



A message from our Chief Executive, Sandra Black

It is hard to believe that it has been 3 months since we entered lockdown and our home and working lives changed so significantly and almost overnight. The impact of the coronavirus has been profound and presented us with unprecedented challenges, but as we enter summer I am pleased that it is with some confidence as we continue to suppress this virus and bring the public health risks under control. It has been a monumental effort and I am very grateful for the support you have shown our communities and businesses and the lifeline you have provided for so many.

This week marked the official start of the school summer holidays and the further easing of lockdown measures. It is very important that you benefit from this and arrange to take leave and spend quality time on holiday or with family and friends. I know that many of you will have had holiday plans disrupted or cancelled completely, but I would urge you to please take some well-deserved

time off and recharge. You can read more about our approach as well as the latest government guidance and travel advice on our website here: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10392/Annual-Leave-Holiday-arrangements-and-quarantine-measures

It is with relief that we are seeing the rate of infection and death rate from Coronavirus continue to fall and to see this replicated in our care homes. This virus is especially cruel to older people, and I want to sincerely thank our care home colleagues and home care teams and the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership for the dedication and commitment they have shown our most vulnerable residents throughout the crisis and in the hardest of circumstances. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure our older people are protected.

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

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

As we continue to make progress in controlling the spread of the Coronavirus, seeing the lowest number of deaths recorded this week since the start of lockdown, the Scottish Government is moving through Phase 2 of Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis and has announced some indicative key dates of Phase 3.

This week face coverings on public transport became mandatory, the reopening of dental practices and places of worship commenced and the construction industry entered the final phase of its restart plan. We also heard an announcement on the proposed return

to schools and nurseries full-time in August. More on this to follow in future updates.

Next week we expect to see some retail outlets, outdoor markets and non-office workplaces reopen, a relaxation on restrictions on house moves and more outdoor activities such as sports courts and playparks to reopen for local access.

The Scottish Government has also announced some potential changes for the weeks ahead that could be implemented on the following dates if we continue to see progress in controlling the spread of the virus. These include:



Phase 2

3 July

- Travel distance restriction relaxed
- Visiting self-catering accommodation without shared facilities and second homes to be permitted

6 July

- Beer gardens can reopen subject to physical distancing rules and public health advice



Phase 3

10 July

- People can meet in extended groups outdoors with physical distancing
- A maximum of three households can meet indoors with physical distancing
- Organised outdoor contact sports can resume for children and young people



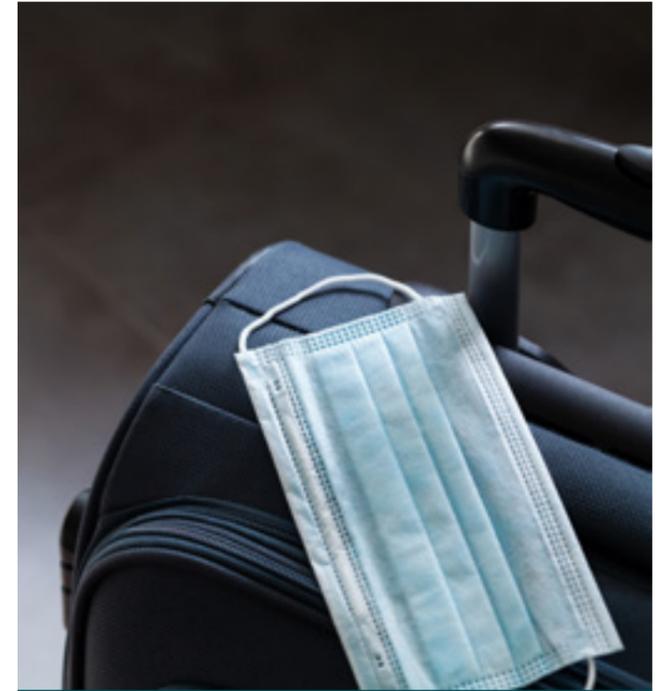
13 July

- All dental practices begin to see registered patients for non-aerosol routine care
- Increased capacity within community optometry practices for emergency and essential eye care
- Non-essential shops inside shopping centres can reopen following guidance and physical distancing

