

To: Emergencies Board

On: 9 April 2020

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Update on COVID-19

1. Background

1.1 This report provides an overview of the Council's current arrangements and response to the ongoing international Coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Emergencies Board:
 - (a) Notes the current national and local situation with regards to COVID-19 and the current plans and guidance from both the UK and Scottish Governments.
 - (b) Notes the current position and response measures being put in place by the Council and partners.

3. National Situation

3.1 Currently there are 55,242 confirmed cases of COVID – 19 in the UK up from 33,718 reported on 3 April 2020. There have been 6,159 deaths across the UK (up from 2,921 in the last report). In Scotland there are now 4,565 confirmed cases (up from 2,602) and 366 deaths (up from 126). Of these, 1,166 cases are within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board Area (up from 682). In GGCHB area there were 555 people in hospital at midnight on Tuesday night (62 in intensive care) as either confirmed or suspected cases.

3.2 In response to this rapidly developing position, the Government has continued the "lock down" for the population. A number of nationally driven operational issues have been focused on over the past week as a key part of the Council and partners response to the pandemic and to protect and support local residents.

Supporting Additional Deaths

3.3 The First Minister has announced her intention to improve the way in which information on the number of COVID-19 related deaths is recovered. This involves information being available seven days per week on the numbers of deaths registered. At present, the registration service is provided in Renfrewshire during normal business hours with no weekend working. The Registration Deaths service will now be available over the weekend including forthcoming bank holidays.

Support for Shielded Residents - Humanitarian Response

- 3.4 Support continues to be developed for local people identified by the Scottish Government as being in the "Shielded Group" of residents who have a medical condition that puts them at high risk if infected by COVID-19. So far, around 3,600 letters have been issued to Renfrewshire residents identified by the Chief Medical Officer as having one or more of an initial tranche of medical conditions. It is understood that further work is ongoing to bring together data on several other categories of medical condition, whilst GPs have also been asked to review locally held data and to provide any additional names of people that they feel should be included on this list. It is therefore expected that the numbers in the shielded group will increase further.
- 3.5 As previously reported, a Local Assistance Team has been established in order to coordinate requests for support from those people who have been asked to remain shielded. The core support available is access to food and also support to access prescriptions. Calls are initially triaged by staff in the Customer Contact Centre, and requests for support are then handled by the Local Assistance Team. This is a 7 day per week service, operating 8.45am to 4.45pm. The service will continue to operate over the Easter public holidays. Training has been ongoing throughout the week to increase the numbers of employees that are available to support this work and ensure a flexible and resilient team is in place.
- 3.6 To date, 404 calls have been received through the Shielding Helpline, of which 202 translated into a referral for support with food and/or prescriptions. The numbers of calls received has been increasing day on day. 50% of calls so far have been general enquiries, or from individuals who have called to query why they have not received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer, or asking how to get the letter in order that they can provide this to their employer as proof of having been asked to shield. As further letters are issued however, it is expected that the numbers of calls requiring practical assistance will also increase.
- 3.7 15 additional Local Assessment Team officers have been trained this week including 3 team leaders and 2 co-ordinators to support the operation of the team. This additional resource is required to ensure efficient handling of enquiries and also to support the team to undertake outward bound calls to people on the shielded list, undertaking welfare checks on a proactive basis.

Food Fund and Assistance

- 3.8 On 18 March, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government announced a £350 million package to support communities. This includes a £70 million Food Fund comprising:
 - £30m initially being made available to local authorities to support local people experiencing food access issues due to for example income or health
 - up to £30m for a nationally procured programme to deliver food for those who are shielded.
 - £10 million for investment in third sector organisations (at a national and local level)
- 3.9 Approximately £1.060m of the initial £30m of funding for local authorities has been allocated to Renfrewshire. Local authorities are being asked to work with partners to reach those households experiencing the greatest barriers in terms of accessing food. Plans for further options for support are currently being developed and the work is closely aligned to the work of the Local Assistance Team.
- 3.10 In order to provide further support to vulnerable children and families, fortnightly payments are being made to eligible families where children would ordinarily have received free school meals. Staff working with vulnerable children and families are also able to request the delivery of a food pack to provide further support for families that require assistance.

