

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

17th Mar 2020

Community Activities

BBC halts plans to charge over-75s for licence fee due to coronavirus Millions of pensioners have begun receiving letters telling them that they must pay the £157.50 fee from June, but this is now on hold

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<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/03/16/bbc-halts-plans-charge-over-75s-licence-fee-due-coronavirus/>

UK hotels could be turned into hospitals during the coronavirus outbreak

Rob Paterson, chief executive officer of Best Western Great Britain, said: "We are in unprecedented territory so we would be willing to take unprecedented steps to support the national effort. "If the NHS wants additional bed space, and we can partner with other companies to provide the right medical equipment and supplies, and we can do it safely, then we would be willing to start having those conversations immediately. "Whatever we can do to help."The move would create additional bed space for the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/uk-news/uk-hotels-could-turned-hospitals-17931704>

Supermarkets to introduce shopping hours for elderly

Lidl and Tesco are to introduce dedicated shopping hours for older and vulnerable customers. The German discount retailer will prioritise elderly customers from 9am to 11am each day starting tomorrow. There will be prioritised queuing and additional assistance in-store for customers. Lidl says the measure is to help protect more vulnerable shoppers due to increased demand and has asked all customers to respect the dedicated shopping hours each morning. A run of coronavirus panic-buying has gripped several countries, emptying shelves of basic goods despite pleas by authorities to stop.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/newslens/2020/0316/1123483-coronavirus/>

For millions of low-income seniors, coronavirus is a food-security issue

For older people with sufficient resources, the message is clear: stay home, stock up on food and supplies, and avoid group activities. However, these recommendations fail to address the struggle of millions of low-income older adults who lack access to healthy food and adequate nutrition on a daily basis. And although social distancing is necessary to help limit the spread of the virus, anything that deters people from accessing group meals at senior centers or food banks puts low-income seniors in danger of malnutrition and hunger. Millions of them also typically cannot afford to stock up on food or supplies, and if they can, many need transportation assistance to and from grocery stores. In light of this, federal, state, and local responders need to consider targeted solutions to ensure that food-insecure and socially isolated older adults (as well as other populations with barriers to food access) can stay fed and healthy during the crisis.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/03/16/for-millions-of-low-income-seniors-coronavirus-is-a-food-security-issue/>

How to survive coronavirus lockdown as a parent, especially moms who carry the burden

Whether children are in or out of school, the threat of the coronavirus has made managing family life a much bigger job. Odd are, moms are taking on more of this emotional and domestic labor. On top

of this, women are more likely to do what experts call "worry work," An expert explained. Moms are more likely than dads to anticipate the needs of the family and plan ahead for worst case scenarios. (Listen closely, and you can hear the hum of "what's next?" on a constant loop in most moms' heads.) Start tag teaming -- splitting work days and house management as much as possible, and it is making life much better. If there is a silver lining in all this, or at least a lesson that we might want to impart to our kids, it's this. In our cities, our workplaces, our classrooms, and our homes, we are being forced to realize that life works better when we can depend on one another. Parents: When you tell your children to wash their hands, don't just say they need to do it in order keep themselves or the family healthy. Tell them they need to wash their hands in order to keep everyone healthy, and explain why. Then maybe leave a note for an elderly neighbor asking if they could use any help. <http://cnnphilippines.com/lifestyle/2020/3/16/How-to-survive-coronavirus-lockdown-as-a-parent-.html>

Coronavirus: PM says everyone should avoid office, pubs and travelling

The key new government measures are: a) Everyone should avoid gatherings and crowded places, such as pubs, clubs and theatres b) Everyone should work from home if they can c) All "unnecessary" visits to friends and relatives in care homes should cease d) People should only use the NHS "where we really need to" - and can reduce the burden on workers by getting advice on the NHS website where possible f) By next weekend, those with the most serious health conditions must be "largely shielded from social contact for around 12 weeks" g) The UK is now "three weeks" behind Italy - the worst-hit country in Europe h) If one person in any household has a persistent cough or fever, everyone living there must stay at home for 14 days i) Those people should, if possible, avoid leaving the house "even to buy food or essentials" - but they may leave the house "for exercise and, in that case, at a safe distance from others" j) Schools will not be closed for the moment <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51917562>

Amazon ramps hiring, opening 100,000 new roles to support people relying on Amazon's service in this stressful time

