

Employees returning to the workplace

Covid19 Individual Risk

Assessment

carmarthenshire.gov.wales

20 August 2020

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**Introduction**

This document explains the risk assessment process in relation to the specific risk of COVID-19 to individuals returning to the workplace particularly those that have been shielding.

Whilst the priority is to risk assess employees returning to the workplace following shielding, the risk assessment is relevant to all staff, including those who are returning to normal duties after COVID-19 related restrictions, those who are returning to the workplace after working from home or anyone who has a concern about a particular vulnerability to COVID-19.

**Welsh Government guidance on individual covid risk assessments was updated on 12th August 2020 and the authority’s covid risk assessment has been updated to reflect these changes. Therefore, all employees who fall into the** [**extremely vulnerable shielding category**](https://gov.wales/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-on-medical-grounds-as-extremely-vulnerable-from-coronavirus-covid-19-html) **and received a shielding letter from Welsh Government are advised to repeat the risk assessment using the updated toolkit at Appendix A.**

For employees that are anxious about returning to the workplace in addition to completing the risk assessment with their manager they can self-refer to the [Wellbeing Support and Advice Service](http://intranet/our-people/coronavirus-guidance/looking-after-your-well-being/).

The Authority has undertaken an organisational Covid-19 risk assessment, has service specific risk assessments and safe working practices in place managed through a robust resetting of services process.

The employee returning to the workplace should complete the individual risk assessment with their manager using the COVID-19 individual risk assessment. This will support employees and managers to assess the risks and agree working arrangements on return to work.

**How to use this document**

After reading this document line managers should implement measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 as much as possible by:

* Ensuring all employees returning to the workplace complete the COVID-19 Individual Risk Assessment (**Appendix A**) to identify the employee’s vulnerability level.
* Explaining the safe systems of work and workplace risk assessments specific to their place of work.
* Having a constructive conversation about how work can be enabled safely on return.
* Reaching an agreement on working duties on return to the workplace.

**Individual Health Risks of COVID-19**

Risk is a combination of the possible consequences of a specific hazard and the likelihood of this consequence occurring. When considering risk to staff from COVID 19, there are two overall considerations:

* **The risk of the transmission of COVID-19 within the workplace.** As an authority all appropriate mitigating measures have been put in place to protect our employees and we all have a duty to follow these measures. This will depend on factors including community prevalence of COVID-19 and the nature of the working environment, taking account of mitigating measures put in place (e.g. PPE use, physical distancing, infection control).
* **The potential affect that COVID-19 might cause an individual (clinical vulnerability).**

This will depend on individual characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity and underlying health conditions.

The combination of these two considerations gives a good indication of the overall individual’s health risk.

The COVID-19 individual risk assessment (see **Appendix A**) has been designed to help managers undertake individual risk assessment with employees.

This should be followed by a supportive and constructive discussion between managers and employees, with the aim of arriving at an agreed course of action.

**Personal Characteristics that affect outcome from COVID-19**

The latest evidence shows that age, sex, ethnicity and BMI, in addition to underlying health conditions, all contribute to an individual’s risk of developing severe illness if they contract COVID-19. This is described as their ‘vulnerability’.

The tool gives an overall assessment of an individual’s vulnerability to COVID-19 and can be used by all staff. Managers should support employee’s in confidence to complete the tool to identify the employee’s own level of vulnerability (low, moderate, high or very high). If the employee does not feel comfortable disclosing personal characteristics with their manager, a constructive conversation can still take place having assessed their own level of vulnerability. The tool also provides specific information for pregnant workers.

**Outcomes and Actions**

The most important part of the process is the conversation that takes places between the manager and the employee. This supportive and constructive dialogue should take into account the safe systems of work and service specific risk assessments that have been put into place and come to an agreed course of action regarding their working duties.

For many employees, no change to their current working arrangements will be required as appropriate controls are already in place proportional to the level of vulnerability. However, for some there may be significant change with a move from shielding, or working from home, to a return to an occupational setting. Further discussion between managers and employees will be required to agree how they will return to work and what support measures are available. If the employee and their manager are unable to come to an agreement on the working duties, or there is uncertainty about the impact of the staff member’s health condition, then please seek further advice from the HR and/or the OH Teams, as appropriate.

For those in the very high vulnerability group, or if there is a health issue and no agreement can be reached between manager and staff member, an onward [referral by the manager to the Occupational Health](http://intranet/our-people/occupational-health/request-a-referral/) should be made. By having a more detailed discussion on the risks, it should be possible for staff members to reach an agreed course of action with their manager.

There is a duty on the authority, managers, HR, OH professionals, and employees to understand how to make the workplace as safe as possible, their role in that process, and the need to be involved to work together in making those decisions.

If an agreement cannot be reached despite additional input, this should be resolved using the authority’s agreed procedures for resolving disputes.