Volunteering

- 3.11 Last week the Scottish Government launched its national volunteering campaign branded Get Ready Scotland. The Council is continuing to work with organisations at a national level to link to this campaign and to align volunteer offers to local groups and services. 841 Renfrewshire residents have signed up to this national campaign.
- 3.12 To support this activity a local volunteering campaign was launched last week in partnership with Engage Renfrewshire. The Renfrewshire Volunteer Reserve Bank is now open for enquiries and applications which are being co-ordinated and checked by Engage Renfrewshire, before being matched to local organisations. To date 60 volunteers have been registered and inducted and are available for matching to organisations, with a further 38 in the process of registration.
- 3.13 Strong partnership working continues to be undertaken with local community organisations that provide food and wider support to local people. A community food network has been established, and the Council is working collaboratively with these organisations to request and coordinate food produce from Fare Share at a national level, which is being delivered to a newly established community distribution hub. Volunteers are also being directed to these groups through the local volunteering campaign being led by Engage Renfrewshire.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

3.14 On 2 April 2020, the Scottish Government issued updated guidance on the type of personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn in various settings to meet safety levels.

- 3.15 As well as showing the recommended PPE to use in a variety of clinical and community care settings, the guidance also reinforces the importance of good hygiene practices. This includes regular hand washing upon entry and leaving premises, maintaining strict social distancing measures and following the correct procedures for use of PPE where it is required.
- 3.16 A key change in the guidance clarifies that secondary, primary and community care workers should wear a surgical mask when dealing with any individuals in the 'extremely vulnerable group' (shielded group).
- 3.17 The Council and HSCP are working together to ensure all frontline workers are clear on the current guidance and appropriately equipped. A group has been established to have oversight of guidance as it is updated to ensure it is consistently applied. This has representatives from relevant service areas and from Environmental Health and Council Health and Safety services. The COVID Working Group will ensure consistency in the application PPE guidance across all workforces and also ensure that a consistent standard is applied across businesses the Council is responsible for advising and regulating. A range of communications are planned to ensure staff are clear on the guidance, when to use PPE and trained in the correct procedures for donning and doffing of PPE. This is being developed in collaboration with the NHS GGC Public Health service.

Development of COVID-19 Community Assessment Centres (CAC)

- 3.18 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde are developing a care co-ordination hub and a number of COVID-19 Community Assessment Centres. No testing is carried out at Assessment Centres the assessment has two purposes:
 - To maximise the numbers of symptomatic people who can be cared for in the community, reserving hospitals for those with the most serious illness
 - To minimise the potential exposure of patients using GP practices to COVID-19, as these patients are most likely to be older and have multiple noncommunicable diseases.
- 3.19 Renfrewshire Community Assessment Centre opened on 6 April 2020 in the Linwood Health Centre Community Wing. The Assessment Centre will operate on an appointment only basis and will assess patients: referred via NHS111, who have then been triaged by the NHSGGC telephone hub, or; referred directly from GPs following a remote consultation. The Clinical Lead for the centre is Dr Stuart Sutton (RHSCP Clinical Director) and Operational Lead is Jackie Dougall (RHSCP Head of Health and Social Care and Children's Services).
- 3.20 The Centre currently has capacity to assess around 100 patients per day and will initially operate from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. It has opened with 4 clinical rooms available. There is scope to increase the number of rooms available to 5 and to review operating times depending on demand and staffing availability.

COVID-19 Testing

3.21 The HSCP has now secured access to COVID-19 testing for key workers in the HSCP, or organisations from whom the HSCP commission services - e.g. nursing homes. Testing will be available for those employees who are currently isolating due to living with someone who is either symptomatic, or has been tested as COVID-19 positive - allowing the employee to potentially return to work earlier.

3.22 In addition, the Scottish Government, working with Boots Plc, has commissioned a testing facility at Glasgow Airport. This is part of a UK-wide expanded testing programme and is focussed on supporting key workers to enable an earlier return to work. Initial access to this facility has been prioritised primarily for the Scottish Ambulance Service and NHS24 employees however the HSCP Chief Officer is exploring access for health and social care staff working in the community if required.

Mobilisation Planning

- 3.23 Renfrewshire HSCP, alongside the five other HSCPs within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area, have continued to contribute to Board-wide mobilisation planning, including providing updates on work ongoing at a local level as part of NHSGGC's required reporting to Scottish Government.
- 3.24 HSCP updates are iterative and are provided on a weekly basis to NHSGGC covering a summary of work ongoing as a result of the HSCP's COVID-19 response. Examples of changes made to maintain service resilience which have been included in the reports are:
 - The implementation of contingency plans across services to focus on delivering critical need and services to vulnerable individuals
 - The closure of day centres for older people and adults with learning disabilities to support infection control
 - Changes to services provided by GP surgeries in line with Level 1 of the NHS GGC wide Primary Care Escalation Plan
 - Closing care homes to visitors in line with national guidance
 - Investing in overtime to support continued frontline service delivery
 - Deploying staff from Council and NHS services to support frontline service delivery (for example within Care at Home)
 - Providing support to external providers and providing assurance that services will continue to be funded in line with contractual agreements, whilst enabling contract specifications to be flexed
 - Working collaboratively with the Council to implement a humanitarian response for vulnerable and shielded individuals and with Engage Renfrewshire to coordinate community volunteering

Parking Enforcement of expired blue badges

3.25 Guidance produced by COSLA and relevant professional bodies and agreed by the Scottish Government has been issued to all local authorities. The guidance acknowledges that there may be a delay in processing new Blue Badge applications and reapplications and advises that Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) should not be issued to citizens displaying a Blue Badge with a badge expiry from 1 January 2020 onwards. Parking Attendants have been advised of this change in enforcement policy. The relaxation of enforcement against these expired Blue Badges is currently expected to continue until 30 September 2020, however, this will be kept under review. A communications message will be issued to provide reassurance to Blue Badge holders who may be affected. All other restrictions and enforcement currently remain in place.

4. Local Situation

4.1 Renfrewshire Council is currently following all guidance from both the UK and Scottish Governments in delivering priority services. Relevant service updates on specific issues that have not been reported before are included below:

Service Update - Health and Social Care Partnership

- Health and social care services are being delivered to people with the most critical levels of need only. All services continue to be stable however the HSCP continues to proactively manage capacity and demand pressures, on a daily basis, including deploying staff to critical services where appropriate.
- In addition to the continued focus on delivering critical services, additional areas of focus include mobilisation planning; ensuring adherence to the updated PPE guidance; and the establishment of a local COVID19 Assessment Centre.
- PPE supply and delivery issues are being experienced nationally. This is
 recognised as a key risk to the HSCP. Over the last week, the HSCP has
 been focussed on ensuring a regular supply of PPE to ensure it can continue
 to operate safe services and protect frontline staff line, service users and
 patients in line with national guidance.

Service Update - Children's Services

- The SQA has confirmed the approach to be taken for the award of qualifications to pupils following the cancellation of the forthcoming exam diet. Head teachers are working collaboratively with class teachers and HQ colleagues in order to ensure these requirements are now implementing effectively.
- Trinity High and St Mary's Primary, West Primary, St James' Primary (Renfrew), the West Johnstone campus (includes nursery provision), Hugh Smiley Nursery, Moorpark Nursery and Riverbrae school have remained open to provide childcare to support key workers through the school Easter holiday period. All other Schools and Pre 5 establishments have been closed. So far, over 300 families have been able to take up the offer of supported childcare with approximately 220 children across early years, primary and secondary being accommodated on any given day.

Service Update - Communities Housing and Planning

- Daily Tasking online meetings continue to be held to assess any incidents taking place. Overall numbers of incidents have reduced, but some incidences of noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour have been identified in relation to parties and groups of people coming together in contravention of the government guidance. These are being addressed as a priority in partnership with the Police. Information and guidance is being sent to tenants of the Council and RSL's and will be included on social media to reinforce the need to comply with current restrictions on social distancing and on how to report instances of contraventions or other concerns, to the Police and Community Safety partnership.
- Street Stuff have been running a programme of online activities for young people – with Quizzes using online meetings and online sports championships using X-Box and Playstation being programmed at times when face to face activities would normally take place. These are proving

