
To: Emergencies Board

On: 15 May 2020

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Update on COVID-19

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides an update of the Council's current arrangements and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Information is provided on the national position including the numbers of cases and deaths at both Scottish and UK levels. The recent publication of updated figures and analysis from the National Records of Scotland is included and shows that the rate of increase in deaths from COVID-19 is beginning to slow. A summary is also provided of policy and guidance updates that have been released over the past week.
- 1.2 Section 4 highlights the support being provided for communities and provides information in relation to Care Homes and safeguarding and supporting vulnerable residents being looked after in their own homes. This section also includes up to date figures on the numbers and types of support being provided to some of the most vulnerable residents in Renfrewshire.
- 1.3 Section 5 provides an update on the support being provided to Council Housing Tenants and an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on the work of the service.
- 1.4 Section 6 provides a workforce planning update for the Council. It includes an update on the current position in relation to availability of PPE; and on employee testing procedures; the current position in relation to the impact of absence on the availability of employees; and redeployments.
- 1.5 Section 7 provides an operational update from Finance and Resources seeking approval for the previously scheduled Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff (JNC) to be arranged and held remotely on 2 June 2020; and information on work undertaken to support businesses to comply with the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020.

2. Recommendations

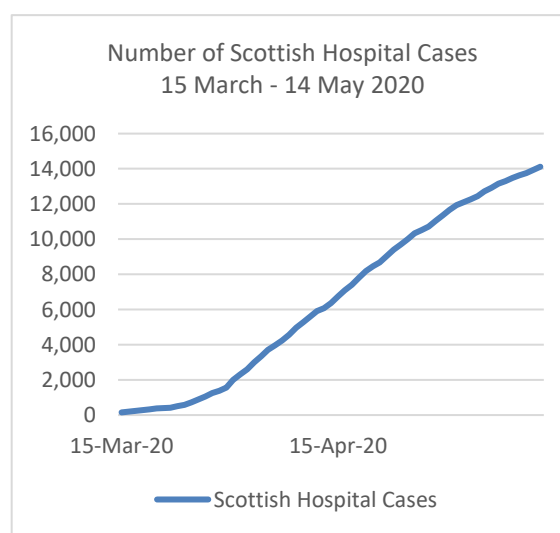
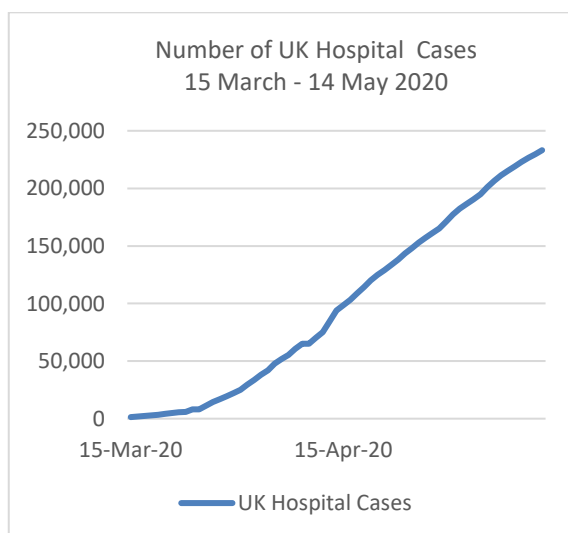
2.1 It is recommended that the Emergencies Board:

- (a) Note the current national and local situation with regards to COVID-19 and the impact on communities, businesses and the Council and its partners
- (b) Note the response measures being put in place by the Council and partners as set out in this report
- (c) Agree that a remotely held meeting of the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff (JNC) be arranged to be held on 2 June 2020

3. National Situation

Numbers of Cases

- 3.1 Currently there are 233,151 confirmed cases of COVID – 19 in hospitals in the UK up from 194,990 reported on 7 May 2020. In Scotland there are now 14,117 confirmed hospital cases (up from 12,709). Of these, 3,628 cases are within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board area (up from 3,203). In GGCHB area there were 473 people in hospital (down from 509) (26 in intensive care – down from 30) as either confirmed or suspected cases.
- 3.2 The following graphs illustrate the significant increase in cases since 15 March 2020:

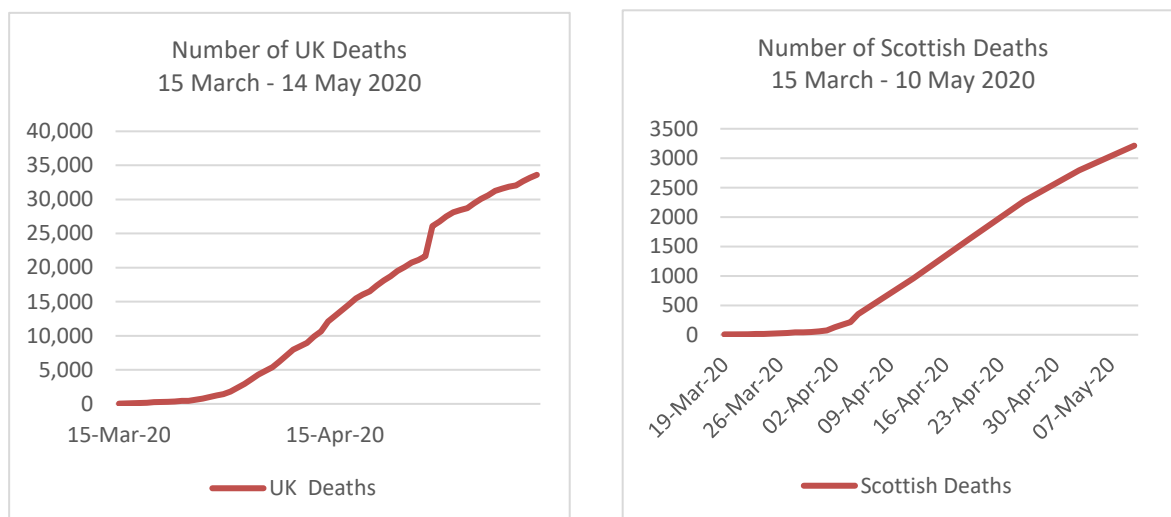


Numbers of Deaths

- 3.3 At a UK level, reports are indicating that there have now been 33,614 deaths across the UK (up from the 29,427 deaths reported on 7 May 2020). The UK has now had more deaths than any other country except for the United States where over 85,000 deaths have been recorded (258 per million population). However a