15 July

- All holiday accommodation permitted (following relevant guidance)
- Indoor pubs and restaurants can reopen subject to physical distancing rules and public health advice
- Hairdressers and barbers to reopen with enhanced hygiene measures
- Museums, galleries, cinemas, monuments, libraries to reopen with physical distancing and other measures (e.g. ticketing in advance)
- All childcare providers can open subject to individual provider arrangements

We continue to follow Scottish Government guidance and encourage you to keep up to date so we can all stay safe, protect others and save lives. You can find the latest information you need on our website: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus.



Taking holidays and quarantine arrangements

With many of our 2020 holiday plans cancelled or postponed, we want to reemphasise the importance of taking some down time. Our Human Resources team has announced the agreed arrangements for carrying forward unused annual leave as far as 2022. However, the last few months have been particularly difficult, so please make sure you take some time off work to relax over the summer, even if you're not going anywhere. You deserve it!

Please note that Scotland is following the UK Government advice on travelling and no-one should travel abroad at this time unless it is essential. Anyone returning from a trip abroad will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

In all circumstances, those intending to travel abroad and therefore impacted by the 14-day quarantine measures, must discuss this with their line manager as soon as possible in order to inform workforce planning and service delivery arrangements. We are asking managers and staff to work together to explore all possibilities to cover the quarantine period, such as, working from home (including doing alternative work at home), working the time back over the remainder of this current year, or some other mutually agreed approach.

For full details on returning to UK quarantine arrangements for staff, visit the following webpage: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10392/Annual-Leave-Holiday-arrangements-and-quarantine-measures



Health, Safety and Wellbeing at work and at home

Our 'Health, Safety and Wellbeing at Work' page is there to help whether you are on the front line or working from home. www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10207/Health-and-Wellbeing-at-Work

The Scottish Government has put together a great package to help us keep our bodies and minds healthy during this challenging time. For ideas on exercising, healthy diet, maintaining a social life and staying emotionally centred visit <https://clearyourhead.scot/>

Losing a loved one to the Coronavirus is for many of us, the hardest thing to come out of this pandemic and we know this is a particularly difficult time for coping with grief and loss. Our 'Death and bereavement support' webpage is there to help you with advice and guidance on necessary arrangements and coping with bereavement at this time. Visit www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10201/Death-and-bereavement-support.

We are also aware of the impact that lockdown has had on those who are dealing with issues of domestic abuse at home. We want to reassure anyone at risk of or currently experiencing domestic abuse in any form that you can still seek help. Under Coronavirus Regulations anyone at risk is entitled to leave the home to seek help from support services, family or friends, to report it to the Police or take measures to stay safe.

For more information on the services and supports available you can visit our webpage on 'Domestic abuse, protecting adults and children' here: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-protection.

Don't forget our employee counselling service is still available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Professional counsellors are on hand to provide you with free, confidential support via telephone and digital channels such as Skype. Visit the webpage www.timefortalking.co.uk/ for more information or call **0800 970 3980** for free support now.

Council Leader praises incredible commitment of council staff

"I am tremendously proud of our Council staff who always go the extra mile to support the people of Renfrewshire.

"Your incredible commitment has never been more apparent than throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, where together with colleagues in the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Renfrewshire Leisure and alongside the emergency services and local volunteers, you have served our local communities with distinction.

"Whether you've delivered food parcels or provided care at home to a local resident, whether you've brought cheer to the children of key workers at one of our hubs or approved a lifeline grant to a local business, your diligence, dedication and kindness has not gone unnoticed.

"Such is the amazing effort from right across the council, each department adapting so seamlessly to such a fast-changing situation, it is simply impossible to mention everyone individually, but I wish to put on record my thanks to each and every one of you.

