

Elected Members Briefing



7 July 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 First Minister confirmed the **final measures of Phase 2** on Thursday, July 2.

These included children being permitted to play outdoors with groups from other households without physical distancing, and the mandatory use of face masks in retail settings from this Friday (July 10).

The five-mile travel distance limit for leisure **has been lifted**.

Restrictions on the **outdoor hospitality industry have also been eased**, with the reopening of beer gardens and pavement cafes.

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Finance

Councillor Gail Macgregor, COSLA's Resources Spokesperson, has now written to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance to set out Local Government's 'asks' in relation to fiscal flexibilities, including changes to Council Tax legislation and additional borrowing powers, as agreed by Leaders. COSLA has asked the Cabinet Secretary that this forms the basis of our joint approach to UK Treasury. On Thursday, July 2, the UK Government announced a package of additional measures for Local Authorities including £50m of consequential for Scotland, a new scheme to reimburse councils for lost income, and measures to allow council and business rates tax deficits to be repaid over three years instead of one.

Officers are awaiting details of the package and further budget announcements are expected tomorrow (Wednesday, July 8).

Also agreed by Leaders, a letter has been sent from Cllr Macgregor to the UK Chancellor requesting a year-long break for Local Authority Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) repayments and temporary flexibility on borrowing for revenue and transfer of capital to revenue.

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Education Recovery

Through the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group, we are continuing to work closely with the Scottish Government on developing guidance to support the next stage of the return to school and childcare following the Deputy First Minister's announcement that the central planning assumption would be for a full return in August.

Discussions are ongoing with the Scottish Government on the £100m of additional funding for the education recovery announced in June. Leaders have agreed that a portion of this funding will be used to create some temporary posts for recently qualified teachers.

Additionally, Local Authorities will have received grant letters for their allocation of the £25m that the Scottish Government has agreed to support digital inclusion for children and young people.

Employers Checklist

An Employers Checklist for Homeworking Issues during COVID-19 has now been issued, further to sign-off from the Scottish Joint Council.

This guidance provides a checklist to consider in supporting temporary homeworking while Government advice remains that people should work from home if they can.

A **[copy of the guidance is available here.](#)**

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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 phone, pension and holiday-related scams.

The bulletin **[can be viewed here.](#)**

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

Thank you all for your efforts during this challenging time.

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Local Authority Delivery of Services

During the Covid-19 Pandemic

STATISTICS TO DATE

STATISTICS LAST WEEK

Shielding

173,000

shielding individuals
in contact with their
council



Business Grants

96,000

Business Grant
applications made
to date



£894M
of Business Grants
awarded by Councils
in total

Free School Meals

156,000

free school meals
provided for children



140%
of those
eligible

Child Protection

2,422

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



Adult Protection

1,375

Wellbeing referrals
made over the last
week



598

Risk referrals made
over the last week



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