more accurate comparison is to consider the number of deaths in relation to population size and on this measure (when removing countries with very small populations) the UK currently ranks 4th with 495 deaths per million population, behind Belgium (768 deaths per million population), Spain (584 deaths per million population) and Italy (514 deaths per million population).

- 3.4 The National Records of Scotland has now published its 6th weekly report which indicates the numbers of deaths registered in Scotland that note COVID-19 as a factor in the death. As at 10 May 2020, there have been a total of 3,213 deaths registered in Scotland where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate – up from 2,795 deaths registered up to 3 May 2020.
- 3.5 The graphs below demonstrate the change in reporting and show the increase in the overall number of deaths recorded in terms of UK deaths on 28 April 2020 and in the case of Scottish deaths on 5 April 2020. (Prior to these dates the figures recorded in each graph reflect the hospital only deaths reported):



- 3.6 The National Records of Scotland analysis also provides an additional level of detail on the outbreak so far in Scotland, including some positive indicators of progress in responding to the outbreak:
- Of the total number of deaths registered in the week from 4 to 10 May 2020, there were 415 where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, a decrease of 110 from the previous week. This is the second weekly reduction since the first COVID-19 death was registered in March.
 - The proportion of all deaths involving COVID-19 has also decreased for the second week in a row:
 - 36% of all deaths in week to 26 April 2020
 - 31% of all deaths in week to 3 May 2020
 - 29% of all deaths in week to 10 May 2020
 - Up to last week, the proportion of all COVID-19 deaths which took place in care homes had risen each week and represented 59% of all COVID-19 deaths in the week to 3 May 2020. This dropped back slightly in the week to 10 May 2020 to represent 57% of all COVID-19 deaths.

- The number of deaths in care homes also reduced for the second week in a row – down to 238, 76 fewer than the previous week.
- When looking at all deaths with COVID-19 registered to date:
 - 45% relate to deaths in care homes
 - 48% were in hospitals
 - 7% of deaths were at home or non-institutional settings
 - 76% were people aged 75 or over
 - 91% of those dying with COVID-19 during April had at least one underlying pre-existing health condition
 - The death rate of people with COVID -19 is 2.3 times higher in the 20% most deprived SIMD areas compared to the 20% least deprived SIMD areas.

3.7 The National Records of Scotland information also provides the ability to understand the position and changing impact of the outbreak in Renfrewshire in more detail:

- In Renfrewshire, the number of COVID-19 related deaths recorded in the week from 4 to 10 May 2020 dropped sharply - to 11, down from 33 the previous week.
- COVID-19 related deaths represented 21% of all deaths recorded in Renfrewshire in the week from 4 – 10 May 2020, down from 44% the previous week.
- The overall weekly number of deaths recorded in Renfrewshire continues to fall in relation to recent weeks but still remains above the normal average for this period in the year.
- The COVID -19 related death rate for all of Scotland is currently 5.1 per 10,000 population.
- The death rate in Renfrewshire has risen slightly during the past week to 8.9 per 10,000 population (from 8.3 the previous week). This means Renfrewshire currently has the fourth highest death rate in Scotland and has dropped back from third place last week. Inverclyde remains the area in Scotland with highest COVID-19 related death rate. (Figure 2: Appendix 1)
- The proportion of deaths that have occurred in care homes in Renfrewshire rose slightly to 49%, up from 48% the previous week and remains slightly above the national average of 45%. (Figures 1 and 3: Appendix 1)
- There appears to be no clear link between overall death rates and the percentage of deaths in care homes. (Figures 2 and 3: Appendix 1)

3.8 At both a Scottish and UK Government level, the policy context in relation to the response to COVID-19, continues to develop at a rapid pace. Changes to existing policy, the introduction of new processes and announcements on future developments, are all being closely monitored. While fuller information is provided elsewhere in the report on key policy updates and their impact in Renfrewshire - since the last Emergencies Board meeting on 7 May 2020, the following policy changes have been announced:

- In Scotland, the advice on how often people can exercise outdoors changed with effect from 11 May 2020 and residents are now able to go outside to

exercise more than once a day. This change was agreed in line with the process set out in the Scottish Government's Framework for Decision Making and followed a review of scientific advice. Guidance makes clear that exercise should continue to be undertaken close to home and be undertaken alone, or with members of a single household

- Earlier this week, the UK Government published its COVID-19 Recovery strategy, with some lockdown measures being eased in England from this week, and with a broad timetable set out for others to be stepped down over coming weeks and months. Specific guidance has been published for businesses in England who are able to consider whether they can open with appropriate protection and physical distancing arrangements in place from 13 May 2020.
- On 12 May 2020 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the UK Government would extend the furlough scheme until the end of October 2020. Furloughed workers will continue to receive 80% of their current salary, up to £2,500 per month up to end of July 2020 with additional flexibility being considered that would be built into the scheme from August to support employees back to work and to share the costs of the scheme with businesses.
- A second Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill is currently being progressed through the Scottish Parliament which sets out further measures to support Scotland's response to the coronavirus outbreak. Key elements of the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Bill include a proposed additional £19.2 million investment in Carer's Allowance Supplement, the introduction of "notice to leave periods" for students in purpose-built student accommodation and halls of residence, and additional protections for those facing bankruptcy.
- The Scottish Government has announced that a new national digital wellbeing hub will enable staff, carers, volunteers and their families to access relevant support when they need it. The site provides a range of self-care and wellbeing resources designed to aid resilience as the whole workforce responds to the impact of coronavirus. The hub is the first of its kind in the UK and its content has been created by trauma and other specialists in Scotland. Specifically tailored to support the challenges being faced by everyone in health and social care, the hub will provide advice on self-care and personal resilience to help users to recognise their own 'warning signs'. Comprehensive information about services and resources available at both national and local level within NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) and local authorities will be available.