"For our nursery and school staff, we are now reaching the summer holiday period and I trust everyone will enjoy a well-earned break, knowing you have done all you can to support our children and young people in unprecedented circumstances.

"From innovative online teaching to phone calls home and ensuring children can access free school meals, you've gone above and beyond and it has been inspiring to see the many different musical performances and examples on this work across school social media channels.

"There is no doubt our education and children's staff care deeply about the wellbeing of our young people and everyone's world was rocked by the news of the recent house fire in Paisley, in which three pupils tragically lost their lives. My thoughts and condolences are with the family and their loved ones, who are grieving this terrible incident and there continues to be counselling and wellbeing support available to anyone affected by this terrible tragedy.



"I would also like to touch on the worldwide Black Lives Matter campaign. We must work to eradicate racism in all its forms and the campaign is rightly challenging us all to examine our local history and consider our connections with the slave trade. Renfrewshire's thread-making was part of an international industry built on slavery, a part of our history we must reflect on and come to terms with. We were also a community with an active abolition movement, embracing diversity and campaigning for equality in all its forms.

"At the Council meeting this week, all political parties engaged in a considered discussion and agreed to further research Renfrewshire's history and mark Black History Month each year through cultural and educational events in partnership with our local communities.

"Finally, as the lockdown restrictions are eased and a sense of normality returns to our daily lives, I would urge you to cherish the time with your families and friends and continue to follow the government guidelines, which enable us all to stay safe and save lives.

"Have a good summer everyone."

Councillor Iain Nicolson



Survey Spotlight: Your Newsletter is changing

Last month, 1431 of you got in touch via our staff survey to tell us what you think about staff communications, what works well and what we can do better.

90% of respondents rated the staff information section of our public website as very useful/useful and 87% rated the staff weekly newsletter as very useful/useful.

You asked for more tailored, frequent and concise communications and more regular consistent communications from your line manager.

Feedback also highlighted a real appetite for digital content—with 89% saying they would like to view more video content.

While the content on the website is rated as very useful/useful the feedback on the design and layout of the website is less positive, with staff looking for an easier to navigate website with better search functionality.

In response to these results we are working on a new strategy that will deliver the type of internal communications you have told us you want to receive.

Additionally, the data from the survey has been broken down into results from each of our key service areas. This will enable each department to make improvements based on your ideas and feedback.

Some of the early changes you can expect to see at a Council level are:

- Replacement of the weekly staff newsletter on a Friday with Thursday Take 5 — the top five key stories of the week that you can read in just five minutes. Each week's five headlines will be sent to staff via email and shared on our social media channels. This will direct you to the weekly news webpage on our public website where you can read the full Take 5 in text or PDF format. A single page poster will be issued for display in frontline hubs.
- We are exploring the use of platforms such as Yammer and Facebook to help connect colleagues, promote staff voice and two-way communications with managers. These platforms will also help us to deliver more tailored and timely digital communications including video content.

Moving forward, we will:

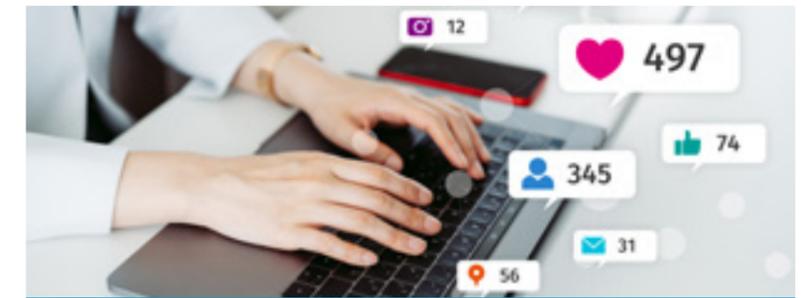
- Work with Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD), to implement a full range of supports for managers to engage effectively with staff in line with our values.
- Assist Directors and Heads of Service with the development of tailored employee engagement strategies to ensure the most effective methods and channels for communicating with staff in their service area.
- Develop an improved digital experience for staff and replace our staff intranet with a fully integrated staff section of our public website with improved features and functionality.

