

OFFICIAL



Please see below a personal message from Mike Burns, our HSCP's Assistant Chief Officer for Children's Services and North East Operations. In his video, Mike talks about some of the ways in which children, young people and families have been supported during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and thanks staff for all their incredible efforts. He also talks about Care Leavers Day (29 October), celebrating the achievements of the young people who we look after and care for on a day-to-day basis and recognising the work that we've been doing to support them.

COVID-19 Message from Mike Burns

Hello, for those who don't know me, my name is Mike Burns. I'm the Assistant Chief Officer for Children's Services, and in terms of reflecting on where we've got to with COVID-19, I hope everybody's had a good summer and the opportunity for a well-earned break and rest.

I think we need to recognise how we continue, not only to support each other, but to make sure that we are then in a capacity to support families, to support carers and to support all those that are finding this a really tough set of circumstances. And I think as we do that, we obviously want to focus on how we continue to improve outcomes, but, in a sense, to continue to assist all of those who are in vulnerable positions across older people, across home care, mental health, criminal justice, but also for every family. And I want to particularly focus on those who are looking after children with complex needs.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

It's the 10-year anniversary of the Christie Commission, and we've been continually focusing in on prevention, which really sits at the very heart of the Health and Social Care Partnership and about what integration is there to achieve.

We've been in the position within Children's Services of launching the Family Support Strategy, moving from £2.7 million in family support to nearer to £6 million. And we're hoping to work closely with community planning in relation to the £19 million pounds that they fund, but also the funding that occurs in relation to education, around school counseling and around mental health. The Winter Social Protection Fund will also give money from the government to support families, and we've had the opportunity to provide £400 to a whole range of children and young people across the community, enabling them to make decisions along with their mums and dads and their families to do things, to mitigate, in terms of the challenges that we've got.

But as we look towards winter, we know that across the country and within the city, the winter is going to be very difficult. We know that furlough is coming to an end, the impact on the Universal Care, the removal of the additional £20, but also the additionality in relation to the National Insurance contribution, coupled with the emergent energy crisis is going to, in a sense, have an even greater impact through the winter. So I think we need to, in a sense, really double our efforts on supporting families. Within Children and Families, as you know, we've gone from 1,413 young people being looked after and accommodated five years ago, down to currently 775, a remarkable reduction by 45%, 647 kids less. In addition to that, at the time of the first lockdown in March 2020, we had 942 young people and children in care and again, we've reduced that by 167, illustrating the desire to respond compassionately, but to respond to that humanitarian crisis. And it's interesting, when we did give that £400 out to families during even January and February of this year, in January, we only took one child into care for the whole of the city – a significant reduction to normally around about 12. So that just shows you what those carers and parents and families thought of that financial

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

assistance and the capacity for us to really reach out and let them know: What can we do to help? What can we do to support you?

But I think as we journey on that, we have to recognise that still the vast majority of children who come into care and the vast majority of children who are on the child protection register come from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation; they come from our most vulnerable communities. And it's within that focus and with that in mind that we need to continue to reach out and see what we can do to support what we can do to assist and what we can do to mitigate so that we can truly live up to that aspiration of People Make Glasgow.

In addition to all of this effort and all of the work that we're doing in relation to supporting children and young people in the community, what's also important is that we continue to celebrate and promote the work that we're doing with those young people who we look after and we care for on a day-to-day basis. At the end of October, 29th October, we will have our Care Leavers Day, but the whole week will be a celebration of the achievements that they've done and the great work that equally we've done across the city. So I look forward to participating with you on that and the work that we do to help them as they grow into adulthood and they grow into hopefully securing for them their very best aspirations.

I did recently report into the Social Economic and Recovery Task Force and the chair of that, the Elected Member, when I've been speaking to them, have indicated, how eager and keen they are to make sure that frontline staff know how proud they are and how grateful they are for the contribution, sacrifice, dedication, and commitment that you've brought over the last 20 months. We know that the Winter might be tough. We know that what lies ahead will require even further resilience from us and further efforts. We hope, as I say, that we look after each other, and that we continue to reach out and support the city towards recovery.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Continue to look after yourself, continue to take care and look forward to catching up with you soon.

OFFICIAL