

## **Statement between Royal Mail, Unite CMA and the CWU on the Return to Work Approach for Employees who are Shielding**

Royal Mail, Unite (CMA) and the CWU continue to work closely to understand the impact of COVID-19 guidance from the Government, to make our workplaces 'COVID-19 secure' and to maintain the protective measures put in place during COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this statement is to set out the commitment of RMG, Unite (CMA) and the CWU to the four-phased approach to support employees who are shielding (self or others) return to work in a COVID-19 secure workplace.

In mid-June, a toolkit and supporting documents were launched to enable managers to start discussions with employees in the vulnerable and shielding groups to determine whether an employee could return to work. Since the launch, we have seen colleagues in the vulnerable groups back in work, supported by the preventative measures in place across Royal Mail.

The Government has announced its furlough scheme is being withdrawn and public health guidance to those '**extremely clinically vulnerable**' employees shielding has changed (shielding is due to come to an end on **31 July 2020 (16 August 2020 in Wales)**). As a result, managers will start to review the situation for their employees who are currently absent from work due to shielding and start to discuss their return to work on **1 August 2020 (17 August in Wales)**.

A toolkit detailing a similar four-phased approach to the 'clinically vulnerable' toolkit, along with updated advice and forms relevant to shielding is being launched today, 6 July 2020:

- Phase 1 – Follow up call to start discussion and where appropriate, set up a further call/meeting to establish and agree return to work
- Phase 2 – Further call/meeting with the employee
- Phase 3 – Outcome of return to work review discussion including OH Advice where appropriate
- Phase 4 – Case review and final outcome

Managers of an employee who is shielding should:

- Review the toolkit and carry out the required actions [include link to toolkit]
- Use the support materials contained and referenced within the toolkit to support discussion to enable return to work
- Contact employees, approach the process and hold any conversations in a supportive and empathetic way
- Recognise the unprecedented nature of this pandemic and therefore explore the concerns employees may have about returning to work and provide any appropriate support
- Manage employees with dignity and respect
- Seek help and advice from HR Advice and Support to address any issues you may encounter

Although the guidance covers many situations, there will be a number of factors for managers to consider in each individual case. HR Services are available for further support, if required.

Any questions of interpretation on this statement should be sent to the signatories.

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