



Dear resident,

Earlier this month, national restrictions began to ease, with children going back to school, care homes allowing one regular visitor and people being able to meet with one other person outdoors for recreation and exercise. After many months in lockdown, these changes were a welcome first step on the road back to more normal times.

With infection rates continuing to drop in Hillingdon and beyond, we are hoping to see more restrictions lifted from Monday 29 March. If the government allows, this could see six people from different households being allowed to meet outside, including in private gardens, a return of outdoor sports such as grassroots football, and the reopening of tennis and basketball courts.

Despite being cautiously optimistic, infection rates in Hillingdon and some of our neighbouring boroughs haven't fallen as low as other parts of London, and therefore it is especially important that we remain vigilant and continue to adhere to the rules as society reopens. Please keep washing your hands, covering your face when you're in enclosed public spaces like shops, and remember to stay at least two metres away from anyone you don't live with. By working together, we can help to drive down infections even further and keep Hillingdon safe.

Getting tested also remains important because even if you don't have symptoms of COVID-19, you could be spreading the virus without knowing it. We now have seven testing sites for people without symptoms across the borough, including a new one in Sipson, making it easier than ever to get tested near to your home. This is particularly important if you can't work from home or need to regularly leave for essential reasons. In addition, if you live in a household with school-aged children, you can now order home testing kits through our 'community collect' scheme. Please see below for more information about testing and how you can access this important service.

I also encourage you to get your vaccine when it's your turn, as it will give you the best protection against the virus. I'm proud to say that more than 100,000 local people have received their vaccine, and two new mass vaccination hubs have opened in the borough, at Heathrow and in Hayes, making the process even more convenient for residents.

**Polling stations will be safe
places to vote in May, but
there are other ways to vote.**

Want to vote by post? Apply early



Remember to get tested

More and more residents are being vaccinated against COVID-19 every day, but it's still vital for people to get tested regularly. This helps to detect any hidden cases in the community.

Around one in three people who have the virus may show no symptoms and could be unknowingly spreading it to those they love and are close to.

Getting your test is easy, painless and free. There are seven community testing sites across the borough for people without symptoms. They are in Hayes, Uxbridge, Northwood, South Ruislip, Harefield, Harlington and Sipson.

If you live in a household with school-aged children, you can also now get home testing kits. Our 'community collect' service launched on Monday 22 March for households with children of primary school, secondary school and college age, as well as those providing childcare and in support bubbles.

The testing kits – available to order online, or to collect from local testing centres – enable parents, family members and those in support bubbles to test themselves twice a week and self-isolate faster if they test positive.

If you have any of the COVID-19 symptoms; a high temperature, new continuous cough, or change or loss of your sense of taste or smell, you should book a test on the government website or call 119.

[Read more](#)



Vaccination update

By last Thursday (18 March), 106,266 residents had been vaccinated in Hillingdon.

This is a fantastic milestone and all thanks to the great work carried out by our partners the NHS, our local CCG and volunteers.

Two new vaccine sites have also opened in the borough, which means many more residents can be vaccinated when it's their turn. The Compass Centre at Heathrow and the Old Vinyl Factory have been transformed into vaccination centres. When it's your turn, you can book your appointment directly.

Last week the NHS also announced that anyone over the age of 50 can book their COVID-19 vaccine online. If you are eligible for a vaccination, please book your appointment as soon as possible.

Many of you have told us that you have had the vaccine to protect yourself and your local community and we'd like to hear more of your stories for our publicity campaign.

[Find out more](#)



Important message about the Astra Zeneca vaccine

More than 17 million doses of the Covid-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca have now been given across the EU.

Fewer than 40 cases of blood clots have been reported as of last week in vaccinated people.

This is much lower than the hundreds of cases that would be expected to have occurred naturally in the general population.

People should still go and get their Covid-19 vaccine when invited to do so.

Dr Genevieve Small – GP lead for the NW London vaccination programme (and a GP in Harrow)

Read the latest Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) [guidance](#)



Boosting business

Since the first lockdown, the council has helped more than 3,500 local businesses from a variety of sectors access temporary support grants totalling around £57 million.

To help more businesses bounce back as society slowly reopens, we've expanded the eligibility criteria for our discretionary business grant schemes. This means that more businesses are now entitled to receive financial support from the council.

This includes businesses in the following sectors:

- supply chain to the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors
- events and events supply chain, including weddings and related services
- travel, tourism and airport support services
- supply chain to retail and construction
- personal and professional trainers/instructors
- professional services

For a list of all available business grants, eligibility details and to apply visit, www.hillingdon.gov.uk/local-business-grants.

