Message from Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan

Wednesday 18 March 2020

**How to stay safe**

Hello,

As Mayor of London, I’m doing everything I can to keep Londoners safe in these difficult times. Nothing in our recent history has prepared us for the threat posed by coronavirus. And that is why we all must make unprecedented changes in how we live, travel and work.

**Listen to the experts**

It’s important for us all to heed [the latest advice from the experts](http://email.london.gov.uk/_act/link.php?mId=AL846345327754412512886342216&tId=42436744&subjId=191470), including social distancing. That means reducing social interaction with other people. It means avoiding non-essential use of public transport. It means working from home, if at all possible. And it means avoiding large gatherings and smaller public spaces like bars, cinemas, restaurants and clubs.

**Closure of schools**

The Government has ordered schools to close to the majority of pupils at the end of the day on Friday, but the most vulnerable children and those of key workers will be able to continue attending. The Government’s scientific and medical experts say this unprecedented step is now necessary to slow down the spread of coronavirus. The timing of these measures is designed to have the maximum possible effect.

Many parents will be concerned about what this means for their children’s education and the difficulty of juggling childcare and jobs. This will also have a huge impact on many other vital public services, together with businesses whose workers will have to stay at home to look after their children due to the lack of affordable childcare alternatives. Londoners must always follow the latest expert advice that applies to them.

**Social distancing for the over-70s and other vulnerable people**

The Government has also advised that everyone over the age of 70 or in a vulnerable group should rigorously follow the social distancing advice above. The NHS will be contacting some of these groups that have the highest risk over the coming weeks to provide further advice on keeping themselves and others safe. Now, more than ever, we must reach out to our older family and friends safely online or via the phone as it’s vital that vulnerable people do not feel forgotten in this emergency.

**Cancellation of Trafalgar Square events**

I have cancelled all events in Trafalgar Square until further notice. This includes celebrations for the Feast of St George on 18 April, Vaisakhi on 25 April and Eid on 30 May. We must take all necessary precautions to keep people safe in London.

I’m working closely with the Department for Health, Public Health England and the NHS to protect Londoners and to ensure that our city is fully prepared to respond to this evolving crisis.

**Postponement of Euro 2020**

UEFA has also decided to postpone the Men’s Euro 2020 football championships for 12 months. I know that this news will come as a huge disappointment to many, but the safety of the public will always come first. To invert the words of one of my footballing heroes, Bill Shankly, football is not more important than that.

**The work of City Hall**

My team and I are in almost constant contact with Public Health England to get the most up-to-date advice. We are also working with the Government, the Chief Medical Officer, business leaders, trade unions and the Metropolitan Police, Fire and Transport Commissioners as we seek to deal with this crisis and help protect the health of Londoners as well as the jobs, businesses and livelihoods from the severe and lasting economic damage predicted.

We want to ensure support is getting to Londoners who need it, when they need it. As part of this, I've just announced a new emergency fund to support voluntary and community organisations who are helping the most vulnerable Londoners. We are doing everything we can from City Hall to help Londoners get through this.

It goes without saying that I’m hugely grateful to those Londoners who are working tirelessly to nurse and protect Londoners, as well as those keeping London moving at this time of great need.

As more information becomes available, I will be sure to keep you updated.