3.9 Scottish Government Funding announcements:

- An initial £50 million in part payment towards Health and Social Care mobilisation plans, of which Renfrewshire will receive £1.667 million has been confirmed. Health and Social Care Partnerships across Scotland have all put in place mobilisation plans, approved by the Scottish Government, to ensure the health and social care system is as well placed as possible to address the COVID-19 pandemic. As outlined previously to the Board, the Scottish Government have indicated in principle agreement to meet the identified additional costs. For Renfrewshire the estimated additional costs for the period through to the end of June is estimated at circa £12.8 million and therefore this funding distribution represent only a

very initial tranche of expected funding to be received from the Government. Work remains ongoing between HSCP's and Scottish Government to update and refine cost estimates as actual costs are beginning to feed through in relation to the initial early weeks of the pandemic response.

- A new £5 million programme will offer an internet connection; training and support; and a laptop or tablet to vulnerable people who are not already online during the response to coronavirus (COVID-19). Eligible digitally excluded people will be identified by local authorities and third sector organisations and offered a device with a mobile internet data package, which will be delivered to their homes. It is understood that this funding is not coming directly to local authorities in terms of the first tranche of the Connecting Scotland programme. The Council will be asked to support a national programme whereby 9,000 devices will be allocated to those most digitally excluded within our communities. The programme will be coordinated nationally by SCVO. A 'digital champion' will provide phone and online support for an initial six-month period – after which the project will be evaluated to assess the support needed longer term. Training and support for digital champions is being coordinated by SCVO and will be delivered through local authorities and third sector bodies.
- Properties occupied by charities can now apply for the £10,000 Small Business Grant Scheme to help with pressures caused by the pandemic. The Small Business Grant Scheme is administered by local authorities. Organisations can apply for the scheme through their local Council.
- £10m funding has been allocated through the Supporting Communities Fund to around 250 community organisations, that will act as 'anchors', bringing together charities, volunteers, social enterprises and the public sector to co-ordinate the local response and channel support where it is needed. This includes making hot meals, organising grocery and prescription deliveries and providing wellbeing support. In Renfrewshire, over £330,000 funding has been allocated to Bridgwater Housing Association, Linstone Housing Association, Linwood Community Development Trust and New Tannahill Centre.

3.10 Guidance Updates:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): staying at home and away from others (physical distancing) – guidance has been updated to reflect the change in advice to allow people to exercise more than once a day. All sport and leisure facilities remain closed in Scotland under the guidance. Associated guidance documents were also updated to reflect this change:
 - National guidance on domestic abuse
 - Guidance on the use of face coverings
- Scottish Government guidance in relation to testing in care homes has been withdrawn and is currently under review and awaiting re publication. The previous guidance required all residents being readmitted to care homes from hospital to have two negative COVID-19 test results before the readmission is made.

4. Support for Communities

Care Homes

- 4.1 Renfrewshire has a mixture of residential care homes and extra care housing directly operated by the Health and Social Care Partnership; nursing homes and a smaller group of residential care homes operated by the independent sector.
- 4.2 At the time of writing there is one resident with COVID-19 related symptoms in the 3 HSCP operated care homes and 4 extra care units. However, testing of residents and staff in one of the three care homes is now being carried out as a preventative measure following a positive test on a resident currently in hospital.
- 4.3 As in previous reports to the Board the data available is based on self-reporting by all 22 care homes and discussions with the Care Inspectorate, which are held weekly. Sadly, 103 people have now been reported by care homes as dying with COVID-19 since 18 March 2020. A smaller group of 6 care homes are now reporting residents with symptoms of COVID-19, or have confirmed cases. However, the number of residents now reported as symptomatic or confirmed has risen to 45 in part because the wider use of testing is now identifying people affected at an earlier stage. This information continues to be subject to frequent change.
- 4.4 At the time of writing (14 May) one resident in an HSCP-operated care home has died, with the death certificate noting the secondary cause of death as suspected to be COVID-19 related. One resident from the same care home is currently in hospital and tested positive for COVID-19 in hospital. Testing of all residents and staff in this care home is being undertaken. There are no reported residents with COVID-19 related symptoms in the two other HSCP-operated care homes or four extra care units.
- 4.5 The extension of testing for all care home residents and staff has continued to roll out, with full testing of all residents and staff where someone is showing as symptomatic. There is no longer a need to wait for a positive result before triggering a request for full testing. Testing has also been carried out on care homes where there was a new infection in the 14 days prior to the commencement of enhanced testing on 1 May 2020. Testing of all staff and residents is now planned across 12 care homes, including the one HSCP operated care home. Testing is currently underway in 8 of these homes, with all testing across the 12 scheduled to be concluded by 21 May 2020. This is providing a fuller understanding of the level of infection present in the homes where the testing has been carried out. Testing will then move to any homes with new outbreaks and to sample testing of homes with no reported COVID-19 related issues.
- 4.6 One local care home has experienced a significant number of residents who have tested positive for COVID-19. Additional support has been given to this care home including input from the clinical lead for palliative care, senior nurse manager for the enhanced care home liaison service, and palliative care nurse who have all visited and provided care to residents. An additional Staff Nurse has also been provided by the HSCP to the care home to supplement their staffing levels and the HSCP will continue to work closely with the care home, Public Health and the

Care Inspectorate to ensure that all appropriate care and support is provided to the residents.

- 4.7 The HSCP and partners are working together to continue to offer a range of enhanced support and assurance to care homes to assist them in responding to the impact of COVID-19 and to provide the best levels of care to all residents. This work has been previously reported in detail and includes daily contact with all care homes to ensure that they have full PPE supplies in place and to seek information on any COVID-19 related issues affecting residents. Ongoing professional advice and support is also being provided with a particular focus on the care homes who have the greatest level of need. This includes support led by the Medical Director and involving pharmacy, enhanced nursing teams, and the hospices [to support palliative care] to offer additional tailored medical and practical support to each home.

Care at Home Services

- 4.8 At present, Renfrewshire HSCP is supporting approximately 1,600 service users through its internal and external Care at Home services. There are a small but growing number of these people, living within their own homes with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- 4.9 Appropriate PPE is worn by staff when supporting service users in their homes, with all appropriate precautions being taken to maintain safe and effective care delivery. Access to testing is available for eligible people and staff who are symptomatic or have household members who are symptomatic.
- 4.10 At the time of writing, sadly 14 Care at Home service users have died, with the deaths reported as being related to COVID-19. In addition, 6 service users have been confirmed as having COVID-19 and another 7 are currently being reported as having COVID-19 like symptoms. As is the case with care homes, this information is subject to frequent change and the expanded testing programme will provide a fuller understanding of the impact of COVID-19 in this vulnerable community.
- 4.11 Staff across care home and care at home services are working in challenging circumstances and their welfare is a priority. Access is provided to mental health and wellbeing services across Renfrewshire and online. Staff hubs have also been put in place to allow care at home staff appropriate places to take rest periods whilst being able to access snacks and drinks when working within a community setting. This provision will be enhanced by the national wellbeing hub established and launched this week.
- 4.12 On 14 May 2020 a special meeting of the Community Protection Chief Officers (the Chief Executive, Renfrewshire Council, the Board Nurse Director, GGCHB and the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland) was held, with a focus specifically on assessing the current position and support being provided to Care Homes and Care at Home services across Renfrewshire.

Shielded and Vulnerable Residents

- 4.13 To date the local helpline has received 4,801 calls in relation to shielding enquires and the following support has been provided:

	Total	Previous	Change since last week
Total number of individuals on shielding list in Renfrewshire	5,921	5,643	278
Total number of individuals on shielding list contacted	5,294	4,677	617
Number of individuals requiring food delivery only	1,583	1,453	130
Number of individuals requiring pharmacy delivery only	127	112	15
Number of individuals requiring food and pharmacy	127	127	0
Number of individuals requiring other services	15	13	2
Number of individuals in need of no services	4,701	4,089	612

- 4.14 Group 2 vulnerable residents have also made 734 calls through the national helpline, with the current level of support provided through the Local Assistance Team to vulnerable people in this category, outlined in the table below:

	Group 1 Shielded	Group 2 Helpline	Other Vulnerable Groups	National Brakes Deliveries (Group 1 only)	Total Supported
Food	520	1103	770	1190	Food – 3,583
Medicine	254	409			Medicine – 663
Other	15	147			Other – 162

- 4.15 The initial focus of work has been to ensure that support is provided on an emergency basis to those most vulnerable, with a strong focus on those that needed support to access medicine or food safely and urgently.
- 4.16 The initial crisis response phase of assistance is now more or less complete. The Local Assistance Team have made contact with the majority of people on the local shielding list – around 90% and in the past week only a further 278 names were added to the list of people being asked to shield. Where contact has not been made directly by the team it is being checked through the HSCP with GP's.
- 4.17 As the Council moves forward with establishing virtual neighbourhood hubs and wider community support, it is well placed to work with local people and in partnership with other organisations to identify longer term options for support. This will include support to access advice and welfare services, to access food at a local level, to offer activity that supports wellbeing and a sense of connection, or to support people to access food independently through some of the new service offerings being developed by supermarkets.
- 4.18 As the response moves on from crisis response, the focus in the Local Assistance Team has also begun to move on, to providing welfare calls to current service recipients to determine the best packages of support that will meet their longer term needs most effectively. This work will seek to ensure vulnerable residents and shielded residents are provided with the assistance they require to live as

independently as possible in coming weeks and months. Over the past week these calls have resulted in confirmation that a significant number of the Group 1 Shielded residents are now being provided reliably with the national support and priority supermarket slots to which they are entitled and no longer require the crisis support that the Council has provided them with up to now. This is a very positive step forward. Other residents have specific needs which mean that some level of ongoing Council support is still required and will continue to be provided. In coming weeks welfare calls will continue to be undertaken - speaking to all residents that are currently being supported and working with them to ensure that they can access the full range of assistance available to them.

Neighbourhood hubs and Volunteering

- 4.19 All 7 virtual neighbourhood hubs are now operational. Hub Coordinators are getting in touch with people to understand their needs and then working flexibly to support people and develop the Hubs offer. Currently referrals are being passed to the hubs from the Local Assistance Team and this will increase as the welfare calls are undertaken with Group 2 vulnerable residents and plans for expanding referral routes are being developed.
- 4.20 Working in partnership with Renfrewshire Leisure, Hubs are set to offer Libraries Direct, a service that uses the skills of librarians to offer a mini library and toy lending service, befriending calls and also digital support.
- 4.21 Volunteers have now received comprehensive inductions and are supporting the Hubs both on and off site. 58 volunteers have registered to volunteer for Neighbourhood hubs, 30 people have attended initial inductions and 27 people reported to the on-site hub inductions. This process is being supported by Engage Renfrewshire. Hub Co-ordinators are also building on relationships with the network of voluntary and community organisations in the area to identify opportunities to connect and widen the offer being made to local communities.

