

Coronavirus: Weekly update

From Camden Council

The situation with coronavirus is changing daily and we are committed to keeping residents updated regularly with essential information.

We will be publishing weekly updates here in the Camden New Journal, including changes to council services and information about the support available in the community through the Council and its partners.

For the latest updates, visit our dedicated webpage at camden.gov.uk/coronavirus. You can also check our rolling news page camden.gov.uk/coronavirusnews and Twitter feed [@CamdenCouncil](https://twitter.com/CamdenCouncil) or talk to us directly on **020 7974 4444 (option 9)**.



I know this is a really unsettling and worrying time, so I want to update you on Camden Council's plans to respond to the coronavirus outbreak.

We are one community and we are determined no one is left alone to deal with this crisis. To do this we will need a whole community effort including the Council, our partners, voluntary, community and faith organisations, businesses and most importantly you, our residents.

It is now clear that the coronavirus pandemic is challenging us all in ways many of us have never experienced before. I know everyone will have worries and concerns – I feel these too – and we do not know exactly what the coming months will bring. But we can control what we do and the actions we take on a personal and collective level.

It is vital that we all remain within our homes and reduce social contact as much as possible to protect our own health, and particularly the health of the most vulnerable in our community. We can prevent the spread of this virus if we work together. Staying at home will save lives and protect our NHS.

This is going to be a tough period and things will change every day – but we can get through it by thinking of each other with every action, and taking care of our neighbours along with ourselves. Our communities make Camden – and together we can get through this.

Please look after yourselves and think of your neighbours – and please keep following the latest advice from the government and Public Health England.

Councillor Georgia Gould, Leader of Camden Council



SIGN UP to our coronavirus e-newsletter
We would like to keep you updated as everything is changing very quickly, so to sign up for email updates, go to camden.gov.uk/coronavirus-updates



To keep up to date with the latest advice, please visit nhs.uk/coronavirus
You can also find the latest information on the situation in the UK at gov.uk/coronavirus

Protecting yourself and others from coronavirus

Everyone should continue to follow the current government instructions, these include:

- **Stay at home** and only leave the house for the following reasons:
 - To buy food and medicine
 - To exercise once a day (either alone or with other members of your household)
 - For medical needs (to provide care or help a vulnerable person)
 - To travel to and from work, if you absolutely cannot work from home
 - Practise social distancing by staying at home and only leaving the house for the above reasons. Remember to stay two metres away from other people when you do leave the house.
- **Self-isolate:**
 - If you are displaying symptoms (high temperature and/or a new continuous cough), do not leave the house for seven days after the onset of your symptoms.
 - Anyone else who lives with you must stay at home for 14 days starting from when the first person in the house became ill. If they start to display symptoms, they must stay at home for seven days from when their symptoms appeared – regardless of what day they are on in their 14 day isolation period.
 - If your symptoms have not improved, contact NHS 111 for further advice at 111.nhs.uk/covid-19



Community support

The Council is working with Camden's voluntary and community organisations to support, encourage and mobilise the huge community spirit that exists within the borough.

Camden Giving

Donate to the **Camden Giving COVID-19 fund** and support work in the borough that addresses poverty, physical and mental health, and social cohesion. One hundred percent of the money raised will go to charities, community groups and social enterprises helping people in Camden. Visit camdengiving.org.uk/donate

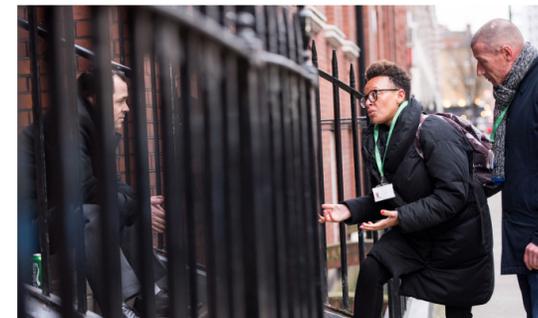
There are many other ways you can show your support at this time, to find out more go to help.timetospare.com/camden

Support for those who are homeless

Camden Council is developing emergency services to ensure that homeless people and people rough sleeping receive the highest possible protection and support amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Council officers are working to make sure rough sleepers and homeless people who are displaying coronavirus symptoms have access to a bed to self-isolate, regardless of whether they qualify for government support.

These extra beds may be sourced from hotels, student accommodation and hospitals.



Pilot emergency food deliveries for vulnerable residents

Camden Council and Age UK Camden will be piloting a service to deliver 600 food packages a week to Camden residents who are housebound and are not able to purchase food.

