West Midlands COVID-19 Update

Last updated: Friday 17 April 2020, 19:30

### ****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

### ****Latest Headlines****

* The West Midlands continues to have the highest number of Coronavirus cases and deaths outside of London, although the rate of infection now appears to be beginning to plateau. There have been 5260 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the region as of Friday 17th April.
* A call to arms for the region’s businesses to step up and produce or donate protective clothing for those on the coronavirus frontline has been met with an overwhelming response. More than 367 companies have so far responded to the call for medical grade Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), which only went out from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) last week. [[Friday 17th April]](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-r/)
* The region’s Nightingale Hospital at the NEC has officially opened. The Mayor joined Prince William, and representatives from the NHS and UHB as part of the opening. [[Thursday 16th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-y/)]
* New testing sites are due to come on stream at Coventry’s Ricoh Arena [[Friday 17th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-j/)] and Sandwell’s Midland Metropolitan Hospital [[Wednesday 15th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-t/)]

Individuals and organisations keen to do their bit in the fight against coronavirus are being invited to join a new initiative which connects offers of help to those most in need. The West Midlands Combined Authority Covid-19 Support platform has been launched by the WMCA to bring the community together in the Covid-19 battle and link up and coordinate offers and requests. [[Friday 17th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-i/)]

### ****Key messages to the public****

### Stay at home

You **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 NHS

You **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 lives

You **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****“The last few weeks have been extremely challenging for people across the West Midlands. They have effectively put their lives on hold, sacrificing seeing friends, family, and loved ones, all to help tackle Coronavirus and slow the rate of infection. The good news is the hard work is paying off, and the graphs clearly show the rate of infection in the region is beginning to plateau. This has only happened because of the responsibility the West Midlands has shown, and I want to thank everyone who has been playing their part and following Government advice. However we are far from out the woods yet, and as the First Secretary Dominic Raab announced yesterday, the current lockdown measures will need to continue for at least another three weeks. I know this is incredibly frustrating for many, but if we are to beat the virus and get through these challenging times, then it is what’s required.Since the Prime Minister first announced the lockdown restrictions more than three weeks ago, the response from the West Midlands has been phenomenal. The key now is to keep showing the same levels of responsibility and restraint. We know people have already sacrificed so much, but we cannot afford to let up and allow the deadly virus to overwhelm our local hospitals - who are currently doing the most amazing job managing demand.I know it is incredibly difficult, but please stay strong, keep going, and remember to stay at home, protect the NHS, and help save lives.”  |

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| ****Further information***** Details of WMCA COVID-19 support and guidance are [available here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-d/)
* Latest WMCA Communications updates are [available here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-h/)
* Full guidance on staying at home can be [found here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-k/)
* You can find the most up to date medical advice [here](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-u/)
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| ****Latest COVID-19 Public Health England and NHS update****There have been **5260 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the West Midlands (as of 17th April)**. This makes the West Midlands to biggest regional hotspot for COVID-19 after London.**Confirmed Cases (the numbers are cumulative)** |

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| ****Further information***** Latest [PHE / NHS data](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-o/) 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:* The regional PPE campaign has seen over 300 companies offer support.  Details of at least 70 of these have been verified and passed to local authorities, and there is a pressing need for these to see supplies delivered to key workers. If you want to help, direct businesses to [this page.](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-b/)
* WMCA funds new online construction training courses to help local people get jobs in the sector during Covid-19 shutdown [[Tuesday 14th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-n/)]
* The Economic Contingency Group agreed that a task group will take forward activity on planning the economic recovery, which will complement the wider recovery activity.  This will draw together partners from across local authorities, LEPs, WM-Redi, business groups and the CA and consider short, medium and longer-term approaches.
* 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:* Work has resumed on the Midland Metro tram extension in Birmingham after it was suspended for two weeks when the Government introduced social distancing measures amid the Covid-19 pandemic. [[Thursday April 9th](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-q/)]
* HS2 construction gets green light despite lockdown [[Wednesday 15th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-a/)]
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| ****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:* WMCA funds new online construction training courses to help local people get jobs in the sector during Covid-19 shutdown [[Tuesday 14th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-f/)]
* Mayor joins Prince William in official opening of Birmingham's NHS Nightingale Hospital [[Thursday 16th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-z/)]
* [Community Support Hub](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-v/) 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.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-e/) 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
* The WMCA [Cultural Leadership Board](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-s/) is joining a specially formed taskforce to support the post pandemic recovery of the region’s arts and cultural organisations.. Led by [Culture Central](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-g/), the West Midlands Culture Response Unit will develop and deliver an action-orientated, sector led response to the Covid-19 outbreak to ensure the visibility, viability and recovery of the cultural sector in the West Midlands. [[Friday 17th April]](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-w/)
* Physical activity providers such as gyms, companies that run gyms for local councils and personal trainers could benefit from a scheme to improve the sector’s digital skills. [[Thursday 16th April](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-yd/)]
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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

Latest updates:* **Staff members have been instructed to work from home**, and only essential staff can work at the WMCA office at 16 Summer Lane in Birmingham. The Mayor has been working from home where possible.

 Previous briefings View the previous briefings here:* [31.03.20](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-yh/)
* [09.04.20](https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.cmail20.com/t/d-l-milzjk-jujriyhyuu-yk/)
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