5. Support for Housing Tenants

- 5.1 Most Housing Services have been delivered remotely since lockdown measures were introduced at the end of March. While the local housing offices and homeless services offices have been closed to visiting members of the public, staff have quickly and positively adapted to working remotely to continue to deliver essential services to tenants and other services users. Staff who have been making essential visits to tenants, high rise blocks, temporary accommodation and sheltered housing complexes have all been provided with guidance and PPE as required.
- 5.2 Information on changes to service delivery arrangements was publicised on the Council's website and a booklet was posted to all Council tenants in the middle of April. The information provided to tenants included contact details for a range of services which are available to provide support and assistance.

Tenancy change, allocations and homelessness

- 5.3 Advice and assistance is being provided by telephone on a 24/7 basis to people who become homeless or are at risk of homelessness and temporary accommodation continues to be made available to people who need this.

- 5.4 Following a small initial increase in the numbers of homeless applications in March (81 applications), the numbers have stabilised over recent weeks, with 55 applications during April. All 55 people were offered, and provided with, temporary accommodation. At the end of April, there were 216 households in temporary accommodation, which is a slight increase from earlier in the year. While most of the temporary accommodation provided to date has been self-contained furnished flats, it has been necessary to make some use of B&B accommodation.
- 5.5 Where this has been the case, arrangements are in place to minimise the length of time in B&B accommodation and to provide cooking facilities (microwave ovens) during these periods. Efforts are continuing to be made by Homeless Services staff to increase the supply of furnished flats
- 5.6 Tenancy turnover has remained low, with people tending to stay where they are, and delay planned moves. Only 33 dwellings became vacant in April, compared with 109 in March and 103 in February.
- 5.7 Routine lettings have been suspended, but it is possible to rehouse applicants with critical housing need (eg people being discharged from hospital) if wraparound services can be arranged to allow the safe movement of people and to facilitate safe living arrangements (such as adaptations, essential furniture and fittings, utility connections, homecare services).
- 5.8 In line with Scottish Government guidance on allocations for the housing sector published at the end of April, work is underway to plan for some homeless people currently staying in temporary accommodation to move on to settled tenancies where it is safe to do so. Initially the number of moves will be small, but it is expected that the number of people able to move into settled accommodation will increase over the next few months.
- 5.9 Plans are in place to offer temporary accommodation to prisoners from Renfrewshire who may be homeless when released from prison as part of the Scottish Government's scheme for the early release of short-term prisoners under special measures in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Homeless Services are working closely with Criminal Justice service and other services to ensure a coordinated response.

Supporting Tenants

- 5.10 Housing Support Officers are maintaining contact by telephone and email, as well as home visits where it is safe to do so, with tenants and other service users who receive housing support services, and are continuing to make referrals to other specialist services where people are particularly vulnerable and in need of additional assistance.
- 5.11 Neighbourhood housing staff have been available to assist tenants with core services by telephone (for example, advice on rent payment and benefits, addressing anti-social behaviour, housing options advice etc.). The normal processes for dealing with rent arrears have been suspended, and officers are proactively contacting tenants where there have been missed rent payments or changes to rent payment patterns to offer advice on accessing benefits and other support services as appropriate. Housing Options advice is still being provided

remotely and new housing applications are being registered, but numbers are well below normal monthly activity.

- 5.12 Rental income is slightly lower than at this point last year and there has been an increase in the rate of rent arrears. (The provisional gross rent arrears figure for April was 6.2%, which is an increase from 5.7% in March, but this figure is subject to further adjustment once all managed Universal Credit payments are received by the Council for April). It is expected that it may take some months before the full effect is evident, with the information currently available showing that the majority of rent arrears cases are among tenants of working age and there is a significant increase in the number of Universal Credit claims.
- 5.13 The arrears position will continue to be closely monitored, with staff providing support and advice and directing tenants to alternative sources of specialist advice and financial support as appropriate.
- 5.14 Tenants aged over 70 years old have been contacted by Housing Officers by telephone to check on their wellbeing, offer advice and assistance and make referrals to other services as appropriate.

Sheltered Housing

- 5.15 For Council tenants living in the ten sheltered housing complexes, staff have been working throughout, with daily wellbeing calls being made remotely by staff, and a physical check still being carried out each day at all sheltered housing complexes (testing fire alarms, ensuring that fire doors are closed and the 24/7 community alarm responder and warden call systems are functioning etc). Assistance is being provided with purchasing and dropping off food and essential supplies where sheltered housing tenants have no family support available to help with this, as well as a range of online activities, and a befriending service for those feeling lonely and isolated. Staff involved in providing this support have been following all guidance on physical distancing and have been provided with appropriate PPE.
- 5.16 Liaison arrangements are in place with the HSCP to ensure that information relating to Council and housing association sheltered housing complexes is shared as appropriate to help plan services within local communities and these arrangements are being extended to other types of housing for older people (Council grouped amenity housing and retirement housing managed by housing associations).

Management of High-Rise Blocks

- 5.17 The concierge and caretaking service have continued to operate throughout, and all 14 high rise blocks have daily fire safety checks carried out. Wellbeing calls with appropriate physical distancing and PPE, are also being made to tenants in the amenity flats at Glencairn Court by concierge staff.

