

Latest position from Government

MHCLG are sending out a regular [bulletin](#) updating on latest Government guidance, advice, communications products and other useful information about coronavirus (COVID-19).

The following GOV.UK page has also been set up to bring together guidance for local councils and LRFs during the coronavirus outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government>.

Latest updates

- [Access to parks and public spaces](#)
- [Vulnerable people and their families will be able to directly call on the army of NHS Volunteer Responders](#)
- [Extension of statutory audit deadlines](#)
- [Update on crematoria guidance alert](#)
- [Businesses to receive £9.7 billion in rates relief](#)

For residents

- [Stay safe online](#)
 - [Update on national voucher scheme for schools providing free school meals](#)
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Council updates

Business grants update

More than £110 million in Government grants has been issued to more than 10,000 businesses in Cumbria, affected by the Coronavirus pandemic.

In South Lakeland latest figures show that more than 4,000 applications have been processed by SLDC and grants worth in excess of £42 million have been approved.

Statistics published by Government on Tuesday showed that out of 314 councils nationally involved in the distribution of the grants, SLDC was the 23rd best performing in terms of numbers of applications processed since the scheme was announced, ahead of many larger authorities including Manchester City Council and Birmingham City Council and all but two of the London boroughs.

SLDC is still urging businesses who are eligible but haven't yet applied for a grant to come forward and claim their entitlement.

District members and parish councils can help to support this message by spreading the word in their communities and encouraging any business owners who they believe may be eligible to apply.

Councillor Robin Ashcroft, SLDC portfolio holder for Economy, Culture and Leisure, said: "We desperately want to make sure that this money goes to those who need it at this difficult time and I'd

like to encourage any small business owner in South Lakeland to check to see if they should be getting a grant

“Remember even if you are in receipt of small business rates relief, rural rate relief or discretionary relief and receive 100% relief on your business rates bill you can still access these grants. You will have a business rates reference number on your bill, which is what you’ll need to apply.

“Please check yourself and please spread the word if you think you know someone who could be applying.

“We’ve created a straightforward online application process to ensure we can receive applications, validate them and release the funds really quickly. If you apply this weekend you could have the money in your bank account by the end of next week.

“Council staff from all areas of the authority have been drafted in to support the application process and we have 27 officers working on the grants scheme.

“Any businesses that have yet to apply can check online about eligibility criteria and to access the application form.”

Businesses can find more information and an application form at:

www.southlakeland.gov.uk/Covid-19BusinessGrants

Businesses that fall under one of the following categories and believe they are eligible for the funding are being invited to complete the form:

- Small business rate relief recipient
- Rural rate relief recipient
- Expanded retail discount scheme recipient

Please note that completing this form **does not** mean a business is eligible for the grants available, but it will allow the council to check details against its rating list and make a determination of eligibility against the criteria laid out by government.

Those eligible should receive the payment within seven working days from receipt of a valid application.

Any businesses that apply but are not eligible will be sent an email setting out why they do not meet the criteria set out by government and will be signposted to other support they may be eligible for.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Applying businesses will need to provide the reference number from a business rates bill to complete the grant application.

Please ensure you have your reference number to hand. If you are the registered rates payer you will receive a business rates bill, even if you are zero-rated for rates. The reference number will appear on any of your rates bills, you do not need your most recent bill.

This is an important security measure to protect the applicant against the risk of fraud and to ensure that SLDC can validate the recipient’s identity and entitlement to the grant.

For security reasons SLDC will not be able to give this information out over the phone, but can issue a duplicate bill to your registered business address if required.

- The £10k and £25k grant schemes are separate to the business rates relief schemes also announced by government.

These business rates reliefs apply to eligible retail, leisure and hospitality businesses (including those that have closed temporarily due to the Government advice on Coronavirus) and 100 per cent rate relief is available for a period of 12 months.

SLDC will apply this relief automatically to business rates bills for 2020/21 and businesses **do not** need to apply for this. New bills with applied relief have been issued. SLDC has also taken the decision not to collect business rates direct debits in April to allow the new reliefs to be applied before any payments are due.