- popular with around 20 attendees each evening and growing numbers signing up as word spreads. The new method of delivery builds on the success of the Street Stuff bus activities.
- Youth Services are working with Renfrewshire Youth Voice to ask young people to record their experience of the lock down using blogs, surveys, video blogs, writing pieces and drawings. Anonymous surveys will ask young people how they are connecting with other people digitally and what the impact of self-isolation is on them with a particular focus on the impact on their mental health. It is recognised that young carers are facing increased responsibilities and they will be asked to record these challenges. A final survey will ask young people to focus on positives and whether their experience has made them change their behaviours or outlook for example: becoming more mindful; supportive; appreciative; or speaking to their family more. The data gathered will be used to design interventions that promote a sense of normality following the period of self-isolation.

Service Update - RLL

- All RLL properties and services are closed in line with government guidance, a significant number of staff continue to work from home.
- Online services continue to be developed and added to, enhanced by a new remote working Community Engagement Team.
- RLL staff continue to actively support the call out for volunteers to deliver essential Council services. In addition to staff supporting the School Camps, RLL are also providing staff as drivers and food packers.
- In terms of welfare, Paisley Museum is developing a response to existing and newly vulnerable communities as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.
 - The PMR team are scheduled to begin work on the Activity Plan as part of the reporting and grant obligations to NLHF. The Activity Plan sets out how the project will engage with audiences over the next two years and beyond the reopening of the Museum itself.
 - Priorities and plans for individuals and organisations will change as a result of COVID-19 and the Activity Plan will be reshaped to take account of this.
 - RLL are looking to support those most vulnerable in our communities individuals and organisations who as a result of the COVID-19 impact find themselves isolated, at risk, facing mental health and financial challenges.
 - The team leading the Activity Plan will begin by mapping out potential organisations to link with and will work with colleagues across the Council to best understand where this need lies in order to help prioritise work.

5. Renfrewshire Council Staffing Update

5.1 Amongst Renfrewshire Council employees there are currently 603 employees selfisolating either because they have symptoms; or because they have other people in their household experiencing symptoms: or because they have recently returned from a Category 1 country and are following government and health guidance. (This is a reduction from 726 reported on 3 April 2020 and reflects that fact that a number of employees who were previously included have now returned to work or moved to different categories such as "at risk, or shielding from social contact"). Of the 603, 214 are currently working from home.

5.2 The 603 are split across Services as follows:

Service	Number of employees
Chief Executive Services	5
Children's Services	270
Communities, Housing and Planning	34
Environment and Infrastructure	175
Finance and Resources	65
Health and Social Care Partnership	54
Council Total	603

- 5.3 The number of employees now being "shielded from social contact" in line with government and health guidance is 1022, up from the figure of 993 reported on 3 April 2020. Of these 427 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.
- 5.4 Guidance on annual leave and public holidays, health and well-being and working from home has been issued across the workforce.

6. Renfrewshire Council Communications Update

- 6.1 Public information continues to be planned and communicated across council, partner and community channels on a daily basis, in line with national guidance and new/emerging policies. At all times, links are being made to local partners; the business community; 3rd sector; NHS and emergency services. This helps maintain simple and consistent messages, without overloading, and ensures communication aims are met:
 - keep people informed, safe and well
 - maintain public confidence in the council's ability to respond to the crisis
 - maintain staff and community support and morale.
- 6.2 The council website is a main channel of communication and is updated each day to provide the latest information on Coronavirus. A new section dedicated to public information relating to the outbreak has been created, to make it as easy as possible for people to find service updates, access advice and support, do things online and find the latest health guidance. The site has been optimised for mobile phone access and there is a separate section for Council staff who can access information remotely and on the move.
- 6.3 Analysis of usage of the new pages has been undertaken and an overview of site performance has been attached as Appendix 1. The report shows the increase in new users to the website and spikes in usage particularly in the days following the national lockdown announcement and at the point of publishing Shielding information. The report includes:
 - Basic statistics which show the increased number of users (and their page views), compared with the same period last year, and the split between new

- and returning visitors. This shows success in encouraging new people to visit the website for information
- Acquisition which shows where traffic is coming from e.g. Google, or via Facebook or Twitter. This helps us understand what information people search for and also how they respond and interact with our social media
- Behaviour this explains traffic spikes and why people visit the website. It helps us understand how people use the site (hour of day, internal searches and top pages)
- 6.4 Combined, this analysis helps the communications team to plan and refine future public communications making sure content continues to meet the information needs of local people, and that time is focused on using the communication channels that have the greatest reach and impact.