Company will invest over \$350 million globally to increase pay by \$2/hour in the U.S., £2/hr in the UK, and approximately €2/hr in many EU countries for employees and partners who are in fulfillment centers, transportation operations, stores or those making deliveries so that others can remain at home.

https://blog.aboutamazon.com/operations/amazon-opening-100000-new-roles?utm_source=social&utm_medium=tw&utm_term=amznnews&utm_content=COVID-19_hiring&linkId=84444004

What it's like to have coronavirus: A first-hand account from CBS News' Seth Doane

"I coughed a little bit, just enough to worry the people I was with here. We were out working covering this story. I started to have a little bit of a cough that worried me. For the most part, I feel okay. As we know, this is a deadly virus. It can be incredibly serious, a major respiratory illness. So far I've been lucky. I've had a chest pressure almost like you feel like you've done a big chest workout. I've had a little bit of a cough. I had a relatively mild fever. I've had kind of weird aches and pains in places I'm not used to. But honestly, I feel like I've had colds and flus worse than this. I've never been totally out for the whole day in bed. I've been up, able to talk with people. So for me, luckily, it's been quite mild.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-what-its-like-to-have-covid-19-cbs-news-seth-doane-first-hand-account/>

Working Remotely

Hit the precaution button not the panic button

1) Restrict handshakes and practice 'hello' from a great distance. 2) Ask your employees to practice sneezing and coughing etiquette 3) Clean your workplace desk or workstation often 4) Promote hygienic washroom practice 6) Disseminating tissues, dustbin and pocket sanitizers to the employees 7) Hygienic office canteen 8) Basics First - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/hit-precaution-button-not-panic-55748>

Coronavirus: Stuck At Home? Here's The Tech To Get You Through It

If you find you suddenly have some unexpected time at home, there are technological solutions to help you make the most of it. This applies for keeping in touch, video-conferencing that meeting with your colleagues, or FaceTime calls to friends and family, especially if they're overseas. But the right gadgets can make your sudden enforced solitude more pleasant, too, from using your iPad to watch Netflix if the TV in your bedroom isn't up to snuff to installing a video doorbell so you don't need direct contact with the guy at the door.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidphelan/2020/03/15/coronavirus-stuck-at-home-heres-the-tech-to-get-through-it/>

Coronavirus: 8 ways to look after your mental health

1 - Seek accurate info from legitimate sources 2 - Set limits on news about COVID-19 3 - Look after yourselves 4 - Reach out to others and support those around you 5 - Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking 6 - Acknowledge your feelings 7 - Take time to talk to the children about COVID-19 8 - Ask for professional support if and whenever you need it

<https://www.mhe-sme.org/covid-19/>

What Can Be Learned From 'Virtual' Firms as Coronavirus Necessitates Remote Work? | The American Lawyer

Brick-and-mortar firms weren't built with remote work in mind, say the leaders of distributed firms, so they face obstacles both physical and cultural as more attorneys log in from home to limit the spread of COVID-19.

<https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2020/03/12/what-can-be-learned-from-virtual-firms-as-coronavirus-necessitates-remote-work/>

Virtual Classrooms

Coronavirus: Simple tips for better online teaching

1. Record your lectures - don't stream them - 2. Show your face during the teaching session 3. - Keep videos short 4 - Test out slides 5. - Using existing resources 6. Make sure they are open access 7. Give specific instructions 8. Provide interactive activities 9. Set reasonable expectations 10. Use auto-checking to measure attendance 10. - Use group communication carefully 11. - Let students take control 12 - Don't hide your feelings & Repeat

<https://www.malaysiasun.com/news/264327387/coronavirus-14-simple-tips-for-better-online-teaching>

Middle East discovers value of the virtual classroom amid coronavirus threat

In the UAE, where more than 80 coronavirus cases have been reported so far, the Ministry of Education ordered the closure of all schools and universities for a period of four weeks starting from March 8. Soon afterwards, Saudi Arabia's education ministry announced the closure of all educational institutions, including public and private schools as well as technical and vocational training institutes. Many institutions in the Kingdom intend to ensure uninterrupted education through digital learning methods in tandem with other measures to reduce the spread of the virus through movement and public interaction.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1640526/middle-east>

All students could soon be learning in 'virtual classrooms'. Here's how they work