This pilot will help residents approaching a food crisis – when there's two days' worth of food at home or less – to access food.

The emergency package will contain milk, bread, butter, eggs, biscuits, tea, coffee, tinned food, cereal, toilet roll and soap, and will be available to residents who meet the above criteria, regardless of age.

Camden Council will support this by providing Age UK Camden with £20,000 funding, drivers and vehicles and an initial six Camden staff, redeployed from Camden's libraries.

Nikki Morris, CEO at Age UK Camden, said "We are very pleased to be working with Camden Council to ensure those most in need receive essential everyday supplies during this crisis. Since mid-March, we have been providing emergency support packs to local older people experiencing a shortage of food and last week delivered 200 emergency food packages within 72 hours. There is a very real need for support in our community which can only be solved by effective partnerships."

Camden residents who meet the criteria can get a food package by:

- A direct referral to the service from Age UK or Camden Council
- By calling Age UK on **020 7837 3777**
- By calling **Camden Council** on **020 7974 4444 (option 9)**

Age UK Camden are also offering:

- An information and advice hotline, telephone befriending and counselling services, to help older people find someone to speak with while they remain isolated. Call **020 7837 3777** for more information.
 - A new virtual book club, open to everyone. Go to ageuk.org.uk/camden/activities-and-events/book-club to find out more and sign up.
 - St Pancras Old Church and Age UK Camden musicians will be live streaming their recitals so people can access them remotely. To watch go to facebook.com/ageukcamden
- Visit ageuk.org.uk/camden to find out how you can help support the borough's most vulnerable residents.



Euston Foodbank

The Council has provided additional funding to bolster the Euston Foodbank, they are also providing the use of the Council's transport fleet and drivers as well as additional council staff to support with the increase in demand at foodbanks.

Contact Euston Foodbank to find out how you can help at info@euston.foodbank.org.uk or **07400 053838**.



Service updates

The Council remains committed to delivering vital services to residents during this time, including to Camden's families and children, older adults, and tenants and leaseholders.



Schools

While all schools are now closed to the majority of students, the Council continues to support families and children where it can. Some staff will remain on site at schools, nurseries and private schools, to help and support the most vulnerable children and those of critical workers where they have no other option.

Free school meals

The Council are working to ensure no one in the borough goes hungry. As part of that they are offering food parcels once a fortnight to children eligible for free school meals. This is in addition to the government's plans to offer meals or vouchers as an alternative. Specific arrangements are being shared with schools directly about how food parcels can be collected.

Children attending school, whether deemed vulnerable or the children of critical workers, are currently being provided food on site irrespective of their free school meal eligibility.

For more information go to camden.gov.uk/schools-children-and-families

Childcare and early years services

The following children's centres and nursery buildings will remain open (Monday to Friday) and will provide some childcare and midwifery appointments: Regent's Park Children's Centre, Harmood Children's Centre, Agar Children's Centre, Langtry Nursery.

Many private, voluntary and independent nurseries are remaining open for the children of critical workers – but, if you are a critical worker and a parent who needs a place for your child aged under five, please call the Council's early years service:

- Regent's Park Children's Centre: 020 7974 8934
- Harmood Children's Centre: 020 7974 8961
- Agar Children's Centre: 020 7974 4789
- Langtry Nursery: 020 7974 5080.

Protecting older and vulnerable people

The safety of Camden's residents remains the Council's top priority. If you receive care at home and are concerned about how your support will be affected, contact Camden Adult Social Care on adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk or **020 7974 4000 (option 1)**.

- The Council is working with home care providers to make sure that those most in need will continue to get care through Camden Adult Social Care.
- All home care providers have business continuity plans in place to make sure they can continue to provide care to people.
- Personal Assistants (PAs) should not provide anyone care if they become ill. The Council can support you to review a contingency plan to make sure you are able to receive care if your PAs are sick or self-isolating.
- For support email Personalisation Support in Camden (PSIC) at info@psic.org.uk or phone **020 7383 4901 (option 1)**.



at camden.gov.uk/your-council-rent or over the phone on **020 7974 4444**.

If you are a leaseholder and you think you will have difficulty paying your service charge or major works invoices because of coronavirus, please email leaseholderservices@camden.gov.uk. Staff are working at home and not in the office, so if you're a leaseholder, please don't send letters and cheques in the post contact the email address above or phone **020 7974 3559** and pay any charges online.

Lifts

If you're using the lift in your block and there's someone in it already, take the next lift or take the stairs to make sure that you stay two metres away from people who you don't live with.

