

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**1. SERVICES****2. SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS CENTRES****3. COUNCIL TAX****4. SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND****5. RECYCLING CENTRES****1. SERVICES**

As of 18/3/20 South Ayrshire Council closed all of their buildings normally open to the public. The majority of their public offices remain closed with staff working remotely.

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.

Guidance on this is available at <https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/19479/Births-Marriages-and-Deaths>

South Ayrshire Council said *"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."*

Some public buildings such as galleries, museums and libraries have started to reopen from the end of July with new protocols such as advanced bookings or reduced opening hours.

Most public conveniences and outdoor parks have also re-opened.

Please check the page below for the most up to date information on Council services by category.

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

2. SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS CENTRES

Schools:

The Scottish Government confirmed schools will reopen full time for all pupils in August. In South Ayrshire, schools will reopen on Wednesday 12 August, but in most schools the first three days will be a phased return. This is to allow for testing of new arrangements such as safe pick up and drop off; one way systems; hand washing; break times; social distancing for adults and between adults and children. Schools will be in touch with parents confirming who should attend on the 12th, 13th and 14th of August. All pupils will return full time from Monday 17 August.

EYC's

It is hoped that the change in the guidance, and continued suppression of the virus, will enable children aged 3-5 years who reside in South Ayrshire to access 1140 hours from August. Children aged two will have access to the statutory entitlement of 600 hours, and where possible, they may have access to more hours.

See more information and FAQ's on the reopening of schools and EYC's at

<https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/23813/Reopening-of-schools-and-early-years-centres>

3. COUNCIL TAX

Your Council Tax pays for essential services that are delivered to all residents in South Ayrshire, so it is really important that if your circumstances have not changed that you continue to pay what you should; maintaining your direct debit payments or payment plan as detailed on your bill.

Please be aware if you are making a claim for DWP benefits due to your financial circumstances, you have to make a separate claim for Council Tax Reduction to the Council.

If you feel unable to do this yourself then Ayr Housing Aid Centre can assist you with making a claim.

If you cannot pay your Council Tax

If you are unable to pay your Council Tax it is important that you keep in touch with the Council and let them know if you are going to miss a payment or not pay the full amount. If you have any questions you can email council.tax@south-ayrshire.gov.uk. They have advised that they are experiencing higher than normal enquires so it may take longer than normal to reply. Alternatively you can call 0300 123 0900 to speak to a Customer Services Advisor.

Council Tax Recovery

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.”*

If you have been invoiced by the Council for other services e.g. Meals at Home, Community Alarms or Waste Management, they will also defer recovery action for 3 months.

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.

5. HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING CENTRES

South Ayrshire Council have advised that there is currently no impact to domestic waste and recycling collections, but ask that all bins are presented by 5.45am as collection times may vary. South Ayrshire Council does not collect side waste and are reminding people not to leave any extra waste beside bins.

Special/Bulky uplifts collections have now resumed. The booking system at <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/bulkyuplifts/> has been reinstated or residents can telephone 0300 123 0900 to book an uplift. It is anticipated that there may be high demand for the service initially and booking slots may be taken quickly, however in those instances the system will look for the next available date for your area.

Household Waste Recycling Centre's (HWRCs) re-opened on Monday 1 June at 8.00am and are now operating normally.

In order to delivery critical services there is a reduction in street sweeping and litter picking. Completion times for missed bins and bin deliveries may also be affected.

For information and guidance on disposing of rubbish safely when self-isolating please visit <https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/19478/Bins-Recycling-and-Open-Spaces>

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

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