



## A message from our Chief Executive, Sandra Black

**I hope this week has given you the opportunity to spend some time outdoors and catch up with family and friends following the easing of some lockdown measures. I understand just how difficult it has been to adjust to the profound changes to how we live and work and be apart from the people we care about most. Having a little more freedom to reconnect provides some hope and peace of mind, so thank you to everyone who has helped to make this happen by supporting the national response either on the frontline or by staying home.**

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

Visit our website at  
[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk)

Latest information and advice  
—we've got you covered!



This week was National Volunteers week and we couldn't be prouder of all our incredible staff members who have volunteered to take on new and additional roles during this time. We also owe a massive debt of gratitude to every individual who has joined our ranks as a volunteer to help the people of Renfrewshire through the Coronavirus crisis. Your acts of selflessness and kindness are what makes us proud to live and work in Renfrewshire. Don't forget to share your stories on social media using #kindnesscounts.

It has been a busy week for many areas of the Council including Environment and Infrastructure with the reopening of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Children's Services as preparations are now underway to begin the gradual reopening of schools. We bring you all the latest on schools and HWRCs later on.

As the Test and Protect programme expands across Scotland, there is a chance you could be contacted and asked to self-isolate. If this happens, we need you to complete a self-isolation note and return it to your line-manager as soon as possible. You can access these here <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note>.

This is an encouraging time for a lot of us as we start to see some restrictions easing and small glimmers of normality returning to our lives. But the reality for those of us who are still shielding is that the guidelines remain largely unchanged. We fully appreciate how challenging it must be to have come this far, now witnessing the ease of restrictions for everyone else but not feeling the benefits yourself. We expect to see updated guidance from the Scottish Government very soon that will give us a clearer picture of the road ahead for those of us in shielding and we cannot wait to see the joy and happiness that will come when families are finally reunited. But for now, you have not been forgotten and shielding guidance remains in place to protect you and your loved ones.



## Our Household Waste Recycling Centres reopen successfully



Paisley HWRC staff Allan Brenchley and Ralph Allen, Warden Brian McLaughlin



Our recycling centres have been open since Monday, giving residents the chance to get rid of any extra household waste they've gathered during the lockdown period.

There's still some way to go until the sites fully reopen, but Environment and Infrastructure Director Gordon McNeil, has words of thanks for our colleagues who've made it happen.

"It's no easy task managing the thousands of visits we receive to our recycling centres each week normally but having been closed for some time and in the current situation, we were prepared for it to be even more difficult.

"The work of my management team in creating and implementing the project plan, ensuring every detail was thought of, has been fantastic, as was the work to create clear traffic management at each site.

"Our teams on the ground have set the sites up brilliantly to allow quick, safe access for residents and they've managed the flow of traffic and directed visitors superbly.

"Residents have been following the rules to the letter which has made life a lot easier for those on site.

"My thanks go out to everyone involved for undertaking this huge piece of work in a relatively short period of time.

"We still have a way to go as we allow more materials onto the site to be disposed of, as well as ensuring that the health and safety risk remains low and follows the latest government guidance.

"I'm confident though that our teams will cope with the upcoming challenges and I'm proud of their efforts so far."

Our recycling centres remain open for essential visits only at this time, with only bagged household waste allowed to be disposed of.

Only cars can visit at the moment and proof of residency and ID must be shown before access to the site is granted.

For all the latest information you need on our recycling centres, you can visit [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-bins](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-bins).

## Supporting businesses and protecting our communities

The restrictions placed on us as we respond to the Coronavirus have been truly unprecedented. We have found ourselves in a rapidly evolving situation with ever-changing guidelines and sometimes it can be challenging to know what's acceptable and what's not. This presents a particular challenge for businesses who have to take many factors into account when considering whether it is safe to reopen and what measures they must put in place to enable them to do so.

Our Environmental Health and Trading Standards teams are continuing to do all they can to support local businesses to follow restrictions and have been in contact with over 600 businesses since the early days of lockdown.

COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) recently released information detailing the 'significant work in protecting the health of the public' undertaken by Councils during this period including 'the implementation of new powers to ensure that those businesses which are permitted to open have appropriate social distancing measures in place and to ensure that other businesses remain closed.

Keeping up to date with and interpreting new legislation whilst negotiating with businesses has been an ongoing challenge for Trading Standards and Environmental Health Officers. They have been required to demonstrate empathy and good listening skills but ultimately must ensure the law is always adhered to.

