

Minister praises multi-agency approach as over 23,000 food packages are delivered to the vulnerable

Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey MLA, today praised council staff and local voluntary and community groups for enabling the delivery of more than 23,000 food packages to the most vulnerable in society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tourism Recovery Steering Group set up for Northern Ireland's tourism sector

Economy Minister Diane Dodds today announced the establishment of a Tourism Recovery Steering Group to lead the planning and preparations for the recovery of tourism in Northern Ireland.

Remote interpreting service established for sign language users

Health Minister Robin Swann MLA has announced the establishment of a free remote interpreting service for British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) users to access NHS111 and health and social care services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Latest update during the COVID-19 emergency

COVID-19

Information updates from Councillors Craig Duncan and Fraser Macpherson

Further update – for Thursday 23rd April – from Councillor Fraser Macpherson (West End) and Councillor Craig Duncan (Broughty Ferry) :

START UP BUSINESS SUPPORT

Start-up businesses are to be allocated £1.25 billion by the UK Government. It includes £500 million loan scheme for high-growth firms, called the Future Fund, and £750 million of targeted support for small and medium sized businesses focusing on research and development.

It will be delivered in partnership with the British Business Bank and will start in May for UK-based companies with between £125,000 and £5 million with private investors at least matching the government commitment.

These loans will automatically convert into equity on the company's next qualifying funding round, or at the end of the loan if they are not repaid.

To be eligible, a business must be an unlisted UK registered company that has previously raised at least £250,000 in equity investment from third party investors in the last five years.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-support-package-for-innovative-firms-hit-by-coronavirus>

SCOTTISH BUSINESS SUPPORT

More detail is now available for the £100 million Scottish Government fund announced last week.

- £34 million Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund with £2,000 grants, managed by councils, for the newly self-employed, facing hardship and excluded from the UK scheme.
- £20 million Creative, Tourism & Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund, managed by the Enterprise Agencies in partnership with Creative Scotland and VisitScotland for creative, tourism and hospitality companies not in receipt of business rates relief. It is for companies of up to 50 employees who will receive £3,000 hardship grants or larger grants up to £25,000 where it can be demonstrated support is needed.
- £45 million Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund, managed by the Enterprise Agencies for vulnerable SME firms who are vital to the local or national

economic foundations of Scotland

- £1 million to top up Creative Scotland's Bridging Bursaries in the not-for-profit sector.

More details on how to apply will be out soon.

BUSINESS SUPPORT IN DUNDEE

As of yesterday, more than 1000 businesses across Dundee had been supported to the tune of £12.1m by the Coronavirus Business Support Fund since its launch earlier this month.

Grant payments are being made under the Scottish Government scheme offering help to small businesses in receipt of Small Business Bonus Scheme Relief or Rural Relief and hospitality, leisure and retail businesses with properties with a rateable value between £18,001 and £51,000.

The first of the 1056 grants of £10,000 to small business and £25,000 to hospitality, leisure and retail businesses were paid at the start of April and payments continue to be made on a daily basis.

Advice for local businesses, including ways of accessing financial support, is available at <https://www.dundee.gov.uk/service-area/city-development/planning-and-economic-development/covid-19-advice-for-business>

CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME

The Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme went live this week, with businesses able to claim up to £2,500 a month towards staff wages. More than 140,000 firms applied for help to pay their wage bill through the government's job retention scheme, when the portal went live on Monday.

Employers can apply for direct cash grants through HMRC's new online portal – with the money expected to land in their bank accounts within six working days.

The job retention scheme, announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak as part of a package of support to protect jobs and businesses, allows employers to claim for a cash grant of up to 80% of a furloughed employees wages, capped at £2,500 a month.

Millions of people across the UK are expected to benefit from the scheme, with businesses including Pret a Manger, Brewdog and Timpsons using it to ensure staff keep their jobs and are paid whilst many high street businesses are closed.

HMRC's portal has a step by step application process and up to 5,000 staff will be manning phone lines and webchat services to ensure any questions can be answered.

Last week the Chancellor announced the scheme will be extended for a further month until the end of June, to reflect continuing Covid-19 lockdown measures.

*Employers can furlough anyone they employ, provided that on or before March 19 they were on PAYE payroll and HMRC has been notified of payment via the RTI system.

It's recommended that you take a screenshot of your successful online submission in case you need to provide that information to your bank or have any queries at a later date.