Housing Repairs, Improvement Work and Newbuild

- 5.18 In order to avoid non-essential visits to tenants' homes, routine and non-emergency repairs have been suspended. Only emergency repairs and gas servicing works are being undertaken in tenanted properties. Tenants are being contacted ahead of planned visits to make sure that it is safe for tradesmen to attend, with alternative arrangements being made where necessary.

- 5.19 The statutory gas servicing process has continued as normal throughout the lockdown period with tenants contacted 8 weeks in advance of their service date to arrange their appointment and to date, the vast majority of services have been carried out within the required 12-month timescale. However, there have been a number of tenants not wanting to give access to allow their service to be carried out for a range of reasons including illness, self-isolation, shielding or other vulnerabilities. To date, this has resulted in approximately 25% of gas services due during the lockdown period to date not being carried out by the due date. Records are kept of all cases where it has not been possible to carry out the service within the required timeframe and officers are contacting tenants and trying to re-arrange appointments where possible so that this can be done as soon after the due date as possible. However, it is likely that in some cases, services will be postponed for an extended period of time, for example in the case of shielding residents who have indicated they do not want officers visiting their home for the period of shielding.
- 5.20 Some essential void repair works continued in the early stages of the lockdown to ensure a supply of properties were available for emergency rehousing and temporary accommodation for homeless people. However, most of this work has been suspended over recent weeks (due to the nature of work required and the lack of availability of specialist contractors) but work is now underway to recommence essential works where possible, as contractors remobilise with new ways of working to meet the requirements of the current restrictions.
- 5.21 Construction activity on planned capital improvement programmes has also been suspended by contractors in line with Government restrictions. Where work had already started on site, any work necessary to make sure that properties were left in a safe and secure condition was carried out and regular site inspections are being undertaken to ensure they remain safe. Construction activity has also been suspended at the Council's two newbuild sites (Bishopton and Johnstone Castle) and where move-in dates have had to be postponed, prospective tenants are being kept informed about the position.

6. Support for Employees

Sourcing and Stocks of PPE

- 6.1 There are sufficient supplies for the next 7 days to support the current service profile in the HSCP and other frontline services.
- 6.2 All guidance continues to stress that physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, are the most important and effective measures to adopt to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Staff Testing

- 6.3 Testing arrangements have become an important element of maintaining resilience across the workforce supporting key workers who are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or live with people who are, to get tested early. If the early testing proves negative, this facilitates an earlier return to work for the employee than would be experienced under existing self-isolation arrangements without testing. This in turn supports services to maintain higher levels of available staff resource to continue to meet the significant demand for services.
- 6.4 As previously reported, NHSGGC has already established its own system of testing which as at 8 May 2020 has facilitated 81 HSCP staff to be tested, with 31 testing positive for COVID-19. Of the 51 staff who did not test positive, this process has allowed 38 to return to work and 13 have moved to general absence.
- 6.5 At present, there are a total of 104 HSCP staff unavailable to work due to a COVID-19 diagnosis, family contact or actual symptoms. This is a decrease in these figures over the last week.
- 6.6 On 1 May 2020 the First Minister announced that access to testing was being further expanded to include a broader range of workers and circumstances and this includes:
- People who are not keyworkers but have to leave their house for work
 - People with COVID-19 symptoms who are over the age of 65 and their households
 - Where there is a confirmed COVID case in a care home, subject to consent, all residents and staff, whether or not they have symptoms can be tested
 - Surveillance sample testing of residents and staff who are not symptomatic for care homes where there are no confirmed COVID cases
 - Urgent testing should be carried out for care homes with an outbreak (and any linked homes as part of a group or chain where staff are moving between homes)
- 6.7 Further to the expansion of the testing arrangements outlined to the Board in the previous report, services across the Council are being supported by HR&OD to refer eligible employees and their households for testing. Given the timing of the new and expanded testing criteria, there has been a gradual increase in the number of employees referred for testing. The established testing tracking process in place will ensure quick and efficient referrals moving forward.
- 6.8 Staff from all services who meet the testing criteria are being encouraged to contact their manager or HR services (including through established weekend

cover arrangements) as soon as they believe either they or someone within their household is displaying symptoms - to allow the testing referral to be undertaken urgently.

- 6.9 To date, 36 non-healthcare Council employees have been tested for COVID-19. 8 employees have tested positive, 16 employees have tested negative, 11 employees are awaiting results and 1 test returned as inconclusive. Of the 25 employees who have received test results, 15 have returned to work and 10 are currently recorded as sickness absence.

Staffing Update

- 6.10 Amongst Renfrewshire Council employees there are currently 436 employees self-isolating either because they have symptoms; or because they have other people in their household experiencing symptoms; or because they are following government and health guidance. (This is a decrease from 580 reported on 7 May 2020). Of the 436, 171 are currently working from home. The decrease in cases is due to on-going work between HR&OD and Service Managers facilitating a return to work from self-isolation. Whilst the majority of employees returned to work after the appropriate self-isolating period, a small number of employees have moved to the “at risk” category as detailed in paragraph 6.12 below.
- 6.11 The 436 are split across Services as follows:

Service	Number of employees
Chief Executive Services	4
Children’s Services	200
Communities, Housing and Planning	31
Environment and Infrastructure	112
Finance and Resources	51
Health and Social Care Partnership	38
Council Total	436

- 6.12 The number of employees in the at-risk category and unable to perform frontline duties is 1,105, up from the figure of 1,085 reported on 7 May 2020. Of these 463 are currently working from home. Where employees are not able to carry out their normal duties from home, options for redeployment on a home working basis are being actively considered and put in place.

- 6.13 Currently around 1,000 employees have been redeployed within their services to focus on the delivery of priority services for the community. Corporate, cross service redeployment requests continue to be received and employees are being matched into roles within 24 – 48 hours. So far, 111 employees have been redeployed into priority front line roles:

- 51 Drivers supporting food and pharmacy deliveries as well as social distancing arrangements within waste collection.
- 20 Call handlers supporting responses to shielded and other vulnerable citizens
- 40 Coordinators, team leads and managers supporting the local response hubs

- 6.14 The Health and Wellbeing of employees is a key priority for the Council and more so during this period of lockdown when so many are working in unfamiliar roles. With more employees working from home, delivering essential services and adjusting to life following the current government guidelines, it is important that they have access to the right support, information and advice to help them stay safe and healthy. The HR & OD Team have been working collaboratively with partners, such as Renfrewshire leisure and the Health and Social Care Partnership, to provide a package of Mental Health and Physical Wellbeing support that is accessible for all employees.
- 6.15 There have already been some significant changes to the way frontline employees are supported, for example, providing an enhanced, bespoke counselling service for those working on the shielding telephone line. Going forward, the engagement package will take the form of spot lighting certain key topics such as home working, physical exercise and healthy eating. The first event to take place will highlight that 18 – 22 May 2020 is Mental Health Awareness Week with a range of relevant topics covered.

7. Service Updates

- 7.1 Relevant service updates on specific issues that have not been reported before are included below:

Service Update – Finance & Resources

- 7.2 At its meeting on 20 March 2020, the Emergencies Board agreed to cancel all meetings of the Council and its Boards for the period 20 March to 24 June 2020. The meeting of the Renfrewshire Council Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff (JNC) which had been timetabled to be held on Tuesday 2 June 2020 was included amongst the meetings cancelled as a result of the Board's decision.
- 7.3 The next scheduled meeting of the JNC after the cancelled meeting is due to be held on 1 September 2020 which falls within the next school session, 2020/2021. The Council has received a request from the teachers' side of the JNC, requesting that a remotely held meeting of the JNC be held before the end of the current school academic session in June. Children's Services is supportive of the reinstatement of the meeting which would allow for a local agreement to be reached in relation to teachers returning to the classroom in light of any amendments to national terms and conditions.

Service Update – Communities and Public Protection:

Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020

- 7.4 The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 were enacted on 27 March, with powers for Councils to visit and prohibit businesses that were not compliant with the Regulations. In line with the Council Integrated Enforcement Policy, businesses have been supported by officers adopting an "engage, explain, encourage and then enforce" model which affords people the best opportunity to comply before any enforcement action is taken.
- 7.5 One of the challenges is that the legislation was written very quickly and there are areas where the regulations and guidance don't give absolute clarity. One example is the term "essential businesses". The term "essential" didn't translate

into the legislation, therefore a business is either specifically mentioned in the legislation or it is not. This has led to complaints regarding businesses operating that the public consider “non-essential” e.g. car washes, however, as they are not specifically mentioned within the legislation, there are no powers to close them unless they are not adhering to physical distancing or other relevant guidance. Other queries have been received in relation to dog groomers, hotels, food businesses, pubs, garden centres, hardware stores, banks and barbers.

- 7.6 The tables below provide current information on the numbers of enquiries and complaints received and the proactive work done to support local businesses and ensure compliance with all appropriate legislation during this exceptional period.

	Numbers received	Numbers advice issued to	Complaint substantiated	Number of warnings issued
Enquiries/complaints relating to businesses	41	41	9	2

	Number of interventions	Number of revisits/calls	Number of warnings issued	Number of prohibition notices issued
Proactive interventions to businesses	343	18	6	1

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – although at this stage not quantified, the Council will experience a wide range of significant financial pressures arising from the impact of the pandemic on the population as well as the economic and social disruption caused by the associated restrictions being deployed by national governments. Significant financial pressures will emerge in a wide range of forms from loss of income, exceptional service costs, significant increase in demand for services, the need for additional and new interventions, urgent and immediate support arrangements and services from the Council to help individuals, families and businesses across Renfrewshire as well as the Council’s workforce. The Scottish Government has provided a range of immediate funding announcements to provide specific support via local authorities to both individuals and businesses as well as a degree of general funding to assist local authorities in managing immediate financial pressures. Engagement will continue between COSLA and the Scottish Government regarding further funding as the period of emergency extends, however notwithstanding, the Council will experience significant financial impact and disruption that will require it to draw heavily on all its financial reserves and which is likely to take some time to recover
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – the Council’s workforce represents a major part of the local population and as such is being impacted directly by the spread of confirmed cases, but much more significantly by the public health directions for self-isolation given to those displaying symptoms and those with family members displaying symptoms as well as those in the at risk groups instructed to pro-actively implement strict social distancing arrangements. Full support and communication are being provided to all staff members to

ensure they remain fully informed of the developing situation and where appropriate and practical, are being supported to work safely at home and or safely return to active work once recovered or free of recommended self-isolation periods. The impact of these factors will increase exponentially over coming days and weeks and therefore the scale of availability across the Council's workforce will come under unprecedented pressures. Working closely with national government, partners and trade unions the Council will by necessity be required to actively manage and redeploy staffing resources to meet the most critical services over this exception emergency period.

3. **Community/Council Planning –**

Covid-19 will impact on the operations of Council partners and on services to the community. This paper highlights the work being undertaken to mitigate this impact as far as possible and maintain essential services for the safety and wellbeing of the community.

4. **Legal – N/A**

5. **Property/Assets – N/A**

6. **Information Technology –** ICT are working to ensure staff have the capability to work from home wherever possible to reduce social contact in line with government and health guidance

7. **Equality & Human Rights**

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.