Responsible for giving advice and issuing Prohibition Notices where rules are broken, the service has been delighted with the response and level of cooperation shown so far. To date they've only issued one single Prohibition Notice, which really shows the high level of compliance shown across the Renfrewshire business community.

Environmental Health Officer, Dianne Foy said, 'Given the significant focus on inspections and hands-on investigation as part our role, we've had to adapt quickly to new ways of working. A lot of discussions have been conducted by telephone, with further advice sent out by email. Follow-up visits and spot checks have been carried out in a socially distanced manner. In general, a high proportion of businesses are doing their best to comply with the regulations and are receptive to our advice.'

Serious Organised Crime & Trading Standards Manager, Faye Wilson said, 'New legislation can be challenging in "peace times", but to get to grips with fast changing legislation while also trying to work from home during a crisis has been a uniquely difficult problem. Thanks to technology, we moved to home working with minimal issues and have been able to work at the pace required.'

The necessary adaptations and lessons learned from this crisis have brought some real positives for the service. Faye said, 'Going forward we will continue to support local businesses in new and unique ways. We have an opportunity to reimagine our service delivery models and are currently exploring ideas such as business advice sessions on Microsoft Teams.'

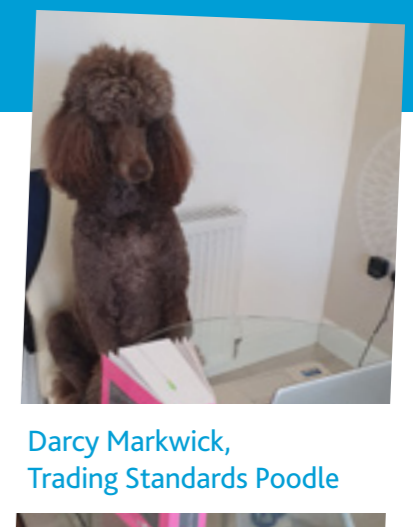
Trading Standards Officer, Scott Markwick, said, 'We have all had to adapt quickly to new ways of working and I am sure this experience will help shape the future of how we protect our local communities. I think the current situation has shown we can do things smarter and that it is possible to work from home and overcome some of the barriers with technology. Though I am looking forward to meeting more people in "real life" as restrictions start to ease.'



Dianne Foy, Environmental Health Officer



Lynsey Duncanson, Trading Standards Officer



Darcy Markwick, Trading Standards Poodle



## Health and wellbeing advice for staff

If you are feeling anxious about the easing of restrictions, we want you to know this is perfectly normal. We've all had to take drastic steps to protect ourselves and our communities in recent months and now as some of the restrictions begin to be lifted, many of us may have worries or concerns about our safety going forward and how best to protect ourselves.

The Scottish Government's Clear Your Head campaign which aims to promote physical and mental wellbeing during this time, has been refreshed with tips and advice on how to continue doing just that. Most importantly though, it seeks to reassure us that feelings of anxiety at this time are ok and there are many things we can all do to stay safe as the situation evolves. Visit the campaign website at [www.clearyourhead.scot](http://www.clearyourhead.scot)

Our 'Health, safety and wellbeing at work' webpage is regularly being updated with useful advice and resources. The information is especially helpful during the crisis period but will also provide you with a strong foundation for continued physical and mental health as restrictions ease and beyond.

But wellbeing isn't just about body and mind. It can also be greatly impacted by our circumstances and the conditions around us. That's why this week we shared a new Financial Wellbeing Guide from our Human Resources team that can help you manage your finances effectively under the current challenging circumstances. This can be found here: [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10207/Health-Safety-and-Wellbeing-at-Work#financial-wellbeing](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10207/Health-Safety-and-Wellbeing-at-Work#financial-wellbeing)



## Schools and nurseries update from Steven Quinn, Director of Children's Services

"The past few months have been utterly unprecedented and I am immensely grateful to all colleagues, not only in Children's Services but right across the council and the wider council family, who have helped to continue to provide support to our families and their children over this time.

"The Scottish Government has now published a route map toward reopening schools and nurseries in August. I appreciate many of you will also be local parents, so I wanted to update you on how we see that working.

"We recently ran a survey of parents to find out the biggest issues affecting you. We received many hundreds of questions and we have answered as much as we can at this time on our website—but I can touch on a few key points below.

"We are now working towards pupils returning to school in August, although staff who are able will return on a phased basis throughout June to prepare for next year. When schools do return it will be with a blended learning model, meaning pupils will be in class on some days and learning at home on others.

"The safety and wellbeing of children and our staff will be our biggest priority and we will be led by the national guidance. We are working with colleagues across the council to put an enhanced cleaning regime in place, but good handwashing and hygiene will also be crucial.



"We will ensure physical distancing in schools where we can and have successfully managed this in our childcare hubs for the children of key workers. All schools have different layouts and sizes and will need different solutions, so each school and early years centre may be slightly different. We will also look to use all available space in our schools and nurseries.

"We understand many parents work full-time, so not having children in school every day may be a challenge. We are working to be able to offer childcare for children of key workers, in line with government advice, on the days children are not in school. Parents will have to apply for this as it will not be possible for this to take place in our school buildings. We are working with Renfrewshire Leisure and out-of-school care providers to consider how and where this can be best delivered, and as plans develop we will keep you informed.

"Numbers will be smaller in each class but that will let teachers spend more time with each child. We will also need staff to support pupils with at-home learning while other teachers are in class.

"The wellbeing of our pupils will be hugely important—we want pupils to be able to enjoy social interaction again. In terms of learning, our teachers will do what they are skilled at – they will assess each child and work out the best steps to support them. For children with



Additional Support Needs who may require enhanced support, schools will contact parents directly to discuss a tailored approach for their child.

"Moving into primary or secondary school from nursery or P7 is a massive milestone for pupils and parents. We will be able to get those pupils back into nursery or primary for a few days in June to say goodbye, and where possible to see inside their new schools. This will take place between 18 and 23 June, and schools will be in touch directly with parents with arrangements.

"Finally I have to offer my heartfelt thanks to our Children's Services staff, including our teachers, early-year practitioners, support staff and Renfrewshire Leisure and community learning staff, as well as our third sector and partner providers, for supporting the childcare hubs, home learning, and for all the work to look after pupil wellbeing over these last few months.

"And I want to thank everyone in the wider council team for all they have done and are doing to get schools and nurseries ready to open in August—your support is hugely appreciated."

For more information on the parents survey and to see a film from Steven, visit our website at [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools)



## Arms out wide: Hope at Hugh Smiley hub

### The Social Distancing Song

*"Head, shoulders, knees and toes, arms out wide,  
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, arms out wide,  
and check your space from side to side,  
head, shoulders, knees and toes, arms out wide!"*



The staff and children at Hugh Smiley childcare hub have been keeping busy during lockdown with a variety of creative activities including music and arts and crafts.

Their inspired reworking of the children's classic "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" takes on a topical spin as they stand 2 metres apart chanting and using their arms to maintain a safe distance.

The song has been well received by children and parents alike who use its lyrics and actions to remind themselves of the importance of physical distancing at this time.

In addition to their musical talents, some of the children at Hugh Smiley could well be considered as budding world class graphic designers. With the assistance of hub staff, they designed an original motif for essential workers symbolising the values of hope and caring for others which have become so prevalent throughout this crisis.

A batch of plain t-shirts, kindly donated by a nearby Tesco, were then given to a local print shop who was "over the moon" to receive the special job of creating some unique apparel for the hub staff.

The heart shaped design reads "I can't stay home I'm an essential worker" and shows the silhouette of a teddy bear reaching out to the word "Hope".

Staff were all delighted to receive these special creations. Laura Watkins commented that she would "keep her t-shirt for years to come" and show it to her grandchildren to help explain to a future generation what the Covid-19 pandemic was all about.

Parents have been praising the hub for its wonderful work during this time. One of them said, "The ethos in Hugh Smiley is warm and fun loving. I am so grateful to the staff who have just been fabulous in looking after my daughter."

Another stated, "The NHS may save lives, but the Hugh Smiley staff have saved mine with their excellent childcare."

Head of Hugh Smiley Childcare Hub, Angela Ferguson said "We have been so lucky to work with such an amazing team and I want to express my sincere thanks to both our staff and volunteers for all of their hard work. It takes great staff to make a great team and the individuals here have come from all walks of life bringing with them a range of skills and experiences which have made for a wonderful environment for the young children here during this very difficult time. Thank you all."



Hub staff model their very own brand of hope

## An insight into the Criminal Justice Social Work Service

Last week Children's Services Social Work Manager Michelle McCargo shared her message of thanks to all the staff who are working hard to continue supporting vulnerable in children in Renfrewshire. This week, Criminal Justice Services Manager Allison Scott, shines a light on the dedication and commitment of those working in the Criminal Justice Social Work Service to protect our communities.