Chief Executive, Sandra Black said, 'It was great to see such positive and constructive feedback from staff. It has given us insight into what matters most and the changes that will ensure we communicate well and reach all of our workforce.'

'Keeping staff informed has always been a priority. But in these unprecedented times, it's been even more important to provide the latest information and guidance, so everyone can stay safe at work and at home and feel supported in their physical and mental health and wellbeing.'

'That's why from the start of lockdown we introduced our weekly newsletter and switched my blog to a weekly open letter. As the situation evolves and we take onboard your feedback, we will alter the format and frequency. I hope you will continue to find these useful and informative.'

Although the staff survey is now closed, that doesn't mean we no longer want to hear your thoughts. To share your views and ideas for how we can continue to improve our communications with you, please get in touch through our internal communications mailbox at internal.communications@renfrewshire.gov.uk.



Connect with colleagues on Yammer

Finding the tools that help us connect with our colleagues has never been more essential. That's why we are starting to promote the use of Microsoft Yammer. For staff with network access, Microsoft Yammer is the ideal platform to link in with colleagues from across the organisation, get the latest news and most importantly join in a conversation about the things that matter to you.

As an Enterprise Social Network (ESN), Yammer is much like any social media platform but one that is specifically designed to help us at work. It has a similar look and feel to Facebook, is simple to use and will help us connect during these unusual times and beyond.

Last year, Yammer was launched in our Customer and Business Services (CBS) department as a way of encouraging staff engagement. It has now established itself as the platform for giving staff a voice and enabling two-way conversations with senior management.

Since the launch in CBS, other services have come onboard, setting up groups and sharing useful information.

Earlier in the year, Yammer was made available to all council staff with Office 365 network access to help you engage with colleagues across the organisation. Most of us now have the Yammer application installed on our PCs and laptops with the icon visible on our desktops. Alternatively, Yammer can be accessed via any web browser by typing www.yammer.com into the address bar. Use your Renfrewshire Council network username and password to gain access.

When using Yammer, as always, you are bound by our employee Code of Conduct and ICT Acceptable Use Policy. These documents are available in the 'Staff info' section of our website here: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/staff. Please make sure you know what your responsibilities are before you get started. Please also note that personal data of any kind should not be shared on Yammer.

If you haven't already, why not login to Yammer today and see the potential benefits for you and your service area?

For tips and advice on how to get started, Microsoft have extensive online guidance including a downloadable getting started guide which can be accessed here: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/yammer>.



Spaces for People

Spaces for People is a new programme in Scotland offering funding and support to make it safer for people who choose to walk, cycle or wheel for essential trips and exercise during Covid-19.

The programme, funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Sustrans Scotland, aims to help local authorities implement new measures for protecting public health, supporting physical distancing and preventing a second wave of the virus.

Fresh air and being outdoors are not only positive for physical health, but it can also help to reduce stress and support our mental health. Walking, cycling or wheeling helps people feel connected in times of isolation and can allow communities to rediscover their neighbourhood.

Officers in our Transportation Team are applying for the funds and will start with a bid for around £100,000 to buy and install temporary protective barriers in the road to widen footways next to local

shops and pharmacies where the path is particularly narrow. This is a quick and easy way to maintain physical distancing and keep pedestrians safe where they are obliged to walk in the road.

The second bid, worth nearer £500,000, would introduce temporary walking and cycling commuter routes to accommodate the increase in active travel. This will provide an alternative to driving and the need to use public transport while it continues to run at a reduced capacity.

Phase 3 will focus on road safety around school entrances and will involve a survey of parents and head teachers to inform temporary measures to ease road congestion at pick up and drop off times.

Development Manager, Mark Higginbotham said, 'Our team has been working very hard in preparing our bids to secure this funding. We eagerly await the results of our bids and hope to be able to get things moving soon!'