The virtual school uses Adobe Connect to web conference, Office 365 and G-Suite for cloud-based document sharing and classwork. Teachers issue and mark homework using OneNote, where they can supervise student progress with tasks in real time. Students can break out into smaller online discussion groups and teachers can mute the class to communicate one-on-one with a student who needs help. Each teacher works with a headset, laptop, desktop computer, webcam and a document camera - which functions like a digital projector - but principal Chris Robertson said they could carry

out most tasks with a laptop alone. Students also have access to Oliver, a fully digitised school library whose librarian works on the NSW South Coast, and the school can reach thousands of students at a time with live streams. Last year it reached over 25,000 primary school students during two live online presentations on eSafety, and streamed HSC workshops to 11,000 senior school students via 654 simultaneous online connections.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/all-students-could-soon-be-learning-in-virtual-classrooms-here-s-how-they-work-20200312-p549fb.html>

NYC Plans To Feed All Students, Deliver Laptops For Remote Learning

The grab-and-go program is one of the main tenets of Mayor Bill de Blasio's schools shutdown plan. As pressure mounted over the past week to close schools during the novel coronavirus outbreak in the city, de Blasio repeatedly emphasized that one major obstacle was the fact that hundreds of thousands of public school students depend on the free breakfasts and lunches offered at school. On Sunday de Blasio announced that schools are closed through the end of Spring Break on April 20th, and they may remain shuttered for the rest of the school year. Remote learning is to begin March 23rd for the system's 1.1 million students. Meanwhile, the grab-and-go program rolled out Monday morning and is available every weekday from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to any child under 18, no matter what school they actually attend, be it charter, private or public, Carranza said. The city is also running the program at every school site for this week, and students don't need to go to their actual home institution but can pick up the food at whatever school is convenient. The plan is to then switch to centralized hubs for food service as the city does during summer breaks.

<https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-plans-feed-all-students-deliver-laptops-remote-learning>

How a top Chinese university is responding to coronavirus

Although online teaching is no longer a novelty, we are aware that not all faculty members are equally adept at harnessing related technology and managing virtual classrooms. As part of the quality assurance process, ZJU organized a series of training sessions in mid-February for 3,670 faculty members. An instructor of one of our most popular MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) courses was invited to demonstrate how he adapted pedagogy to online tuition and forged a strong sense of community. Student success is what online teaching efforts are all about. It is, therefore, crucial to ensure no one is left out. Seeking to bridge the digital divide, since January ZJU has funded access to online learning for more than 1,000 disadvantaged students. The university has also negotiated deals with several network providers to subsidize the data plans of its faculty and students. For students without access to live streaming or grappling with shaky internet connections, ZJU provides them with lecture playbacks and courseware packages.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/coronavirus-china-the-challenges-of-online-learning-for-universities/>

COVID-19 pushes universities to switch to online classes—but are they ready?

While the work to transition face-to-face instruction to online environments would mean an initial massive increase in working hours, the results for some educators and some students so far are promising. In the emerging and ever-changing COVID-19 context, New York University Shanghai and Duke Kunshan University offer examples of successful adaptation and rapid deployment of educational technology products, like the video-conferencing platform Zoom and online course provider Coursera. Significantly, these universities had existing experience with these technologies that they were able to expand; they weren't starting from scratch with new and untested tech solutions.

<https://phys.org/news/2020-03-covid-universities-online-classesbut-ready.html>

Healthcare Innovations

COVID-19 Vaccine Test Begins With US Volunteer

"We're team coronavirus now," Kaiser Permanente study leader Dr. Lisa Jackson said on the eve of

the experiment. "Everyone wants to do what they can in this emergency." The Associated Press observed as the study's first participant, an operations manager at a small tech company, received the injection inside an exam room. Several others were next in line for a test that will ultimately give 45 volunteers two doses, a month apart. "We all feel so helpless. This is an amazing opportunity for me to do something," said Jennifer Haller, 43, of Seattle. She's the mother of two teenagers and "they think it's cool" that she's taking part in the study.

<https://time.com/5804092/experimental-covid-19-vaccine-test-begins-as-u-s-volunteer-receives-first-shot/>

'Healthcare on brink of collapsing': Doctors share stories from inside the Italy coronavirus quarantine

I'm just back from Italy and "enjoying" my first day of self-isolation. Getting a real picture of how bad the situation is, especially in Lombardy and the north, has been really difficult for TV news because movement is so restricted, access to the overwhelmed hospitals impossible and the danger of infection so great. But it's really important people understand just how bad things are, not least because it is where we may be headed. So I will continue to write here about conversations, emails or recordings with those who are still under quarantine in Italy. Some will be Britons who have stayed on, some Italians, some doctors. I start with a voice recording of two Milanese doctors speaking on WhatsApp about the situation at their hospitals.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-03-11/italy-doctors-coronavirus-covid-19-quarantine-milan-health/>

They've Contained the Coronavirus. Here's How.

