

Return to work process: Phase 1 - Prompt sheet for follow-up phone call with employees who are shielding / on furlough due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

VERSION 06 JULY 2020

This prompt sheet is for managers to use to start discussion with employees who are shielding due to coronavirus to set up a further call to discuss their potential return to work. It is intended to be used with employees who have been shielding themselves or others, as identified in the Government guidance and those on furlough:

- **Extremely clinically vulnerable** – advised to shield
- **Carers of extremely clinically vulnerable** – have an NHS letter of the person they are shielding
- **Shielding self or others and on furlough** –

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of the call is to check in with the employee following the Government's announcement that its furlough scheme is being withdrawn and the updated public health guidance to those employees shielding. The guidance states employees should start to discuss returning to work from 1 August 2020 (17 August in Wales).

The discussion is informal and is recommended to take place before any required meeting (not face-to-face) to discuss an employee's potential return to work following shielding due to coronavirus. You may have covered some of the questions already when you had the initial return to work call mid-end June, so refer to that form in preparation for this phone call.

Please record discussion points and agreed actions.

1. Since we last spoke in mid/end June, how have you been feeling and coping with shielding?

[Prompt: Review their most recent NHS letter/communication or fit note to check the advice. This updated letter should now have been provided by the employee following your initial call in mid-end of June 2020.]

2. As you will be aware, the Government has recently updated its guidance for people who were advised either to shield or shield others. I am therefore giving you another call to see how you are and to start to talk about the impact of these changes and how I can support your potential return to work. How do you feel about the changes in advice?

[Prompt: Government advice is for people to shield (shielding) until 31 July 2020 (16 August 2020 in Wales) as long as the business is 'COVID-safe'.]

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3. 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]

As I mentioned in our previous call, we have been providing daily updates on how the RMG has been dealing with the impact of coronavirus, such as the measures to protect our employees and customers to make our offices 'COVID-19 secure'. In our office we have.....

[Prompt: Once again, 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. Mention any updates to the measures or working practices since you last spoke]

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

[Prompt: If return to work is causing concern, establish whether or not the concern is considered to be a clinical reason because they are shielding themselves.]

[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. If you have had employees return to work from other vulnerable groups, think about how you supported their integration back to the office]

5. 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 etc. 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]

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(particularly men). This may be an additional worry for employees from those groups, which should not be ignored – seek advice & support where required]

6. Is there anything you can suggest I or 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.]

7. 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 next conversation or 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].

8. I would like to set up a further discussion to talk through in more detail the potential options available regarding your return to work and what support can be put in place.

As you are still shielding under Government guidance, you will not be able to come into the office yet for the meeting, so we can do this over the phone.

[Prompt: As face-to-face meeting in the office is not possible yet, the employee will not be able to see the safety measures and changed working practices within the office. Consider if you can send

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something to the employee that shows the working practices, e.g. photos of signage, etc. This may help address concerns they have.

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

Many thanks for your time today.

[Confirm follow up conversations required and/or any future meeting invitations arranged (when employee is able to attend).]

If you would like a union rep or colleague to be on the call or involved in any meetings, 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:

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