White Rose Update appendix 15 May 2020

Workers that cannot work from home – what is the advice?

The government has indicated that organisations with employees who are unable to work from home, should start planning for their return. the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) is urging organisations to ensure they can meet three key tests before bringing their people back to the workplace:

1. Is it essential?
If people can continue to work from home they must continue to do that for the foreseeable future. If they cannot work from home, is their work deemed essential or could the employer (i.e. the town or parish council) allow the current situation to continue for longer, giving them the time needed to put safety measures and clear employee guidance and consultation in place?

2. Is it safe?
Employers have a duty of care to identify and manage risks to ensure that the workplace is sufficiently safe to return to. This will involve social distancing measures, potentially reconfiguring workspaces and common areas, possible changes to working hours to reduce risk of exposure, and increased workplace cleaning and sanitation measures. Employers should take their time with gradual returns to work to test these measures in practice and ensure they can work with larger numbers before encouraging more of their workforce back.

3. Is it mutually agreed?
CIPD research found that 4 in 10 people are anxious about returning to work and there are concerns people could be forced back. It's vital that there is a clear dialogue between employers and their people so concerns, such as commuting by public transport, can be raised and individual's needs and worries taken into account. There will need to be flexibility on both sides to accommodate different working times or schedules as ways of managing some of these issues.

What is the Guidance from the Government and HSE?

Below is a summary of advice for employers (local councils as employers) in England to follow to protect their workforce and customers, whilst continuing to trade. It includes social distancing, hygiene, cleanliness, staff sickness advice and staying at home.

During the coronavirus outbreak, it is important for organisations to operate/work where it is safe to do so. This guidance is designed to help you work safely and control the risks associated with continuing to work at this time.

The guidance explains measures you can take to help you carry on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19), for example by putting in place social distancing measures, staggering shifts, providing additional handwashing facilities and how to talk with workers to help them stay safe.

Putting in place plans to work safely
The plans organisations put in place mean that work is likely to be organised differently from how it was before lockdown. These guides are designed to help you to know what you can do to control risks associated with running your business during this time.

These guides should not be used on their own, to decide on the actions that you need to take, but as a starting point to consider what you can do. Further detailed guidance is also available on GOV.UK.

Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak - a short guide (PDF)

A guide to the steps you should take to help manage the risks of coronavirus in the organisation. These include taking measures to work at home where possible, maintaining social distancing, cleaning and hygiene.

Talking with your workers about working safely during the coronavirus outbreak (PDF)

By consulting and involving people in steps you are taking to manage the risk of coronavirus in your workplace you can:

- explain the changes you are planning to work safely

- make sure changes will work and hear their ideas

- continue to operate your business safely during the outbreak

You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. If possible, you should consider publishing the results on your website (and the government expects all employers with over 50 workers to do so).

You can find a notice to download, print and display in your workplace to show you have followed this guidance at GOV.UK.

What you need really to know:

- workplaces should make every possible effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, workplaces should make every effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government

- members of staff who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable, as well as individuals whom they live with, should be supported as they follow the recommendations set out in guidance on social distancing and shielding respectively

- where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff. Potential mitigating actions are set out in these illustrative industry examples – Local Councils with litter pickers and street cleaners should read the section on 'Waste Management'

- staff who are unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) should not travel to or attend the workplace.

- staff may be feeling anxious about coming to work and also about impacts on livelihood. Workplaces should ensure staff are fully briefed and appropriately supported at this time

- any member of staff who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (a new, continuous cough and/or a high temperature) should be sent home and stay at home for 7 days from onset of symptoms. If the member of staff lives in a household where someone else is unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) then they must stay at home in line with the stay at home guidance

- employees will need your support to adhere to the recommendation to stay at home to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) to others

- employees should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently and catch coughs and sneezes in tissues

- frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products

- those who follow advice to stay at home will be eligible for statutory sick pay (SSP) from the first day of their absence from work

- employers should use their discretion concerning the need for medical evidence for certification for employees who are unwell. This will allow GPs to focus on their patients

- if evidence is required by an employer, those with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can get an isolation note from NHS 111 online, and those who live with someone that has symptoms can get a note from the NHS website

Good practice for employers (local councils as employers)

It is s good practice for employers to:

- keep everyone updated on actions being taken to reduce risks of exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace

- ensure employees who are in a vulnerable group are strongly advised to follow social distancing guidance

- ensure employees who are in an extremely vulnerable group and should be shielded are supported to stay at home

- make sure everyone's contact numbers and emergency contact details are up to date

- make sure managers know how to spot symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and are clear on any relevant processes, for example sickness reporting and sick pay, and procedures in case someone in the workplace is potentially infected and needs to take the appropriate action

- make sure there are places to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, and encourage everyone to do so regularly

- provide hand sanitiser and tissues for staff, and encourage them to use them

Health and Safety Executive [website](), Coronavirus (COVID-19): Working safely

If you need help and advice on how to protect people from coronavirus (COVID-19) in your workplace, contact HSE:

- by telephone: 0300 790 6787 lines are open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 10pm

- online using HSE '[Working Safely Enquiry Form]()'