



A message from our Chief Executive, Sandra Black

As we head into another bank holiday weekend it is with increased hope, as we see the number of hospital admissions and deaths due to Coronavirus continue to fall, and we can begin to look ahead to the easing of some lockdown measures at the end of next week. I want to express my sincere thanks to everyone who is continuing to play their part in helping to reduce the spread of infection by staying at home and to those who are so carefully supporting our communities and businesses. I don't underestimate how difficult it is to balance work life, family and home schooling, and I appreciate everything you do to support the council.

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

Visit our website at
www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

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

This week has brought several updates to the current lockdown though the key advice remains the same for now and over the bank holiday weekend; stay at home unless for essential journeys for food and medicine.

At the start of the week, the Scottish Government announced that a loss of taste and/or smell has been added to the list of symptoms that mean you and members of your household should stay at home and self-isolate.

Testing has also been expanded meaning that everyone with symptoms (all those over the age of five), are now eligible for a test. You should apply for a test within the first three days of displaying symptoms.

On Thursday the Scottish Government published 'Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis' and the First Minister confirmed the early measures for gradually easing restrictions in Scotland. The move to the first phase is due to commence from 28 May subject to confirmation. You can read the route map here: www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/

For most of us the changes are likely to mean that more outdoor activity will soon be possible and you will be able to meet a small number of people from another household as long as you are outdoors and you stay 2 meters apart, however there will be implications about how we work and provide our services in the coming months. We are working to examine the detail of this and will keep you updated as more information is available.

Phase 1 of the route map also includes the gradual reintroduction of:

- waste and recycling services
- key community support services such as access to social workers and face-to-face Children's Hearings
- a phased resumption of the criminal justice system
- a gradual resumption of the NHS services that are currently suspended

The First Minister has stressed this route map is not a guaranteed set of dates for returning to normality. Measures will continue to be reviewed every 3 weeks though changes can take place at any time if the evidence suggests this is necessary.

Please continue to follow the latest Scottish Government guidance in relation to Coronavirus. More detailed and up to date information can be access on our website – www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Mental Health Awareness Week

It's Mental Health Awareness Week and the theme this year is kindness. Although this is a difficult time for most of us, you don't have to go far to see plenty of genuine acts of kindness as local groups and communities band together to support one another through this unprecedented crisis.

This is a moment in history that will be remembered, not just for the immense tragedy of the hundreds of thousands of lives lost worldwide and the negative impact on people's homes and livelihoods, but for the courage and revived community spirit that ordinary people have shown in coming together and doing whatever it takes to provide essential services and keep life going.

Since the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, we've been working hard to support your health and wellbeing as you navigate your way through this unique and challenging time. We set up a 'Health and Wellbeing at work and at home' section on our webpage and filled it with plenty of tips and advice to help you maintain a healthy body and mind.

To celebrate Mental Health Awareness Week, this week we shone a brighter light on positive mental health as our Human Resources team published new guides every day filled with useful information, advice and links to resources that are especially helpful for taking care of our mental health at this time.

Each day the focus shifted to something new. Monday introduced the week with general wellbeing advice and support; Tuesday brought us healthy habits for homeworking; Wednesday was all about healthy eating for a healthy mind; Thursday's focus was on boosting your wellbeing through exercise and today we rounded up the week with kindness and self-care tips.

More information including the guide for each day can be accessed on our Mental Health Awareness Week webpage: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10276/Mental-Health-Awareness-Week

And to make sure that we continue to provide you with the right level of support and information at this time could you please complete this short survey and tell us what you think: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/e9deea73d0244cf1a79499fd7d5e4bfc>

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 here for more information or call 0800 970 3980 for free support now.



Staff Survey Thank You

We were delighted to see so many of you getting in touch through the Staff Survey to share your views and feedback on our staff communications.

We've been looking for your ideas and opinions to help shape our approach now and in the future, and you didn't let us down.

A total of 1,434 colleagues took the time to reply which is a fantastic result! Your responses have given us plenty to work with and we'll update you soon on our findings, insights and what we've learned about the support you need and what you find most effective.

The survey is now closed so a huge thank you to everyone who took part. Watch this space!