Armed Forces Day

Armed Forces Day falls on Saturday 27 June this year and in keeping with tradition, we marked the day a week earlier on 20 June. Though circumstances meant we were unable to hold our usual ceremony, we raised our Armed Forces Day flag outside Renfrewshire House in tribute to all the men and women who have served.

Provost of Renfrewshire, Lorraine Cameron, met online with East Renfrewshire Provost Jim Fletcher and Inverclyde's Provost Martin Brennan to pay tribute to the contribution the Armed Forces make to our communities.

The Armed Forces Day flag will fly outside Renfrewshire House until Monday 29 June.



Kevin Milliken

Food Bank Food Rush 2020

Once a year, Procurement Assistant, Kevin Milliken organises a mass food bank collection across various Council locations including Renfrewshire House, Abbey House and local schools.

Due to this year's unique circumstances the collection of food donations will unfortunately not be possible. However, this does not mean that we cannot do our bit for those in need. So, this year as part of Kevin's The One Initiative—Making Changes Project, there will be an online collection of funds, that will be donated directly to the Renfrewshire Food Bank.

This is a crucial time for food banks across the country as they continue to work hard providing much needed support for those households worst hit by the economic impact of the Coronavirus.

This year's financial donation will allow the Renfrewshire Food Bank to buy the items it needs most and will help in the planning for the very busy weeks and months ahead.

Last year's collection raised 433.95kg, the equivalent of 1,033 meals for the people of Renfrewshire. We've already shown many times in the past and throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, what incredible things we can achieve when we work together to help those in need of our support. Together this year we can break the 2019 record and raise even more so the Renfrewshire Food Bank can continue its crucial work helping tackle food poverty in our communities.

This year's collection will run for one month, from Monday 29 June to Friday 31 July. To make a donation visit: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/foodbankfoodrush. Thank you!

The class of 2020



Newmains Primary School leaving ceremony

This week saw the remainder of our P1 and S1 transition pupils visiting their nurseries and schools for a final farewell in preparation for moving on after the summer.

The visits went very well, with staff and pupils commenting how grateful they were to have the opportunity to say goodbye and good luck in person.

One pupil said, 'I'm glad we got to see all our friends again at school one last time'.

Headteacher at Newmains Primary School, Carol Cooke said, 'We were very pleased all the families were able to join us to celebrate our Primary 7 children's time at Newmains. It was wonderful to see everyone!'

A particularly special celebration was had at St Anthony's Primary School, where P7 children had been preparing a special performance of The Lion King in collaboration with Disney and Scottish Opera. As one of only five schools selected in Scotland, the massive 3-year project was to cumulate with a stunning performance at the Glasgow Theatre Royal in May this year.

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, May's show was called off and there is still uncertainty around whether the project can resume in future.

Just in case, and by way of spectacular send off, the P7 kids who'd spent such a long time perfecting their acts, got to perform a physically distanced version of their scenes for those gathered at the farewell visit.

About the project, class teacher, Samantha Bogle said, 'It was incredible to see our pupils singing, acting, dancing and working behind the scenes to make the magic happen. It truly was an inclusive opportunity for our children to get involved in all aspects of theatre production and as a result, build their confidence in a way they hadn't anticipated themselves'.

One of the pupils remarked, 'Lockdown has been weird, but I will remember Lion King in P7 forever!'

We couldn't agree more, lockdown has been 'weird' in more ways than one! This has been an exceptionally challenging and unusual time for children, staff and parents alike.

Your summer break is truly well-deserved. Enjoy!

The Lion King by St Anthony's Primary School



Returning to School

So much hard work by our schools and education staff has gone in to developing the blended learning model that would have supported our children's return to school in August. Following this week's announcement by John Swinney that schools will now return full time from August 11 if the virus continues to be suppressed, the blended learning model will now serve as an essential contingency plan in case the situation changes. A massive thank you to everyone involved.

