**Protecting our staff – returning to work and Health Risk Assessments**

This document explains how to carry out an initial health risk assessment to enable an early review of risks, mitigation and controls for employees in vulnerable groups who work in settings.

To cause infection the Covid-19 virus needs to enter the body through the eyes the nose or the mouth and therefore there are two types of transmission:

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| --- | --- |
| **Direct Transmission**  When a person with the disease coughs or sneezes, droplets can spread up to 2m, which can be inhaled or land on your eyes. | **Indirect Transmission**  When a person with the disease coughs or sneezes, droplets can be deposited on surfaces and can last for up to 5 days. If you touch these surfaces with your hands and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, the virus can enter the body |

The aim is to prevent virus spread via indirect and direct transmission.

**Responding to these issues**

In response, the setting has undertaken a Health and Safety Risk Assessment for reopening, taking into account the Government’s “Working Safely during Covid-19” guidance, expectations for Covid-19 secure workplaces, Public Health England (PHE) guidance and new Government [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures%3Futm_source%3D9608bad7-1794-4353-b541-6b62ca6930f8%26utm_medium%3Demail%26utm_campaign%3Dgovuk-notifications%26utm_content%3Dimmediate&data=02%7C01%7C%7C3593d52ecb914efa624508d81e6b6551%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637292793888496755&sdata=s0yC7HyR9ekfMwtcm94ggDMfnMNk5LVQgzo5K3SqiJk%3D&reserved=0) in September 2020.

Staff have been consulted on this Risk Assessment and it will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

**Protecting setting staff**

The Government has confirmed that following the relaxation of shielding measures on 1 August they expect that most staff should attend setting, including those that are clinically vulnerable and extremely clinically vulnerable.

While it remains the case that those who can work from home should do so, it is recognised that this will not be applicable to most setting staff from September when all children return on a full- time basis.

Having considered Government guidance for full opening of settings in September 2020, essential measures put in place include:

* a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
* robust hand and respiratory hygiene
* enhanced cleaning arrangements
* active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
* putting in place any Personal Protective Equipment (and guidance for use for specific roles) as required by risk assessments.
* formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in setting wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable. This will include:
  + grouping children together
  + avoiding contact between groups
  + arranging classrooms with forward facing desks
  + adjusting timetable patterns and staggering entry and exit times
  + staff maintaining distance from children and other adults as much as possible, especially outside their bubble

**It is recognised that there are some groups who are particularly vulnerable or who have particular concerns about a return to work. An individual risk assessment for these individuals will provide reassurance and/or enable identification of any specific measures which may be appropriate and can reasonably be applied for individuals.**

**Clinically Extremely Vulnerable**

Individuals identified as being clinically extremely vulnerable (those with serious underlying health conditions), which puts them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus and have been shielding.

Shielding will be paused on 1 August and this group of staff can return to work where strict social distancing can be maintained. Guidance on protecting this category of vulnerability can be found on the [PHE website](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fguidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cf4136e449a9041d41ec308d7f8cfc156%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637251443486740854&sdata=v9pIpqBC9TpMkDFIIoKdPGedBttJp8ZUqjlGDGMtyjs%3D&reserved=0)

**Clinically Vulnerable**

Employees who are at higher risk (people with some pre-existing conditions, aged 70 (regardless of medical condition) or pregnant), as set out in the [Staying at home and away from others (social distancing) guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing#clinically-vulnerable-people) are advised to take extra care in observing social distancing.

**BAME Employees**

Emerging UK and international data suggest that people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are also being disproportionately affected by Covid-19. PHE have been asked by the Department for Health & Social Care (DHSC) to investigate this. Some research points to risk factors relating to people with BAME backgrounds who are over 55 or with other health vulnerabilities. Until the review by PHE has been concluded and more evidence is available, we are recommending that that the health risk assessment is undertaken with all BAME employees in front line roles.

**Other concerns**

It is recognised that some employees not covered by the specific categories above may nonetheless be anxious about returning to work especially if they have not been in the workplace for many months.

