

# **MEDWAY COUNCIL COVID-19 RETURN TO WORKPLACE INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENT FOR HIGH RISK GROUPS – PART 1**

## **Information**

This Individual Risk Assessment for High Risk Groups is designed to help managers ensure the safety of employees falling into the high-risk categories in relation to assessing returning to the workplace following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The high-risk categories include those employees who have underlying medical conditions, who are aged 70 or over or who are from a BAME background. These risks will be considered further as part of this Risk Assessment.

This Risk Assessment takes into account Government Guidance, the safety of individuals and the operational needs of Medway Council. If used correctly risks to employees from high risk groups in relation to the Covid-19 virus should be eliminated or significantly reduced to an acceptable level.

The Assessment is supported by Medway Council's Corporate Risk Assessment which provides further detailed guidance on what measures have already been put in place to help protect the health and safety of all staff. This Risk Assessment is entirely tailored to the Covid-19 virus pandemic. It does not replace any other Risk Assessment in place but should be read in conjunction with.

The Risk Assessment should be completed jointly by the Line Manager with the employee before any potential return to the workplace is considered. This can be done on-line electronically via MS Teams for example or by telephone and once completed should be regularly reviewed.

**It is important to note that Medway Council's current default position remains that wherever possible staff should work from home.** Managers should arrange, facilitate and support home working for the employee concerned. If home working is not practicable for the officer concerned, or practicable or compatible with the needs of the service, managers are required to discuss the situation with the HR Team first and seek further advice.

**It is important to also note that those employees who are considered clinically extremely vulnerable and have received written confirmation from their GP that they are currently required to shield themselves from potential exposure to the virus should not be considered to return to the workplace at this time.** The situation should be regularly reviewed in light of 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 well-being.

**Please note that the government is advising that from 1 August that shielding measures will be paused. From this date, the government is advising people to adopt strict social distancing rather than full shielding measures. In practice this means that from 1 August those shielding could then go to work, if they cannot work from home, as long as the business is COVID-safe. Further clarification is provided by the latest Government Guidance here: <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>**

## **Underlying Health Conditions Associated With an Increased Vulnerability to Covid-19 Risk?**

The government is advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from Coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

This group includes those who are shielding and those with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):

- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis

## Appendix 4

- 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 your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

### **Demographic factors Linked With Increased Vulnerability to Covid-19**

There is currently growing evidence and data which suggests there are three key demographic factors that can impact people's vulnerability to Covid-19. These are Age, Gender and Ethnicity. Based on this data and guidance from national government, it appears that older people, men, and people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities seem to be at greater risk from risks and complications related to Covid-19. The causes of these increased risk factors are not yet fully understood, and further research is taking place right now. However, it remains important for us to respond quickly to what the evidence is telling us.

#### **Age:**

The current evidence suggests that age is a clear risk factor to consider in relation to vulnerability to Covid-19. There are clear government measures already in place for those aged over 70 and therefore it is important that we make sure we are taking action to reduce older colleagues' exposure to Covid-19

#### **Gender:**

There is recent evidence that suggests an increased vulnerability for men of becoming seriously ill from the effects of Covid-19 and this vulnerability also appears to be exacerbated by age. We need to consider this carefully when assessing the risk from Covid-19.

#### **Ethnicity:**

There is an increasing amount of data and research which suggests that people from a BAME community/background have an increased vulnerability to the risks and complications of Covid-19, compared to others. Therefore, we must take colleagues' ethnicity into account when assessing their risk from COVID-19.

#### **Religion or Beliefs:**

The current situation is likely to coincide with religious events which may have an impact on the ability of individual members of staff to perform their role fully, especially if wearing the highest levels of PPE. Line managers should have a thorough and comprehensive conversation with the employee about how they will cope in these circumstances and consider what adjustments could be made.

### **How to Score the Assessment**

The risk rating should be calculated using the formula below:

- Slightly Harmful = 1
- Harmful = 2
- Extremely Harmful = 3
  
- Likely = 3
- Unlikely = 2
- Highly Unlikely = 1

Scoring- 5-6 = **high risk** -further work/action required or constant monitoring

Scoring 3-4 = **moderate risk** - review measures regularly

Scoring 2 - **low risk** - no further action unless circumstances change

## Appendix 4

**When scoring the assessment it is important that managers make reference to the latest national government guidance relating to the risk factors and the measures already implemented at the office location to protect the health and safety of staff at the workplace. If managers have any questions or queries relating to the latest guidance please contact HR.**

**MEDWAY COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT – PART 2**

Name of Employee: <b>Employee X</b>	Date of this Assessment <b>23.06.2020</b>
Name of Assessor: <b>Line Manager Y</b>	
Site / Office Location: <b>Gun Wharf</b>	Current Situation: e.g. working from home, shielding, self-isolating etc.
Summary of High-Risk Categories Applicable to Employee (please tick all that apply)  Aged 70 or over <b>X</b> Aged over 60 with pre-existing medical condition <b>X</b> Pregnant <input type="checkbox"/> BAME background <b>X</b> Identified as being clinically extremely vulnerable <input type="checkbox"/> Identified as being clinically vulnerable <b>X</b>	<b>Employee X is currently working from home.</b>

