

**SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****1. SERVICES****2. KEY WORKERS AND CHILDCARE FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN****3. COUNCIL TAX****4. SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND****1. SERVICES**

As of 18/3/20 South Ayrshire Council closed all of their buildings normally open to the public.

*"We are working hard to ensure we are fully staffed to deliver critical services such as Home Care, Community Alarms, Child and Adult Protection Services, Residential Care, Justice Services, Emergency Property Repairs, Environmental Health, Waste Management and Homeless services. We know that for many people, the impact of coronavirus may be financial. We will therefore, provide a telephone service offering money, welfare and benefits advice, including access to crisis grants and food bank vouchers. Please call 0300 123 0900."*

The exception where face to face enquiries are essential is Registration, but this is by appointment only. To register a birth, marriage or death in person call the usual SAC number 0300 123 0900.

All schools across Scotland closed on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. At this stage it is uncertain if they will reopen before the end of the Summer Term. Critical Key Workers who don't have alternative childcare support will be able to access childcare provision. **See below for further details.**

<https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

**2. KEY WORKERS FOR CHILDCARE AND SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

For essential Key Workers, the First Minister has guaranteed that the Scottish Government will continue funding streams which allow contractual payments to private and third sector providers, including

childminders, for statutory early learning and childcare hours to continue. Specialist schools will remain open and provision to continue delivering free school meals to eligible children will continue. In some areas, educational HUBS have been created and not all schools will reopen to facilitate necessary childcare.

There are limited places and they will be allocated in order of priority key worker status. South Ayrshire have announced that in order to qualify for a place, both parents must be critical key workers.

## **KEY WORKERS**

The Key Worker list differs between each local authority area to meet local needs.

At this stage critical key workers in South Ayrshire in priority order are:

- **NHS: all staff including primary care; pharmacy and dentistry**
- **Health and social care staff providing a direct service**
- **Key emergency services staff, including those at Glasgow Prestwick Airport**
- **Key staff working at National Air Traffic Service, Prestwick (NATS)**
- **Staff who work in Prisons**
- **South Ayrshire Council staff designated as critical service providers**
- **Education staff providing child care for other key workers**

The definition of key workers may change as the spread of the virus progresses.

This service is not available for parents who are working from home, or where any member of the household is displaying symptoms. People are asked to follow public health advice and act responsibly.

## **Free School Meals for Eligible Children Updated**

While schools are closed, all pupils entitled to free school meals will continue to have access to food.

Daily deliveries of lunch bags have been replaced by a food box, which will be delivered on a weekly basis.

Boxes will be delivered on either a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, and after the first box is delivered this will determine the day the box will be delivered in future.

The food box will contain a range of items, which can be used to make lunch for your child/children for a week. The contents of a box may vary from week to week depending on availability of stock, but will usually contain bread, milk, cereal, fresh fruit and ingredients to make soup.

**Parents are instructed to contact their child's school by phone or email in the first instance.**

See the following link for information.

<https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/19485/Schools-and-early-years-centres>

### **3. COUNCIL TAX**

South Ayrshire Council has indicated that if people are genuinely unable to make payments and do not qualify for help with Council Tax Reduction, that they would delay recovery action for 3 months.

A South Ayrshire Council spokesperson said: *“Where you are unable to make a payment, or can only make a partial payment, we will defer any recovery action for three months. At the end of June 2020 we will review the position, you do not need to contact us until you receive a recovery notice. At this time we will also consider a special payment plan so that the council tax due for 2020/21 is split over an appropriate period if required.”*

In addition to Council Tax, the Council have indicated they will also stop recovery action for meals at home, community alarms or waste management charges for 3 months.

People are encouraged to email [council.tax@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:council.tax@south-ayrshire.gov.uk) with questions or be patient if needing to call as the phone lines on the main SAC number 0300 123 0900 are busy.

See <https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/19530/Council-Tax-> for further information.

### **4. SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND**

Restrictions limiting Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants to 3 per person, per year, have been relaxed.

The regulations governing the Scottish Welfare Fund allow a local authority to make more than 3 payments to an individual in a 12-month period if it considers there are *“exceptional circumstances”*.

The Scottish Government have confirmed the current circumstances are exceptional and they have provided an additional £45 million for the Scottish Welfare Fund to deal with the increase in demand.

**If you have any further questions about any of the above topics,  
or if you require Housing Advice or Information**

Email [advice@ayrhousingaidcentre.com](mailto:advice@ayrhousingaidcentre.com) or call, text or whatsapp us on 07549 603895 / 07760750256 or contact us via facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ayrhac>