8. **Health & Safety –** Advice and guidance is being given to protect the health and safety of employees and service users when carrying out priority services for the Council in line with government and health guidance

9. **Procurement – N/A**

10. **Risk –** Due to the severity of the global pandemic and Covid-19, there is a risk to the delivery of the services with staff levels being reduced. This is being closely monitored by the Emergency Management Team. Business Continuity Plans have been reviewed and the risk has been added to the Corporate Risk Register.

11. **Privacy Impact - None.**

12. **COSLA Policy Position – Not Applicable**

13. **Climate Risk – Not Applicable**

List of Background Papers

None

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Appendix 1 - Deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Renfrewshire

Figure 1 - Renfrewshire, Location of COVID-19 Deaths

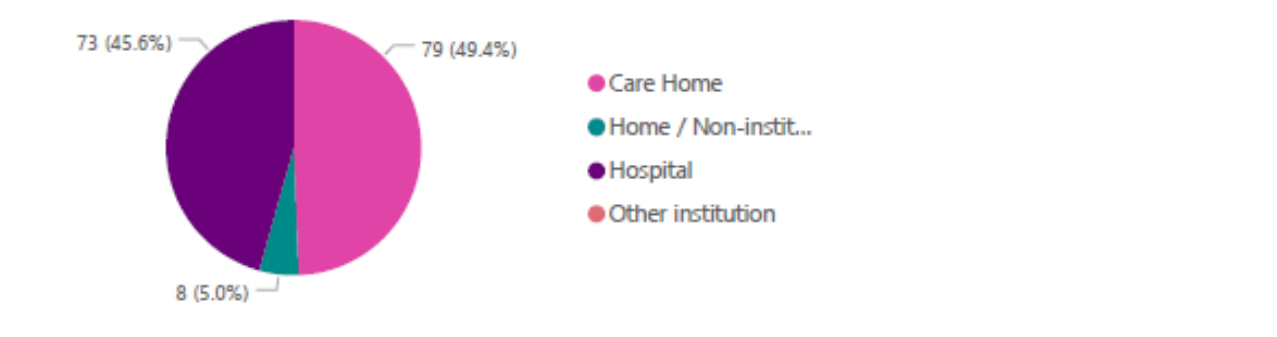


Figure 2 - COVID-19 Deaths Per 10,000 pop by Local Authority

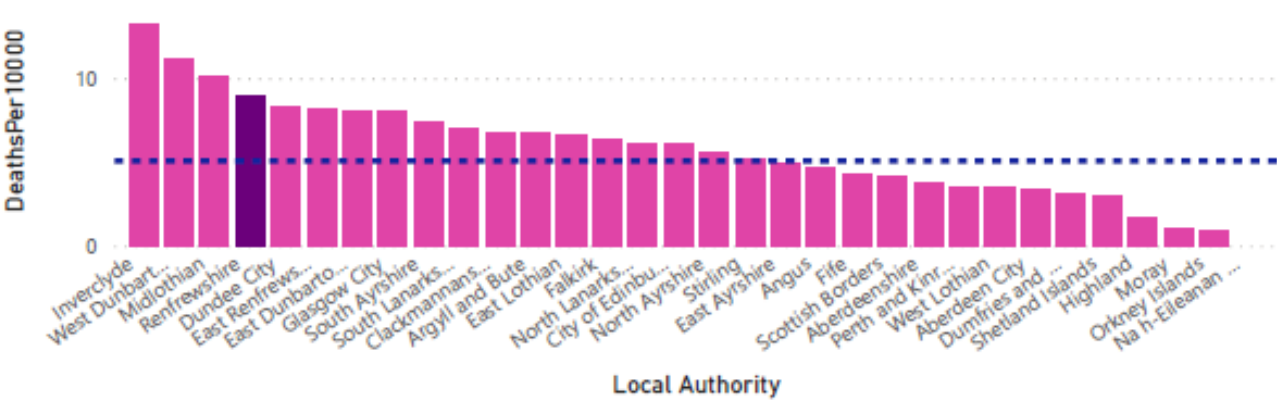
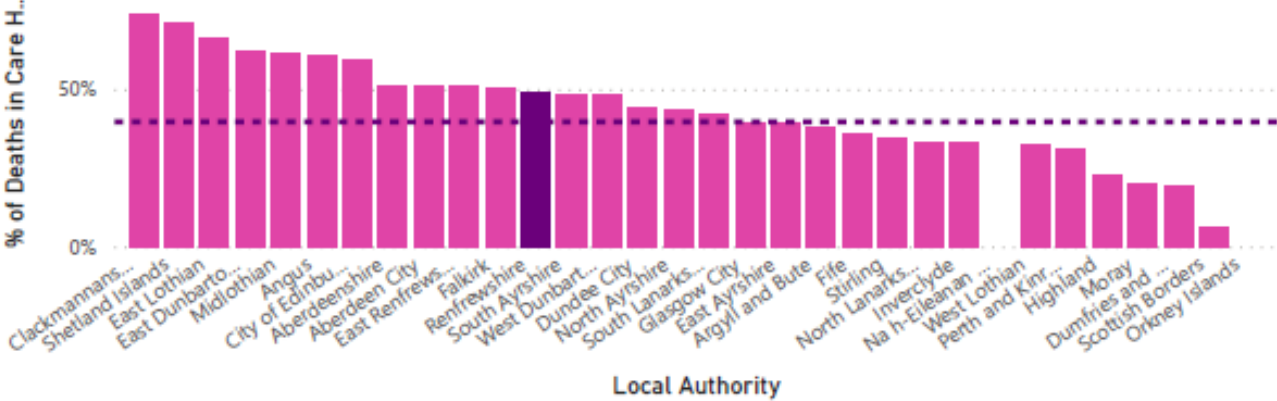


Figure 3 - % of COVID-19 Deaths in Care Homes by Local Authority



Deaths recorded since the 18th March 2020
Source: National Records Scotland <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>