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
- 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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Public website summary report

Date range: Feb 1, 2020 - Apr 4, 2020

General stats

Users

"Unique visitor" or a person who has come to our website

293.1K

Sessions

"Visits", or different times that person came to our site.

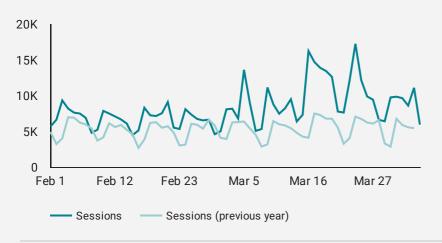
535.1K

Pageviews

Total number of times our pages on the website has been viewed.

2.3M

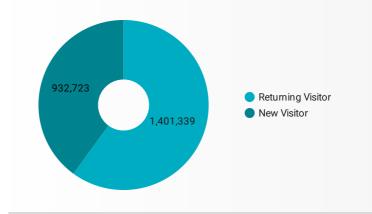
There's been a general website traffic increase over the past year and it's been more significant since Covid-19 outbreak and release of information



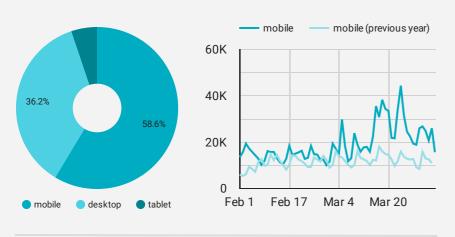
Difference between new and returning visitors

<u>New visitors</u> are people who are coming to your site for the first time on a device.

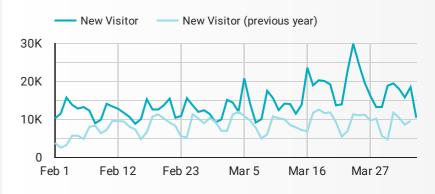
Returning visitors have come back to your site before.



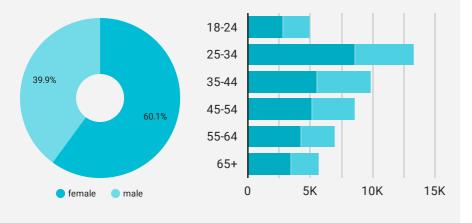
What devices are people using?



Since the beginning of the year we've seen more new visitors every week compared to last year, particularly from March and the Covid-19 outbreak



Engagement by Age & Gender



Number of returning visitors has been similar from last year but we observe more people coming back to the website since March



Public website summary report

Date range: Feb 1, 2020 - Apr 4, 2020

Acquisition

Top channels

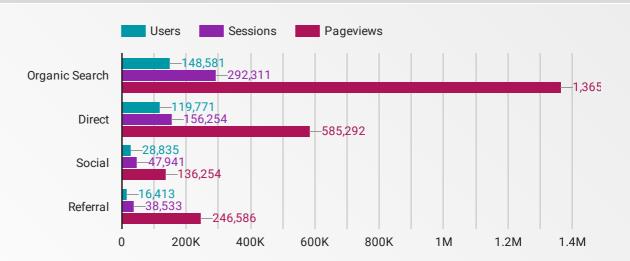
Showing from which channels our traffic is coming from.

Organic Search: Indicates visits from organic search results (Google)

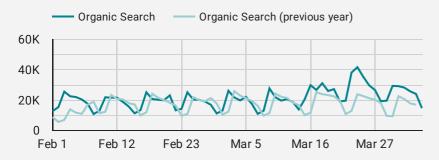
Direct: Indicates visits where users navigated directly to the URL or the source of the visit is unknown.

Social: Indicates visits from social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Referral: Indicates traffic where users clicked a link from another site or newsletter, excluding search engines



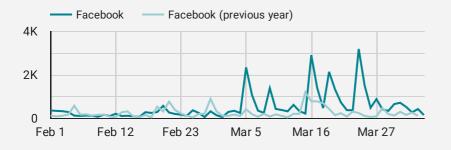
Visits from Google and other search engines have significantly increased since start of Covid-19



Traffic coming from Facebook has increased and spikes after each shared Covid-19 message

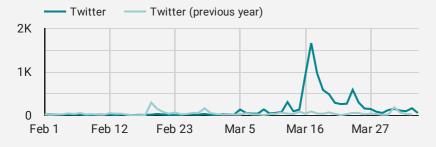
23.4K

11.2K from previous year



Traffic coming from Twitter has increased and shows a different traffic pattern from Facebook

5.4K



People are still making the same searches on Google as before Covid-19 but they make them more often to check changes to Council services

Query

38.1K

≜ 8.1K from Mar 1, 2019 - Apr 4, 2019

	-	.
	Query	Clicks *
1.	renfrewshire council	33,832
2.	renfrewshire school holidays	9,665
3.	renfrewshire school holidays 2020	3,404
4.	renfrewshire council bins	2,650
5.	renfrewshire council school holidays	2,087
6.	renfrewshire bin collection	1,930
7.	renfrewshire bins	1,580
8.	renfrewshire council bin collection	1,249
9.	renfrewshire	852
10.	renfrewshire council coronavirus	761
11.	renfrewshire council tax	685
12.	renfrewshire council tax bands	674
13.	renfrewshire council planning	644
14.	school holidays renfrewshire	627
15.	bin collection renfrewshire	570
16.	renfrewshire school holidays 2020/21	517
17.	renfrewshire school holidays 20/21	482
18.	bin collection	454
19.	renfrewshire school holidays 2021	418

Public website summary report

Date range: Feb 1, 2020 - Apr 4, 2020

Behaviour

Traffic spikes from 1 March to today

Please note there is usually a spike of traffic on Mondays which is followed by a slow decrease throughout the week.

<u>5 March</u>: Coronavirus page launched

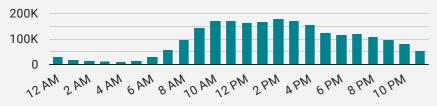
9 March: Budget 2020 released

16 March: Information for staff on /coronavirus-staff 19-20 March: Schools advice on Covid-19 released 24 March: Changes to Council services page created

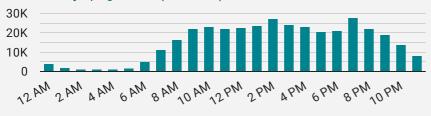
3 April: SQA Awards information added to website

Compared to normal traffic, Covid-19 pages are used longer throughout the day with a peak at 7pm





Hour of day - pageviews (Covid-19)



Total of internal searches (use of search bar) is almost identical to last year

Signposting across the website directing to Covid-19 pages have helped people find the right content without using the search bar

17.9K

1.0K from previous year

	Search Term	Total Unique Searches 🔻
1.	council tax	94
2.	Bus pass	86
3.	bus pass	73
4.	community care grant	72
5.	business world	67
6.	Coronavirus	66
7.	Council tax	66
8.	Covid 19	62
9.	School holidays	57
10.	planning	56



Covid-19 traffic & top pages

Coronavirus pages represent 25% of total website pageviews from beginning of March

	Page	Pageviews
1.	/coronavirus	114,500
2.	/coronavirus-staff	62,913
3.	/coronavirus-schools	46,327
4.	/coronavirus-changestoservices	31,878
5.	/article/2072/Contact-us	26,951
6.	/coronavirus-businesses	21,259
7.	/coronavirus-public	12,384
8.	/coronavirus-binswasterecycling	8,973
9.	/coronavirus-counciltaxandrent	7,476
10.	/coronavirus-sqaawards	7,463
11.	/coronavirus-shielding	6,774
12.	/coronavirus-communities	5,159
13.	/coronavirus-wellbeing	1,928
14.	/coronavirus-money	1,875
15.	/coronavirus-housing	1,120
		1 - 100 / 1264

Proportional traffic increase seen for MyAccount in the last 2 weeks of March

