator apps so you can keep up to date with service changes and information.
- To enable more social distancing on Metrolink we're increasing the frequency of trams to every 10 minutes from Monday 22 June.
- We're installing hand sanitiser dispensers at bus stations and interchanges and we're looking at installing dispensers at busy Metrolink stops as well.
- We're introducing a Clipper card on Metrolink so people can work more flexibly, including if they are working from home more often. This will be available on **get me there** smart cards.

See further advice on coronavirus and transport

Business or employer? Get support from TfGM

#SafeGM

togethergm.org/reopening

Keep informed: tfgm.com/coronavirus   **@OfficialTfGM**

Treatment for coronavirus patients approved for NHS use

Following clinical trials, an anti-inflammatory drug – dexamethasone – has been approved for use in UK hospitals for COVID-19 patients who require oxygen, including those on ventilators.

The trial showed the drug significantly reduced the risk of death for patients who required oxygen as a result of COVID-19.

Funded by the UK government, via the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the Oxford University UK RECOVERY trial is the first clinical trial anywhere in the world to show a treatment provides significant impact in reducing patient mortality.

Sick pay for care workers

Local care workers who test positive with COVID-19 will receive full sick pay while they self-isolate.

As part of the initiative from the council, care workers will also receive backdated sick pay for COVID-19 related sickness absences.

Previously, carers were only entitled to the government statutory sick pay, but thanks to careful financial planning and utilising the government's infection control fund, the council has developed a scheme to ensure this funding shortfall is met.

Free school meals

The Government has announced a new £120 million voucher scheme- the 'Covid summer food fund'- so children eligible for free school meals in term-time in England will now get a six-week voucher to support them during the summer holidays.

The decision follows a campaign from Manchester United player Marcus Rashford, who had called on the government to extend the scheme through the summer holidays.



Greenspaces update

We have regularly undertaken and reviewed risk assessments across all of our parks, greenspaces and buildings to ensure the appropriate measures are in place to keep our residents and workforce safe before we fully open to the public again.

Following the risk assessment reviews, all council-owned golf courses, bowling greens, playing fields, tennis courts and car parks within parks have now re-opened with relevant safety protocols in place.

Play areas, outdoor gyms, multi-use games areas and basketball courts remain closed.

Toilets at our parks and local nature reserves, bowling greens and playing fields have also remained closed, together with changing rooms and pavilions.

We'll be reminding residents to follow government guidelines on social distancing and social interaction.

Greater Manchester Police will be carrying out patrols across our parks and green spaces and issuing fines for breaking government restrictions.

The maintenance of non-essential grass cutting in parks and open spaces, bowling greens, football pitches and roadside grass verges has resumed with a limited service, as many staff are still redeployed to support critical services.

The bird hides both at Pennington Flash and the Three Sisters Recreation Area will also not be open.

We will keep updating residents, but for now these arrangements will stay in place while we review the latest guidelines alongside our priority to keep residents safe.