HAZARDS IDENTIFIED	NOTES ABOUT THE RISK TO THE EMPLOYEE, CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND WHAT YOU ARE ALREADY DOING	FURTHER EXISTING CONTROLS/MEASURES CURRENTLY IN PLACE	SEVERITY OF HARM			LIKELIHOOD/PROBABILITY			RISK LEVEL
			Slightly Harmful	Harmful	Extremely Harmful	Likely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely	

Appendix 4

<p>1. General Covid-19 infection exposure and transmission</p>	<p><b>Employee X is currently working from home and therefore has reduced exposure to potential Covid-19 transmission and infection.</b></p> <p><b>Prior to working from home, employee X would work full time at Gun Wharf offices.</b></p> <p><b>Employee X usually commutes to work via public transport (bus) and due to full time working hours would usually commute in peak times</b></p> <p><b>During the working day at Gun Wharf employee X makes good use of the staff canteen and frequently uses meeting rooms to engage with internal colleagues and staff.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employees to home-work where possible.</b></li> <li>• <b>Employees attending the workplace encouraged not to use public transport but to follow Government guidelines regarding it's use.</b></li> <li>• <b>Free car parking facilities on site available for staff.</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduced staffing levels to maintain social distancing.</b></li> <li>• <b>Staggered start and departure times.</b></li> <li>• <b>Designated entrance / exit points for all buildings.</b></li> <li>• <b>Clear signage throughout buildings.</b></li> <li>• <b>Instructions re: use of lift &amp; stairs.</b></li> <li>• <b>Workstation booking procedure.</b></li> <li>• <b>Allocated workstations set at 2 metre distances and clearly marked.</b></li> <li>• <b>Work stations sited away from commonly used routes.</b></li> <li>• <b>Work stations to be free of any personal property and sanitised prior to new occupancy.</b></li> <li>• <b>Employees reminded of the need to wash hands frequently.</b></li> <li>• <b>Areas subject to strict cleaning regime and enhanced for Touch Points i.e. Doors/handles/Hand Rails etc.</b></li> <li>• <b>No face to face meetings. Meetings to be held either by conference call or Teams.</b></li> <li>• <b>All received mail opened and scanned to staff or safe drop-off/collection.</b></li> <li>• <b>Management on site to review adherence.</b></li> <li>• <b>Any employee falling ill at work with Covid-19 symptoms to be sent home safely and advice sought regarding decontamination processes and other employee safety.</b></li> </ul>	<p>X</p>			<p>X</p>		<p><b>Moderate Risk</b></p>
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Appendix 4

<p>2. Is the employee at an increased risk of severe illness/complications in relation to Covid-19 due to BAME background?</p>	<p><b>Employee X does have a BAME background. Employee X is black and has an Asian background.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Follow national government guidance on measures to protect the health and safety of employees from a BAME background</b></li> <li>• <b>Thoroughly discuss how the employee feels about the current situation and the emerging evidence regarding their increased vulnerability due to BAME background. If they feel stressed or anxious consider a referral to occupational health potentially</b></li> </ul>			X	X			<p><b>High Risk</b></p>
<p>3. Are there any religious events that the employee may wish to attend in the near future that might impact on their vulnerability?</p>	<p><b>Discussed with employee X. None planned as of yet but might change in future.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discuss any upcoming events thoroughly with the employee and their arrangements for their safety. Discuss whether they feel any further measures could be implemented to help protect their safety</b></li> </ul>	X					X	<p><b>Low risk</b></p>
<p>4. Is there an increased risk of severe illness/complications in relation to Covid-19 due to age in relation to the employee?</p>	<p><b>Employee X is aged 70.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assess the person's age and gauge based on national government guidance how high the increased risks associated with Covid-19 would be based on their age range. If unclear on the current national government guidance please consult the HR team who can advise further.</b></li> </ul>		X		X			<p><b>High Risk</b></p>
<p>5. Is there an increased risk of severe illness/complications in relation to Covid-19 due to gender in relation to the employee?</p>	<p><b>Employee X is an elderly male, aged 70.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assess the person's gender and take into account the national government guidance when assessing the risk level.</b></li> <li>• <b>Also consider other demographic risk factors in this risk assessment to determine if the risks associated with gender are exacerbated by any other factors</b></li> </ul>		X		X			<p><b>High Risk</b></p>