In an open letter to all Children's Services staff, Director of Children's Services, Steven Quinn said, 'Thank you for the incredible efforts and commitment that you have demonstrated in support of the children, families and service users in Renfrewshire.'

'The last three months have been a very challenging time in both working and personal lives. We have all had to adapt to a new way of working to ensure we continue to support children, families, individuals and the communities in Renfrewshire...'

You can read Steven's full letter here: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10386/Steven-Quinn-Thank-you-to-all-Childrens-Services-staff-for-your-support-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic

The work of our schools teams has been recognised by parents and carers from all over Renfrewshire too. Just have a read at some of the comments received on social media this week and the following snippet from a recent Kirklandneuk PS Parent Council letter to Steven Quinn, which shows just how valued your incredible work has been...

Kirklandneuk PS: Letter from Parent Council

"It has been an incredibly challenging time for the children, parents and staff, as you know. However, it has also been a time where the school community has pulled together and made a difficult situation more bearable.

"Firstly, I would like to thank you and your team, the communication from the authority has been very welcomed, concise and has helped to elevate some anxieties that people were having. Your message about not trying to replicate a school day had such a positive effect on the parents, you could almost hear them sigh with relief. The virtual Parent Council Chair meetings have been very welcomed, and great to see so many people getting involved.

"After watching the Q&A with John Swinney and hearing parents' questions from across Scotland, in my opinion Renfrewshire is among one of the best authorities for its planning, communication and support to parents. So, we thank you for that...

"We have been incredibly lucky at KPS...The staff team have been excellent... I don't think as a parent group we could praise them enough...

"They have also done a great job organising transition events and opportunities for not only P1 and P7 but for other pupils of the school that might need that bit more support in returning to school...

"I and the other parents were keen to give this feedback...we could not let the end of term go by without passing on our thanks, and to take the opportunity to praise the team, they really have been brilliant. We are lucky to have the SMT, teaching, support and janitorial team that we have.

Hopefully the next month or so will be less busy and you and all the teams will get a well-earned rest!"

Staff Thanks and Social Shout Outs



Our Facebook and Twitter channels have received 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...

"Renfrewshire thank you and well done in trying to get all our children back into full time education if and where possible & can keep the kids safe as this is obviously the main thing."

Maggie Lickrish via Facebook

"@RenCouncil Had the P1 transition today at @EastFultonPS . It was so lovely and welcoming. Great that they got this settle before August"

Leanne Baxter via Twitter

"Our values as an organisation and a Renfrewshire community. Some mail delivered today from work, we are Fair, Helpful, collaborators and we value learning @RenCouncil"

Kevin Milliken (staff member) via Twitter

"I have to say I think the system has worked well. Made several visits to the Linwood site and it's clearly displayed on the website and on sign posts on road to centre what you can and cant take and the guys are more than helpful in telling you which bay to use."

Gary Elliot via Facebook in reference to the reopening of HWRC sites

"@RenCouncil credit when credit is due the recycling centre at Underwood road is very well sign posted and organised and very helpful staff. Thanks"

Fraser Thompson via Twitter

"Thanks to Miss Murray for a wonderful tour @SJOpaisley for little Miss Brady this morning. She can't wait to get started! Thanks. @RenCouncil"

David Brady via Twitter

"Ok. Thank you. And thanks for all your doing."

Nicola Madden via Facebook in response to a query about nursery hours

"Visited Johnstone site yesterday, all staff very friendly and helpful. Really well organised, safe for all & well planned. Well done guys"

Alan Sim via Facebook

"Erskine recycling centre is well organised and the staff were helpful..."

Yvonne Thompson via Facebook

"Thank you @RenCouncil awoke this morning to a shiny new wheelie bin after my previous one went missing. Great service during these challenging times."

Tom McEwan via Twitter

"Well done @RenCouncil great wee positive vid with lots of lovely familiar (and missed) faces. Spotted our lovely @williamkay62!"

The Star Project via Twitter in response to Our Values launch video



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