

Covid-19 Briefing for Members #2

Public Protection Partnership

Bracknell Forest
West Berkshire
Wokingham

PPP is committed to delivering their important protective services

We continue to receive a significant number of service requests around the business closure elements of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020. The Response Team have been working through these and providing practical and legal advice. Our usual service requests continue to come in and the new delivery arrangements are now established so demand is being met.

Proactive key messages have related to scams, bonfires and health and safety advice for employers.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restriction) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force on 23rd March 2020 to increase measures for preventing the spread of Covid-19. The new trading controls have been designated to local authorities and are enforced by PPP within the three Councils areas. We continue to work with TVP to ensure that the new Regulations are enforced in a consistent and measured way. Information and reports are being shared and where appropriate joint visits are being carried out to deal with any businesses that are believed to be non-compliant. We have implemented a seven day enforcement response primarily for business closure issues but also some other critical areas in line with other Council services being provided 7 days a week.

Since the beginning of April we have been completing a Business Closure Daily Return for The Office for Product Safety and Standards (for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy). This provides the numbers of enquiries we are receiving, the information we are publishing or releasing and the types of media we are using (e.g. website, social media).

Example of infographic that PPP produced for website and social media.

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HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CORONAVIRUS SCAMS

I'm not sure about this...? **NEVER FEEL PRESSURED**
Never feel pressured into making any decision or contract. Genuine offers of help/support will not pressure you to do this.

ONLY BUY GOODS FROM TRUSTED RETAILERS
Only buy goods from trusted retailers and sources. Do not buy from unsolicited emails or texts even if the sender is a large 'brand'. These messages can be fake. Always search independently to find genuine online stores.

DO NOT PAY ANY MONEY UP FRONT
Do not pay any money up front. Be very suspicious of anyone demanding money up front and question their motives. See point above, only buy from trusted sources.

NEVER GIVE OUT FINANCIAL INFORMATION
Never give out any financial information. Your bank, HMRC, the police or local authority (or other organisations) will not ask for this. Never share your pin with anyone.

DO NOT ENGAGE WITH STRANGERS FOR HELP...
...unless you have accessed support through a recognised community support group. If you do not know the person who has contacted you, then do not engage with them for help. See link at bottom for details of community support groups.

NEVER CLICK ON SUSPICIOUS LINKS IN EMAILS OR TEXTS
Never click on suspicious text or email links and do not engage with these messages. If you have any queries with your bank, HMRC, NHS, the Local Authority or any other business, then call them directly. Do not click on any links or use any contacts given in these messages. Think before you click.

For more information on Coronavirus Scams and where to access support or report a scam see website link below:
<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news/articles/press-release-coronavirus-covid-19-update-from-public-protection-partnership-trading-standards-team/>

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Response

The types of complaints or requests for advice received in the last three weeks have included the following:

- whether or not a business should still be operating
- advice requests from food establishments about operating takeaway services
- complaints about personnel not maintaining 2m distancing
- allegation of a public house having a lock-in
- query about food markets still operating and 2m distancing not maintained
- can a mobile dog groomer still work by collecting animals?
- supermarket not enforcing own restrictions on the number customers permitted inside the store at any one time
- increase in number of bonfires
- street traders including ice cream vans?
- fly tipping
- advice on manufacture / import matters around PPE and sanitizer
- due diligence checks for partner Councils on PPE procurement

It has become obvious that there is confusion amongst the trade, the public and business employees over the application of the Regulations regarding certain business practices and circumstances. The regulations allow certain business practices to operate that seemingly conflict with the restrictions on essential travel.

We are working with colleagues from across the south-east tier one authorities and with colleagues at OPSS to work through these anomalies and share best practice.

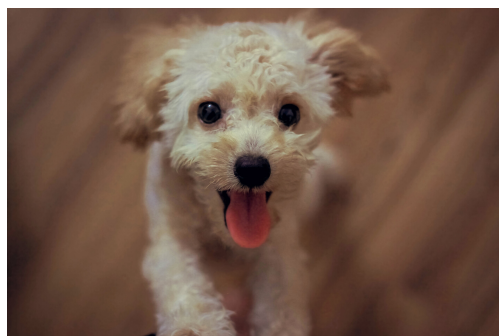
It is quite likely that the easing of lock-down restrictions will be incremental, so we are keeping matters under constant review.

