

Returning Employees Safely to Work

Manager's Guidance

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Introduction

With the general easing of lockdown comes the gradual recovery of services. Priority services have been identified and People Management will work alongside managers to assist in returning employees to the workplace where their job requires it. Where the work can be done at home, then employees must remain working from home until such time as longer term return to work/remote working arrangements are agreed. This is in line with Government Guidance and has been directed by the Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service.

Non-Working Employees

Letters are being issued to all **non-working** employees in the following groups:

1. Shielding – those who have been strongly advised by Welsh Government to stay at home.
2. Vulnerable groups – those are advised to be particularly stringent in following social distancing advice.
3. Those living with either of the above.

We anticipate that managers have remained in regular contact with these employees and the letters should not therefore come as a surprise to anyone. We hope that managers will as part of the regular contact, inform their employee that a letter and phone call is to be expected and that they are expected to engage with the process. The letter will be followed up by a telephone call from a HR Advisor.

Group 1 – Shielders (Extremely Vulnerable from Coronavirus)

The letter and conversation will focus on:

- Current circumstances and exploring what work can be undertaken.
- Employee will be expected to register with the [Skills & Workforce Hub](#), and be available to undertake other duties, which may be suitable.
- Shielding letter must be provided to People Management.
- If employee wishes to return to the workplace, manager must make a referral to Occupational Health for a risk assessment consultation to be undertaken. Information on local management arrangements will be required to carry out a full Occupational Health return to

work assessment; the HR Advisor will send the manager guidance on what will need to be provided. [Occupational Health](#)

[A full list of health conditions that fall under the extremely vulnerable group can be found here.](#)

Group 2 – Vulnerable (Increased Risk of Severe Illness from Coronavirus)

The letter and conversation will focus on:

- Current circumstances.
- Return to the workplace and discussing any concerns.
- These employees are expected to return unless there are specific risks associated with their circumstances and their working environment.

A referral to [Occupational Health](#) will be required before a return. Information on local management arrangements will be required to carry out a full Occupational Health return to work assessment; the HR Advisor will send the manager guidance on what will need to be provided.

Where a return to the substantive role is not advised then the employee must register with the [Skills & Workforce Hub](#) and be available to undertake other duties, which may be suitable.

[A full list of health conditions that fall under the "increased risk of severe illness" group can be found here.](#)

Group 3 – Employees living with Group 2 or Group 3

The letter and conversation will focus on:

- These employees are expected to return to the workplace.
- Any anxieties or concerns will be discussed, and managers can discuss risk assessments and arrangements for return directly.

Risk Assessment Process

It is important that where employees raise a concern about their return or the impact on members of their household, this should be explored via a risk assessment process. A very

useful [risk assessment tool](#) has been developed by Welsh Government for the NHS and Social Care, but it can be used for all work settings and we advise that you and your employee use this to objectively to assess their risk. Advice may also need to be sought from Occupational Health.

Occupational Health Advice

The Employee Wellbeing Advice and Support Service ([EWASS](#)) can provide advice and guidance if any employees are experiencing concerns about returning to the workplace during the present climate. Government guidance on strict social distancing and hygiene control measures should be continually followed. Further advice can be found on the [.gov.uk website](#).

Returning to Work

The HR Advisor will liaise with the Manager/Headteacher and arrangements for a return to the workplace will be managed by the Manager/Headteacher. Any employees who are unable to return to their normal place of work must register with the [Skills & Workforce Hub](#) and be available to undertake other duties, which may be suitable.

Other Non-Working Employees

Managers/Headteachers should also be making contact with those employees who are not working, either because their role does not allow them to work from home and/or they have child care responsibilities, with a view to returning them to the workplace or referring to the [Skills & Workforce Hub](#) if child care does not allow a return to the substantive role. Your HR Advisor can provide you with a template to assist with this discussion.