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

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Issued 15 May 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*** |

**Army mobile testing unit for Inverclyde**

A mobile covid-19 testing unit will be stationed in Inverclyde from next week.

It is expected that the initial location will be at the Waterfront leisure centre in Greenock but the unit, operated by the Army, has the capability of moving to other locations across the area.

This testing will allow symptomatic key workers, members of the public over the age of 65 and those members of the public who have to leave home to go to work, including the household members of each group, to know whether or not they have the virus.

This will in turn keep essential services running.

All HSCP,NHS and social care providers staff will continue to access the Port Glasgow testing facility.

Promotion will take place to raise awareness of this with key workers living in and working in Inverclyde.

Council services have received guidance about key worker testing and it is published on ICON, the council intranet and at the *‘Covid 19 Testing For Council Key Workers, Employee Families And Household Member’* section of [www.inverclyde.gov.uk/coroanvirus](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/coroanvirus) including links to NHS Inform and self-referral for key workers.

**Health secretary testing meeting**

It was announced in First Minister’s Questions in parliament this week that the Scottish Government Health Secretary, Jeanne Freeman MSP is to meet council Chief Executive Aubrey Fawcett.

The announcement follows a letter written by the Chief Executive (see [daily briefing on Monday 11 May 2020: ‘Additional testing capacity call’](https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/covid-19/daily-briefings)) calling for more testing capacity in the area.
 **Pivotal enterprise resilience fund**

This £90 million fund provides bespoke needs based grants for Scottish SMEs that that can play a critical role in supporting Scotland’s recovery but need some immediate support, has reopened it applications.  A large volume of new applications for this fund is expected and full capacity will be reached quickly. It is anticipated that applications will close at 5pm on Monday 18 May: https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/service/coronavirus/pivotal-enterprise-resilience-fund

**Lord advocate covid deaths investigations**

The Lord Advocate, The Right Honourable James Wolffe QC announced in parliament that deaths of key workers and care home residents linked to coronavirus in Scotland are to be reported to prosecutors for investigation.

His statement to parliament reads:

“As Lord Advocate, I am constitutionally responsible for the investigation of sudden, unexpected and unexplained deaths in Scotland. Although I exercise that function independently of any other person, I want to take this opportunity to advise Parliament of the approach that I am taking to that responsibility, in relation to deaths attributable to Covid-19.

“At the outset of the pandemic, I issued a direction that Covid-19 or presumed Covid-19 deaths do not require to be reported to the Crown unless there is some other substantive reason for reporting the death. That direction was consistent with the approach that has been taken in relation to other significant outbreaks of infectious disease. That approach helps to reduce the demands on the medical profession while maintaining the overall integrity of the system for reporting and investigating deaths.

“In that system, a death falls to be reported to the Crown if the circumstances are such as to give rise to public anxiety. My officials have been keeping the situation under review, and I have concluded that two categories of Covid-19 or presumed Covid-19 deaths meet that criterion, and should accordingly be reported to the Crown.

“The first of those categories is all Covid-19 or presumed Covid-19 deaths where the deceased might have contracted the virus in the course of their employment or occupation. Although not exhaustive, that might include the deaths of care home workers, front-line national health service staff, public transport employees and emergency services personnel. The second category is all Covid-19 or presumed Covid-19 deaths where the deceased was resident in a care home when the virus was contracted.

“My officials have been working closely with the office of the chief medical officer, and others, on the practical arrangements to implement those principles. Once that work is concluded, a letter will be issued from the office of the CMO and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to medical practitioners, to advise them that from the date of that letter they should report any death that falls in either of those two categories to the Crown.

“My decision also applies to deaths in those two categories that have already occurred. However, arrangements are being made so that the Crown can obtain the information that it requires to identify and register those deaths without imposing any burden of retrospective reporting on medical practitioners.

“Those steps will ensure that all deaths within the two categories that I have described will be registered within the Crown system of death investigation, and that each of those deaths can be investigated. The nature and extent of the investigation that is required in relation to any particular death or group of deaths will depend on the particular circumstances. In some cases, the investigation required might be quite limited, and in others it might be more extensive. That will depend on the particular circumstances.

“In that regard, it would be premature for me to speculate at this stage on whether a fatal accident inquiry into any particular death or category of death from Covid-19 would or would not be appropriate. Those are decisions that will fall to be made on the basis of the circumstances of each particular case, once it has been investigated.

“In discharging my responsibilities for the investigation of deaths, I am acutely conscious of the interests of bereaved relatives who face sudden loss. The Crown will be sensitive to the needs of bereaved relatives, and will keep them informed about any investigation in accordance with the family liaison charter, which I laid before Parliament in 2016.

“The Crown will take a multi-agency approach, working with other agencies that have relevant responsibilities: the Health and Safety Executive, local authorities, the Care Inspectorate, the police, and others. That will ensure first that the right investigations are undertaken by the right agency or agencies in each case. Secondly, it will ensure that the Crown, in fulfilment of its independent responsibilities, can make the right decisions about whether further investigation, or any further process of inquiry, is required in each particular case. The approach to the reporting of deaths that I have outlined is the first stage in enabling those steps to taken.

“I am confident that the process will help to make sure that, in due course, we as a society will better understand the circumstances of those deaths. It will also ensure that, where we can, society will learn lessons for the future. We do that knowing that every one of those deaths is an individual tragedy that calls for profound sorrow, compassion and respect from each of us.”

You can watch the ministerial statement at Scottish Palriament TV: <https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/ministerial-statement-covid-19-update-lord-advocate-may-13-2020>

 **Supporting migrants framework**
A framework to help councils and their partners to support people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) during the COVID-19 pandemic has been produced by COSLA.

It sets out the legal basis and other considerations for providing support, with a specific focus on people with NRPF who are rough sleeping or vulnerable from a safeguarding perspective.

COSLA spokesperson for Community Wellbeing, Councillor Kelly Parry, said: “Migrants can be additionally vulnerable during and after the pandemic, particularly if they are restricted from accessing public funds.

“COSLA has produced a framework to assist local authorities and their partners to support people with NRPF during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Councils are working hard to provide support to the most vulnerable migrants and cooperating with partners to strengthen safety nets and to meet the needs of as many people as possible.”

For more information, visit:
<http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/migrants-rights-and-entitlements-0>

**New guidance on physical distancing in education and childcare settings**
New guidance has been issued by the Scottish Government:

Coronavirus (COVID-19): physical distancing in education and childcare settings - Advice for schools and childcare settings who are providing care to children during the pandemic.

Here is a link to the full guidance:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/>
 **New guidance for covid-19 business help**
New guidance has been issued by the Scottish Government:

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for businesses on offering support - Details of a single point for contact to help prioritise offers from businesses to help tackle the coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency.

Here is a link to the full guidance:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-coordinating-offers-of-help-from-businesses/>

**New clinical and practice guidance for adult care homes**
New guidance has been issued by the Scottish Government:

Coronavirus (COVID-19): clinical and practice guidance for adult care homes - National clinical and practice guidance (updated 15 May 2020) to support those working in adult care homes in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here is a link to the full guidance:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-clinical-and-practice-guidance-for-adult-care-homes/>