

A message from our Chief Executive, Sandra Black

It has been another exceptionally busy week for council staff as we move through week 6 of lockdown and I want to thank everyone for their commitment to deliver local services and play their part in the national effort. The latest news from UK Government is that we have thankfully passed the peak of the crisis for now, but it is critical that current measures remain in place to continue to prevent the spread of the virus.

I want to thank you for continuing to follow advice to stay home and stay safe wherever possible and also remind you to please only travel for essential purposes. We have heard this week that our roads are becoming busier and how important it is to continue to follow the measures now, so that we can move closer to restrictions being lifted.

[Read Sandra's message in full here.](#)



Stay home, stay safe, save lives

Keep up to date with all the latest Coronavirus information and guidance from the NHS, UK and Scottish Governments—
www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus



Expansion of testing for key workers

The Scottish Government has this week extended Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for council key workers who are showing symptoms, namely a continuous cough and/or a fever/high temperature.

This will allow key workers who deliver essential services and those in their household who are showing symptoms to know whether they have the virus, and help people return to work as quickly as possible.

If you begin to show symptoms, please contact your line manager as soon as possible to inform them of your absence, even if this falls on a weekend. They will advise you to self-refer and book a test and in some cases can help to arrange this for you.

This programme runs alongside the existing programme of testing in the NHS for clinical purposes and testing of key workers in health and social care. Health and social care staff should continue to follow the same process for testing as they currently do. For more information on booking a test and our key worker categories, please visit the **Staff advice on coronavirus > Expansion of testing for key workers** section on our website. www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10232/Expansion-of-testing-for-key-workers

Latest staff advice on Coronavirus

Visit our Staff advice on Coronavirus webpage for useful information and advice for Renfrewshire Council employees.
www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-staff

Follow us on Social Media

For daily updates you can follow us on Facebook:
[@renfrewshirecouncil](#) and Twitter: [@RenCouncil](#).

Please send us a direct message with any queries and a member of the team will be happy to assist you.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing at work and at home

Advice for staff

The following webpage is dedicated to bringing you all the information you might need for looking after your health, safety and wellbeing at work. Go to www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10207/Health-and-Wellbeing-at-Work

Staff Support

Our staff counselling service, Time for Talking, is still available to support you 24/7 with free, confidential support from professional counsellors. This is currently available through telephone or digital channels such as Skype. Visit the webpage www.timefortalking.co.uk/ for more information or call **0800 970 3980** for free support now.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Updated information is available on our webpage which includes guidance on PPE required for non-health care visits such as Community Meal Drivers, Plumbers and our Waste Collection teams. The health and wellbeing of our staff and communities is always our priority. If you have any concerns about PPE you should contact your local health and safety representative or email the Health and Safety team at health&safety.cs@renfrewshire.gov.uk immediately.

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10207/Health-Safety-and-Wellbeing-at-Work#Non%20Health%20Care

Elected Members' tribute to staff

The Leader, Provost and Board Conveners of Renfrewshire Council have praised the dedication and hard work of staff in a video released on social media earlier this week.

Renfrewshire Council Leader Iain Nicolson described the work of staff as 'heroic' as we 'continue to provide all our essential services with a reduced workforce'. Provost Lorraine Cameron thanked and paid tribute to all the 'outstanding men and women' who are 'putting the needs of others before their own' and said it makes her proud to be part of the Renfrewshire community. The full video can be found here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VmEI-BmWpg and on our social media pages.



The NHS is Open

The NHS is Open campaign seeks to reassure people that hospitals and GP surgeries are still there for them even when the issue is not coronavirus related. We know that many people don't want to place added pressure on the NHS right now. Figures indicate patients are delaying contacting their GP or visiting Accident & Emergency when they have genuine and often urgent medical concerns. Examples include a drop in urgent suspected cancer referrals and a reduction in families bringing their children for immunisation.

This can all have a hugely detrimental effect on the health of individuals and cause bigger challenges for the NHS in the long term. So, it's important to get the help you need when you need it.

If you have a non-coronavirus health condition please contact your GP practice, dial 111 out of hours or call 999 in an emergency. If it's urgent, it's urgent.



100,000 meals and counting

Just over two weeks ago we brought you the news that our Support Packages Distribution Hubs at Castlehead and Park Mains High Schools had prepared and delivered over 37,000 meals to vulnerable and shielding families across Renfrewshire. In the interim a third hub has now opened at Gleniffer High School. The number of meals delivered has now more than doubled as this week the total reached a staggering 100,000 meals!

A huge well done is in order for the Soft Facilities Management team and everyone involved with this incredible achievement. Not least of all to the catering staff who work tirelessly behind the scenes preparing healthy, tasty meals for the people of Renfrewshire. A tenacious and adaptable bunch, they have done a magnificent job in coming together from their ordinary roles which include janitorial work, catering in schools and Renfrewshire House Atrium.