Here are some useful links:

- The CJRS Online Portal – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wages-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>
- Guidance on Business Support – <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Support Finder for Business – <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>
- Step By Step Guide – https://d15k2d11r6t6rl.cloudfront.net/public/users/Integrators/BeeProAgency/459211_439271/Coronavirus_Job_Retention_Scheme_step_by_step_guide_for_employers.pdf
- Make the claim yourself by logging into your PAYE account <https://www.gov.uk/payee-online>
- Set up a PAYE account if you don't already have one <https://www.gov.uk/payee-online/enrol>
- If you do have one but have forgotten your details <https://www.gov.uk/log-in-register-hmrc-online-services/problems-signing-in>

TESTING FOR CARE HOMES

All potential new residents to care homes will be tested for Covid 19, something that Willie Rennie MSP had asked for to give confidence to residents and their families about the protection in care homes. This is one part of new measures which also include NHS Directors of Public Health taking on enhanced clinical leadership for care homes.

Covid-19 patients discharged from hospital to a care home should have given two negative tests before discharge. Other new admissions to care homes will be tested and isolated for 14 days in addition to the clear social distancing measures the guidance sets out.

Willie raised the issue of safety in care homes for the last two weeks with the First Minister and raised it again on Tuesday.

NEW NHS AND SOCIAL CARE FRONT LINE SUPPORT

Willie Rennie MSP also asked the First Minister to support the Liberal Democrat five-point plan for to support front line health and social care staff. It includes a £29 a day active duty payment and measures on mental health support, bereavement support, PPE and a service medal.

https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/support_package

SHIELDED GROUP

Some people with health conditions are concerned about whether they fall into the highest clinical risk group and should follow shielding measures or whether they fall into the increased risk group and should follow social distancing measures. To find out more on the categories: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding-contacts/pages/highest-risk-classification/>

Letters have been issued to all the people in the shielded group based on information in the central NHS databases, prescribing data or through GP and hospital clinicians.

GPs and hospital clinicians are also identifying individuals they feel should be in the highest clinical risk group but do not have one of the conditions identified. Those added will also receive a letter.

If you think you are in the highest clinical risk group, and have checked the guidance using the above link, you can contact your GP or clinician to discuss.

Guidance for those with specific medical conditions but not in the shielded group:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tailored-advice-for-those-who-live-with-specific-medical-conditions/>

If you have queries about the support available, please email: Shielding.Correspondence@gov.scot

The Dundee helplines to ensure the best possible support across a range of services are :

For Shielded Individuals this is via – 0300 123 1403

For other vulnerable individuals and/or families this is via – 0800 111 4000

Both helplines are now available from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.

Additional information and frequently asked questions are available via :

<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/support-%26-helplines>

<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/humanitarian-helplines-frequently-asked-questions>

FUNERAL LINK UPDATE

Linda Sterry, Service Manager at Funeral Link writes, “I wanted to provide a brief update which I hope you will share with your networks. We know this is really challenging but we are here to help support our community. There are so many heart-warming stories of our community response emerging but these are tempered by stories of those who are losing loved ones.

I just wanted to reassure you all that we are still here, albeit working slightly differently, and will continue to be here for the foreseeable.

Our phone line is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, please do give us a call

on 01382 458800 if you need our support or drop us a private message via Facebook Messenger. If you get our voicemail please do leave us a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can. I can promise we will do what we can to help and we can call you back if you haven't got phone credit or are worried about the call cost."

Funeral Link's Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/funeralinkdundee/>

FURTHER LOCAL INFORMATION FOR THE WEST END :

The Bridge at City Church (The Friary at Tullideph Road) continues to operate from the garden ground on a Monday 10.30am-12.30pm offering tea, coffee and food parcels.

Dundee West Church is maintaining contact with many regular Making Dundee Home attendees offering support and food as required.

The West End Community Fridge at Millers Wynd operated by the Gate Church Carbon Saving Project continues to offer free food daily from 11am-4pm.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE

This is an anxious and uncertain time but we want you to know that we are here to try to help constituents in whatever way that we can.

CONTACT DETAILS

WEST END WARD – Bailie Fraser Macpherson

Phone – Dundee 459378 (home)

E-mail – fraser.macpherson@dundeecity.gov.uk

Facebook updates : www.facebook.com/dundeewestend

[Hargey publishes COVID-19 Community Response Plan](#)

Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey today published her Department's Community Response Plan – setting out 15 actions being taken forward to support the grassroots community response to COVID-19.