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<p>6. Is there an increased risk of severe illness/complications in relation to Covid-19 due to underlying medical conditions?</p>	<p><b>Employee X has type 2 diabetes and suffers from asthma and frequently uses an asthma pump to alleviate symptoms of the asthma condition. His diabetes is monitored regularly.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clinically extremely vulnerable and Clinically vulnerable employees not to return to the workplace but continue to work from home.</b></li> <li>• <b>If clinically vulnerable employees are unable to work from home, evaluate the current measures taken within the workplace to reduce the risk to the employee (please see corporate risk assessment and site assessment)</b></li> </ul>			X	X			<p><b>High Risk</b></p>
<p>7. Is the employee working in a high Risk work environment where role prevents social distancing</p>	<p><b>Employee X works in an office environment which would allow for social distancing provided appropriate measures are implemented in the workplace.</b></p>	<p><b>In addition to the measures identified above;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Specialist advice for the particular setting to be followed</b></li> <li>• <b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided as appropriate.</b></li> <li>• <b>Tasks reviewed and where possible risk reduced further.</b></li> </ul>	X				X		<p><b>Moderate Risk</b></p>
<p>8. Is the employee suffering from any stress/anxiety? If so, is this work related or Covid-19/health related?</p>	<p><b>Discussed with employee X. Employee X has found working from home and the current pandemic difficult to bear and has expressed concern that he is suffering from stress and mental strain.</b></p> <p><b>Employee x is also anxious for the safety of his family and their wellbeing and is concerned returning to work may put his wider family at risk.</b></p> <p><b>None of the other members of his household however suffer from any underlying medical conditions.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employees kept informed, reassured, and a system put in place for employees to raise any concerns and to resolve identified issues.</b></li> <li>• <b>All employees returning to workplace to have access to Care first.</b></li> <li>• <b>Regular review of controls to ensure they remain fit for purpose and continued monitoring of employee views regarding returning to workplace</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to occupational health if required</b></li> <li>• <b>Carry out a stress risk assessment if required</b></li> </ul>	X			X			<p><b>Moderate Risk</b></p>
<p>9. Is there insufficient management oversight when the employee is carrying out their role?</p>	<p><b>There is clear management oversight of Employee X on a day to day basis, especially if he returned to the workplace.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regular review of controls to ensure they remain fit for purpose</b></li> </ul>	X					X	<p><b>Low Risk</b></p>

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<p>10. Is the member of staff required to travel as part of their role and do they use public transport?</p>	<p><i>Discussed with Employee X. Employee X uses public transport in peak rush hour times to commute to work.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Consideration should be given to staggering start and finish times to avoid peak rush hour</i></li> <li>• <i>Advice should be given to staff member to advise on the rules surrounding current use of public transport such as face masks etc</i></li> <li>• <i>Discuss any alternative methods of transport that could be adopted by employee such as bicycle etc.</i></li> </ul>	<p>X</p>				<p>X</p>	<p><b>Moderate Risk</b></p>
<p>11. Are any other risk assessments required to be carried out on this staff member (i.e. pregnancy risk assessment or risk assessment to conduct home visits for example)?</p>	<p><i>Discussed with Employee X. Employee X undertakes home visits as part of their role and therefore the risks associated with conducting home visits needs to be separately risk assessed using the separate risk assessment form</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Undertake separate risk assessments specific to home visits.</i></li> </ul>	<p>X</p>				<p>X</p>	<p><b>Moderate Risk</b></p>
<p>12. Is the staff member required to visit other sites that could be associated with increased risks related to Covid-19?</p>	<p><i>Discussed with Employee X. The only other sites required to be visited are the home visits carried out by Employee X.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>See results of separate risk assessments specific to home visits.</i></li> </ul>	<p>X</p>				<p>X</p>	<p><b>Moderate Risk</b></p>

<p>Sign &amp; Print Name:</p>	<p>Date: <b>23.06.2020</b></p>	<p>Date for Review:</p>
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**MEDWAY COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT – PART 3**

**ACTION SHEET**

MODERATE AND HIGH RISK HAZARDS IDENTIFIED AND NOTES	FURTHER COMMENTS / ACTION REQUIRED TO REDUCE RISK LEVEL FURTHER	TIMESCALE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
<b><i>General Covid-19 infection exposure and transmission</i></b>	<p><b><i>Employee X to continue working from home if possible</i></b></p> <p><b><i>If not possible, consider staggering start and finish times to avoid peak commute times on public transport.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Provide advice to employee x on all the measures currently in place in Gun Wharf to protect their safety and ask the employee if there are any further measures that they think could help to protect them further</i></b></p> <p><b><i>However, this is subject to the other results of the other risk factors and hazards.</i></b></p>		
<b><i>Increased vulnerability due to BAME background, gender, age and underlying medical conditions of employee x</i></b>	<b><i>Due to the volume of high risk factors associated with employee X, it would be advisable that they continue to work from home at present</i></b>		
<b><i>High risk work environment</i></b>	<b><i>The work environment for employee x allows for social distancing provided the employee follows all the signage and guidance posted around Gun Wharf.</i></b>		
<b><i>Employee x is currently suffering from stress/anxiety</i></b>	<b><i>An occupational health referral should be made to determine what further assistance or support could be provided. Employee to also be provided with details of Care first and mental health charities in addition to being signposted to further support HR have published on mental health and wellbeing</i></b>		

Appendix 4

<p><b><i>Employee required to travel on public transport to commute to work and to conduct home visits</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Provide advice and guidance to staff member on current risks of using public transport and current rules such as use of face masks for example.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Discuss alternative methods of transport such as bicycle.</i></b></p>		
<p><b><i>Employee required to carry out and undertake home visits</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Conduct the separate risk assessments specific to home visits and evaluate the results of those separate risk assessments.</i></b></p>		

SIGNED:	DATE:
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