In the first 20 days of April we dealt with 99 Covid business restriction enquiries and 178 bonfire complaints (up from 21 in the same period last year). We are advising in all domestic and commercial circumstances, and where there is evidence of nuisance, we will serve an abatement notice. In the run up to the Easter weekend we put statements out on social media about reducing bonfires and these were picked up by local media.

In order to assist with information gathering to advise in cases of nuisance we have introduced a noise monitoring app to be used by the customer to record when they are affected by the noise and email to the case officer.

Animal Warden Service Update

We are still currently running a normal stray dog collection service. Whilst stray dog numbers may not have risen we are encountering the problem that our usual rescue centres are limited in the number of strays that can be accommodated. We are currently trying to find alternative rescue centres can help us. At the moment we are unable to deal with dog fouling complaints or carry out the usual patrols.



Advice to Businesses

We continue to provide relevant advice and links on our website. This includes a distancing poster which can be downloaded / printed off and used in those shops that remain open. There is also comprehensive advice on a number of areas of business including licensing.

Examples of all our advice can be found here:

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/covid-19/>

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Social Distancing

When shopping here, we would be grateful if customers would follow these guidelines:

- Please keep 2 metres away from others at all times
- Please stand back while being served
- Please use contactless payment if you are able



Thank you for helping to keep our community safe

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/covid-19/>

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Poster above that was distributed for local retailers to use.

Advice to Community Hubs

PPP has contacted Community Hubs to request that any group or individual undertaking particular activities initially seek our advice to ensure those activities are carried out safely.

They are as follows:

- collecting and storing food in order to package and re-distribute to residents,
- breaking down and re-packing bulk packages or catering packages for re-distribution to residents
- producing meals for distribution to residents
- providing a collection and delivery service for hot meals to residents.

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Community Support Food Safety

Public Protection Partnership aim to provide Food Safety, Health and Safety and Trading Standards advice and assistance to any community groups or individuals that are providing support to vulnerable or isolating households in this time of Coronavirus pandemic lockdown.

To help ensure we get the right information to the right place we would ask that any group or individual who undertaking the following activities to please contact us directly for advice.

- Collecting and storing food in order to package and re-distribute to residents.
- Breaking down and re-packing bulk packages or catering packages for re-distribution to residents.
- Producing meals for distribution to residents.
- Providing a collection and delivery service for hot meals to residents.

We do not wish to discourage any organisation or individual from helping their local communities however, we do have a duty to ensure that any such help is provided in a safe manner.

For support and advice please contact Catherine Henderson on 01635 503609 or email Catherine.henderson1@westberks.gov.uk

www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk

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Poster above that was produced and sent to community groups.

Protecting vulnerable residents, and prioritising high risk/harm issues

An update on scams advice has been distributed see link below:

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/trading-standards/>

Our Fraud Victim Support Officer is producing videos offering advice about specific Covid-19 scams. The first of these will be ready for distribution from next week on the website and social media.



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Case Management Update

Cases are being reviewed and all cases for Reading Magistrates have been awarded a nominal date of the end of June. They have dealt with a number of queries and advice, including ensuring consistency in approach on the new regulations across the county.

Licensing Governance

Kit Malthouse MP, Minister of State for Crime and Policing has written to Licensing Committee Chairs across England and Wales recognising the difficulties faced by regulators and businesses and urging a collaborative and pragmatic approach to minimise damage to both businesses and the licensing objectives. Each council needs to assure itself of the approach it takes, "balancing the desire to support local businesses, the objectives of relevant legislation and the council's capacity."

