

APPENDIX 2 DISCUSSION CHECKLIST TO UNDERSTAND THE INDIVIDUAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 RISK FACTORS ON EMPLOYEES AND THEIR WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

INFORMATION

The latest research and evidence from Public Health England (PHE), indicates disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19, confirms that the impact of COVID-19 has replicated existing health inequalities and, in some cases, has increased them. The largest disparity found was by age. The risk of dying for those over 80 is seventy times more likely than those under 40.

The risk of dying from covid-19 is also:

- higher in males than females
- higher in those living in the more deprived areas than those living in the least deprived
- higher in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than in White ethnic groups.

PHE have stated that these inequalities largely replicate existing inequalities in mortality rates in previous years, except for BAME groups.

This toolkit is designed to help managers carry out discussions with all staff members to ensure their safety when undertaking their roles and duties. It takes into account government guidance, the safety of individuals and the operational needs of Medway Council. If used correctly managers should be able to identify any further measures or further support or guidance that may be required to help support the employee.

The checklist should be completed jointly by the line manager with the employee as soon as practicable, and if the employee is currently not at work, before any potential return to the workplace is considered. Ideally this will be completed via TEAMS (or similar video conferencing) or face-to-face, whilst adhering to social distancing measures or alternatively by telephone and/or email. Once the checklist is completed it should be regularly reviewed. Line managers should prioritise this activity for those staff who are likely to be at greatest risk of impact from Covid-19.

Those employees who are from high risk groups such as BAME, pregnant or considered clinically extremely vulnerable may require further risk assessment prior to any potential return to the physical workplace or their continued temporary working arrangements. The individual's situation should be regularly reviewed in light of council and government guidance. The manager should ensure that the employee is supported to work from home where practicable and that they maintain regular contact with them, monitoring their wellbeing.

The Council's default position remains that wherever possible staff should work from home. Managers should arrange, facilitate and support home working for the employee concerned, where practicable. If home working is not practicable for the officer concerned, or practicable or compatible with the needs of the service, managers need to ensure that staff are fully conversant with the H&S measures that have been put in place to protect the safety of staff. Managers can discuss the situation with their HR Business Partner or HR Consultant to obtain further advice.

ENGAGING THE EMPLOYEE IN DISCUSSION

Before you complete the discussion there are some considerations you need to explain to the employee first:

- You should explain to the employee why the discussion is being carried out and ensure that they understand and are comfortable with it.
- You should explain to the employee that the results of this discussion will be kept strictly confidential.
- If an employee is resistant to engaging in the discussion please explore their reasons for this and if necessary please consult HR who can advise further.

EXAMPLE DISCUSSION CHECKLIST WITH GUIDANCE NOTES

EMPLOYEE NAME:		
NAME OF LINE MANAGER	Directorate and Service Area:	
SIGNATURE OF LINE MANAGER:	DATE:	REVIEW DATE:

QUESTION	YES ✓	NO X
Are they or anyone in their household currently displaying symptoms of Covid-19 i.e. High Fever, New Continuous Dry Cough, Difficulty Breathing?	They should be told to follow the Government Guidance on self-isolation and to not return to work at this time.	Continue to the next question.
Have they or anyone they share a household with either displayed symptoms of, or had a positive test result returned, for Covid -19?	Continue to the next question	Continue to the next question
Were applicable, have the self-isolation requirements been met?	Continue to the next question	Self-isolation requirements must be adhered to. They must be completely clear of symptoms before returning to work
Do they have any concerns about undertaking their job as a result of covid-19 / returning to the workplace? Sample supplementary questions to ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they feeling? • What's happening for them right now? • How are they impacted by covid-19? 	Listen and detail their concerns. Try to reassure them and resolve the concerns. Signpost them to the Medway Council's Wellbeing Guidance/Information on Medspace– if you are seriously concerned speak with your HR Business Partner or HR Consultant for further advice. Continue to the next question.	Continue to the next question

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they have caring responsibilities? • How are they feeling about their job etc. 		
<p>Did the employee use public transport to commute to work prior to Covid-19 and would they still use public transport to commute to work?</p>	<p>You should advise them of the current guidance regarding using public transport i.e. the rules surrounding face masks and to avoid public transport where possible etc. The possibility of temporarily changing their start and finish times to minimise contact with other people in transit.</p>	<p>Continue to the next question</p>
<p>Are they required to medically shield at the moment?</p>	<p>They should be advised that they cannot return to work at present but strict attention should be made to government guidance on this area as this has recently changed.</p> <p>The government has updated its guidance for people who are shielding, taking into account that Coronavirus COVID-19 infection rates have decreased significantly over the last few weeks.</p> <p>Importantly, from 1 August 2020 the government will be advising that shielding will be paused. In practice this means that from 1 August an employee currently shielding could return to work, if they cannot work from home, as long as the business is COVID compliant or safe. The latest guidance can be found here:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19</p> <p>Continue to the next question.</p>	<p>Continue to the next question.</p>

