

Return to work review discussion for employees who are shielding/on furlough due to coronavirus

Version: 06 JULY 2020

Employee name:

Pay number:

Absence start date:

Absence end date:

Reason for absence:

A tool to help managers when welcoming back people to work following a period of non-attendance due to coronavirus related shielding / furlough.

The discussion should be conducted in privacy in an open and supportive way. The discussion is informal and is recommended to take place before any agreed return to work date.

Following your initial calls with the team member, set up a further call in advance of any agreed return to work date. As the Government's announcement that its furlough scheme is being withdrawn and the updated public health guidance to those employees shielding has changed (as at 23 June 2020), employees should start to discuss returning to work from 1 August 2020 (17 August in Wales). You should set up this call to take place at least two weeks before this date.

A telephone conversation with the employee would be appropriate as a face to face meeting is not possible while employees are still shielding.

It is very important that this supportive discussion takes place and that both the manager and employee discuss the shielding absence and the employee's overall wellbeing.

Employees will not be required to disclose information of a personal or sensitive nature if they choose not to do so.

Please record discussion points and agreed actions.

Welcome the team member to the discussion / meeting and explain its purpose:

- Check they are feeling OK and how they feel about potentially returning to work after a long absence.
- Provide an opportunity for the employee to raise any concerns they may have.
- Establish whether they need any additional support.
- Update them on what has happened whilst they have been away.
- Ensure that current medical information or certificate/s covers their whole absence.

Introduction:

As I mentioned on our call, the purpose of this meeting is to discuss any updated medical guidance you have received and your potential return to work. It is also to give you the opportunity to ask any questions or raise any issues with me.

During our meeting, I will be completing a COVID-19 return to work review. This is to help me review your personal situation to put in place the appropriate level of support to aid your return to work.

[PROMPT: Outline any previous discussions or communication with the employee and what was covered]

[PROMPT: OH advice is only going to be appropriate for employees who have been shielding themselves, not others] [It may be necessary for me to refer you to Occupational Health, but if this is the case, I will ask for your permission. Do you have any initial concerns or questions about this?]

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1. Can you outline how you have been over the last few weeks?

[PROMPT: Needing to shield in a pandemic is unprecedented and people will have had different experiences and reactions to it.]

2. We have worked hard to make our offices 'COVID-19 secure' and to maintain the protective measures put in place in the workplace, such as temporary changes to our operational processes, social distancing, hand washing, staggered start times, provision of protective equipment (PE) etc. To reiterate, in our office...

[PROMPT: Reiterate the preventative measures established within the unit that you covered in the initial call and any new measures or changes to working practices. Refer to the one-page summary listing preventative measures. Talk through in more detail than you did on the initial call, the health and safety measures put in place in your office and how they are working in practice.]

3. How are you feeling about returning to work following your shielding absence due to coronavirus?

[PROMPT: Acknowledge that the current pandemic is very stressful, and people cope in different ways. The team member may have been directly affected through family or friends contracting the virus or lost someone to the virus. Being at home for several weeks may have impacted on mental or physical wellbeing and they may be nervous about returning to work. Be mindful of the Press reports relating to evidence of increased risk of serious ill health or dying from COVID-19 for older groups and those from BAME backgrounds (particularly men). This may be an additional worry for employees from those groups, which should not be ignored – seek advice & support where required]

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4. To support this discussion, can you share with me up to date medical information e.g. NHS letter, Fit Note, other medical information, if relevant.

[PROMPT: Be mindful of the employee's right to maintain their medical information as confidential. If on medication, discuss any known side effects to ensure ability to perform job safely.]

*If the employee is shielding themselves (not others), is a referral to occupational health required to review and support understanding of the team members health status and return to work timeline?
Yes/No*

5. Discuss any key changes that may have taken place during the absence.

[PROMPT: Briefings, revised operations methods or work area changes e.g. one person per van, no need for PDA to be signed by the customer. Record brief details including obtaining signature for colleague brief sessions.]

6. Remind and share support available.

[PROMPT: Are you aware of the services of First-Class Support (0800 6888777)? Offer details, emphasis this is a confidential service available 24/7 and no information shared to the business. Note employee response. Share one-page support summary and signpost www.myroyalmail.com/Coronavirus for the latest advice and guidance.]

7. Let's agree next steps and your return to work date (if appropriate)

[PROMPT: Discuss how they would travel to work, any concerns and agree next steps, which may include flexibility, an agreed start date to return to work, job modifications and/or changes to hours via a phased return. Arrange a follow-up telephone call and/or another agreed review date as required. If a follow-up meeting is agreed, note the areas to be covered during the call. Consider:

- What can you change to help overcome the difficulties?*
- Are there any temporary or permanent adjustments that could potentially be made to the working*

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environment which may help, e.g. hours of work, the employee's duties and or role?

- *If there are any modifications or phased return to work options that are considered appropriate during the first week or so. Agree these and write them up with an expected conclusion date.]*

NOTE: For Disability related /Pregnancy Related Absences and short-term job modifications.

PROMPT: *Review any existing Risk Assessment for changes or ensure a Disability or New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment has been carried out and specify progress review arrangements including dates of weekly review meetings.*

After our meeting, I will finalise and complete the COVID-19 return to work review form. I will contact you in due course to update you on the outcome and next steps. I will share this review document with you once completed to reflect any agreed plan/commitments.

Many thanks for your time today. I am looking forward to welcoming you back to work and will do all I can to support your return.

If you have any questions in the meantime, just give me a call or drop me an email.

Confirmation that this supportive discussion covering the above points has taken place:

Employee's signature:

Date:

Manager's signature:

Date:

Print Name (Manager's):

Date:

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