Since identifying the first infections (all imported) on their territories — on Jan. 21 in Taiwan and on Jan. 23 in both Hong Kong and Singapore — all three governments have implemented some combination of measures to (1) reduce the arrival of new cases into the community (travel restrictions), (2) specifically prevent possible transmission between known cases and the local population (quarantines) and (3) generally suppress silent transmission in the community by reducing contact between individuals (self-isolation, social distancing, heightened hygiene). But each has had a different approach.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/13/opinion/coronavirus-best-response.html>

Wuhan-style hospital could be built from scratch in Milan as area runs short of facilities amid coronavirus outbreak

A 500-bed Wuhan-style hospital could be built from scratch in Milan to resuscitate coronavirus patients as northern Italy runs out of facilities to keep the most seriously ill alive. As the region grapples with a wave of critical cases that shows no sign of slowing down, Lombardy governor Attilio Fontana said the new hospital would be "fundamental" for the region's capacity to treat urgent patients. "The progression [of the contagion] continues, so it's clear we have to prepare ourselves to create many new resuscitation beds," he said last night. Lombardy is at the epicentre of Europe's biggest Covid-19 outbreak, with Italy the second worst-hit country after China, seeing 24,747 cases and 1,809 deaths by yesterday.

https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/wuhanstyle-hospital-could-be-built-in-milan-coronavirus-a4388231.html?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1584372488

Imperial College Modelling Paper - Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce COVID19 mortality and healthcare demand

Two fundamental strategies are possible: (a) mitigation, which focuses on slowing but not necessarily stopping epidemic spread - reducing peak healthcare demand while protecting those most at risk of severe disease from infection, and (b) suppression, which aims to reverse epidemic growth, reducing case numbers to low levels and maintaining that situation indefinitely. Each policy has major challenges. We find that that optimal mitigation policies (combining home isolation of suspect cases, home quarantine of those living in the same household as suspect cases, and social

distancing of the elderly and others at most risk of severe disease) might reduce peak healthcare demand by 2/3 and deaths by half. However, the resulting mitigated epidemic would still likely result in hundreds of thousands of deaths and health systems (most notably intensive care units) being overwhelmed many times over. For countries able to achieve it, this leaves suppression as the preferred policy option.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/medicine/sph/ide/gida-fellowships/Imperial-College-COVID19-NPI-modelling-16-03-2020.pdf>

Ten-Minute Coronavirus Test for \$1 Could Be Game Changer for Africa

Using technology from home pregnancy and malaria tests, its saliva and finger-prick kit could be ready for sale by June for less than \$1 apiece. In Africa, they will be manufactured in Senegal by diaTropix, a newly built diagnostics manufacturing facility run by the director of the Pasteur Institute, Amadou Alpha Sall, who has led training around the continent for coronavirus testing. “We are ensuring that these tests are made accessible at the cost of manufacture,” said Joe Fitchett, medical director of Mologic, which received a \$1.2 million grant from the U.K. government to develop the test.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-16/ten-minute-coronavirus-test-could-be-game-changer-for-africa>

Ventilator Maker: We Can Ramp Up Production Five-Fold

“We could increase production five-fold in a 90- to 120-day period,” says Chris Kiple, chief executive of Ventec Life Systems, a Bothell, Wash. firm that makes ventilators used in hospitals, homes and ambulances. He’d have to tool up production lines, train assemblers and testers and get parts. Accelerating the parts delivery might be the toughest task, he says. The ventilator industry is getting a burst of desperate orders from China and Italy. The U.S. hasn’t seen that yet, although manufacturers are bracing for it. “The time for action by the government is now,” says Kiple. “[Covid] is most likely to get worse next fall.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/baldwin/2020/03/14/ventilator-maker-we-can-ramp-up-production-five-fold/>

Coronavirus Treatment Begins Human Trials in China

China has kick-started a clinical trial to speedily test a drug for the novel coronavirus infection as the nation rushes therapies for those afflicted and scours for vaccines to protect the rest. Remdesivir, a new antiviral drug by Gilead Sciences Inc. aimed at infectious diseases such Ebola and SARS, will be tested by a medical team from Beijing-based China-Japan Friendship Hospital for efficacy in treating the deadly new strain of coronavirus, a hospital spokeswoman told Bloomberg News Monday. Trial for the drug will be conducted in the central Chinese city of Wuhan — ground zero of the viral outbreak that has so far killed more than 360 people, sickened over 17,000 in China and spread to more than a dozen nations. As many as 270 patients with mild and moderate pneumonia caused by the virus will be recruited in a randomized, double-blinded and placebo-controlled study, Chinese news outlet The Paper reported on Sunday.

<https://time.com/5776682/coronavirus-drug/>

Isolation Tips

Hong Kong to quarantine arrivals from all foreign countries

Travellers arriving in Hong Kong from any foreign country from Thursday will be put under home quarantine, the city’s leader has said, as she extended a red travel alert to cover all overseas nations. Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor noted on Tuesday that the coronavirus outbreak had become a pandemic, and the total number of infections abroad had exceeded the total in China. She said that in the previous two weeks, Hong Kong had recorded 57 new infections, 50 of them imported. “If we exclude these imported cases, we only have seven local cases in the past week,” she said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3075491/coronavirus-hong-kong-quarantine-arrivals-all-foreign>

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Covid-19: Everything you need to know about social distancing

For those of us not in self-isolation, social distancing is one of the ways we can stop the spread of Covid-19. This is a step by step guide explaining how to do it.

<https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/17-03-2020/covid-19-what-is-social-distancing/>

Coronavirus latest: UK told to stop non-essential contact and avoid public spaces

Key points from the Prime Minister's announcement were: a) Anyone living with someone who has a cough or a fever should also stay at home for 14 days b) All people should work from home if they can and avoid unnecessary travel c) The Government will no longer support mass gatherings with emergency workers d) People should avoid pubs, clubs, theatres and other social gatherings e) Those classed as 'vulnerable' will be asked to remain at home for 12 weeks f) Schools are not being closed yet

<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/coronavirus-latest-uk-told-to-stop-non-essential-contact-and-avoid-public-spaces-2457025>

Social distancing prevents infections, but it can have unintended consequences

What effects, if any, might be caused by social distancing in response to the coronavirus is an open question. "I have a couple competing hypotheses," Holt-Lunstad says. "On the one hand, I am concerned that this will not only exacerbate things for those who are already isolated and lonely, but also might be a triggering point for others to now get into habits of connecting less." A more optimistic possibility, she says, is that heightened awareness of these issues will prompt people to stay connected and take positive action. "We'd love to be collecting data on that," she says.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/03/we-are-social-species-how-will-social-distancing-affect-us>

How to Prevent Loneliness in a Time of Social Distancing

Recent research by the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health paints a more nuanced picture: how you use such platforms seems to matter more than how much you do so. We can all benefit from developing digital habits that support meaningful human connections—especially now that it may be our only option until the outbreak calms. Whether you are quarantined, working remotely or just being cautious, now is the perfect time to practice using technology in socially healthy ways.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-prevent-loneliness-in-a-time-of-social-distancing/>

Hygiene Helpers

Coronavirus elderly advice: How can I look after my older relatives?

Age UK says it is also important to think of "practical" ways to help, such as running errands on relatives' behalf or picking up supplies such as food and medication. Simon Hewett-Avison, from charity Independent Age, also says families need to make sure elderly people have the supplies they need but urges a "balanced approach" rather than panicked stockpiling. Both the government and supermarkets have urged people not to stockpile goods. Carers UK says those who cannot visit elderly relatives should think of other ways of spending time together - setting up a family group chat, for example, or playing games online. "If online communication isn't possible, never underestimate the value of a regular simple phone call to offer social contact and support," it says.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51855011>

European distillers turn to making sanitisers to tackle shortage (paywall)

Spirits makers from France's Pernod Ricard to small craft gin distilleries in the UK are joining efforts to boost production of hand sanitisers to help fight the spread of the coronavirus. The move comes as the UK government prepares regulatory changes to aid a switch in production, and as healthcare systems, businesses and customers in Europe struggle to secure to procure sanitisers, as well as other medical supplies, as infection rates rise. Stocks of isopropyl alcohol, a vital ingredient for hand

gels and alcohol wipes, is also in short supply in Europe, with prices for the chemical jumping sharply.

