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| West Midlands COVID-19 UpdateLast updated: Friday 24th April 2020 17:00****Purpose of this briefing****This is a regularly updated document which aims to give to regional stakeholders:* An overview of the spread of COVID-19 in the urban West Midlands (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton)
* A single view of the actions of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and the Mayor in response to COVID-19
* A guide to where to find detailed regional information to support the existing national Government guidance
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| ****Latest Headlines***** There have been **6573 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the West Midlands (as of 24th April)**. This makes the West Midlands the biggest regional hotspot for COVID-19 after London.
* Coronavirus testing sites are open at Edgbaston Cricket Ground in Birmingham, the Ricoh Arena in Coventry, and the Midland Metropolitan Hospital site in Sandwell. The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust is helping to facilitate home testing.
* The WMCA is playing its part in setting up the new NHS Nightingale Hospital at Birmingham’s National Exhibition Centre by funding the training of hundreds of key workers. Local training providers, funded by the WMCA, are supporting the NHS by rapidly training staff for the Nightingale as part of the region’s response to the Covid-19 outbreak. [[Monday April 20th](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-r/)]
* Frontline public transport staff in the West Midlands are now being tested for coronavirus [[Tuesday April 21st](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-y/)]
* A recovery action plan is to be drawn up specifically tailored to help the West Midlands economy bounce back quickly once lockdown restrictions start to be lifted. Political and business leaders announced today they were working together to form a bespoke strategy capable of securing an effective and long-lasting economic recovery. [[Friday April 24th](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-j/)]
* Create Central, the industry-led body set up in late 2019 has secured £2million of investment to deliver a programme of activities to help turbo charge the West Midlands film, TV and games sector. [[Thursday April 23rd](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-t/)]
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| ****Key messages to the public****Stay at homeYou **must stay at home**, only leaving for the following very limited purposes: * Shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible
* One form of exercise a day – for example, a run, walk or cycle – alone or with members of your immediate household
* Any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
* Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

Protect the NHSYou **must** stay at home to **protect the NHS**: * The NHS only has a limited number of doctors, nurses and specialist equipment
* We are working around the clock to increase NHS capacity
* The more people who get sick, the harder it is for the NHS to cope
* We must slow the spread of the disease so that fewer people are sick at any one time.

Save livesYou **must** stay at home to **protect the NHS** and **save lives**. The police will have the powers to enforce the following restrictions:  * Dispersing gatherings of more than two people in public, excluding people you live with
* Issuing fines to anyone who does not comply with these rules
* Closing shops that are not essential, as well as playgrounds and places of worship.
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| ****Message from Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands****“While our region continues to do a good job of fighting Coronavirus with our rate of infections plateauing and hospitals coping well with the demand, attention has begun to switch to the economic impact on the West Midlands.Research by the Centre for Progressive Policy has suggested our region could be the hardest hit economically by COVID-19, and it is important we start to ramp up our recovery plans.Political and business leaders have started to draw up a bespoke recovery strategy for the region which is already looking at what infrastructure projects we can bring forward to help provide a shot in the arm to the economy. However it is also important that Government allows the regions to be at the heart of the national recovery policy decision making, and I am lobbying to make this happen.” |

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| ****Further information***** Details of WMCA COVID-19 support and guidance are [available here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-i/)
* Latest WMCA Communications updates are [available here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-d/)
* Full guidance on staying at home can be [found here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-h/)
* You can find the most up to date medical advice [here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-k/)

**Bereavement Support**We understand that losing a loved one can feel overwhelming, especially if the death was sudden, untimely and unexpected.There are a number of organisations who can support you and your family during this distressing time.These include:* [Find bereavement services from your council](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-u/)
* For a step-by-step guide after a bereavement [click here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-o/)
* Cruse Bereavement Care has online resources on how bereavement and grief may be affected by this pandemic, [click here to find out more](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-b/). Alternatively, call their free helpline: 0808 808 1677
* For facts about the coronavirus and supporting children [click here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-n/)
* [The Compassionate Friends](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-q/) offer support to families after the death of a child of any age and from any cause. [Visit their website](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-a/) or alternatively, call: 0345 123 2304
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| ****Latest COVID-19 Public Health England and NHS update****There have been **6573 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the West Midlands (as of 24th April)**. This makes the West Midlands to biggest regional hotspot for COVID-19 after London. |

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| ****Further information***** Latest [PHE / NHS data](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-f/) on COVID-19 cases in the West Midlands
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| ****West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Response to COVID-19****The WMCA has been focused on the following six areas of activity in response to COVID-19, working closely with our seven constituent councils, and focusing on the areas where the Combined Authority can add to what is being done by Government and other public bodies:* **Strategic Co-ordination across the Public Sector**: Working together across the public sector to ensure that the response to COVID-19 is joined up and effective as possible.
* **Protecting the Regional Economy**: Working with businesses and representative organisations to make sure that support is provided to businesses and workers to ensure the West Midlands economy can recover as swiftly as possible following the COVID-19 outbreak.
* **Running the Transport Network**: Reducing services because of the guidance limiting travel in the region, but running sufficient services on train, Metro and bus networks to allow key workers to get to their work in a safe manner and by providing free transport to NHS workers.
* **Supporting All Our Communities**: Ensuring all communities of the West Midlands are looked after during the COVID-19 outbreak, including all faith and ethnic minority groups and other vulnerable groups such as the homeless, those with mental health issues or disabilities and older people
* **Communicating with the Public**: Giving clear guidance to people in the West Midlands about what they are expected to do during the COVID-19 outbreak
* **Adapting the WMCA’s Own Operations:** Ensuring our staff are safe and healthy, while continuing the activities of the WMCA
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| ****Strategic Co-ordination across the Public Sector******Context**: The response to COVID-19 will require the joined-up working between different public sector organisations to tackle the outbreak and the impact on public services and the regional economy. The WMCA is well-positioned to work closely with public sector bodies given its existing collaborative working relationships, particularly with councils and with those agencies involved in transport, housing, skills, employment, policing and health.The purpose of this activity is:* Work closely with other public sector organisations
* Support regional resilience planning and resourcing

The structures leading this work in the West Midlands are:* **Regional Strategic Co-ordinating Group**: (Senior leaders from West Midlands Police, Councils, NHS, PHE, WMCA) reporting to COBR in London
* **Regular Mayor and Council Leaders Conference Calls** (Mayor, Council Leaders, Respective Chief Executives, briefed by other agency leaders e.g. Chief Constable of West Midlands Police)
* **Calls between the Mayor and leaders from the NHS, Public Health England, Police and other public bodies**
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| ****Protecting the Regional Economy******Context**: The public health measures which have been implemented to slow the spread of COVID-19 are having a huge impact on the West Midlands economy. Government has put in place unprecedented support measures to help businesses and workers through this time. The WMCA is working with representative organisations to make sure that this support is getting through to businesses and workers and is working on plans to accelerate the economic recovery after the COVID-19 outbreak.The purpose of this activity is:* Monitor the latest economic situation for businesses in the West Midlands on a weekly basis through WM-Redi
* Ensure Government support is reaching West Midlands businesses and workers
* Lobbying Government to secure further support for West Midlands businesses and workers
* Prepare for the economic recovery following the COVID-19 outbreak
* Connecting West Midlands businesses with the frontline public sector organisations e.g. the NHS, who may need support

The structures leading this work in the West Midlands are:* Regular Economic Contingency Group meetings(WMCA, Councils, TUC, LEPs, Chambers of Commerce, West Midlands Growth Company, Bank of England, BEIS)

Latest updates:* A recovery action plan is to be drawn up specifically tailored to help the West Midlands economy bounce back quickly once lockdown restrictions start to be lifted. Political and business leaders announced today (Friday April 24) they were working together to form a bespoke strategy capable of securing an effective and long-lasting economic recovery. [[Friday April 24th](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-z/)]
* Brownfield investments have been announced to boost post-Covid-19 economic recovery. The announcement from the WMCA’s Investment Board is a strong signal to the market that the region is continuing to use its brownfield site investment to keep the wheels of the economy turning during the unprecedented lockdown and give the private sector the confidence to invest and develop key sites. [[Wednesday April 22nd](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-v/)]
* Local people will have more opportunities to improve their digital skills during the Covid-19 shutdown, thanks to new training courses funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority.  [[Wednesday April 22nd](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-e/)]
* While the furlough scheme is operating smoothly so far, businesses have emphasised that there has to be a transition out of furlough as government eases lockdown conditions.
* The EIG is working with LEPs to understand the impact of COVID-19 on different sectors and how well current support plans are working.  This provides a basis for a series of sector-based business roundtables to accelerate the recovery, in conjunction with the Strategic Economic Development Board.
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| **Running the Transport Network****Context**: Due to the Government’s guidance limiting people’s movement, Transport for West Midlands has been working with operators to reduce the number of services to the appropriate level to be sufficient for key workers.The purpose of this activity is:* Run a limited service to allow key workers to access work and residents to be able to access essential shopping and healthcare
* Protect the health and safety of all those working on the transport network
* Ensure that operators are able to reinstate full transport services when the lockdown is finished
* Provide free travel for NHS staff and manage a shuttle service from stations and park and rides to hospitals