We are prioritising requests, applications or hearings that are business critical in terms of the COVID-19 response. Licensing processes can continue and we are able to process new and current applications. It is in the public and business interest that the licensing system is definitely not coming to a complete halt. We have received many questions from licence holders of all types and Applications and Licensing Officers have been busy answering these service requests. Our view is that if a licence holder wishes to put their licence on hold that is permissible. Work is being carried out within the Councils on the budget implications of licence cancellations and voluntary suspensions.

Licensing Governance cont...

Under the Licensing Act 2003 there is no lawful power, even during this emergency period, for Licensing Authorities to delegate decision-making to Officers where relevant representations have been received in response to an application. Determinations in such cases will still have to be made by licensing committees or their sub-committees. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 was published on 2 April 2020 and made under section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. The Regulations make provision to enable local authorities to hold meetings remotely including by (but not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming. Part 2 of these Regulations, relating to the holding of remote hearings, only relate to England. Progress is well underway for sub-committees to be held remotely. We have reviews / hearings coming up in all three Licensing Authorities which are to be carried out remotely, with the first one arranged for the 1st May 2020 for a street trader in Wokingham borough.

Licensing Challenges

The Licensing trade is facing changes at this time due to premises closed and lack of customers resulting in a loss of income. We are assisting licence holders where we can including dealing with queries over whether they can undertake deliveries and do takeaways or how to go about varying their licenses to allow these. We are continuing to process any new applications as well as renewals, transfers and variations.

Public Health

We have been supporting and distributing the wider public health messages of DHSC and Public Health Messages. We have done this through our own communication with the public but also through the advice we give business.

You may be aware that the #quitforcovid campaign started at the end of March. ASH are organising daily quit clinics on twitter (#quitforcovid) between 7.30-8.30pm. Hundreds of smokers have accessed this stop smoking support as well as our stop smoking service Al Bella App. These are gaining popularity and traction by many smokers since both the lockdown restrictions commenced and information published regarding the increase in adverse effects that smoking has when the body is fighting the effects of COVID-19.

All West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell primary schools have been invited to take part in a poster campaign in primary schools this month asking for artwork to be used as part of the Quit for Covid campaign. This is a locally run campaign with support from PHE.

Quit Clinic

Every day 7.30pm - 8.30pm

TODAY IS THE DAY

#QuitforCovid

Snapshot of our Social Media Posts re COVID-19



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Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 22 hrs ·

****How to Protect Your Business Against COVID-19 Scams****

Malicious email attachments, false government grant phone calls and CEO impersonation scams are among a raft of scams undermining businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The increasing risk has led National Trading Standards to launch Businesses Against Scams – a free online training tool to protect businesses, employees and customers from costly scams.

With remote working and many businesses having to stop or d...

[See more](#)

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Public Protection Partnership @PublicPP_UK · Apr 20

Be aware of this [#Netflix](#) scam.

With millions of more people staying at home, Netflix has seen a rise of 32% in paid subscriptions since mid-March. The radical shift in consumer activity has led to scammers attempting to take advantage of the situation.



Chartered Trading Standards Institute @CTSI_UK · Apr 17

Netflix scam takes advantage of COVID-19 lockdown

With Netflix seeing a rise of 32% in subscriptions since mid-March, the radical shift in consumer activity since lockdown has led to scammers attempting to take advantage of the situation.

[Read in full: tradingstandards.uk/news-policy/ne...](#)

NETFLIX

We're having some trouble with your current billing information.



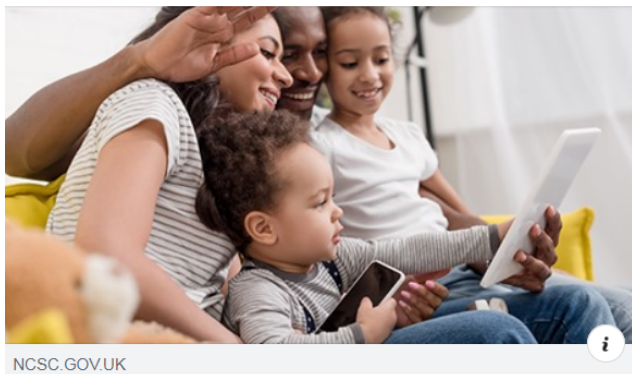
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Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 22 April at 16:19 ·

Public are urged to flag coronavirus related email scams as online security campaign launched by National Cyber Security Centre.

