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

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Issued 25 March 2020

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| **Below is the latest briefing on the activity in managing the response to coronavirus (Covid-19).**  |

**Care and support at home**

The protocol below was agreed today at the corporate management team (CMT) to manage the home care service as a result of staffing pressures from coronavirus (Covid-19)

Inverclyde HSCP and commissioned providers for care and support at home will reduce service to essential tasks only on a phased basis within the following protocol.

Any identified risk or service user/carer concern should be directed to the ‘access 1st team’ on 01475 714646.

* Each care at home provider has responsibility to identify essential tasks for individual service users and inform service user/carer. Essential tasks include moving and handling, personal care and medication support. All providers should inform the HSCP of any change in care package via the homecare monitor inbox as per normal procedure.
* All essential visits should be kept to the minimum requirement, times and length of visit may vary from the norm.
* Provider should continue to log in and out as normal procedure to confirm service user has received a visit. Temporary payment rules will be confirmed separately.
* Alternative arrangements should be identified for meal provision. In the first instance service users should be asked if alternative arrangements can be made. If an able person resides in the same home they will be asked to provide meals.
* Where there is no available alternative the home support manger for the area should be informed. HSCP and CVS Inverclyde will co-ordinate the provision of meals.

General guidance as follows:

* No domestic tasks to be carried out unless essential, e.g. personal care laundry. Staff will wipe down surfaces, door handles etc during visits.
* If appropriate, support with showering to be reduced to twice weekly for continent service users.
* Support will be identified to assist with shopping for service users if no other means of support available.
* Any requirement for home care service users who require shopping/supplies should be sent to Colin Paterson at HSCP home care, colin.paterson@inverclyde.gov.uk

**Public toilet closures**

Council public toilets will be closed from today due to limited staff availability to open, clean and close the toilets as a result of the impact of coronavirus (covid-19).

**Contacting your councillor**

Social media message being promoted:

With national guidance in place for people to stay at home, anyone wishing to contact their councillor should use the phone and email contacts listed on the council website in the ‘councillors’ section.

**Waste collections**

Clarification has been issued about waste collections:

Residential bin collections are continuing as normal for the time being. This includes uplifts of black/grey, blue, brown and green food waste bins.

The service will, however, be reviewed regularly and may change at short notice due to staffing levels as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 (coronavirus) emergency.

There may be slight adjustments to uplift times or even people’s regular collection days but we are working hard to ensure the service continues as normal for as long as possible.

We will notify residents of any changes as and when they occur.

We have paused commercial glass collections because of a reduced demand due to the closure of pubs and clubs and we’re running very limited commercial waste collections because of the shutdown of other businesses. Our municipal recycling centres are also closed to minimise social gatherings and in order to prioritise resources.

However, neighbourhood recycling points are still open and will continue to be emptied as regularly as possible.

We urge people who use these residential recycling points to do so as infrequently as they can and observe social-distancing of two metres apart from others, in line with the rules laid out by the UK and Scottish governments and health professionals to help reduce the spread of Covid-19.

**Home care volunteering**

An urgent appeal for homecare volunteers has been issued:

**WE NEED YOUR HELP - CARE AT HOME SERVICE**

We need as many people as we can who have PVG checks in place and who, with a short amount of training, can support us particularly in the delivery of care at home services such as meal preparation and/or delivery of meals for home care service users.

If you are interested to volunteer for this essential service please contact brian.young@inverclyde.gov.uk

**Licensing services update**

The update below highlights restrictions to the council’s licensing services:

**All Civic/Taxi Driver/Taxi Operators Licences/Liquor Licences -** This guidance is for current licence holders and anyone planning to apply for a new licence. It explains the changes we are making to our licensing service to help minimise the disruption caused to licence holders by COVID-19.

**General guidance -** Please note that the public reception at Municipal Buildings, Greenock will be closed until further notice.

**Face to face appointments -** We are currently not offering face to face appointments. Paperwork can be posted by Royal Mail, submitted electronically or hand delivered by posting in the letterbox which is located in the carriageway at the rear of the Municipal Buildings, Greenock and which will be clearly signposted.

**New Applications -** All new applications are suspended. Please note if you submit a new application (civic/taxi driver/taxi operator/liquor licences etc.) it will not be processed until further notice.

**Renewal Applications -** We will endeavour to continue processing any renewal applications submitted prior to the expiry date of existing licences. However applicants should note that it is likely that renewal applications will take longer than the usual timescales to process in light of the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19). An application for renewal in relation to a licence should be lodged prior to the date of expiry in order that an existing licence continues.