The structures leading this work in the West Midlands are:* **Transport for West Midlands**
* **Bus Alliance** (bus operators across the West Midlands)
* **West Midlands Rail Executive** (councils and rail operators in the West Midlands)

Latest updates:* Frontline public transport staff in the West Midlands are now being tested for coronavirus [[Tuesday April 21st](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-s/)]
* Highways England have expressed concern at the increase in the level of traffic on the key route network. We are reminded to follow government guidelines and only make journeys that are essential.

****Supporting All Our Communities******Context**: During this challenging time for the region, all communities need to come together to support people, particularly those who are vulnerable. The WMCA and councils are working together to ensure that community efforts can contribute to the overall response to the COVID-19 outbreak effectively.The purpose of this activity is:* Work with faith and community organisations to co-ordinate support for those who need it
* Support vulnerable communities in the West Midlands like those with mental health issues, disabilities or the homeless

The structures leading this work in the West Midlands are:* Faith leaders who have previously been engaged by the WMCA, for example at the Mayor and Faith Conference
* WMCA and Mayor’s Office working closely with local authorities

Latest updates:* [Community Support Hub](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-g/) website remains live, allowing people to see what local groups are near them if they want to volunteer. There are over 400 community groups on the website, including details of virtual faith services in each local authority area.
* The [Community Champions blog](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-w/) celebrates the volunteering efforts of our community heroes during the Covid-19 crisis, sharing stories, ideas and inspiration from across the West Midlands. If you have a story that you'd like to be featured, please get in touch via email: volunteers@wmca.org.uk
* In celebration of St George's Day, the Mayor has been reflecting on how the true values of the day align with the struggles we're all facing at this moment in time. About inner strength, tolerance, inclusivity, and the underdog spirit, [hear more here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-yd/)
* As the holy Islamic month of Ramadan begins, the Mayor wanted to send his very best wishes to Muslims across the West Midlands, and all those celebrating, [hear more here.](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail19.com/t/d-l-mitilld-jujriyhyuu-yh/)
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| ****Communicating with the Public******Context**: During the COVID-19 outbreak, it is critical that the public understand the medical guidance and act accordingly to tackle the virus. Due to restrictions on contact, public services will also have to change, and these changes need communicating to the public. Furthermore, this will be a worrying time for residents, and there is a need to reassure and comfort people, and to celebrate positive stories of people supporting one another through the crisis.The purpose of this activity is:* Ensure people in the West Midlands understand the Government’s guidance
* Provide clear regional guidance on changes to public services, such as new transport timetables or skills provision.
* Explain what is being done in the West Midlands and reassure the public that there is a committed regional response to the crisis
* Make the case for further Government support

The structures leading this work in the West Midlands are:* **Regular Regional Press Briefing Sessions**: These briefing sessions for the press are hosted by representatives from a range of public sector organisations in the region, including the Mayor, Public Health England, the NHS, West Midlands Police, the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, Birmingham City Council, and the Local Resilience Forum.
* **West Midlands Regional Communications Directors’ Calls**: These calls allow Communications Directors from councils, the WMCA and other public bodies to co-ordinate communications activities across the West Midlands.

Latest updates:* **Amplifying the Government’s official guidance** on COVID-19 to people in the West Midlands through the WMCA’s communications channels.
* **Providing clear regional guidance on changes to public services**, such as new transport timetables or skills provision.
* **Explaining what is being done in the West Midlands and making the case for further Government support** through the Mayor’s media appearances.
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| ****Adapting WMCA’s Own Operations******Context**: The WMCA as an organisation has responsibilities for supporting economic growth in the West Midlands, including transport, housing, skills, and making sure everyone in the West Midlands benefits from that economic growth through work on areas like mental health and homelessness. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the WMCA will adapt to support the immediate needs of the West Midlands, working closely with public sector partners, and will also ensure that essential WMCA activities continue.The purpose of this activity is:* Keep our staff and those of our suppliers safe and healthy during the COVID-19 outbreak
* Reprioritise effort towards meeting the immediate needs for tackling the COVID-19 outbreak
* Ensure essential WMCA operations continue

The structures leading this work in the West Midlands are:* **WMCA Senior Leadership Team**, led by Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive, WMCA
* **TfWM Leadership Team**, led by Laura Shoaf, Managing Director, TfWM

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