

Return to work process: Phase 1 – Prompt sheet for initial phone call with employees who are shielding or self-isolating due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

This prompt sheet is for managers to use to start discussion with employees who are shielding or self-isolating due to coronavirus and where appropriate, to set up a meeting to discuss their potential return to work. It is intended to be used with employees who fall into any of the vulnerable groups, as identified in the Government guidance:

- **Extremely clinically vulnerable** – advised to shield
- **Clinically vulnerable** – over 70s, pregnant employees, or those with an underlying health condition
- **Carers of extremely clinically vulnerable** – have an NHS letter of the person they are shielding
- **Carers of clinically vulnerable** – stringently social distancing
- **Non-clinically vulnerable** – employees at risk of domestic abuse at home

Employee name:	Pay number:
Absence start date:	Absence end date:
Reason for absence:	

The purpose of the call is to check in with the employee and understand if there are any changes in circumstances following updated Government/NHS guidance to vulnerable groups and if appropriate, start to discuss returning to work.

The discussion is informal and is recommended to take place before any required meeting to discuss an employee's potential return to work following shielding or self-isolation due to coronavirus.

Please record discussion points and agreed actions.

<p>1. How have you been feeling and coping with shielding/self-isolation?</p> <p><i>[Prompt: Review their original NHS letter/communication or most recent fit note to check if the advice was to shield or self-isolate (for themselves or someone in their household.)]</i></p>
<p>2. As you may be aware, the Government has recently updated its guidance for vulnerable groups of people who were advised either to shield or self-isolate. I am therefore giving you a call to see how you are and to start to talk about the impact of these changes and how this may lead to your potential return to work</p> <p>Have you received any updated communication and/or medical evidence such as another NHS letter or fit note regarding your period of shielding/self-isolation?</p> <p><i>[Prompt: Government advice is for people to shield (shielding) until 30 June 2020 (31 July in Scotland, 16 August 2020 in Wales), when another Government update is expected. Other vulnerable groups, e.g. over 70s (self-isolating/social distancing) are able to return to work:</i></p>

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- *If they are shielding and haven't had any updated advice, they should continue shielding. They will, however, need to provide an updated NHS letter when their previous end of shielding date comes to an end or Government advice changes.*
- *For those self-isolating – if the date has run out on their current fit note, ask for further medical evidence and continue to ask the return to work questions from 6.]*

3. [If yes] Has the advice changed from the original medical evidence you provided?

[Prompt: As noted in 2., if they are shielding and haven't had any updated advice, they should continue shielding. There will be no need to ask the return to work related questions 6-10. or set up a meeting with the employee at this stage.]

4. Do you feel you have been able to look after your physical and mental wellbeing?

[Prompt: Reminder of health and wellbeing support available such as Feeling First Class]

5. Have you been able to keep up to date with the company communications, for example on the myroyalmail app?

[Prompt: Provide an update on the office – any news from colleagues, or the office]

There have been daily updates on how the RMG has been dealing with the impact of coronavirus. For example, there has been a huge amount of work done on putting in place measures to protect our employees and customers. In our office we have.....

[Prompt: Talk through the key health and safety measures put in place in your office and how they are working in practice. You may find the office SHE COVID-19 risk assessment useful]

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The following questions only need to be asked if shielding/self-isolating is not continuing for the employee.

6. Do you have any specific concerns about potentially returning to work?

[Prompt: If you have suggestions, talk through with the employee, e.g. if they are concerned about the commute to work, start to explore working different start times. Give examples of what other employees are doing to socially distance at work, e.g. staggered entry/exit times]

7. What is causing you most concern?

[Prompt: This could be related to the commute to work on public transport, not being able to socially distance at work.]

8. Is there anything you can suggest I/RMG can do to help address these concerns?

[Prompt: Start to think about whether they could start/finish at a different time due to avoid peak travel, carry out alternative duties any further adjustments that could be made in the office.]

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9. Based on our conversation today, when do you consider you will be able to return to work?

[Prompt: If they are reluctant to return to work, advise them to take a bit of time to reflect on what has been covered in the initial conversations and you can discuss further when you have the meeting.]

[Prompt: The following meeting may not be required if the employee is able to return to work with the current protective measures in place].

10. I would like to set up a meeting to discuss the potential options available regarding your return to work and what support can be put in place.

Would you be willing to come into the office for the meeting as I would be able to show you the changes we have implemented to our current ways of working and how the safety health and wellbeing of all employees and customers is at the forefront of everything we are currently doing, while managing our operation.

[Prompt: This enables the familiarisation and onboarding element – so encourage face-to-face with social distancing, as employees will be able to see the safety measures and changed working practices within the office. This may help address concerns they have. If the face-to-face review meeting is declined, you can set up a further call to discuss potential options of return to work. Do not force face-to-face].

11. Is there anything else you would like to cover today?

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Many thanks for your time today.

[If they are continuing to shield] **As the current advice is for you to continue shielding, we do not have to have a meeting about your potential return to work at this stage. Please continue to stay at home and keep me updated with any further advice you get. I will continue to contact you weekly as part of our agreed contact.**

[If they are not shielding and are able to return to work] **I look forward to you returning to work on [DATE]. On your first day I will hold a welcome back meeting with you.**

[If they are not shielding and can potentially return to work] **I will send out the meeting invite today. If you would like to be accompanied by a union rep or colleague at the meeting, please consider contacting them now.**

I am looking forward to welcoming you back to work and will do all I can to support this.

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

[Prompt: Signpost www.myroyalmail.com/Coronavirus for the latest advice and guidance]

After the call:

Additional comments/notes/actions from the manager: