

OFFICIAL



CORPORATE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Colleagues

I wanted to keep you updated on our preparations for coronavirus.

The first thing to say is that I know you are all anxious. That is perfectly understandable as this is a very uncertain time.

However, we cannot afford to be paralysed by fear. This council delivers services which vulnerable people rely on. Society's recovery from this is utterly dependent on us doing our jobs and continuing to support people. We are an absolutely vital part of Scotland's response to this and I am very proud and grateful for the work you have all done so far and the work you will do in the difficult weeks and months ahead.

I chaired a strategic meeting of council directors and officers, known as a Gold group, this morning.

The group took a number of strategic decisions which could have an impact on how you work so I want to share them with you here.

1. **We will continue to follow the Government advice**

This has been communicated to you already, but it is important to set out what this means for you.

- First of all, **the government's advice may change regularly**, even day to day. This may be unsettling for people because in stressful situations like this it is always easier to have certainty. However, regular changes in advice does not suggest that previous advice was wrong, merely that the situation is changing and that the government will want to take action at the right time.
- Second, **the government has issued very clear advice on when people should stay away from work and we will not second guess that**. This is because we are not experts in the public health implications of coronavirus. Instead, we will take decisions which support you to follow government advice and also to continue to deliver the services the city's most vulnerable people rely on.
- This means that if we decide to have staff work from home, or in a different location, or in a completely different role, we will be doing so not because we think that's best for their health, but to free up staff and resources who support them to work normally.

2. **The council's priorities are social care, cleansing and public health, and education**

- Keeping schools open is particularly important.
- This is firstly because our schools support many thousands of vulnerable young people who would otherwise be unsupported.
- However, this is also because having children at school allows many of our vital staff to be at work during the day, and allows vital staff in the NHS to be at work during the day. I am concerned about the impact on our workforce, and the workforce of the emergency

services, if we were to shut schools. Our ability to deliver social care services and cleansing services will be severely restricted if people need to take time off of their work to look after children who would otherwise be at school.

3. **We are actively considering shutting some buildings in order to redirect staff and resources to support our three priorities**

- I will make a general announcement about this when we take that decision and you will receive local communication if you are affected.

I would also like to reiterate a point I have made before but which I still think is causing some people concern. The government's very clear advice on who should stay at home can be found here - <https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus> - **but in short if you have a new cough, shortness of breath or high temperature then you should stay at home for seven days.** You can find advice about what you should and should not do when you are staying at home here - <https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus#stay-at-home-advice>.

If you require to stay at home because you meet the criteria set out in the government advice then you will continue to be paid and the time you are off will not contribute to any absence management process.

There are a few other things I would like to ask you to do:

1. **Wash your hands.**
I know you're sick of hearing it, but it really is the best thing we can do.
2. **If you have the option of using hand sanitiser provided by the council or soap and water, please use soap and water.**
Stocks of hand sanitiser are low and we must do what we can to preserve those stocks for occasions when they are really needed. In any case, soap and water is a more effective way of cleaning your hands.
3. **Please do not take decisions to work from home or take time off without first discussing this with your manager.**
4. **In your private life, please do not hoard food, toilet paper or cleaning agents.**
First of all, it is a substantial problem for society as a whole, but anything which makes it harder for vulnerable people to get hold of the things they need to live their lives will only increase the burden on the NHS and social care.
5. Please regularly check www.glasgow.gov.uk/coronavirus for council updates.

Managers are asked to share these messages with staff who do not have access to a computer at work and remind staff that all updates are available on our dedicated staff area on our website at <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/staffupdates> Our web site can be viewed on any device at any time.

Regards

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Chief Executive

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