A 'Cyber Aware' campaign and other services have been launched to combat cyber security threats.

You can report COVID-19 email scams by emailing: ... [See more](#)



NCSC.GOV.UK

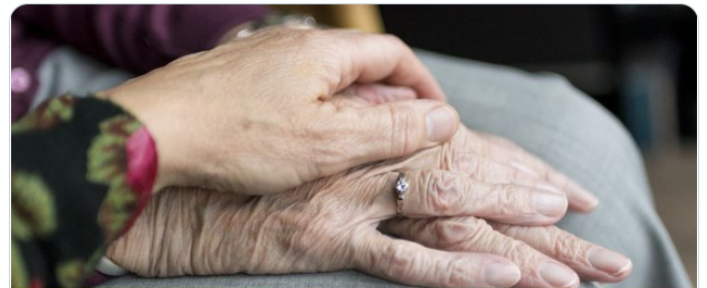


Public Protection Partnership @PublicPP_UK · Apr 20

Do you know someone looking for care?

[#SupportWithConfidence](#) is a national Local Authority scheme which provides a list of approved care and/or support services that have been vetted on the grounds of quality, safety and training.

publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/campaigns/supp...



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Published by Lisa Barnes [?] · 21 April at 14:10 ·

What you need to know about coronavirus and food:

- ➡ It is very unlikely that you can catch coronavirus (COVID-19) from food.
- ➡ Cooking thoroughly will kill the virus.... [See more](#)

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What you need to know about Coronavirus and food

- It is very unlikely you can catch coronavirus (COVID-19) from food
- Cooking thoroughly will kill the virus
- COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. It is not known to be transmitted by exposure to food or food packaging
- Everyone should wash their hands regularly with soap and water, to reduce the risk of illness.
- It is especially important to wash hands before handling or eating food.



Public Protection Partnership @PublicPP_UK · Apr 17

Walking your four-legged friends 🐕

Keep your dogs on leads in busier areas helps ensure you can follow 2m social distancing guidelines ❤️🐕

See advice from [@DogsTrust](#)

dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/ad...



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Support with Confidence

Support with Confidence is a service we run for West Berkshire and Wokingham and is for businesses and individuals who provide care and support services. Providers who are registered with the scheme have been approved by us by showing they have had the training they need as well as a valid DBS certificate, insurance and background checks. There are registered carers who are available for emergency cover as well as routine care, and a full list is available on the website

<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/supportwithconfidence>

Should you wish to contact us with any queries, please email

supportwithconfidence@westberks.gov.uk
or telephone 01635 519171.

FAQ's Update

We are producing advice on the legal and practical position for traders providing goods and services to and within people's homes e.g. repairs, prepared food, hairdressing, dog grooming etc. This is causing some confusion as for example you can't take a computer in to a repair shop but a computer repair firm can collect it from you and return it. The same goes for others providing goods and services. These will be used to advise businesses and residents along with information on how such services can be delivered safely.

Communication

There has been a 470% increase in total Facebook reach and 35% increase in website pages viewed over the Easter weekend alone. See following page for snapshot of social media posts re COVID-19.

Looking ahead we are starting to prepare for when we come out of lockdown. This will include how we are going to position our communications and potentially sector by sector advice.

Our media releases can be found here:

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/news/>

Who to Contact

Reporting of complaints relating to Covid-19 can be made on the website via the Enforcement Form on the front page. [Link here](#).

Trading Standards:

Concerned residents or anybody with information about coronavirus related scams are being asked to contact Trading Standards directly via:
TSadvice@westberks.gov.uk

Environmental Health:

Environmental Health matters are to contact us by emailing: ehadvice@westberks.gov.uk

Licensing:

Bracknell Forest Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: LicensingAll@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
West Berkshire Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: LicensingAll@westberks.gov.uk
Wokingham Licensing matters are to contact us by emailing: LicensingAll@wokingham.gov.uk