<p>Do they have an underlying medical condition such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis • Chronic heart disease such as heart failure • Chronic kidney disease • Chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis • Chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson’s disease, Motor Neurone disease, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), a Learning Disability or Cerebral Palsy • Diabetes • Problems with their spleen e.g. Sickle Cell disease or Spleen removal • A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy • Being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above) 	<p>Ideally, they should continue to work from home at present. If, however this is not possible, as they are required to be at the place of work to undertake their role, consider any advice that you may have received previously from Occupational Health. Think about what you can do to reduce the risk of exposure to Covid-19 and incorporate this.</p> <p>If an employee wants to return and you have concerns or they cannot work from home but they do not want to return to the workplace, please refer to HR for further advice before continuing with the checklist.</p> <p>No employee should be requested to return if they have concerns, until further advice is sought.</p> <p>Consider any temporary redeployment opportunities.</p> <p>Continue to the next question.</p>	<p>Continue to the next question.</p>
<p>Does the employee come from a BAME background?</p>	<p>BAME staff have been identified as being at increased risk from the effects of Covid-19 and this specific risk assessment should be carried out with the employee.</p> <p>Continue to the next question</p>	<p>Continue to the next question</p>
<p>Is the employee currently pregnant?</p>	<p>Women who are less than 28 weeks pregnant should practise social distancing but can choose to</p>	<p>Continue to the next question</p>

	<p>continue working in a customer-facing role, provided the necessary precautions are taken.</p> <p>Women who are more than 28 weeks pregnant, or have underlying health conditions, should avoid direct customer contact and it is recommended that they stay at home.</p> <p>All pregnant employees should have a risk assessment regardless of covid-19. Please carry out the pregnancy risk assessment with the employee.</p> <p>Continue to the next question</p>	
<p>Does the employee fall within a high-risk category based on their age? I.e. are they over 70?</p>	<p>Individuals over the age of 70 are at increased risk from the effects of Covid-19 and should follow national government guidance. This risk assessment should be undertaken with an employee who falls into this category</p> <p>Continue to the next question</p>	<p>Continue to the next question</p>
<p>Does the employee fall into another high-risk group based on any other demographic factors?</p>	<p>This risk assessment should be carried out with the employee</p>	
<p>Are there any reasons why if the job can be undertaken at home the individual would prefer not to work from home?</p>	<p>Listen, offer support, facilitate them coming back into the workplace where possible and safe to do so.</p>	

TEMPLATE DISCUSSION CHECKLIST

EMPLOYEE NAME:		
NAME OF LINE MANAGER	Directorate and Service Area:	
SIGNATURE OF LINE MANAGER:	DATE:	REVIEW DATE:

QUESTION	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Are they or anyone in their household currently displaying symptoms of Covid-19 i.e. High Fever, New Continuous Dry Cough, Difficulty Breathing?		
Have they or anyone they share a household with either displayed symptoms of, or had a positive test result returned, for Covid -19?		
Were applicable, have the self-isolation requirements been met?		
Do they have any concerns about undertaking their job as a result of covid-19 / returning to the workplace? – Sample supplementary questions to ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they feeling? • What’s happening for them right now? • How are they impacted by covid-19? • Do they have caring responsibilities? • How are they feeling about their job etc?. 		

Did the employee use public transport to commute to work prior to Covid-19 and would they still use public transport to commute to work?		
Are they required to medically shield at the moment?		
<p>Do they have an underlying medical condition such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis • Chronic heart disease such as heart failure • Chronic kidney disease • Chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis • Chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, Motor Neurone disease, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), a Learning Disability or Cerebral Palsy • Diabetes • Problems with their spleen e.g. Sickle Cell disease or Spleen removal • A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy • Being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above) 		
Does the employee come from a BAME background?		
Is the employee currently pregnant?		
Does the employee fall within a high-risk category based on their age? I.e. are they over 70?		

Does the employee fall into another high risk group based on any other demographic factors?		
Are there any reasons why if the job can be undertaken at home why the individual would prefer not to work from home?		