It is expected that there will be further information regarding MOT/Licenced Vehicle Testing and we ask you to check this website for further details.

It is important that you note the standard of road worthiness of a licenced vehicle will not be relaxed. Taxi operators and drivers will still require to comply fully with the vehicle standards stated in the Taxi Inspection Manual.

We ask that applicants bear with us at this difficult time.

**Submitting Applications for Renewal -** Renewal applications can be submitted to the licensing section by post or email.

**Civic, Taxis, Miscellaneous and Liquor Licensing -** Applications should be submitted by post or email.

Please ensure that applications for alcohol licences and civic licences are completed in full, signed and copies (not originals) of the relevant documentation are submitted.

By Post: The Licensing Section, Inverclyde Council, Municipal Buildings, Clyde Square, Greenock PA15 1LX.

By Email: Scan the signed form and documents as pdf files and send an email to licensing.section@inverclyde.gov.uk.

Payment: Payment can be made by telephoning the Contact Centre on 01475 717171 with your card details (please quote your name and licence number), BACS payments (details of which are undernoted) or by posting a cheque.

**Licensing Board and General Purposes Board -** Please note that all Licensing Board meetings and meetings of the General Purposes Board will be postponed until further notice. Licensing staff will be in touch with applicants advising of revised dates when known.

**Contact Details -** Licensing staff can be contacted by telephoning 01475 712139 or by email at licensing.section@inverclyde.gov.uk.

**We ask that callers restrict their calls, in this emergency period, to telephoning between 10am and noon and between 2 - 3pm.**

All licence holders are encouraged to keep up-to-date with government guidelines and advice in respect of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Finally please note as the current situation develops it may be necessary for working practices to change.

Inverclyde Council Licensing Section will aim to maintain continuity of business, insofar as is possible, during these challenging times.

**Details for BACS payments:**
Account No. 00438747
Sort Code: 80-91-25

**Inverclyde advice services**

Below is an update from Inverclyde HSCP advice services highlighting temporary reforms to benefits to support claimants during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

New legislation in force as from 13 March 2020 has been issued by the UK Government that has introduced temporary measures to reform elements of the benefits system during the coronavirus outbreak.

**FOR PEOPLE ALREADY CLAIMING WELFARE BENEFITS**

Special arrangements are in place for claimants in receipt of benefits who cannot attend reassessments or Jobcentre appointments because they are required to stay at home or are infected by coronavirus.

The arrangements are:

Disabled and sick claimants who cannot attend an assessment or reassessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit will continue to receive their payments while their assessment is rearranged. As from 16 March 2020 the UK Government announced that with effect from 17 March 2020 all face-to-face assessments for sickness and disability benefits are to be suspended for three months;

People who need to claim ESA or Universal Credit because of coronavirus will not be required to produce a fit note;

When claimants ‘advise jobcentre in good time’ that they are staying at home or that they have been diagnosed with coronavirus, they will not be sanctioned. Jobcentre will review their conditionality requirements in their claimant commitment to ensure they are reasonable;

Claimants who are staying at home as a result of coronavirus will have their mandatory work search and work availability requirements removed to account for a period of sickness.

**FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED TO MAKE A NEW CLAIM FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

People who are required to stay at home or are infected by coronavirus may need financial support and quickly. The legislation has been changed so that:

Those affected by coronavirus will be able to apply for Universal Credit and can receive up to a month’s advance up front without physically attending the Jobcentre;

The 7 waiting days for ESA for new claimants will not apply if they are suffering from coronavirus or are required to stay at home – so ESA will be payable from day one.

**EMPLOYEES AND SELF-EMPLOYED PEOPLE**

To make sure people in work can take the necessary time off to stay at home if they are suffering from coronavirus or to prevent its spread, changes have been made to Statutory Sick Pay and how Universal Credit supports self-employed claimants. This includes:

People who cannot work due to coronavirus and are eligible for Statutory Sick Pay will get it from day one, rather than from the fourth day of their illness, this measure applies retrospectively from 13 March 2020;

Statutory Sick Pay will be payable who are staying at home on UK Government advice, not just those who are infected. From 13 March 2020 employers are urged to use their discretion as to what evidence, if any, they ask for;

If employees need to provide evidence to their employer that they need to stay at home due to coronavirus, they will be able to get it from NHS 111 Online instead of having to get a fit note from their doctor. This is currently under development and should be made available in due course;

Self-employed claimants on Universal Credit who are required to stay at home or are ill as a result of coronavirus will not have a Minimum Income Floor (an assumed level of income) applied for a period of time while affected.

The above are the legislative changes the UK Government has introduced thus far. Further updates will be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Inverclyde HSCP Advice Service will look to issue further briefings as further legislative change is announced.

Inverclyde HSCP Advice Service can provide advice and assistance in relation to welfare benefit and money advice. We can be contacted on our Inverclyde Advice First, Telephone Triage Advice Line of 01475 715299 or email: triage.advice@inverclyde.gov.uk

**Third sector update**

The update below was presented to the local resilience management team (LRMT):

CVS Inverclyde’s priority is to help ensure the health and wellbeing of staff, their families and the wider community. We are continuing to coordinate communications with Inverclyde HSCP, Inverclyde Council, Third Sector Network and the Scottish Government. We are providing updates through emails to our network, on our website news pages and through our social media channels, as well as sharing information with local media as appropriate.

**Volunteer Inverclyde** – [www.volunteerinverclyde.org.uk](http://www.volunteerinverclyde.org.uk), has been updated with ‘COVID-19’ as an event to capture those from the community who are willing and able to volunteer.

Organisations that have already registered to access this website can then contact potential volunteers directly themselves, with other trusted organisations encouraged to register in order to be granted access to search for volunteers.

**NHS volunteering @ IRH** – Discussion ongoing with Strategic Lead for Volunteering NHS GGC, and service is being developed. Local recruitment campaign to be launched 26/03/20.

**Inverclyde Life** – Website [www.inverclydelife.com](http://www.inverclydelife.com) has been repurposed in response to COVID-19 and CVS team are sharing this with the community as an asset register. CVS team are actively contacting groups to update their ‘About’ section to include what they can do to help at this time - such as preparing food parcels, dog walking, daily phone calls to those self-isolating and much more – individuals can find a service using the COVID-19 tag.

**Community link workers** - Inverclyde’s community link worker (CLW) team are actively supporting the community during the COVID-19 outbreak. Each of the 14 GP practices in Inverclyde has a CLW. The team is currently based in the community and are using technology to continue to help people through phone calls, video calls and text messaging. The team are also responding to requests for support with prescription collection whilst this service is mobilised.

**Shielding Service** – Discussions with HSCP ongoing and second draft SOP in progress. Initially led by CLW coordinating in each locality, supported by a network of PVG’d volunteers.

**Inverclyde Community Fund** – In partnership with CVS the fund will shortly open offering small grants.

**Funding** – Various funding streams have been announced by Scottish Government. CVS is working closely with the Scottish Funders Forum to understand how local organisations can apply to the funds once they are open. Third Sector Resilience Fund has opened managed by Firstpost, Corra Foundation and Social Investment Scotland. CVSI will offer support to groups applying.

**Inverclyde Community Action Response Group:**

Members:
Stephen Henry, Mind Mosaic and Belville; Laura Reilly, Belville CG; Louise Hunter, Creative Inverclyde/Summerhouse Media; Charlene Elliott, CVS Inverclyde; Alison Bunce, Compassionate Inverclyde; Gwyneth MacDonald, Mind Mosaic; Karen Haldane, Your Voice; and Lynn Foreman (grassroots/community volunteer network).

Initiatives:
Isolation Boxes – Partnership between Belville and Compassionate Inverclyde. All donations of surplus food (and other items e.g., self-care) to be diverted here, including excess free school meals. Over 100 self-isolation boxes delivered to date and demand continues to grow.

Opt-in Telephone Support Service – Compassionate Inverclyde/Your Voice – Daily telephone call to self-isolators to check-in and offer support. Demand for this is growing. Discussions around whether any local Call Centre’s are able to assist.

Key Worker Support - Morton FC/Morton in the Community keen to support key workers including care homes. Louise Hunter in discussions with Fun World and others re community food initiative.

Access to Mindfulness Podcasts and telephone therapy support – in progress/systems testing by Mind Mosaic.

Community Volunteer Network – COVID-19 Inverclyde Private Facebook Groups. Updates on activity at local community level across a network of ‘team leader’ volunteers operating on a neighbourly basis. CVSI providing support, advice and best practice resources.

**Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT)**

HEAT face-to-face in-home support has been suspended with the service continuing remotely.

If you have a client/tenant or customer who requires support, please contact HEAT by email at HEAT@thewisegroup.co.uk or by phoning 0800 092 9002.