**Managers Guidance on Staffing during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Last updated: 26 March 2020**

As the threat of Coronavirus intensifies in the UK, the following guidance has been drafted to support managers with working arrangements for staff groups. This local guidance has been informed by the following national guidance:

* ‘Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK’ (Gov.uk)
* ‘COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable’ (Gov.uk)
* COVID-19 guidance on isolation for residential-educational –settings (gov.uk)
* ‘Stay at home advice: Coronavirus (COVID-19) (NHS)
* Staying at home and away from others (social distancing) (Gov.uk)

A Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document, which provides more information, is also available on the intranet and for those staff who do not have access to the intranet, a private page is available to access on the internet.

This guidance is applicable in all situations. When the UK is in a lock down phase, where movement is severely restricted, then further measures apply. Refer to the FAQ for further details.

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| **Category** | **Detail** | **Manager Guidance** |
| A - Shielding | Those in this group are at **greatest risk of severe illness** from COVID-19 and should follow the **Government’s guidance COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable.** If not already done so, employees in this group should be contacted by the NHS with advice about the more stringent measures they should take in order to keep themselves and others safe. The Council is committed to ensuring staff in this category are protected as much as possible. | 1. If working from home is possible for the employee’s job role and personal circumstances, the Council will provide the technology and/or equipment in order to do so. 2. If the employee’s job role does not make it possible to work from home then they are **not required** to attend the workplace and will be required to fully follow shielding measures to keep themselves safe at home. For further information on shielding and protecting the most vulnerable **click here. (link to Gov’t guidance)** |
| B – Underlying Health Conditions | The following group with Underlying Health Conditions (UHC) need to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. This is because people in this group are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. The NHS also instruct those in this group to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds. The Council is committed to ensuring staff in this category are protected as much as possible.* aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
* under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
	+ chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-copd/), emphysema or [bronchitis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bronchitis/)
	+ chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-failure/)
	+ [chronic kidney disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-disease/)
	+ chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis/)
	+ chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson’s disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/parkinsons-disease/), [motor neurone disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/motor-neurone-disease/), [multiple sclerosis (MS)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/multiple-sclerosis/), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
	+ [diabetes](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetes/)
	+ problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sickle-cell-disease/) disease or if you have had your spleen removed
	+ a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hiv-and-aids/), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/steroids/) or [chemotherapy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chemotherapy/)
	+ being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
* those who are pregnant
 | 1. Wherever possible, we will expect employees in this group to work from home. The Council will provide the employee with the technology and/or equipment in order to do so.
2. If the employee has a job or personal circumstances where this is not possible, the following applies:
* You need to have a discussion with the employee about **social distancing** and how you will be able to make their workplace safe.
* A risk assessment template has been developed to support managers with this and is **available here. (link to template)**

Outside of Lockdown, if the employee’s job cannot be done safely with social distancing in place, or they have discussed with you that they feel at **significant** risk of harm, then the employee will required to **self-isolate.** This means that they need to take all reasonable steps to ensure they are not placing themselves or others at increased risk of contracting the Coronavirus. |
| C – Self Isolation/Others | Those in this group are self-isolating because they have a household member who has contracted the Coronavirus or is showing possible symptoms. | Employees are required to self-isolate for 14 days.1. Wherever possible, the employee is expected to work from home in the first instance and will be provided with the technology and/or equipment in order to do so.
2. If this is not possible, then the employee is required to fully self-isolate at home. This means that they need to take all reasonable steps to ensure they are not placing themselves or others at increased risk of contracting the Coronavirus.
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| D – Self Isolating/Self | Those in this group have displayed symptoms of Coronavirus but are well and fit for work. | 1. Wherever possible, the employee is expected to work from home in the first instance and will be provided with the technology and/or equipment in order to do so.
2. If this is not possible, then the employee is required to fully self-isolate at home for 7 days if they live alone and 14 days if they live with others in the household. This means that they need to take all reasonable steps to ensure they are not placing themselves or others at increased risk of contracting the Coronavirus.
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| E– Self isolating/vulnerable others  | Those in this group are self-isolating because they have a household member who has the highest level of need and falls within a Group 2 group.  | 1. Wherever possible, the employee is expected to work from home in the first instance and will be provided with the technology and/or equipment in order to do so.
2. If this is not possible, then they are required to fully self-isolate at home. This means that they need to take all reasonable steps to ensure they are not placing themselves or others at increased risk of contracting the Coronavirus.
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| F – Off sick with COVID 19 | Those in this group have displayed symptoms of Coronavirus and are not well and not fit for work. | The employee is required to fully self-isolate at home for 7 days if they live alone and 14 days if they live with others in the household as a minimum or for as long as they are unwell. This means that they need to take all reasonable steps to ensure they are not placing themselves or others at increased risk of contracting the Coronavirus. If your employee has one of the symptoms of COVID-19 and are not fit for work, they should follow the normal sickness procedures and contact either the sickness hotline (Departments) or your manager (Chief Executives). This will be recorded as sickness absence. Triggers and sickness reviews are suspended.*For HR recording purposes, the employee will be classed as ‘Sick and not fit for work – COVID19’.*  |
| G – Childcare | Staff whose children who are absent from school and there is no alternative. | From Monday 23rd March schools will only be open to children in the following groups: children with a social worker; some children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and children of critical worker parents. The schools will only look after children of these workers where the parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.  The government are stating that “if it is at all possible for children to be at home then they should be.”  |
| H – At work | All other staff. | The Council must ensure that services are delivered as far as practicably possible in the current challenging circumstances. Whilst working from home is encouraged in line with the national guidance, and all measures are being put in place to facilitate this for priority services, this is not possible for all job types and services. This presence will be locally determined and managed by Assistant Directors and Directors. During Lockdown, employees in this category who are not an essential employee in a Priority 1 critical service, must stay at home and self-isolate unless they are redeployed into roles in priority areas.If you are in a Council building or workplace (such as outside) and not working from home, then social distancing must be observed, wherever possible. We advise employees to follow social distancing measures as much as possible and to significantly limit face-to-face interaction with colleagues and customers and service users as much as practicably possible within their job role such as:1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.
2. Avoid sitting directly next to colleagues wherever possible and keep at least 2 metres apart. This might mean changing where you would normally sit. Please note a manager may ask you to move or put in place new arrangements to ensure that social distancing rules are adhered to.
3. Holding meetings via Lync (guidance is available on the intranet) rather than face to face. If face to face meetings are absolutely required, ensure there is enough space to sit far enough away from each other.
4. Avoid gatherings in the corridor, kitchen or toilets.
5. Use other ways of communicating such as telephone, email or Lync video and messaging to keep in touch.
6. If you work outside ensure, where possible, ensure that a 2 metre distance is kept between each other.

Everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as is practicable. |

The above provides guidance for managers on the most likely circumstances. However, there will always be examples where guidance does not sufficiently cover the circumstance. HR are always there to provide support to managers. For further guidance and support, please contact HR@hartlepool.gov.uk.