A new way of life

Property Services Architectural Assistant, Claire Black, has given us an insight to her new way of life with some smashing photos from around her neighbourhood in Strathbungo, Glasgow. She feels one positive to come out of being in lockdown is that it has afforded her time to 'notice and appreciate' where she lives.

She said, 'It's nice to have time to stop and take in things we generally rush by. Take these two examples. I frequently walk this route and have never before noticed the leaning trees or the stencilled animals.'



Deserted streets and roads at Nithsdale Road



Savanna stencil art, hidden down a lane off Moray Place



With hairdressers closed for the time being, lots of us are sporting longer laissez-faire hairdos. Claire's golden retriever Frankie is no exception. She's rocking her new lockdown look.

We want to see some images of your new normal too! Whether that's a photo of you working from home, in action on the frontline or a scene from your daily exercise route. Send them in to us as internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Collecting Covid-19 Experiences in Renfrewshire

Paisley Museum staff continue to work on the re-development of the Museum with new displays, visitor facilities and events planned for reopening late 2022 and now they want to capture the experience of people living and working in Renfrewshire, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Museum staff appreciate this is a busy, stressful time for people balancing vital work with their own home life and family responsibilities but are keen to listen to colleagues in Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire Leisure and Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership who are on the frontline delivering essential services.

If you are interested in finding out more and sharing your experiences to mark this unprecedented time, please contact paisleymuseum@renfrewshire.gov.uk.





An alternative route for Improving the Cancer Journey

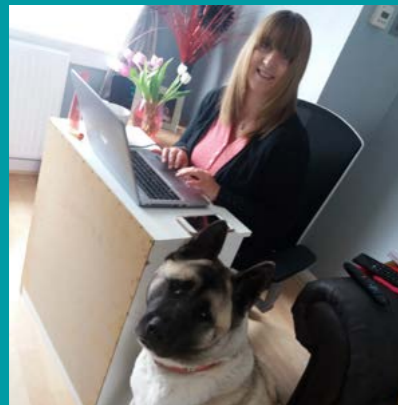
Launched at the start of the year, Renfrewshire Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) provides support to local people affected by cancer. When someone gets in touch, a dedicated coordinator helps them to complete a Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) and personalised care plan. Supports on offer include referrals for financial advice, care at home, counselling, plus a range of other services.

Within the first few months, the team were already receiving lots of positive feedback from grateful individuals who received support. Things were going very well indeed. Then along came Coronavirus!

The team has faced a range of unforeseen challenges directly resulting from the pandemic.

As most service users are part of the shielding category, it quickly became impossible to continue providing face to face support. This coupled with the reality that many of the partner support organisations are now running a reduced service, meant the scope of support the team could offer was suddenly limited.

However, a pandemic was not going to stop this dedicated team from helping the people who need them most. Before lockdown was announced, they had already developed an innovative plan to continue providing a service when face to face support was no longer possible.



'A cancer diagnosis can be such an overwhelming experience without having the added worry of Covid-19. I feel that it is extremely important to maintain regular contact with our clients to ensure they are fully supported.'

– Service Delivery Officer Louise O'Connor and Lexi her American Akita

'For our clients this period of uncertainty can be very stressful - especially when coming to terms with a Cancer diagnosis. Some individuals are waiting to find out when their next treatment will be or the date of an urgent scan. It's especially important now that we can offer that reassuring ear as well as passing on guidance and available resources.'

– ICJ Coordinator Caroline Kyle-Chittick



Manager Andrew McLinden said 'Early planning meant we were well prepared and we have maintained a high-quality service for our clients. The first four weeks after the lockdown on 23rd March 2020 were the most challenging however, during this period, we actually managed to assist more people than we did in the four-week period before.'

The biggest change was adapting the Holistic Needs Assessment so that it can now be completed online at home. When the form is completed, the client receives a phone call from their coordinator to discuss their needs and any follow-on referrals that may be required.

Service Delivery Officer, Louise O'Connor, said 'It's so important that we maintain the service during this difficult time. We are keen to ensure that those who are shielding, particularly those without a family support network, do not fall off the radar.'