Catering Manager, Alison Cassidy, pictured above front right, said 'I am really proud of the team and we are delighted that the hard work we are putting in is making a big difference to people in the community who are relying on the service that we are providing.' What a big difference that is! Congratulations and well done on all your hard work.

GovDelivery Newsletter

Our latest newsletter for residents of Renfrewshire was published this week and includes information on the Scottish Government's paper on the framework for coming out of lockdown, details on the Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund and Skills Development Scotland's online learning programme My World of Work plus more.

If you live as well as work in Renfrewshire, sign up through our website for future updates.

Online learning resources

To help support you in your continued development during these unprecedented times, the Organisational Development Team will be sharing regular online learning guides providing useful information and links to eLearning, websites, webinars and articles for further reading. The first issue is available on our Health Safety and Wellbeing webpage here:

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10207/Health-Safety-and-Wellbeing-at-Work#working-at-home and covers online learning to support remote working, managing virtual teams, managing in a crisis situation, working from home and dealing with stress.

Contact the team at hrpolicy@renfrewshire.gov.uk if you have any feedback or suggestions for future topics or if you need advice and guidance on accessing any of the online learning resources and iLearn.



View your payslip online

For many of us this week saw the first working from home payday. If you are used to receiving your payslip in the office, don't forget you can access your payslip online through Business World on any device. Go to the **Systems and user guides > Business World** section of our website for detailed instructions. www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10031/Viewing-your-payslip

Please note if your Business World password does not meet the updated security requirements you will be prompted to update this from today.

Frontline focus

Supported, Sheltered and Social

Our Sheltered Housing Team continue to give the best support they can 7 days a week to the 310 tenants living in the Council's 10 sheltered housing complexes.

Despite the many challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, Sheltered Housing Officer Alison Connelly and her colleagues still make their daily welfare checks and are on call for all tenants to contact them whenever they need help.

The team provide a range of supports for tenants from offering reassurance, arranging deliveries of essential shopping items and medication to carrying out the daily safety checks across all 10 buildings.

Alison said 'we've all been working so hard to make sure none of our tenants ever feel alone or unsupported. It can be exhausting, but we want to be there for our tenants'.

Relatives of tenants have been in touch with the team to express their gratitude and highlight how reassured they feel knowing their loved ones are getting the support they need during this crisis.

But it's not just the essentials that are being met. Almost half of tenants are now accessing the team's Befriending service and Ross McNicol Digital Participation Officer, has been helping tenants stay connected digitally by loaning tablets and supporting those with smartphones. The Renfrewshire Sheltered Housing Facebook group with virtual exercise and dance sessions and weekly online quizzes has worked wonders for keeping spirits high.

A massive well done to everyone involved for keeping this vital service running so well.



Alison Connelly Sheltered Housing Officer, about to visit tenants at Speirsfield Gardens in Paisley.



Thanks are sweeping in!

Positive feedback has continued to sweep in this week as local residents recognise the continued efforts of our street cleaning and waste collection teams.

From returning lost mobile phones to clearing up fly-tipping hot spots and providing assisted bin lifts, your hard work is truly appreciated by the people of Renfrewshire. Residents have been calling customer services with feedback, taking to social media and leaving notes and gifts by their bins. Frontline staff have been rewarded with friendly waves and artwork from children and have even scooped up some refreshing and chocolatey treats. Just look at this generous hamper left out over the Easter break.

At Park Mains hub Building Services, janitorial, volunteer and catering staff observe the minute silence.



International Workers' Memorial Day

This year, International Workers' Memorial Day, 28 May, was especially significant as we paid tribute to the many workers who have tragically lost their lives in the fight against Covid-19. This pandemic has highlighted just how important the contribution of our key workers truly is. At 11am staff across the council took part in a nationwide one-minute silence in memory of all workers who have lost their lives and in recognition and thanks to every person who continues to work during these challenging times.



On the street Waste Services staff observe the minute silence.

A frontline staff member pays a silent tribute at our workers memorial during the minute silence. The plaque reads 'Safe & Healthy work for all in remembrance of lives lost in the workplace. Stone laid by Renfrewshire Council and Paisley District TUC'

Happy and healthy home learners

The current situation can be extremely challenging for parents and carers who are supporting children's education at home. This can be particularly difficult if you are juggling work at the same time.

Schools are sending out useful tools and materials to help you progress your child's learning during this period of school closures. However, we do not want home learning to be an added pressure that will cause unnecessary stress and strain on families.

We are sure you agree, the mental and physical wellbeing of you and your children is the most important thing. So, while we want you to do your best in supporting your child's learning from home, we also want to remind you that keeping your child active, happy and healthy is the number one priority. If a particular task is not manageable or is causing you anxiety, in the words of a much beloved Disney princess 'let it go'.