**Undertaking individual health risk assessments:**

Employees should complete the General Assessment section on Pages 3 and tick relevant sections on Page 4 of the Risk Assessment, detailing their normal role/activities and identifying their particular vulnerability/concerns.

The manager should discuss with the employee:

* The issues and potential risk factors and the mitigation that is already in place through the Health & Safety Risk Assessment. This includes safe systems of work, social distancing, hygiene measures and the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), if required.
* The need for, and viability of, any further measures that the staff member and/or the setting can put in place, including any temporary or alternative working arrangements to enable the key elements of the job role to be done.

**How to approach the health risk assessment:**

1. The tool is intended to provide structure to a one to one conversation with a staff member to seek a pragmatic and safe working arrangement.
2. Where actions to mitigate risk are outlined in the setting’s Health & Safety Risk Assessment for September opening, it is appropriate to cross-reference the actions to avoid duplication.
3. The risk assessment can be used in conjunction with, but not replace, any occupational health assessments or other existing medical advice.
4. It is very much hoped that agreement can be reached, but ultimately the setting will need to make a judgement about whether it is reasonable to require the employee to attend for work.
5. The risk assessment should be kept under review, particularly where circumstances change.

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

**Health Risk Assessment:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| General information | | | |
| Staff member’s name(s) |  | Job title |  |
| Setting |  | Working hours |  |
| Date of assessment |  | Review date |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Current post involves** | **(tick and give brief details where applicable)** |
| Direct contact with other adults |  |
| Direct contact with children |  |
| Providing support to colleagues but not directly in the setting (e.g. training) |  |
| Providing support to colleagues within the setting (e.g. cleaning, estates, IT) |  |
| Other relevant factors |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Individuals underlying health condition category / other factors** | **(tick where applicable)** | **Measures already in place** | | **Additional measures** |
| Extremely Clinically Vulnerable (has been in receipt of shielding letter) |  |  | |  |
| Age (>70 years). Please tick if age is over 50 for BAME staff |  |
| Diabetes |  |
| Chronic lung or heart disease |  |
| Cancer |  |
| Pregnancy (please indicate if over 28 weeks,  under 28 weeks if pre-existing risks present) |  |
| Immunosuppression |  |
| Pre-existing disability that impacts on respiratory morbidity |  |
| Clinical Obesity |  |
| BAME background |  |
| Gender (please tick if male BAME above 50) |  |
| Living with clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable people |  |
| Other concerns about attending for work (please detail) |  |
| Do you currently have symptoms of coronavirus? |  | Employee must isolate for 7 days and get a test | Does anyone you live with currently have symptoms ? | Employee must isolate for 14 days and get a test |

**Summary decisions and actions**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area of concern/risk** | **Measures to be put in place** | **Action by whom** | **Action by when** | **Completed** |
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| **Manager’s Assessment Summary** | | | |
|  | ***YES/ NO?*** |  | ***Monitoring / further action*** |
| Actions as detailed above reduce the risks to the employee |  | Manager and employee to keep under review |  |
| Actions as detailed above do not fully reduce the risk to the employee / some concerns remain |  | Seek further advice and support |  |
| Employee to attend work  If no include details of arrangements |  | Manager to monitor, set review date |  |

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| **Declaration** | |
| 1. I confirm that I have understood the risk assessment and had the opportunity to ask questions / seek clarification. 2. I confirm that I have been informed of my responsibility for personal hygiene and will follow the setting guidance accordingly. 3. I understand that if I present any symptoms of coronavirus, I must not attend the setting and will inform my manager immediately. 4. I will report immediately any colleague, contractor or anyone at setting acting in way that may put staff or children at risk. 5. I have been provided information on setting social distancing and understand the arrangements outlined to me. I will do all that is reasonable to ensure social distancing requirements are met. 6. I will inform my manager if I am tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if my circumstances change. | |
| Individual’s signature (can be electronic signature of reference to email confirmation) |  |
| Print name |  |
| Manager’s signature (can be electronic signature of reference to email confirmation) |  |
| Print name |  |