Survey to assess economic impact

A survey has been circulated by Cumbria LEP to begin to assess how the Cumbrian economy is being affected by COVID-19 and inform decisions going forward.

All businesses, large and small, are being encouraged to complete the survey, which can be found here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CumbriaCV19W1>

This round of the survey will remain open until Friday, 15 May 2020.

The Cumbria COVID-19 Business and Economic Response and Recovery Group (BERRG), led by Cumbria LEP, was established to assess the implications of the coronavirus pandemic on Cumbria's economy and to ensure that appropriate actions are put in place to support Cumbria's businesses now and in the months to come.

More information about **The Cumbria LEP** and the **BERRG** can be found on their [website](#).

Look after mental and physical health during lockdown

With many people working from home, home-schooling children or feeling worried or anxious during these challenging times, there are even more reasons for everyone to do all they can to look after their own and their loved ones' mental and physical health.

SLDC is backing a national campaign to encourage people to look after themselves to prevent issues becoming more serious.

Public Health England's 'Every Mind Matters' campaign includes lots of helpful tips and advice, focussed on looking after people's mental wellbeing during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Every Mind Matters has been developed in partnership with clinicians, academics and leading mental health charities and offers authoritative, evidence-based and practical support.

Councillor Suzie Pye, SLDC's portfolio holder for Health, Wellbeing and Financial Resilience, said: "Every Mind Matters encourages people to complete a personal Covid-19 'Mind Plan', using a quick and free interactive tool that creates tailored mental well-being advice.

"The website also includes information and support for specific mental wellbeing issues such as anxiety, stress, low mood and trouble sleeping.

"At SLDC we are encouraging as many people as possible to take care of their mental wellbeing at this difficult time.

"To further support this the council has funded the distribution of 16,000 self-help guides produced by the charity Every Life Matters called 'Wellbeing and Mental Health during Covid-19'. This guide also contains lots of useful advice on how to look after your mental health during lockdown.

"These have been sent to GP surgeries, food banks, voluntary and community groups in South Lakeland, while electronic versions of the guide have also been shared with all our staff working from home as well as district, town and parish councillors to distribute in their communities."

As well looking after mental wellbeing, the council is also encouraging residents to ensure they get, or stay, active during the lockdown.

Councillor Robin Ashcroft, SLDC portfolio holder for Economy, Culture and Leisure, said: “Official advice is to follow the guidance on social distancing and to avoid non-essential travel - including working from home if you can - which means our routines are changing.

“Staying active is more important than ever right now. We are encouraged to continue to exercise and getting outdoors into the fresh air and sunshine is beneficial in itself to your health if you are able to, even if that’s just into your garden or back yard, but even if you’re mostly in your house at the moment there are plenty of ways you can still keep fit and active.

“There are some great tips and ideas out there for staying active for all ages – everything from movement and mindfulness videos for use with children to online yoga and later life training.

“Active Cumbria has pulled together some fantastic information including from national and local providers to help you to ‘stay in and work out’.”

- Find more information about the Every Mind Matters campaign, including advice and information about creating a Covid-19 Mind Plan at: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>
- You can find a copy of the ‘Wellbeing and Mental Health during Covid-19’ guide to download at: <https://www.every-life-matters.org.uk/covid-19/>
- Find more information about staying active during the lockdown at: <https://www.activecumbria.org/behealthybeactive/stay-work-out/>

Emergency Support Line

An emergency support helpline set up by the county council with support from partners including SLDC, is continuing to support vulnerable members of the community.

The most common contacts are for medication and prescription collections, food supplies and from family members who are isolating or live far away from their elderly loved ones who they would normally care for.

The helpline exists to provide support to people at ‘high risk’ who aren’t able to rely on neighbours, friends or family members, and may be struggling for food, medicines or other essential supplies. The requests for help are matched with local support which is being offered by a network of community groups, volunteers, redeployed council employees, and local businesses. In South Lakeland alone there are 99 local community groups that we are linked in to providing support ‘on the ground’.

Letters and text messages sent to highly vulnerable people

SLDC is continuing to work alongside partners, local business and volunteers and using a wide range of communications and media to help raise awareness of the helpline.

Text messages and letters have also been issued to thousands of people who have been identified, by the county council and NHS, as being at high risk from Coronavirus and who should be staying at home as much as possible. 2,442 texts and 4,500 letters have also been sent to vulnerable people advising them about the service.

SLDC has sent nearly 2,000 individual letters with information about the helpline to residents on its assisted collection and clinical waste collection database.

How to contact the Emergency Support Helpline:

- Phone - The emergency support helpline number is **0800 783 1966**.
- Online at [cumbria.gov.uk/covid19form](https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/covid19form).
- Email your request for help to COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk.

The telephone call centre operates **Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm** and **10am to 2pm at weekends**. The service also accept referrals from members of the public who may be concerned about people in their community.

PLEASE NOTE: District and parish councillors can help to raise awareness of the helpline, as can members of the public, volunteers and local businesses, by downloading a pack of useful resources to print and share from www.cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus in the 'Download and share campaign resources' tab.

These resources are publicly available for people to share in their local communities, to raise awareness of the Emergency Support Helpline, promote safeguarding and other important messages.

Please help to spread the word about the helpline in your communities by putting up posters or flyers and sharing with anyone you think may benefit from this support.

COVID-19 information for users of public rights of way

Please be reminded that people live and work in close proximity to many of our public rights of way and many landowners will be especially concerned and vulnerable at this difficult time. You are asked to:

- be sensible, courteous and considerate when using public rights of way at this time
- follow the government guidance on social distancing by keeping at least 2 metres apart. Natural England have asked users to, if possible, try to avoid using footpaths etc. that may take you through a farmstead or other rural business where social distancing may be difficult
- follow the Countryside Code: leave gates as you find them and keep dogs under close control at all times - Defra advise that you should keep your dog on a lead near livestock and away from other people/dogs, [Defra have posted a video](#) containing advice for users
- when using gates and stiles be mindful that other people pass through these and that landowners may need to use them multiple times a day. Wash your hands and or sanitise as soon as possible after touching shared surfaces
- keep to the definitive line of the path or use an alternative route if provided by the landowner

Public rights of way provide an opportunity for people to take exercise in their local area and get some fresh air in these difficult times. However, people are advised to stay local and not travel unnecessarily, and should not congregate on public rights of way. If there is a particular problem with large numbers of people congregating on a right of way then the Police should be informed who have powers to disperse such groups.

The county council manages the public rights of way network in line with national government legislation and guidance and at present there is no advice or requirement for the public rights of way network to be closed or restricted in any way.

COVID-19 information for landowners and property owners

The government reports that the risk of the coronavirus being passed on to others from people using public rights of way and other paths and trails is considered to be very low as long as people follow the government's instructions to maintain social distancing.

People living and working in close proximity to public rights of way are reminded that the public have a legal right to use a public right of way, and that they should not block or obstruct paths. Where residents living near public rights of way have concerns then they should exercise suitable precautions to ensure social distancing from people on the path.

They may want to regularly clean any gate latches or other surfaces on any paths across their property, or landowners may wish to consider tying gates open if it is safe to do so, so that users of the path do not need to touch the gate.

Landowners may, in very limited circumstances where large numbers of people are using routes, consider:

- informing the public using the public right of way of their responsibilities, by displaying an appropriate notice. This should not discourage use but alert users to their proximity to homes and working environments and to use appropriate and reasonable caution in terms of social distancing and hygiene practices.
- if suitable, installing a permissive path through which you can invite users to use an alternative route. However, the definitive alignment of the public right of way must remain open and available at all times, and any permissive path is arranged under your own liabilities and insurance cover and must have agreement from all landowners. You would be advised to waymark any permissive path as such and the public rights of way team can provide further advice on this.
- temporarily displaying polite notices that encourage users to respect local residents and workers by considering using alternative routes that do not pass through gardens, farmyards or schools.

Public rights of way provide an opportunity for people to take exercise in their local area and get some fresh air in these difficult times. However, people are advised to stay local and not travel unnecessarily, and should not congregate on public rights of way. If there is a particular problem with large numbers of people congregating on a right of way then the Police should be informed who have powers to disperse such groups.

