



HR-12/2020

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Updated guidance for managers

Following Government advice and changes, please find updated manager guidance on the below topics:

- [Self-isolation period extended](#)
- [Caring for children](#)
- [Annual leave and travelling abroad](#)
- [Returning extremely high and high risk groups](#)
- [Occupational Health video assessment](#)
- [Making the workplace COVID-19 secure](#)
- [DSE and Home working risk assessments](#)
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This guidance is accurate as of Friday 7th August however to keep abreast of the most up-to-date guidance, please visit <https://mynl.co.uk/article-categories/coronavirus-guidance-for-managers/>

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Self-Isolation period extended

With effect from the 30th July, all people who experience coronavirus symptoms or have a positive test result must now self-isolate for 10 days.

Relevant pages within myNL have been updated to reflect this increase in the self-isolation period from 7 to 10 days.

Caring for Children

The enhanced provision, up to a maximum of 20 working days special leave which was implemented at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, will cease effective from 11th August 2020.

Employees who continue to require access to special leave for childcare should request this through the Special leave policy which can be found [here](#).

Annual leave and travelling abroad

Due to the complex and ever changing travel environment, in particular with relation to travel abroad, it has been agreed that further measures are required to ensure service delivery is maintained and all employees treated fairly and consistently with regards to annual leave and travel.

The below outlines the key steps and considerations managers should take when granting annual leave for travel abroad from now on.

- Previous advice remains for those who booked annual leave for a holiday abroad prior to the 8 June 2020, when the quarantine rules were instigated. Providing they can prove their booking prior to this date, Managers are encouraged to accommodate this request where possible and if employees can work from home, they should. If they are unable to work from home, they should be granted special leave for the quarantine period.
- For those who booked a holiday to Spain during the period of 20 to 26 July 2020, when the air-bridge existed, the same rules noted above apply.
- However, from Friday 7th August, anyone who books a holiday abroad will need to ensure with their manager that, if required, they can take an additional two weeks annual leave or unpaid leave if they need to quarantine on their return.
- Term time employees who do not have the ability to take additional annual leave will require to take unpaid leave.
- Managers will continue to have discretion to approve or reject annual leave requests based on the length of time required and in line with operational requirements.
- Please note if an employee books a holiday abroad, and the air bridge no longer exists by the time they are due to return, irrespective of when they booked the holiday, they will be required to take additional annual leave or unpaid leave to accommodate the quarantine period.

For more information related to annual leave provision and rules, click [here](#).

Returning to the workplace

Extremely high risk (Shielding)

From 1 August, the Scottish Government are advising people who have been shielding that they currently no longer need to do so. This means that in general, people who have been shielding can now follow the same advice as everyone else in Scotland and can return to the workplace if required to do so.

Managers should return shielding employees to the workplace using the same protocol for High Risk employees as outlined [here](#).

However, it is important that each shielding employee has an individual risk assessment carried out to ensure that the appropriate Health and Safety measures are in place to allow for their return. The Individual Risk Assessment can be accessed [here](#).

In order to support the process for bringing shielding employees back to the workplace a COVID Age assessment should be completed by the employee prior to commencing discussions about their return. The assessment and further information is contained in the Managers Guidance [here](#).

Not all shielding employees will feel able to return to work due to the nature of their condition and the inability to apply necessary health and safety measures. Managers should contact Employee Relations for advice in relation to these cases.

Higher risk (Other underlying health conditions, pregnant workers, over 70)

Pregnant Women

Advice from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists states that generally there is no evidence that pregnant women are more likely to get seriously ill from coronavirus but pregnant women have been included in the list of people at higher risk (clinically vulnerable) as a precaution.

Pregnant women should follow the latest government guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing) and avoid anyone who has symptoms suggestive of coronavirus.

The exception to this is a pregnant women is in her third trimester (more than 28 weeks' pregnant) who should be particularly attentive to social distancing and should only be allowed in the workplace if this can be stringently adhered to.

Further guidance on what steps need to be taken in relation to all pregnant employees is contained [here](#).

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Employees

Growing evidence suggests that people of BAME origin are more at risk of COVID19 and therefore will be considered as being in higher risk group.

Where possible, and as detailed above for those in the higher risk group, BAME employees should be allowed to continue to work from home and where this is not possible, you must ensure that they are able to comply with social distancing and all

other health and safety measures required to ensure their safety and wellbeing in the workplace.

Managers should follow the same protocols as detailed [here](#) for those who are in the higher risk category when considering a return to work for BAME employees.

Occupational Health Video Assessments

Throughout the pandemic occupational health have continued to provide support, in particular for COVID related referrals. As with the other wellbeing provisions face to face appointments were not possible and all OH assessments were and still are conducted via telephone. However, with effect from Monday 10 August employees that are triaged as requiring to be assessed by an Occupational Health Physician will be offered a Video assessment.

If an employee is unable to participate in a video call, a telephone call will be offered. However, a face to face appointment may be arranged in exceptional circumstances. Further information on the video assessment process and the Occupational Health process in general can be found [here](#)

Making the workplace COVID-19 secure

The gathering of contact information from council employees and visitors to council premises, in a secure and safe manner, will assist NHS Scotland's Test and Protect service to identify and contact individuals who may have been exposed to the virus, and request them to take appropriate steps to prevent the potential onward spread of the virus.

Containing outbreaks early is crucial to reduce the spread of COVID-19, protect the NHS and save lives, and avoid the reintroduction of lockdown. This will support the country to return to, and maintain, a more normal way of life.

Managers can play a significant role in helping staff and visitors to understand the value of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect service, and the importance of playing their part to identify people who may have been in contact with the virus.

As a manager please ensure you follow and put in place the protocol for your employees and any visitors you have to the buildings and sites you manage/are responsible for.

For more information and the full protocol, click [here](#).

DSE and Home working risk assessments

The Health and Safety team have been working hard to ensure staff working from home have completed a DSE and home working risk assessment, which they can access via their mySelf account.

The ones completed to date have been picked up by H&S and contact made with the relevant parties to ensure they have the correct equipment and any concerns raised have been addressed.

Any staff who have still to complete the assessments can still do so however responsibility for following up on the results of these assessments now falls on the line manager. If you receive notification that one of your staff has completed the risk assessments, please review these on myTeam and take appropriate action.

For advice, please contact the H&S or the ESC People Helpdesk.

Click [here](#) for myNL guidance

Click [here](#) for myTeam

FAQs

The FAQ pages on myNL have been updated to include the most recent government advice. Please continue to review these to ensure you have the most up-to-date information.

They can be found [here](#).