

Coronavirus – City of Edinburgh Council issues its own guidance

Council Leaders have tonight issued a call to residents to follow national guidance on dealing with coronavirus while supporting and helping one another.

The Council has also introduced new measures to protect the city's most vulnerable such as the elderly and ensure that its staff can continue to provide core services.

Social distancing and restrictions on visiting will be introduced in Council-run care homes in Edinburgh as part of a response to the outbreak of the virus.

The council says these measures are aimed at protecting some of the city's most vulnerable people.

Care home residents will eat meals in their rooms, while day centres will be closed.

The Council announced [emergency funding of £2 million](#) to support Edinburgh's response to the pandemic just a few days ago.

In schools, assemblies, large gatherings and team meetings will be stopped, unless absolutely essential.

In line with the [official guidance](#) announced by both the UK and Scottish Governments earlier today to reduce the spread of the virus, it is possible that arrangements will be made for

council employees in office-based jobs to work from home. This may be introduced on a phased approach in the coming days, with no attendance at events and only essential external and internal meetings.

In terms of official Council committee business, the recess period will now begin from Friday 20 March rather than 30 March and will last until 27 April.

Any urgent decisions during this recess will be made by the Council Leadership Forum (a formal committee of group leaders of each political grouping on the Council, chaired by the Council Leader).

Council Leader Adam McVey said: "These are very challenging times and I know people are justifiably anxious about what's ahead of us. As a Council, we're determined to do everything we can to protect our communities, especially those in our care and throughout Edinburgh who are most vulnerable.

"These measures will help safeguard those most at risk by minimising the spread of the virus through social contact. We'll continue to work closely with the Scottish Government, NHS Lothian and all our partners to respond as swiftly and impactfully as we can to this fast-changing situation.

"We've got incredible community spirit in this city and we're already hearing some inspiring stories of big-hearted residents rallying to support the most vulnerable. There are many ways you can help and our advice right now is act locally.

"Phone your neighbours, offer to collect a prescription, take their bins out or pick up some shopping. Small but meaningful gestures can help us pull together as a city as we get through this by looking out for one another."

Depute Leader Cammy Day said: "Maintaining services in the midst of this worsening outbreak is a serious challenge but we

are working extremely hard to keep Edinburgh functioning as best it can, with a focus on our duty of care to those most in need.

“Our employees’ safety and wellbeing are critical and we’re rolling out contingency plans such as working from home and limiting meetings so that we can reduce the risks to our workforce as much as possible.

“I’d like to thank all the Council teams who’ve already worked day and night for many weeks to deal with this and ensure Edinburgh’s as ready as it can be for what’s to come – they’re doing a tremendous job in very difficult circumstances.”

Updates on the Council’s response to the pandemic are available on the [dedicated Coronavirus web page](#) and residents are encouraged to follow [NHS Inform advice](#) and contact [Volunteer Edinburgh](#) for more information on safe ways to help.