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| **Coronavirus (Covid-19) – briefing** |

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Issued 31 March 2020

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| **Below is the latest briefing on the activity in managing the response to coronavirus (Covid-19).**  **Local updates, council service changes and links to trusted sources of health guidance are published at *www.inverclyde.gov.uk/coronavirus*** |

**Car park closures**

To support the stay at home guidance, car parks at parks and open spaces operated will be closed in several locations across Inverclyde.

The car parks to be closed to vehicles today (Tuesday 31 March) are:

* Lunderston Bay
* Parklea
* Battery Park
* Inverkip
* Greenock Cut
* Overton Road car park

While many parks and open spaces remain open to walkers, the aim of this action is to limit the number of people travelling to parks and open spaces by car and breaching the stay at home guidance.

The broad message below will form part of our communications with residents:

Stay at home guidance – parks and open spaces

During this time of restrictions it is important that we all stay active for our physical health and mental wellbeing.

Recreation outside is an important part of this, but it is essential that each of us practise good social distancing while outside. You should not travel to access the outdoors and your time spent outside exercising should be done close to your home rather than travelling elsewhere.

Playground equipment and play areas are currently closed. This decision was taken to reduce the potential for transference of the virus from the surfaces. As the playgrounds are closed, the equipment is no longer subject to safety inspections.

If you live close to a play park, the open space is still available to you, but please do not allow young ones to play on the equipment. Please also observe social distancing as guided by government.

We want you to discover Inverclyde’s landscape, leisure opportunities and natural beauty but not right now.

During this unprecedented time, these facilities should be considered out of bounds to anyone who does not live within a short walking distance. Please do not travel to these locations. Once the current restrictions are lifted we will welcome you back and we want you to discover all of the leisure opportunities we have.

At this moment, we ask that you comply with the national guidance and stay at home.

Your help and understanding is essential at this challenging time. It is only by us all working together, following Government advice, that we can defeat this, save lives and protect the NHS.

**Early years expansion deadline removed**

Local authorities will no longer be legally obliged to deliver 1140 hours of funded childcare from this August.

Ministers have laid an order in the Scottish Parliament to revoke the statutory duty, allowing local authorities to focus on the coronavirus pandemic response.

Minister for Children and Young People Maree Todd and COSLA spokesperson for Children and Young People Councillor Stephen McCabe have issued a joint statement.

*“Before the extent of the Covid-19 pandemic became clear a couple of weeks ago, Audit Scotland confirmed we were on track to deliver 1140 hours of early learning and childcare from August 2020. Indeed, Councils had already built or refurbished hundreds of buildings and recruited thousands of additional staff, and in excess of 50,000 children were already receiving more than the current entitlement of 600 hours.*

*“That progress was driven by and a testament to the strong partnership working between central and local government throughout the expansion programme. Our commitment to delivering the expansion, and to making sure our children have access to the best support and opportunities for development in their early years, remains undimmed and our partnership working will continue with that aim.*

*“However, in these exceptional circumstances it is not realistic or reasonable to expect that local authorities can deliver their original expansion plans to secure high quality experience for all children in time for August this year. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible to continue with the planned recruitment and infrastructure projects required to support expansion. As we focus on saving lives and looking after people most vulnerable to the virus the immediate priority is to ensure that we have the emergency childcare in place to support families during the Covid-19 pandemic.*

*“To support local government with this critical response work, the Scottish Government has now moved to suspend the statutory duty on local authorities to provide 1140 hours of early learning and childcare from this August.*

*“Tens of thousands of children have already benefited from expanded hours, and we expect this will continue when normal provision resumes. Once there is a clearer picture of the impact and duration of the pandemic response measures, we will work together to agree the right time to reinstate the statutory requirement and ensure that all eligible children can access 1140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare.”*

**Temporary covid-19 medical facility**

A temporary hospital with an initial 300 beds is to be created in the Scottish Events Campus (SEC) in Glasgow to increase patient capacity during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

**Health screening programmes paused**

The Scottish Government has announced that a range of health screening programmes are to be paused to allow NHS resources to be dedicated to tackling coronavirus (covid-19).

Due to the rapidly changing situation with Coronavirus (COVID-19) the Scottish Government is to temporarily pause a number of screening programmes.

In practice this means no additional patients will be invited for screening until further notice. Results for those who have recently been screened or who have completed and returned home test kits will continue to be processed.

The move means healthcare staff can be re-allocated to support other essential services, including COVID-19 laboratory testing and covering for colleagues who are unwell or self-isolating.

Because members of the public are already choosing not to attend appointments, a structured pause also helps ensure people will not miss their screening altogether.

The paused programmes are as follows:

* Breast Screening (mammograms)
* Cervical Screening (smear tests)
* Bowel Screening (home test kits)
* Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening (ultrasound of abdomen)
* Diabetic Retinopathy (Eye) Screening (images taken of the eye).

Pregnancy and Newborn Screening Programmes, including tests offered during pregnancy and just after birth, will continue where logistically practical.

**NHS recruitment drive**

More than 2,300 applications have been received in less than one week following a major recruitment drive by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) to take on additional staff to help combat coronavirus (covid-19).

An immediate call from NHSGGC to increase its staff bank workforce to fill roles for estates and facilities staff, healthcare support workers, registered staff nurses and Allied Healthcare professionals will provide significantly more capacity at the frontline in coming weeks and months.

This first cohort of circa 1,000 new bank staff will bolster Greater Glasgow and Clyde’s workforce and play an integral role in the delivery of services during a crucial period.

The move forms part of a wider mobilisation plan to manage a significant increase in the number of coronavirus (covid-19) cases being treated in hospitals and in the community, while also ensuring non- coronavirus (covid-19) patients continue to receive care.

All vacancies within NHSGGC can be found by visiting: <https://apply.jobs.scot.nhs.uk/>