**Appendix A**

**Covid-19 Individual Risk Assessment Toolkit**

**How to use the risk assessment tool**

1. Start by completing the staff member’s name, role

2. Go through the ‘COVID-risk factors’ to identify what risk factors they have;

3. Each of these factors has been assigned a number; calculate the total number based on these factors;

Having worked out the total, the table on page 6 should be reviewed.

Using this assessment of vulnerability, managers should have a constructive conversation with their staff member about how they can be enabled to work safely and can be recorded in the space provided. Where an agreement cannot be reached, additional input may be required.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  |  | |  | |
| **Job Role:** |  |
|  | | | | | |
| **COVID- Risk factor** | | | | | |
| [**Extremely vulnerable category**](https://gov.wales/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-on-medical-grounds-as-extremely-vulnerable-from-coronavirus-covid-19-html) | Extremely vulnerable refers to people who have one of a very specific list of pre-existing and long-term serious health conditions and received a personal letter from Welsh Government advising to shield. | | 7 | |  |
| **Sex:** | Male (Covid-19 seems to have a bigger impact on males than females | | 1 | |  |
| **Ethnicity:** | |  | | --- | | COVID-19 seems to have a bigger impact on people from some ethnicities | | Do you identify as one of the BAME or Mixed racegroups as set out in this link [BAME or Mixed race](https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/P3-Ethnic-Group-June-16-1.pdf#page=7) | | | 1 | |  |
| **BMI:** | [BMI calculator](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/) This link will help you to work out your BMI if your BMI is over 30   |  | | --- | | OR  If your waist circumference is:  South Asian Female more than 33 inches (84cm);  Other BAME or white Female more than 34.5 inches (88cm):  South Asian Male more than 35 inches (89cm);  Other BAME or white Male more than 40 inches (102cm) | | | 1 | |  |
| **Age**  COVID-19 seems to have a bigger impact on people who are older**.** | If you are aged 50-59 | | 1 | |  |
| If you are aged 60-69 | | 2 | |  |
| If you are aged 70-79 | | 4 | |  |
| **Existing health conditions** | Cardiovascular disease  Are you on any treatment for Hypertension (high blood pressure), Atrial Fibrillation (Irregular heart rate), Heart Failure, Previous MI (had a heart attack), had a stroke, or Transient Ischemic Attack (mini stroke) | | 1 | |  |
| Diabetes Melitus Type 1 or 2 | | 1 | |  |
| Chronic Lung Disease (Including asthma, COPD, interstitial lung disease | | 1 | |  |
| Chronic kidney disease (any stage 1-5) | | 1 | |  |
| Sickle cell trait, Thalassaemia trait or other haemoglobinopathy | |  | |  |
| **Family history**  **Covid-19 seems to have a family susceptibility for some people especially twins** | Has a member of your immediate family (parent, sibling, child) been in ITU or died with covid-19) | | 1 | |  |
| **Total Score** | | | | |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Additional comments: |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk score | **Your risk** | | **Things to think about when getting ready to return to work** | | | |
| **Very high**  7 or more | You’re at very high risk from COVID-19.  You must take great care when leaving your home, making careful choices about what you do. | | Ideally you should work from home and not go into a workplace.  If you do go into work, your employer should try to make the risk of being at work no greater than the risk within your own home.  Maintain strict social distancing. Ensure you can maintain good hygiene and infection control measures.  A referral to Occupational Health may be required. | | | |
| **High**  4-6 | You’re at high risk from COVID-19. | | You can attend work. You should maintain strict social distancing. If you cannot socially distance, you should keep the risk in your workplace as low as you can by ensuring you strictly follow the safe systems of work at your place of work.  Clinical work, care work and working closely with others (such as teaching, sharing a vehicle, using public transport) may be possible, but you must follow the safe systems of work at your place of work.  A referral to occupational health may be required. | | | |
| **Low**  0-3 | You’re at very low risk from COVID-19 | | You can attend work.  You should maintain strict social distancing. If you cannot socially distance, you should keep the risk in your workplace as low as you can by ensuring you strictly follow the safe systems of work at your place of work. | | | |
| **Pregnancy** | There’s no current  evidence that you or your baby are at any increased risk from COVID-19, unless you have an underlying health condition. | | You should keep any risk as low as you can by socially  distancing from others and regularly washing your hands.  You should also have an opportunity to discuss how you undertake your work, whether some can be completed from home, or whether you can change the type of work you do at work to keep risks low. You should complete a [pregnancy risk assessment](http://intranet/media/659320/expectant-mothers-risk-assessment-4.pdf) and discuss with your manager so that appropriate mitigations can be put in place. | | | |
| **Vulnerability group selected after discussion with the employee:** | | | | **Very high** | |  |
| **High** | |  |
| **Low** | |  |
| **Agreed course of action, including any control measures needed:** | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | |
| **Name of manager:** | |  | **Signature of manager:** | |  | |
| **Date of assessment:** | |  | **Signature of employee:** | |  | |