<https://www.ft.com/content/e7c02232-67a5-11ea-800d-da70cff6e4d3>

Coronavirus guidance

If you have paid care workers, cleaners or other helpers coming into the home of the person you care for: Ensure that they are following stringent hygiene and infection control measures as set out by the NHS. If they are employed through an agency and you have any doubts, contact the agency to ask them about what protective measures they are taking. Talk to the person you care for about the hygiene and infection control measures they should expect someone coming into their home to follow. They should not be afraid to insist that these are followed. If possible, ensure soap is made readily available and towels are frequently changed.

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>

Reducing the spread of coronavirus starts with basic hygiene

Turns out Mom was right. Health experts say the best, simplest ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus that has killed more than 3,200 people and affected more than 100,000 around the world, follow the tried and true cold-season admonishments given out for generations. Wash your hands. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Avoid touching your face. Stay home if you are sick. But some of the advice has gotten a little more specific. COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets, which typically travel about three to six feet and settle on surfaces, where they can live for a few hours up to several days, according to the World Health Organization. There is a risk of catching the disease by inhaling those particles, but there is a more significant risk of getting it by touching surfaces, such as desks, handrails, or doorknobs, where those droplets may have settled. "The disease transmission goes from a cough or sneeze to a surface to your hand to your face, and that's how people get infected," said Paul Biddinger, director of the Emergency Preparedness Research, Evaluation, and Practice Program, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "Good hand washing really matters. If people cough or sneeze into their elbow, that limits the spread of respiratory secretions. What all of us can do together is follow basic hygiene measures that will actually slow the spread of disease in communities."

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/03/preventing-the-spread-of-coronavirus-starts-with-basic-hygiene/>

Social enterprises help out with coronavirus across Asia

After teaming up with a local partner and activating a network of volunteers, Soap Cycling now provide hygiene kits and masks to about 3,000 of the city's 21,000 street cleaners. Other businesses for good are tackling education. This week, Hong Kong prolonged its suspension of schools until April but with an artificial intelligence (AI) learning platform that can be accessed from tablets or phones at home, more than 12,000 students in China, Hong Kong and Vietnam are continuing to learn. "When serious disruption occurs, from natural disasters to outbreaks of disease, education has traditionally suffered drastically," said Priya Lakhani, founder of London-based Century Tech, which offered its product for free to affected students.

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/world/asia/2020-02-28-social-enterprises-help-out-with-coronavirus-across-asia/>

Public Policies

Is the government moving fast enough on coronavirus? - podcast

Britain has changed its approach to the coronavirus outbreak after coming under intense pressure as surrounding countries raise their response levels, close schools, shut borders and put in place measures for social distancing. Britain had moved more slowly, with medical experts preparing for the long haul and recommending a more gradual scaling up of policy responses. But yesterday it stepped up its response with a series of new guidelines. The Guardian's health editor Sarah Boseley

has been talking to scientists who defend both approaches and tells Anushka Asthana that a definitive answer is simply not possible, but the pressure is now mounting on the UK to show its modelling data and explain why it is diverging.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2020/mar/17/is-the-government-moving-fast-enough-on-coronavirus>

Romney proposes sending \$1,000 checks to every American to ease coronavirus economic pain

GOP Sen. Mitt Romney proposed on Monday sending every American adult \$1,000 to ease the financial pain of the coronavirus pandemic that has tanked global markets and threatens to grind U.S. economic activity to a halt. “While expansions of paid leave, unemployment insurance, and SNAP benefits are crucial, the check will help fill the gaps for Americans that may not quickly navigate different government options,” Romney said in a statement. In an opinion article in The Wall Street Journal published earlier this month, Harvard University economist Jason Furman proposed sending \$1,000 to every taxpaying resident or citizen, and \$500 to every child.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/16/coronavirus-stimulus-romney-proposes-1000-for-every-american.html>

China's STA introduces tax measures to manage COVID-19 implications

The State Taxation Administration of China (STA) explains which measures it has implemented for all taxpayers to manage the social and economic implications of the coronavirus. Pascal Saint-Amans, director of OECD’s Center for Tax Policy and Administration, said he highly appreciated the effective measures that the Chinese government has taken to contain the spread of coronavirus and the rapid implementation of tax and fee incentives by the STA to support the epidemic control and recommencement of work and production.

<https://www.internationaltaxreview.com/article/b1ks79vdxzgb/chnas-sta-introduces-tax-measures-to-manage-covid-19-implications>