Anyone wishing to find out more about the service or to make a referral can do so by either phoning the team on 0300 300 1380 or emailing them at adultservicesreferral.sw@renfrewshire.gov.uk. Referrals can also be made by filling out the form on the council's webpage: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/Cancer-Support-Renfrewshire-Council



'We have worked together to adapt how we deliver our service. Completing assessments online and over the phone is never going to offer as personal a service as sitting with someone in their own home, but I hope we have managed to get it to a close second place—even if I do have to apologise for my dog's inconsiderate interruptions when he barks at the postman!

– ICJ Coordinator Karen Spencer



Education Survey Response

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part in our recent parent and carers survey. We know the wellbeing and education of your children is of the utmost importance and we are working hard to ensure that no child is disadvantaged at school or nursery as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

More than 1,500 questions were asked through the survey so we are now going through these and will come back to everyone who took part next week to share as much information as we can at this stage.

It has been announced that all schools and nurseries are set to reopen on August 11 with teachers and other staff due to return in June. Preparations will be made to ensure schools are safe, welcoming and equipped to support the phased return of pupils on a part time basis.

We also understand that many of you will be concerned about the implications of these arrangements or your balance between home and work life. We will keep you updated as soon as further details are available.



Helping deliver a Fareshare for Renfrewshire

Graphic Designer Dylan Glynn and Amy Fishlock from Licensing are two of our staff members who have temporarily taken on new roles to help combat the Covid crisis.

They are part of a small team based at the Tannahill Centre in Ferguslie working in partnership with Fareshare, Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH), Kibble and Engage Renfrewshire to distribute food to a variety of local charities supporting those in need across Renfrewshire.

FareShare are a charity who take surplus goods from across the food industry—food that would otherwise be going to waste—and distribute it to other charities and community groups across the UK.

Food is collected from Fareshare by Kibble and delivered to the Tannahill Centre, then volunteers from the Engage volunteer reserve get to work unloading, categorising and doing a full stock take. Amy put her excel skills to good use for this part of the process to record and split stock accurately.

After splitting the food for the groups, RAMH collect and deliver it to Darkwood Crew, Paisley Star Project, Erskine Community Unites, Lochwinnoch Food Group and Home-Start.

Dylan said 'Amy and I were both keen to get involved in the Covid-19 response so were pleased to be asked to help out on this project. Each week is totally different, and always a bit of a surprise. One week included tons of tins, lots of pasta, rice and kids' cereal. The next week there was loads of fresh veg, meat, vegan mince, and cans of Irn Bru.

'We've had a great response from the community groups who are really happy with the variety of food available. We've also had lovely feedback from the Tannahill Centre who said they are really thankful for the amount of work we've put in. It's been great to be doing something which has such a wide and valued impact.'



Housemates Dylan and Amy take a quick selfie before getting to work

Are you part of a team who are working hard to deliver frontline services during this challenging time? We want you to get the recognition you deserve! Send your stories to internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk



Happy 40th Kellie-Anne!

Kellie-Anne Shields received a big birthday surprise this week from her Soft Facilities Management colleagues at Park Mains support pack distribution hub, proving that big birthdays in lockdown don't have to be dull!

Despite the restrictions Kellie received fabulous gifts from her team including a bangle, mocktails and a beautiful engraved glass. They even managed to throw her a fabulous physically distanced tea party complete with birthday cake!

Kellie said 'It's the first time in 40 years I've been speechless! I was really overwhelmed with everyone's kindness especially at a time like this.'

The team also want to shout out to Alison Purdue who celebrated her 60th the week before. Happy birthday ladies!

CBS Be Jammin'

Customer and Business Services (CBS) were the first Renfrewshire Council department to start engaging staff with Microsoft Yammer and the platform has proven to be an ideal tool for keeping colleagues connected during the Covid-19 crisis.

Sometimes referred to as the "engine room of the council", CBS is comprised of around 750 staff members working to support a diverse range of council services including frontline and administrative support for schools, care for older people and vulnerable adults, frontline customer services, welfare benefits, Council Tax, business rates, payments to suppliers, recruitment and payroll.

With such a diverse spread of teams, employee engagement has been an important part of CBS life for the past few years, as managers have been working hard to connect with staff, take onboard feedback and move the service forward in a progressive staff orientated direction.

