

Latest update during the COVID-19 emergency

COVID-19

Information updates from
Councillors Craig Duncan
and Fraser Macpherson

Further update – for Monday 25th May – from Councillor Fraser Macpherson (West End) and Councillor Craig Duncan (Broughty Ferry) :

EASING OF LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS

The First Minister has published the route map through and out of the crisis. As from Thursday 28th May the following changes to guidance will start.

You will be able to meet people from one other household, though initially in small numbers, and at 2 meters distance while you are outside.

You will be able to sit or sunbathe in parks and open areas.

Some non-contact outdoor leisure activities will be allowed to restart – such as golf, tennis, bowls and fishing – subject to appropriate hygiene and physical distancing.

People will be able to travel up to five miles – preferably by walking or cycling – to a location near their local community for recreation.

Take-away and drive-through food outlets will be free to reopen. Waste and recycling services will start to resume. Outdoor retail outlets such as garden centres will be allowed to reopen. Children's hearings will restart. Non urgent NHS treatment and surgery will gradually restart. Some construction will restart.

The document sets out four phases for seven activity areas, but we may not be in the same phases for all activities at the same time. This week the message remains stay at home. Next week that changes slightly to stay at home as much as possible. The decision on the future message has yet to be determined.

The full route map document is here.

<https://www.gov.scot/news/route-map-for-moving-out-of-lockdown/>

SHIELDING

The Government will issue new guidance before the initial period of shielding ends on 18th June. This will aim to increase your quality of life and your ability to make informed choices, while continuing to protect you as much as possible from the risks the virus poses.

SCHOOLS AND OTHER LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Teachers and other school staff will return during June to prepare classrooms for the new term and a different model of learning.

The number of children who have access to the critical worker childcare hubs for those returning to work will increase.

Transition support will be offered to children going into primary 1 or moving from primary 7 to secondary school.

From 11 August, all schools will re-open. However, to allow appropriate physical distancing, children will return to a blended model of part time in-school and part time at-home learning.

Childminders can re-open during phase 1 and over the summer all early years childcare providers will re-open.

Universities and colleges will be allowed to have a phased return next term, with a combination of remote learning, and some limited on-campus learning.

TESTING ROLLED OUT TO EVERYONE OVER THE AGE OF 5

Testing for the virus has been opened out to everyone who is symptomatic over the age of five. This means anyone who is displaying any of the three symptoms of COVID-19 – continuous cough, high temperature, or loss of sense of taste or smell – will be able to book a test at the drive-through or mobile test centres. Do not travel more than 90 minutes to reach a testing site. If there is not a site near to you, then you should try to book a home testing kit. <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>

If you are a key worker or have to leave home to work, and you have symptoms or a member of your household age 5 years or over is symptomatic: you can self-refer here www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers

BUSINESS RATE GRANT SUPPORT FOR RENTERS

After pressure from the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish Government has agreed businesses that have a rateable value that would qualify them for support through the grant scheme but which pay their business rates through an intermediary—that is, through a rental agreement or a management charge for the rented service office space that they occupy—will now qualify for the support. More details will be announced soon.

SUPPORT FOR LARGER BUSINESSES

Businesses will be able to benefit from larger loans under the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), the UK Government announced.

The maximum loan size available under the scheme will be increased from £50 million to £200 million, to help ensure those large firms which do not qualify for the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) have enough finance to meet cashflow needs during the outbreak.

The expanded loans, which have been introduced following discussions with lenders and business groups, will be available from tomorrow – 26th May.

Borrowers under CLBILS will be able to borrow up to 25% of turnover, up to a maximum of £200 million.

CORONAVIRUS STATUTORY SICK PAY

The Covid-19 Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme will launch online tomorrow – Tuesday 26th May. The scheme will enable employers with fewer than 250 employees to claim coronavirus-related Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Tax agents will be able to make claims on behalf of employers.