Waste can wait

Dumping extra bags of waste or unwanted furniture in back lanes is classed as fly tipping and you may be prosecuted. It can also be a health hazard for neighbours and officers who have to clear up after you.

Please use your kerbside waste collection and recycling services, and if you have any extra waste please store it at home until you can safely dispose of it correctly.

Recruitment - Cumbria's Support Worker Bank

Cumbria County Council and the county's independent care providers are working together and recruiting Support Workers and Night Support Workers, to provide additional support to hard working residential care teams right across Cumbria.

They are looking for people with care experience, or who have looked after a loved one, or are looking for a new opportunity.

The jobs are listed on cumbria.gov.uk where you can read more about the vacancies.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service - Please do not set off sky lanterns

Please do not set off sky lanterns and fireworks in support of our amazing carers. Lanterns are a fire hazard posing a risk to livestock, wildlife and property.

All emergency services are currently under increased pressure due to COVID-19. The National Fire Chiefs Council has published a message warning that a campaign to light sky lanterns is 'misguided' - [socsi.in/GHxdo](https://www.socsi.in/GHxdo)

Parked vehicles

With more people at home than usual, there are probably lots of vehicles parked on streets in your area. PLEASE make sure you leave enough room for emergency vehicles to get by. Every second counts for 999 responders.

This also applies to SLDC's waste and recycling collection crews, who are having to negotiate more parked vehicles when they are out on their rounds. If they are unable to access a street to collect bins/boxes/bags then it can lead to missed collections.

Together We Can

Together We Can is a new social media campaign which you and your communities can be part of:

- Twitter - <https://twitter.com/TogetherCumbria>
- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/TogetherCumbria>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TogetherCumbria>

The Together We Can campaign aims to bring together positive stories and information from people and businesses across the county, lifting morale and showcasing the efforts of people responding to the outbreak of Coronavirus.

Locality update

Members of the public can now subscribe to locality specific email updates to receive news and information about how public services and local communities are responding to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, at cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus/communities.asp.

How you can help if you're on social media

Agencies across Cumbria are continuing to share trusted key messages, advice and guidance and you can help by sharing this on your own accounts on Facebook and Twitter. Every share or retweet means we reach more people and spread important messages wider across our communities.

Here are some some key accounts for you to follow:

Organisation	Facebook	Twitter
Department of Health and Social Care	https://www.facebook.com/DHSCgovuk/	@DHSCgovuk
Public Health England	https://www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland/	@PHE_uk
NHS	https://www.facebook.com/NHSwebsite/	@NHSuk
Cumbria County Council	https://www.facebook.com/CumbriaCC/	@CumbriaCC
NHS North Cumbria Clinical	https://www.facebook.com/nhscumbriaccg/	@NHSCumbriaCCG

Commissioning
Group (CCG)

North Cumbria <https://www.facebook.com/NCICNHS/>
Integrated Care
NHS Foundation
Trust

[@NCICNHS](https://www.facebook.com/NCICNHS/)

Morecambe Bay <https://www.facebook.com/UHMBT/>
NHS Trust

[@UHMBT](https://www.facebook.com/UHMBT/)

NHS Morecambe <https://www.facebook.com/morecambebayccg/>
Bay Clinical
Commissioning
Group (CCG)

[@MorecambeBayCCG](https://www.facebook.com/morecambebayccg/)

Cumbria Police <https://www.facebook.com/cumbriapolice/>

[@CumbriaPolice](https://www.facebook.com/cumbriapolice/)

South Lakeland <https://www.facebook.com/southlakelanddistrictcouncil/>
District Council

[@SouthLakelandDC](https://www.facebook.com/southlakelanddistrictcouncil/)

Useful links

- [Find the latest online from nhs.uk](#) for symptoms and dos and don'ts.
- [Find the latest online from gov.uk](#) for staying at home, social isolation and shielding guidance.
 - Also, [gov.uk coronavirus guidance collection](#) for health professionals, employers, businesses and other organisations.
- [Q&A from Public Health England on coronavirus](#)
- Volunteering across the county is being coordinated by Cumbria CVS and partners via a new website at [SupportCumbria.org.uk](#).
- [Cumbria County Council - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Latest Information](#)
[Cumbria County Council - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Local Communities](#)