The Enterprise Social Media platform Yammer, which came as part of the Microsoft Office 365 package, was identified as the ideal way to enable staff voice, link colleagues across different teams and locations and share news on the ground.

A key feature of Yammer is the ability to engage staff with senior management through live question and answer sessions – a.k.a. YamJams. Before the crisis YamJams had taken place with CBS Head of Service Rhona McGrath and Business Services Manager Emma Shields.

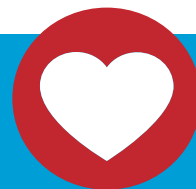
The latest manager to take to the Yammer stage in the first ever lockdown YamJam was Service Delivery Manager for Frontline Adult Services Robbie Weir. Yammer users joined the discussion to quiz Robbie on how he's coping with lockdown (especially after suffering a heart attack), his new household menagerie and his biggest achievement at the council among many other things.

CBS Head of Service, Rhona McGrath, said, 'At this time platforms like Yammer provide real opportunities for staff and managers to come together in a virtual way, breaking down barriers and opening up new ways of communicating and reaching out to each other. We had already started to do this before the coronavirus hit, but now it is even more important to find ways for us all to engage and interact with each other. I'd encourage all our staff to get involved in the fun and banter of an informal YamJam'.

Robbie's home has been transformed into an animal kingdom as his Principal Teacher of Science wife kindly offered to shelter her school's zoology club creatures during lockdown.



Social Shout Outs



We've received some more fantastic feedback this week on our social media channels. Here's just a few of the comments so far:

"@RenCouncil @thankateacher Massive thank you to Mrs Davies, Mrs Montgomery, Ms Johnstone, Ms Harper, Mrs Dalrymple and Ms Docherty @WallacePrimary for supporting our family recently. Difference you're making cannot be underestimated esp for my youngest. Thank you!"

Sarah Cooper

"@RenCouncil @stcatherinespsy @StDavidsPS @StMargaretsJoh1 @LangbankPrimary @thankateacher A huge THANK YOU to all the teachers, Miss Wilson and Mrs Reid especially, and the management team @ElccWest despite the uncertainty their support, encouragement and positive, proactive approach has been a lighthouse, shining throughout. Thank you!"

Mrs H

"@stcharlespais @UKThankATeacher @EducationScot @RenCouncil A big thank you to all the teachers and staff @stcharlespais from Headmistress to support staff. You all do a fantastic job educating and supporting our children especially in these unusual times"

Aileen

"@RenCouncil @thankateacher I would like to thank Miss Reid & Mr McElhone at @OurLadyofPeace3 and the management team for the support given to my kids this school year and especially in recent weeks. You know when your eldest is crying because "his best year has been cut short" they've done a great job"

Lisa Broadhurst

"@RenCouncil #ThankATeacher day thanks to Mr Mothersole @OurLadyofPeace3 who's done an amazing job ensuring every child in the school is eased into this new way of learning and has put health and wellbeing to the top of priority for everyone #topheedy"

Kayleigh

"On National Thank A Teacher Day, a great big THANK YOU to all the wonderful staff @SaintPetersPS especially Mrs Quinn and Mrs Everett! Thank you for everything from Orla and Joe (P4). @UKThankATeacher @EducationScot @RenCouncil #HowWillYouSayThankYou"

Mrs Hannigan

"@RenCouncil @stcatherinespsy @StDavidsPS @StMargaretsJoh1 @LangbankPrimary @thankateacher We would like to say a big thank you to our wonderful teachers Mrs Steele & Mr Barrett @ThornPriSch Mrs Hart, Miss Lawson, all the teachers and support staff for their dedication, commitment, care and support. They have kept in constant contact with us and are just the best Suzie and Rory"

Di

@RenCouncil @stcatherinespsy @StDavidsPS @StMargaretsJoh1 @LangbankPrimary @thankateacher I would like to thank Miss Holgan, Miss Fraser, Mr Mullen, Miss Sloan and everyone @St_Andrews_Acad, @riverbrae for there continuous support and useful material and @BushesPrimary Miss Boyle has been amazing making sure everyone is kept busy"

Linzi McG



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