We will continue to advise and support local businesses as restrictions ease. Please keep an eye on our website for the most up-to-date information. Detailed guidance on the government's forthcoming 'restart' grants, which are due to be available from April, will also be included on our website.

[Find out about business grants](#)



Visit our parks and green spaces

With spring in full swing, Easter just around the corner, and the possibility of the rule of six returning outdoors from Monday 29 March, now is a good time to start exploring our parks and open spaces. As London's greenest borough, there are plenty to choose from. Check our website for a list of local parks and walking trails.

From Easter, on a trial basis, we will be limiting the number of visitors allowed at Ruislip Lido at any one time to 1,200, and council marshals will be on site to assist. This will allow people to keep visiting the Lido, while ensuring everyone remains safe.

Social distancing remains crucial in all our parks, so please remember to follow the latest government guidance and stay at least 2 metres apart from anyone you don't live with. And please help to keep our borough clean and tidy by taking any rubbish home with you.



[Read more](#)

Easter waste and recycling collection dates

To minimise disruption to waste and recycling collections over Easter, we will be working on Saturday 3 April and Saturday 10 April.

Normal collection day	Revised collection day
Friday 2 April (Good Friday)	Saturday 3 April
Monday 5 April (Easter Monday)	Tuesday 6 April
Tuesday 6 April	Wednesday 7 April
Wednesday 7 April	Thursday 8 April
Thursday 8 April	Friday 9 April
Friday 9 April	Saturday 10 April

Please leave your rubbish out for collection by 6am, near your front gate, but not on the pavement. Separate arrangements are in place for flats and business premises.

[Read more](#)

In the coming weeks, you will start to notice our new food waste vehicles. Food waste will be collected separately from garden waste as part of our drive to increase recycling.

Garden waste will be collected and processed as normal, whereas food waste will be broken down into renewable energy to generate electricity, fuel for transport and fertiliser for farmers.

All you need to do is use your kitchen and outdoor caddy, and we'll do the rest via our free weekly collections. If you haven't already, sign up for our food waste service today at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/food-waste.

Census 2021 and exhibition

All households in Hillingdon are legally required to take part in the Census 2021 survey.

The census takes place every 10 years, and the answers will help plan and fund public services in the borough.

All Hillingdon households should have received an invitation letter in March from the Office for National Statistics, with a unique access code allowing them to complete the questionnaire online. Census Day itself took place on Sunday 21 March and surveys should be completed by Tuesday 4 May.

For residents without computer access and those who need additional support, the council has opened four census support centres, based at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge and at adult learning centres in Uxbridge, Hayes and South Ruislip. Paper copies of the census are available upon request and copies are also available in different languages.

Failure to complete the questionnaire could result in a £1,000 fine.

To celebrate this decade's survey, the council has launched an online exhibition called 'Hillingdon on Census', which looks at the history of the survey and what it can tell us about life in the past.

The exhibition explores six different locations across the borough, unearthing a different story in each – a farming family in Ruislip, Harefield's canal boat community, Uxbridge's vanished yards, a market gardening company in Harmondsworth, a 'missing' photographer and inventor in Hayes, and West Drayton's own test cricketer and Hollywood star.

[Read more](#)

Virtual library events

While our usual library events are unable to take place in person, we're holding an array of virtual sessions and fun activities.

Our Teen Reading and Discussion Group takes place every Wednesday for 14 to 16-year-olds. Young people can share their enjoyment of reading and discuss stories and topics that arise from books and characters, including social media, the pressures of school and friendships. Join from 4.30pm to 5.15pm on Zoom.

From Wednesday 7 April, we're launching a new Teen Creative Writing Group for teenagers who are interested in writing short stories, spoken word or poetry. 14 to 16-year-olds can take the opportunity to build confidence, discover new ideas and share work with like-minded teenagers.

For the younger ones, our Tiny Tales sessions are held via Zoom and are suitable for under-5s and their parents/carers. Join library staff for online sessions with stories, songs and fun! Children must be supervised throughout the session.

And for adults, there is a wide range of regular events on offer, including themed coffee mornings, read aloud events and crafting sessions. We're also offering Culture Bite Lunches - quick and friendly live broadcasts by well-known authors streamed live to Hillingdon Libraries' social media channels, giving you the chance to put your questions to authors in real time. Adults can also engage with authors by booking one of our evening panel events held on Zoom, which bring multiple authors together to discuss things like their books, getting published and more.

[Find out more](#)

CENSUS 2021

