

No. 349/2020

1st July 2020

Dear Colleagues

POST OFFICE: COVID-19 - VULNERABLE PEOPLE POLICY

I wish to update Branches with regards to the attached Joint Statements agreed for the return to work of members in the vulnerable categories who have been self-isolating and/or shielding on 'Special Paid Leave' since March.

Government guidance for some time has been that people in the '*clinically vulnerable*' category and those who '*live with extremely clinically vulnerable*' people could go to work, albeit taking extra care due to their circumstances.

On June 19th, the government lowered the Covid-19 alert level to level 3 and on June 22nd, the government announced that people who are *clinically extremely vulnerable* and are currently shielding would no longer need to do so from August 1st in England.

As a response to the latest announcements, we have been working with Post Office and Unite to agree a way forward that facilitates the return to work of these members which is sensitive and empathetic thus helping them to feel confident in the knowledge that their safety and well-being in the workplace is an absolute priority.

The two Joint Statements for Crown Offices and Supply Chain (which are identical in content), explain the agreed timeline and flight-path of the crucial activities that need to be carried out by line managers before members are able to return to work.

Consequently, we have agreed that members who fall into the categories below will begin returning to work during July:

- Clinically vulnerable
- Living with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable

Members who are '*clinically extremely vulnerable*' will begin returning to work during August and will remain on paid special leave throughout July. The aim is that everyone is back at work by the beginning of September. Where there are differences across the UK regarding the lifting of shielding rules, members will return according to the protocols in the relevant country.

An integral and important part of the Joint Statements is a firm commitment that the activities below will be undertaken by line managers in advance of these members returning to the workplace. It is imperative our Representatives ensure that in all circumstances the following actions are performed as a pre-requisite to these members returning to full duties. Any problems encountered in this regard should be immediately reported to Lynn Simpson, Postal Executive member – lsimpson@cwu.org who is liaising with Senior Post Office Management in these matters.

- Workplace Risk Assessments
- Individual Risk Assessments
- 121 conversations to gauge the needs and support individuals may need
- Familiarisation of the operational changes to facilitate social distancing
- Half day induction

In closing, I am certain the agreed arrangements as contained within the Joint Statements are to the benefit of our members. It is though important that our Reps engage with management to ensure the agreed measures are followed in full. I also wish to thank Lynn Simpson who has engaged with Post Office management on this matter and other Covid-19 related issues. Branches and Representatives are urged to bring this LTB to the attention of Post Office members (particularly those in the categories described above).

Yours sincerely

Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary