



Executive Director
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Our Ref: SHR/SS

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Dear Colleague,

Corona Virus update for all Catering & FM staff

The circumstances we find ourselves in are unprecedented and a worrying time for all of us, our families, friends and colleagues.

Over the last few weeks I have witnessed the very best of what being in public service is about, the way we have pulled together to keep vital services going and planning for the inevitable challenges that lie ahead over the coming weeks.

In recent days it is very evident that circumstances can change rapidly requiring us to adapt and respond to ensure that we can provide support to our most vulnerable citizens whilst at the same time keeping the day to day business going and supporting the city's economy as it faces mounting pressure. We will try to provide clear and concise information as quickly as possible against a backdrop of rapidly changing events.

On behalf of the DRS Management Team, I thank you for your ongoing efforts. The days and weeks ahead will be demanding but we will pull together to support each other as we focus on keeping the city running and protecting our most vulnerable.

Working Arrangements

We have all seen the recent news that the schools across Glasgow will be closed to pupils from Monday 23 March and are saddened that we are in this situation for the children of the city. We have also recently seen that the Glasgow Life premises have been closed to the public and other venues affected.

The situation is changing daily and we are doing our very best to keep you informed with factual and clear information about how this crisis affects you and your work. The information in this letter is the latest position as at Friday 20 March 2020.

You may know already from your manager of the following situation – but we are repeating this here to be sure that this message has got through clearly to everyone.

You should stay at home and not come to work if you are in any of the following categories:

- 1. Over 70 years of age**
- 2. Pregnant – please let your manager know of this situation if they are not already aware**
- 3. Have a significant underlying health condition, for example those conditions which weaken immune systems and those with long term health conditions or are eligible under NHS guidelines for free flu vaccine due to your personal health situation - please let your manager know of this situation**

Education Premises

Education Services have confirmed they will open every school next week except some ASL establishments. So we need you to report for work as normal on Monday. We have confirmed this situation to your Trade Union representatives from Unison, Unite and GMB and they understand our position on this. **All Catering and FM Staff based at educational premises should report as usual for duty on Monday 23rd March** (outside the categories listed above). For staff working in ASL units, you will have been contacted directly by your manager to explain what we want you to do on Monday.

Teaching will not be taking place as normal, but the schools must remain available for children of our critical emergency and medical workers and those who may be vulnerable. Your efforts have never been more needed and we want to ensure that we continue to provide a catering, cleaning, janitorial and school crossing patrol support service.

This situation will be constantly reviewed by Education Services and ourselves and could well change after, or even during, next week. There may, for example, be a need for people to work in different locations or undertake different activities – these requirements are not and cannot be clarified at the moment, but we will let you know as soon as we can.

Encore Staff

Glasgow Life locations are closed to the public, but you should continue to report for work (outside the 3 categories listed above). Some of you may have already been assigned to different duties or locations to support our critical services. As with the staff based at the education establishments, there may be an increased need for people to work in different locations or undertake different activities – again these requirements are not and cannot be clarified at the moment, but we will let you know as soon as we can.

All Catering & FM staff

This is a fluid situation and during a period which may extend up to 12 weeks or beyond we may have to deliver our services in a different way and of course the government may direct us to do so. This may include building closures and different ways of working. The key is for us is to continue to contribute to providing critical services to the city and our most vulnerable service users.

We know this will be a very anxious time for you and please remember we have our employee assistance support, Workplace Options 0800 247 1100 which are available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Your line and HR team are also available for support and guidance if you need them.

We recognise that for many of you, there is the additional worry of child care arrangements now that the schools are closed from this Monday. We have been in close liaison with Education Services and they recognise these difficulties for some of you too. So, please do talk to your manager if you have children of school age and are struggling with childcare issues and we will do everything we can to liaise with Education management to try to help you find a solution which makes it easier for you. We consider you critical to maintaining Glasgow's ability to keep the schools open – we will try our best to help and are keeping this situation under constant review.

Your manager will be trying hard to keep you updated also – and if you are in the categories which can't come to work then they will be in touch regularly to see how you are doing. Your managers won't be able to answer every question but they'll try to find out for you.

Please, remember the Glasgow City Council website, where you now have the ability to access the full internal communications. If you don't have access to a computer then let us know and we'll try our best to keep you informed by other means – in these circumstances we would prefer to use your personal number for this, so please let your manager know if this is not suitable.

We would dearly like to have all the answers to your questions about what may be asked of you in the future – but I am sure you also understand that these are fast moving times and we may not have all the answers for you about what might happen in the future.

We are also keen to work closely with your Trade Unions who have offered their support to rising to the challenge of the virus – there will be issues which are very important to you which will come up over the coming weeks and we will try our hardest to ensure that your TU reps are involved appropriately as much as we possibly can.

Finally, may we ask if you would be willing to provide a personal e-mail address which we can use during this time of crisis. This would be incredibly helpful to us during this period and allow us to transmit key and urgent messages to you without the delay of posted mail. If you do not have a personal e-mail, then please ensure your manager has your contact telephone number.

Both your Director, Ian Robertson and myself want to assure you of our desire to keep you fully informed and supported as best we possibly can through this crisis and help you to continue to provide the vital support needed to join with other front line services in fighting the impact of the virus.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Sawers
Head of Catering & FM (Interim)