"Within Criminal Justice, we provide a range of services for individuals at all stages of the criminal justice system. Many of the people we support are often regarded with little or no public sympathy. Yet through the work we do, we know that all too often these are the people who are the most vulnerable, most at risk and most isolated from society. A lot of our work involves office-based face to face contact and as a result providing our services to vulnerable people through a pandemic and under lockdown conditions has been challenging to say the least. I couldn't be prouder of the achievements of my colleagues who have demonstrated immeasurable commitment and effort to continuing their vital work through this crisis.

"At the beginning of lockdown, Inverclyde and Dumbarton Sheriff Courts were closed, increasing the number of cases at Paisley Sheriff Court. New Coronavirus regulations also meant that the Court Social Work Team could no longer be present in court buildings, so we've found new ways to assist court procedures from afar. Our reports and new methods of virtual information sharing have been vital aids in assisting the work of fiscals and court clerks, and ensuring information gets to all who need to know.

"We continue to provide the best possible support to help prisoners transition and settle back into the community, and to help their families adjust and cope. None of the services and help we provide to this group has been adversely impacted by lockdown thanks to our use of technology and the dedication of our Fieldwork, Throughcare and Pathways services

Allison Scott



and the positive relationships we have with everyone involved in the parole process. Our role extends way beyond release and we have used technology and new ways of working to provide a range of support to help people maintain positive mental health, combat addiction, access work and rebuild their lives.

"I also want to pay tribute to our female only Women's Community Justice Service team who have been keeping in touch with vulnerable women, who described their support as a "lifeline" during the crisis. They have continued to provide vital support to women subject to domestic violence including making MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) referrals which enables a quick multi-agency response to women at this time.

"Though adapting to these highly unusual times has not been without its challenges, we have supported the needs of our vulnerable service users all the way and continued to put safety and public protection first.

"Thank you to all our fantastic staff who have used every means to continue to provide this incredible level of support to our service users, and thanks also to our friends and colleagues in Housing Services, and across the council and HSCP. Please take care and stay safe."

## 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](mailto:internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk)



# Staff Thanks and Social Shout Outs



Our Facebook and Twitter channels have received more fantastic feedback from the people of Renfrewshire this week and thanks to staff are pouring in from all directions. 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...

## Feedback from individuals receiving Shielding Support packs...

"I'm on the shielded list due to a recently diagnosed illness. Please can you pass on to all the team that I think they are doing an amazing job and choice of food and meals are great. It's a great help when you can't go to your favourite shops. Thanks for all you're doing—it's very much appreciated."

"My husband and I would like to thank all the staff involved in facilitating this service. We are very grateful as we are both elderly and vulnerable with several underlying health conditions. We have no one who can shop for us and were unsuccessful in booking regular food deliveries online. Thank you."

## From colleagues...

"I would like to thank all the staff of Renfrewshire Learning Disability Services who are doing an amazing job during lockdown providing support, encouragement and emergency response. They have also been out delivering community meals and helping at older people's services. They are an amazing team who always go the extra mile to keep people safe and well. -

Fiona Brown, Operational Manager,  
Renfrewshire Learning Disability Service

"We would like to thank all home care workers in the community providing essential services. We are proud of your commitment and continued hard work every day."

Renfrewshire Health and Social Care  
Partnership Service Delivery Team

"Thanks Lauren to you and all the comms team for keeping us informed, the newsletter looks great."

Donna Cunningham,  
Information Governance Officer

## On social media...

"@RenCouncil just been for my first trip to the recycling centre in Renfrew, lovely to see the staff again and very well sign posted and organised. Today is a happy day!"

"@RenCouncil Thanks to Steven, his team and the Comms team for getting this out. Us parents have lots of questions, this has certainly helped to answer a good % of them."

Both from Tracey Lundie via Twitter

"It is just to say I dropped off some items today at the Underwood Road location in Paisley and there was no wait. Signage was on point and well marked for outside, entering and navigating to your own bay and dumpster. And of course the staff was friendly and helpful. Thank you all!"

Brad Gibson via Facebook

"Just back from Erskine recycling centre and very well organised! Well done erskine staff!"

Amanda Ayr via Twitter

"Thanks for everything. My dog will be disappointed when you cut the long grass she loves running through it!"

Sheila Hart via Facebook

"Thank you for all your support Renfrewshire throughout the last few weeks."

Fiona McLean via Facebook