Employers are eligible to use the scheme if:

They're claiming for an employee who's eligible for sick pay due to coronavirus;

They had a PAYE payroll scheme in operation before 28 February 2020;

They had fewer than 250 employees across all PAYE schemes on 28 February 2020; and

They're eligible to receive State Aid under the EU Commission Temporary Framework.

The repayment will cover up to two weeks of the applicable rate of SSP, and is payable if a current or former employee was unable to work on or after 13 March 2020 and entitled to SSP, because they either:

Have coronavirus;

Are self-isolating and unable to work from home; and

Are shielding because they've been advised that they're at high risk of severe illness from coronavirus.

To prepare to make a claim, employers should keep records of all the SSP payments they wish to claim for. Further details can be found via the below link.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

SUPPORT FOR THE SELF EMPLOYED

The UK government's scheme to support the self-employed has now opened for claims – weeks ahead of schedule.

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme now opened for applications

those eligible will receive government grant worth up to £7,500.

Self-employed individuals or members of partnerships whose business has been adversely affected by coronavirus will be able to apply for a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant worth 80% of their average monthly trading profits.

Millions are expected to benefit from the scheme with the payments – to be paid in a single instalment covering three months and capped at £7,500 – expected to land in bank accounts within six working days of each claim.

Everyone eligible for the SEISS, which is one of the most generous support schemes announced by any government in response to coronavirus, will be able to receive the government grant within six days of a completed claim.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Individuals are eligible if their business has been adversely affected by coronavirus, they traded in the tax year 2019 to 2020, intend to continue trading, and they:

earn at least half of their income through self-employment
have trading profits of no more than £50,000 per year
traded in the tax year 2018 to 2019 and submitted their Self Assessment tax return on or before 23 April 2020 for that year

HMRC calculate the amount to be paid to each eligible claimant based on an average of the tax returns for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Eligibility details –
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

Customers were invited to claim their SEISS grant on a specified date, from 13 – 18 May. They won't be able to apply before their claim date but can make a claim after that day.

People can check their date using HMRC's online checker at any time.

<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/self-employment-support/enter-unique-taxpayer-reference>

If you need further support, please use HMRC's webchat service or call the Covid-19 Helpline on 0800 024 1222.

MORTGAGE HOLIDAY EXTENSION

Homeowners struggling to pay their mortgage due to Coronavirus will be able to extend their mortgage payment holiday for a further three months or start making reduced payments.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/help-with-mortgages-to-continue-for-homeowners-affected-by-coronavirus>

STATUTORY SICK PAY REBATE SCHEME

Employers will be able to make claims through the Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme from tomorrow – Tuesday 26th May. This scheme will allow small and medium-sized employers, with fewer than 250 employees, to apply to HMRC to recover the costs of paying coronavirus-related SSP.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-back-statutory-sick-pay-paid-to-employees-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

CHARITY GRANTS

Properties occupied by charities can now apply for the £10 000 Small Business Grant Scheme. An additional £31 million is being made available to more than 3,000 small properties occupied by charities – including day centres, workshops and halls.

<https://www.gov.scot/news/extra-support-for-charities/>

INFORMATION

UK Government news: www.gov.uk/search/news-and-communications

Scottish Government Updates: www.gov.scot/news

Dundee City Council updates: www.dundee.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19

Covid community helpline for food, shopping, prescriptions, finances, personal care: People in Dundee on the shielded list only – 0300 123 1403. People in Dundee who are vulnerable but not on the shielded list – 0800 111 4000

NHS Inform –
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

NHS Tayside website: www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk

Helpline for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice Tel: 0800 028 2816.

Health Protection Scotland Guidance –
www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19

Federation of Small Businesses: www.fsb.org.uk/coronavirus

Helpline for small businesses, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm. Tel: 0300 303 0660.

Ready Scotland Information – www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus

Tayside Cares – www.taysidecares.co.uk

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@dundee.gov.uk

Facebook updates : www.facebook.com/dundeewestend