

# Elected Members Briefing



10 June 2020

## Introduction

Welcome to the latest Elected Members Bulletin, your weekly update from COSLA covering issues related to COVID-19. Information and resources can also be found on COSLA's social media accounts, with the **Facebook account** and **Twitter account** updated on a regular basis. The COSLA website can be found at **cosla.gov.uk** and the **KHub** for Elected Members is also regularly updated.

The current number of COVID-19 cases and the risk level can be found on the **Scottish Government Website**. **NHS Inform** continues to be the source of up-to-date public health information. All Scottish Government COVID-19 related guidance can be found on **their website**.

Help and support for those experiencing domestic abuse is available at **https://sdafmh.org.uk** The helpline number is **0800 027 1234**.

## Key Messages

The Scottish Government announced an **extension to shielding measures** on Monday (June 8). The original advice was for those impacted to shield for 12 weeks, which would have ended on June 18. However, the advice has now changed and people are advised to continue shielding until at least July 31.

New **public health measures** came into force on Monday (June 8) to help suppress COVID-19 and prevent new cases being brought into Scotland. These include a requirement for residents and visitors entering the country from abroad to self-isolate for 14 days.

# Elected Members Briefing



10 June 2020

## Key Messages continued

The UK Government's **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme** will be extended, giving more security to individuals whose livelihoods are adversely affected by coronavirus in the coming months.

## Finance

COSLA's Resources Spokesperson, Councillor Gail Macgregor, has written to the Deputy First Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Communities seeking an urgent meeting on expectations around the ongoing provision of community food and free school meals over the summer.

The benefits of such provisions are recognised across all spheres of government but will require additional funding, given significant pressures on the original £30m for Local Government as part of the Food Fund.

An exercise has begun to capture estimated "full year" additional costs for Councils of the COVID-19 response. Costs are likely to change significantly as we move through the recovery phases and local authorities have to adapt and redesign their services. This cost information will be used in ongoing discussions with the Scottish and UK Governments.

# Elected Members Briefing



10 June 2020

## **New Guidance for Local Authorities on violence against women, work and COVID-19**

Equally Safe at Work is a world-leading accreditation programme being piloted in Scotland's local government. It supports councils to progress their work on gender equality at work and prevent Violence Against Women (VAW) both in the workplace and in the wider community.

The COVID-19 crisis has necessitated a number of changes to workplaces. As a result, victim-survivors may be facing different, and sometimes greater, barriers to accessing support.

**This guidance from Close The Gap** outlines the impact of COVID-19 on women's experiences of VAW; provides information on how to recognise its signs and sets out best practice for responding to and supporting employees disclosing or reporting VAW.

## **Trading Standards**

Trading Standards Scotland is part of COSLA. In **the latest edition of their Scam Share bulletin**, they outline scams which have been reported by consumers across Scotland, including those related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

There is some very useful information for local communities, covering issues such as scams relating to 5G conspiracies, Bitcoin scams and counterfeit toys.

# Elected Members Briefing



10 June 2020

## Test and Protect

Trading Standards Scotland has produced an infographic in response to reports of scam calls relating to COVID-19 tracing.

The graphic outlines the Test and Protect Scheme and what members of the public can expect from a genuine call.

It also offers information to help people identify a hoax call.

**What is Test and Protect?**

Test and Protect is Scotland's public health approach to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Those who have been in close contact with someone who has been confirmed by testing to have the virus will be contacted and told to self-isolate for 14 days, so that if they have the disease they are less likely to transmit it to others.

Unfortunately, there have been reports from around the world of contact tracing scams.

The more you know about the Test and Protect scheme, the better equipped you will be to recognise scam calls and texts.

**What Will Happen if I'm Contacted by a Contact Tracer?**

Genuine contact tracers will text or call people who have tested positive with the virus and those who they have been in close contact with.

They will:

- Introduce themselves and state the reason for their call
- Address you by your name
- Ask you for details of your movements and who you have come into contact with

**What Will a Genuine Contact Tracer NOT Do?**

Genuine contact tracers will NOT:

- Ask you for any personal information, including bank details or medical records. If a caller does not know your name, they are not a genuine contact tracer
- Try to sell you anything
- Tell you the identity of the infected person

**Where Can I Find Trusted Information?**

**NHS Scotland:**  
[www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/test-and-protect](http://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/test-and-protect)

**Scottish Government:**  
[www.gov.scot/coronavirus](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus)

**Public Health Scotland:**  
[www.publichealthscotland.scot](http://www.publichealthscotland.scot)

If you have been the victim of fraud, report it to Police Scotland on 101

# Elected Members Briefing



10 June 2020

## Appearances

COSLA President, Councillor Alison Evison, was joined by Jim Savage of SOLACE and COSLA's Nicola Dickie in giving evidence to the Local Government and Communities Committee last week. They outlined the unprecedented challenges faced by Local Government during the COVID-19 pandemic and the vital role it plays in supporting vulnerable communities, children and families, local businesses and key workers.

COSLA's Resources Spokesperson, Councillor Gail Macgregor, joined the BBC Debate Night Extra panel last week. You can [listen to the session here](#)

Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, Councillor Kelly Parry, will make an appearance on the show on Wednesday, June 17.

The President will be taking part in a [SCVO opendoor Webinar](#) on Thursday.

# Elected Members Briefing



10 June 2020

## **Summary**

The Local Government workforce and partners across sectors are working hard to support our communities. We continue to highlight this across our social media channels using #CouncilsCare and it is heartening to see communities working together to look after each other. Retweets and follows would be greatly appreciated.

Further briefings will be issued, however our social media channels, Khub and website will be continually updated.

If you or your officers require any clarity from COSLA officers on policy matters, please contact the team in the usual way. If you are not sure who to direct your email to, please contact COSLA member support: [membersupport@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:membersupport@cosla.gov.uk)

Thank you all for your efforts during this challenging time.

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10 June 2020

## Local Authority Delivery of Services

During the Covid-19 Pandemic

STATISTICS TO DATE

STATISTICS LAST WEEK

### Shielding

146,000

shielding individuals  
in contact with their  
council



145,000

calls made by individuals to  
wellbeing lines or helplines

### Business Grants

85,000

Business Grant  
applications made  
to date



£786M  
of Business Grants  
awarded by Councils  
in total

### Free School Meals

126,000

free school meals  
provided for children



140% of those  
eligible

### Child Protection

2,397

children with Child Protection plans  
had face-to-face contact with a  
social worker over the last 2 weeks



### Adult Protection

1,280

Wellbeing referrals  
made over the last  
week



564

Risk referrals made  
over the last week



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