Playgrounds

All playgrounds, including all estate playgrounds, are in the process of being closed. Even if your estate's playground isn't locked off by a gate, please keep everyone safe and do not use it.



If you live in a Camden Council home

You will see some changes to your housing services but please bear with the Council as it works to make sure that all essential work continues, and that the most vulnerable people get the help they need.

If you are worried about paying your bills the Council can help

Camden Council is committed to supporting everyone through this very difficult time. No council tenant will be evicted from a council home if there is clear evidence that they have been unable to pay rent as a direct result of coronavirus.

If you're a tenant and you're worried about paying your rent, get in touch with your neighbourhood housing officer as soon as possible to get support and advice.

If you need help paying your rent because you pay in cash or use an Allpay card, speak to your neighbourhood housing officer. You can also pay for your rent online



Frequently asked questions

I'm worried about my finances

If your income stops or drops, you may be eligible for Universal Credit or Job Seekers' Allowance/Employment Support Allowance. If you're on benefits, please tell the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions about any change in your circumstances.

If you're worried about paying your rent, mortgage, bills, service charge, or your council tax, contact the Council to discuss what support might be available, go to camden.gov.uk/coronavirus or call the Council helpline on **0207 974 444 (option 9)**.

Can I visit a friend/relative at their supported living scheme or residential care home?

Almost all care homes now restrict all visitors but please check directly with the home. We know this is a difficult time, but urge you not to visit care homes or supported living schemes. Instead, stay in touch by telephone, post or using the internet.

Are there any changes to parking restrictions?

The Council is working closely with the NHS trusts in Camden, GP surgeries, schools and emergency services to identify the need for extra parking and provide spaces for critical workers where needed. As this situation changes, the Council will continue to develop its parking offer to meet the needs of these vital services. For all up to date information go to camden.gov.uk/coronavirus

Are libraries still open?

All Camden libraries are now closed until further notice. However, you can still access the free online library, which includes e-books and audio-books, online newspapers, magazines, graphic novels and comics. Camden is extending library renewals and suspending all fines until mid-July. To access the digital library, and to find up-to-date information, go to camden.gov.uk/libraries

Scammers operating across Camden

While most people have been stepping up to help their community at this difficult time, there has unfortunately been an increase in coronavirus related scams across London.

It is always important to remain vigilant, especially when buying online or accepting help from unknown people.

Please be aware that NHS staff are not going door to door. If someone knocks on your door claiming to be conducting coronavirus tests, do not let them in to your house and immediately call the police.

How to protect yourself:

1. Watch out for scam messages

Don't click on links or

Can I still visit the park?

Camden parks are currently remaining open. The government's advice is that you can only go outside for exercise once a day, and always practice social distancing. Play areas, cafes, public toilets and tennis courts have been closed.

Are there changes to recycling and rubbish collections?

The Council is working closely with its partner Veolia to keep essential services running. Collection times may change, so please put your bin or bag outside by 6am or the night before. If you live on a street with time-banded collections, put your recycling and rubbish out as usual. Help protect collection teams and the public – make sure recycling is clean and dry, and rubbish bags securely tied.

For the latest updates visit camden.gov.uk/recyclingandrubbish

If someone in your household is self-isolating, put personal waste (e.g. used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths in a separate rubbish bag, place into another bag and keep aside for at least 72 hours before putting out for collection.

Is there any extra support for those experiencing domestic violence and abuse?

The Council's dedicated team, Camden Safety Net, are providing extra support, as well as developing dynamic safety plans to help victims, survivors and families of domestic abuse who might feel more unsafe during this time, especially if they are self-isolating and staying at home with an abuser.

For more info please contact Camden Safety Net on camdensafetynet@camden.gov.uk or **020 7974 2526** (Mon to Fri 9am-5pm). In an emergency always call **999**, or for non-emergency police assistance please call **101**.

Additional support

Citizens Advice Camden are continuing to support local residents and have increased their telephone answering capacity. Contact them on **0300 330 1157**.

Mary Ward Legal Centre provides free, independent advice to help people access their legal rights and entitlements. Call **020 7831 7079**.

attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls asking for your personal or financial details. Remain alert for malicious emails offering testing kits of coronavirus.

2. Take precautions when shopping online

If you are buying anything from a company or person you do not know and trust, carry out thorough research into them to

make sure they are legitimate.

For more information, visit actionfraud.police.uk

For further advice on online scams you can also get in touch with Citizens Advice.

Residents who believe that they are a victim of fraud should report the matter as soon as possible via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline number on **0808 223 1133**.

camden.gov.uk/coronavirus
020 7974 4444 (option 9)