For lots of advice, learning resources and help with any concerns visit our **Schools and nurseries advice on coronavirus** webpage and see the section on **Home learning and support**. www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools#Active,%20happy,%20healthy



The world's largest public art gallery

If you're looking for a project to keep the kids entertained, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) has been sharing some jazzy colouring sheets for children by education company Twinkl on their social media platforms. The drawings celebrate the services supplied by council workers and the hope is that they will provide children with some creative inspiration that can be displayed in windows, adding a new artistic dimension to the daily walk for passers-by. COSLA also hope parents and carers will share their little ones' work with them through social media. Find them on Facebook @CofSLA and Twitter @COSLA



School Placement Requests and Appeals

As many of you in Children's Services know, we are working hard to ensure we have all placing requests and any appeals completed before the new school year begins. If you live as well as work in Renfrewshire and have submitted a school placement request for your child, we know you will be eager to hear of the outcome. Please know we will always write to inform you of the outcome of your placing request as soon as we can. All applications submitted by **15 March** can expect a response by **31 May**.

The Scottish Government has recently issued guidance extending the time councils have to respond to placing requests and appeals.

For full details on when you can expect to hear from us, plus information on the appeals process go to the **Information, help and guidance on Coronavirus** section on our website and see the page on **Schools and nurseries advice on Coronavirus**. www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools#placing%20request



Riding the Storm

A short time before schools were closed and pupils began their new normal of learning at home, two Renfrewshire schools were given the accolade of being named Cycling Friendly Primary Schools.

Houston Primary and St Peter's Primary both received the national award after their hard work in delivering Renfrewshire Leisure's Bikeability training and promoting safe cycling to and from school was recognised by Cycling Scotland.

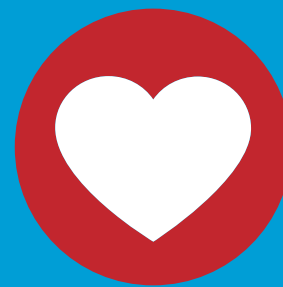
Given the current measures which limit us to one hour of exercise per day and the addition of some recent sunny weather, it turns out these efforts were worth more than anyone could have anticipated.

Craig Dalziel, Bikeability Co-ordinator for Renfrewshire Leisure said "Congratulations to both schools on receiving their awards. During lockdown we are seeing increasing numbers of families taking up cycling as their one form of daily exercise. Pupils who have taken part in Bikeability are able to put their training into practice and are taking advantage of much quieter roads due to reduced traffic presence. Along with colleagues in Active Schools, I am currently liaising with schools to ensure that no pupils miss out on learning the important life skill of safe on-road cycling as a result of school closures. As Bikeability is an outdoor activity we are confident this can be delivered relatively easily with social distancing in place and it is our intention to support schools to re-establish delivery of both playground and on-road training when schools reopen".

"Bikeability Scotland" training is available to all schools in Renfrewshire. If you work at a school that has not yet taken advantage of this fabulous opportunity, you can contact Craig for more information at Craig.Dalziel@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Social Shout Outs

Our Facebook and Twitter channels have received some more fantastic feedback from the people of Renfrewshire this week. Just goes to show all your hard work is recognised and appreciated. Here are just a few of the comments we have received so far...



"@RenCouncil sending my warmest thanks to the binmen they deserve a mention they are the greatest"

Wilma Ashe via Twitter

"Absolute best team 🥰 The girls & Matthew that are still working through this deserve so so much praise"

In reference to staff at Abbey Nursery in Houston via Facebook

"My little girl goes to abbey It's such a great nursery! The staff are all so amazing and really engage with the children Brilliant-well done xx"

Alex Ferguson McCarley

"@_RenMusic @RenCouncil @RenCouncilNews Many thanks to David Kerr for coming along to our store to provide outstanding support in our recognition and thanks to all front line workers during COVID crisis we face—thank you"

Framey24 via Twitter

"Thank you. We are grateful to all the council staff who are working to get us through this. As a shielded person, my husband could not have been better looked after. We haven't needed much help but the call from the council asking if we have everything we need is so reassuring. Thank you all. Take care"

Kathleen Birney via Facebook

"@RenCouncil A massive thanks from me to the guys who are emptying our bins and keeping our streets clean. Where would we be without you?"

Fiona Lindsay via Twitter

"@RenCouncil You are all doing such a great job."

Di via Twitter

"@RenCouncil please could you say thank you to the bin men who found my phone in mayfield crescent howwood this morning!."

Arlene Motherwell via Twitter



Share your stories and photos

Don't forget we'd love to hear from you! It could be a photo of you working from home, something interesting from your daily walk, or a photo of your new "colleagues" (furry friends most welcome!). Have you started volunteering or taking on new roles and responsibilities you never thought you would? Tell us all about it and we can share your stories. Send them in to internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk