

COVID-19 Coronavirus – Staff Guidance

This guidance was updated on: **2nd July 2020**

How to use this guidance document

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COVID-19 Coronavirus – Risk Reduction Framework

This guidance covers:

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1. Risk Reduction Framework

BCC has designed a Risk Reduction Framework and Sample Risk Assessment with input from Health & Safety, Occupational Health, Building Management, Public Health, Human Resources, Workforce Equalities & Trade Unions.

The Risk Reduction Framework outlines that there are 3 elements that should be considered:

1. The Work Environment
2. The General Risk Assessment
3. The Person

Please refer to visuals and links on the following pages (these can also be downloaded on the [Covid-19 Staff Guidance web pages](#)):

Risk Reduction Framework

COVID – 19

The General Risk Assessment

These should be in place and consider the significant risks that your employees face whilst at work. In addition managers should now be considering the impact of COVID-19 and what control measures need to be introduced specifically around routes of exposure and the vulnerability of the employees for which they are responsible for.



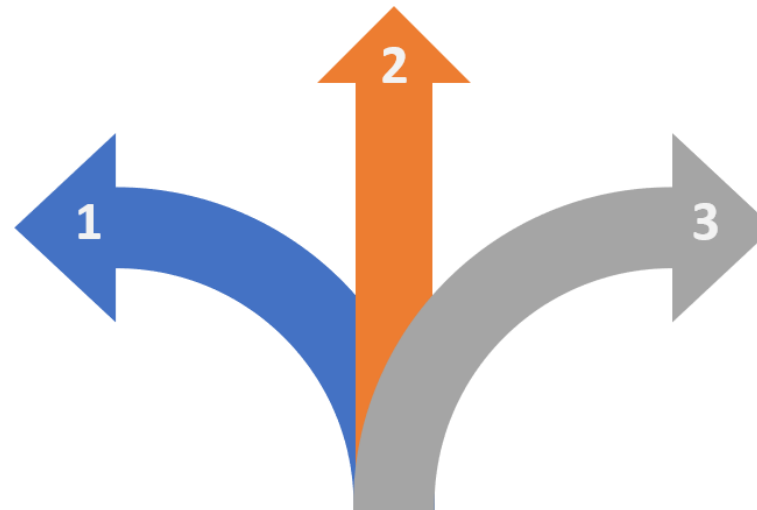
The Work Environment

Take into consideration the ability to maintain social distancing and likelihood of exposure to COVID-19 within the workplace(s)

Hierarchy of control

- Eliminate possibility of exposure – Home Working / reduced need for travel and physical attendance at locations
- Reduction by hygiene measures
- Safe systems of work
- Task Specific PPE including training and fit testing

Monitor the Effectiveness of these measures and adherence to the controls put in place.



The Person

Age - those aged over 70 are particularly vulnerable
Clinically vulnerable people - those with underlying health conditions.

Ethnicity – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, those at increased risks, particularly aged above 55 or have comorbidities (multiple medical conditions occurring at the same time).

Pregnancy - in particular those who are over 28 weeks or have underlying health conditions

Disabilities identified which may be the subject of reasonable adjustments

Talk through the control measures with your team and address the concerns of all.

Occupational Health can also support this process via the manager referral route.

Risk Reduction Framework Considerations

Workplace Risk Factors

Individual Risk Factors and Workplace Risk Factors – only if working from home cannot be preserved

Individual Risk Factors



Increasing Risk

Age < 40
No underlying health conditions and no criteria from higher risk groups

Age > 40 years old
Employee lives with someone shielding

Ethnicity – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, those at increased risks, particularly aged above 55 or have comorbidities (multiple medical conditions occurring at the same time).

Clinically vulnerable people - those with underlying health conditions.

Disabilities subject of reasonable adjustments

Age > 70 years old
Extremely Clinically vulnerable people - those within shielded group

Pregnancy – (over 28 weeks or underlying health conditions)

- Necessary direct physical contact with people
- Necessary / possible contact members of the public without a physical barrier
- Necessary / possible contact > 2m with number of people without a physical barrier
- Can maintain physical barrier > 2m with a limited shared facilities
- Can maintain social distancing (>2m, or with a present) and no shared facilities
- Can maintain social distancing (>2m, or with a physical barrier always present) but with
- Performing all work duties from home

Consider lower risk staff members performing these tasks. Seek alternative work role or work from home if not possible to work in alternative role

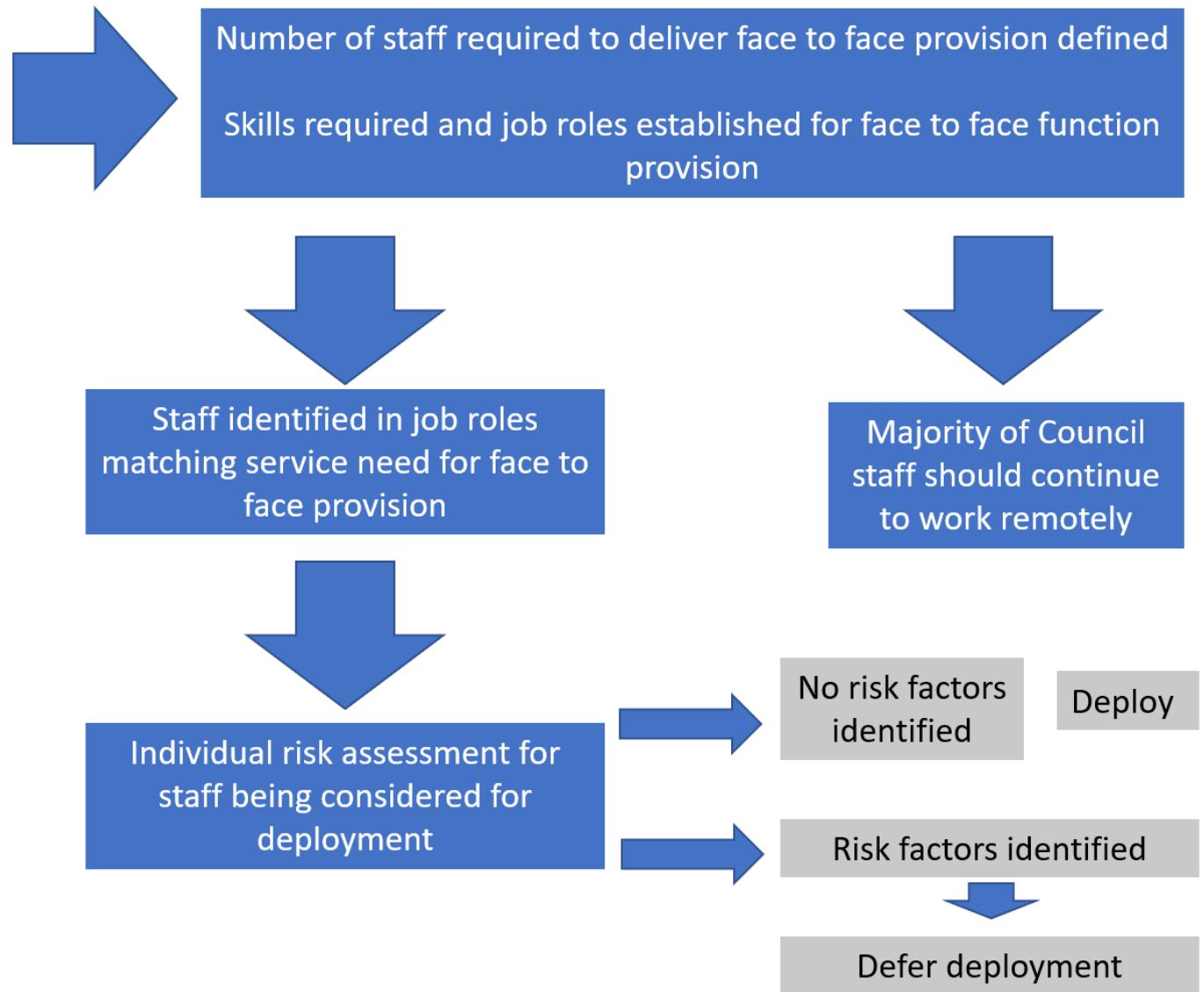
Consider lower risk staff members performing these tasks. Workplace adjustments should be sought if person unable to work from home.

Universal risk control measures and workplace risks assessed to increase safety.



*Sex – males are considered to be more susceptible to COVID, however gender should only be considered as an contributory feature in an individual assessment in conjunction with other risk factors.

- Service Risk Assessment**
1. Is face to face working required to deliver the service?
 2. How frequent is face to face working required?
 3. Inside or outside setting?
 4. How many staff are needed to deliver face to face work?
 5. How long is the duration of face to face engagement with an individual?
 6. What other methods of delivery have been used during lockdown?
 7. What did they deliver in terms of outcomes?
 8. What is the justification for face to face delivery returning?



2. Sample Risk Assessment Template

We have developed a sample risk assessment to support managers reviewing the risk of Covid-19 infection for vulnerable employees and for the workplace. The template can be found here: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50234/covid-19_staff_guidance/2150/covid-19_health_and_safety/5

The sample risk assessment form is intended to assist managers in meeting their legal obligation to protect the health safety and welfare of employees by assessing and managing risks in relation to Coronavirus in the workplace.

The sample assessment covers the working environment - particularly for indoor environments such as offices, contact centres, operation rooms and similar workplaces and has been developed in line with the government guidance on Coronavirus – COVID-19:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles>

Additional individual risk assessments are needed for individual employees who have any factor which places them at higher risk or in a vulnerable category and for all factors, consideration must be given to adjustments for any employees with any protected characteristics.

Additional role-based risk assessments may be needed over and above the workplace assessments where the nature of work is impacted by the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

In this extraordinary circumstance, general principles of risk assessment still apply – it is critical that staff and managers work together to agree an approach.

Consider the following:

- Combat risks at source
- Take advantage of technology wherever possible
- Prioritise controls that protect the greatest number of people
- Consider what procedures may need to be created
- Consider PPE as a last resort
- Consult those that will be affected (service user / staff delivering the service)
- Review your assessment and the control measures with other similar services or other local authorities

- Ensure that you monitor the effectiveness of controls

It is important to remember that these considerations should be in addition to existing risk assessment control measures and should form a key part of business continuity plans. You will need to formalise such assessments and ensure there is Trade Union consultation, and results are communicated to employees and, where appropriate, service users.

3. Higher risk (Vulnerable) Staff

The virus that causes COVID-19 infects people of all ages.

The NHS state that the following factors should be considered as these groups are more vulnerable to getting severe COVID-19 disease:

- Age - People who are 70 years old or over;
- Gender – males are at greater risk;
- Clinically vulnerable People - with underlying medical conditions/long-term health conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, cancer and those who are immune compromised);
- Pregnancy; particularly those who are over 28 weeks or have underlying health conditions
- Ethnicity: Those within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups appear to be at increased risk, particularly aged above 55 or have comorbidities/underlying health conditions
- Disabilities identified which may be the subject of reasonable adjustments

Clinically vulnerable staff – generally those who are eligible for the season flu jab.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) emphasizes that all people must protect themselves from COVID-19, through regular hand washing for 20 seconds and respiratory hygiene (catch it, bin it, kill it), which will also help to protect others within these vulnerable groups.

The Council is supporting the most vulnerable based on their working situation and the level of clinical risk. If able, staff should notify managers of their existing health conditions/concerns, so managers can ensure these staff are supported, and prioritised to assure social distancing, by working from home where possible, otherwise by changing working practices/responsibilities and/or redeployment. Staff with pre-existing conditions can email Occupational Health Occupational.Health@birmingham.gov.uk to seek advice.

Further guidance on extremely clinically vulnerable (shielded) people

Where staff are in **the 'shielded group'** that have been contacted by the NHS and instructed to self-isolate due to the very high level of risk for this group, staff must stay at home until 31st July, and this absence should be recorded as self-isolating (no symptoms) including an end date, in line with staff guidance. **These staff must have an individual risk assessment** completed with management looking at all the risk factors, and should be supported to work from home. Only where a workplace is COVID-19 secure, and strict social distancing can be maintained, should there be any discussion about the potential for these staff returning to work.

The council will review the situation following national guidance, as it is released. Detailed guidance for shielded individuals can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Disease specific advice is available on the national disease charity websites e.g. British Lung Foundation, British Heart Foundation, Diabetes UK and Macmillan Cancer Support.

COVID-19 Coronavirus – Staff Guidance on Self-Isolation

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1. NHS Test and Trace

The [NHS test and trace service](#) will contact people who need to self-isolate because they have had “close” recent contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. Any contacts who need to self-isolate will be contacted by phone, letter, email or text message setting out how long they need to self-isolate for.

Affected employees must provide this notification to their manager and record the self-isolation period on [self-service](#) (as detailed under Self Isolation 1.1). The manager must upload the notification to the employees [DPF](#).

The period of **self-isolation will be for 14 days** from the point of most recent contact with the person who has tested positive for coronavirus.

If the employee is able to work from home they should continue to work unless they become unfit to work, then the [COVID-19 absence reporting](#) process should be followed.

2. Notifying coworkers

When someone first develops symptoms and orders a test, they will be encouraged to alert the people that they have had close contact with in the 48 hours before symptom onset. If any of those close contacts are co-workers, the person who has developed symptoms may ask their employer to alert those co-workers.

At this stage, co-workers **should not self-isolate** but should follow [Government guidance](#).

Since 18th May, everyone in England who is showing coronavirus symptoms is eligible to book a swab test to find out if they have the virus.

People can register for a test at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>, after checking their symptoms. Those in England and Wales who do not have any access to the internet, or who have difficulty with the digital portals, will be able to ring a new 119 service to book their test. You should ask for the test in the first 3 days of symptoms.

Essential workers are prioritised for testing, while allowing as many tests as possible for the wider population:

- Essential Workers and members of their household who have symptoms should continue to register for a test here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers>

Staying Alert:

We can all help control the virus if we all stay alert. This means we must:

- Stay at home as much as possible
- Work from home if we can
- Limit contact with other people
- Keep our distance if we go out (2 metres apart where possible)
- Wash our hands regularly
- Self-isolate if we or anyone in our household has symptoms

3. Self-isolation – guidance and recording

Further to Government guidance staff should self-isolate:

- if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- after 7 days, if you do not have a high temperature, you do not need to continue to self-isolate. If you still have a high temperature, keep self-isolating until your

temperature returns to normal. You do not need to self-isolate if you just have a cough after 7 days, as a cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone

- if you live with others and you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), then you must stay at home for 7 days, but all other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill. [See the explanatory diagram](#)
- for anyone else in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period. The ending isolation section below has more information, and [see the explanatory diagram](#)
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874011/Stay_at_home_guidance_diagram.pdf

Where staff are in a household where 14 days isolation is advised, they should register for a COVID19 test. Once the test results are confirmed you must advise your manager. Detailed guidance is provided by the government here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

You must contact your line manager in accordance with the sickness absence policy and remain in contact with your line manager throughout the self-isolation period. If you are unable to contact your line manager, you should contact an appropriate senior manager in your service.

Managers must take account of the epidemic situation and should not take action under the sickness absence policy as staff must not feel under inappropriate pressure to attend work when this risks infection of citizens and colleagues. A diagram of reporting processes is included at the end of this section.

Recording – it is very important that staff record self-isolation to inform council business continuity planning – we need to know who can work, and where.

NB – Staff who are simply working from home, should not record they are self-isolating, unless they meet the government criteria.

3.1. Self-Isolating with Symptoms – Fit to Work

- If you are showing mild symptoms but are fit to work, you must up-date your HR/Payroll record on the Intranet/People Solutions via [this link](#).

- You should record this period of special leave under the category 'self-isolating with symptoms'. This will not count towards your sickness absence record. If you do not have access to the intranet/people solutions your line manager can record this on your behalf.
- You should discuss with your line manager about whether you can work from home and undertake work activities. See further advice on working from home.
- Note that this is recorded as a period of special leave, therefore, you will have to record leave around bank holidays as you cannot have two types of leave on your record at the same time.
- Where you have symptoms, you should register for a test, if tested and this confirms you do not have COVID 19 then, where you are fit to work, you will be expected to return to work as soon as possible

3.2. Unfit to Work – Cough/Cold/Flu

- You must follow the Council's sickness absence policy and notify your line manager. This absence will count towards your sickness absence record (for pay purposes, not towards absence triggers for AIP/FCH) and as such MUST be recorded using -
 - Primary Absence: Cough, Cold, Flu
 - Secondary Absence: Other Cough, Cold, Flu
- When you feel better, and fit to work, you may need to stay in self-isolation, pending COVID-19 test results, and should report absence as under 1.3 below.
- Where you have COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste), you should register for a test; if tested and this confirms you do not have COVID-19 then, when you are fit to work, you will be expected to be available to work as soon as possible. If COVID-19 is subsequently confirmed, then see 1.4 below.

3.3. Self-isolating without Symptoms – Fit to Work

- If you are self-isolating without symptoms, either because you feel better after cough/cold/flu symptoms or due to another suspected COVID-19 case in your household, you should register for a test; if tested and this confirms you/household members do not have COVID 19 then, where you are fit to work, you will be expected to be available to work as soon as possible.
- If you are self-isolating without symptoms you must up-date your HR/Payroll record on the Intranet/People Solutions via [this link](#).
- You should record this period of special leave under the category 'self-isolating without symptoms', this will not count towards your sickness absence record. If

you do not have access to the intranet/people solutions your line manager can do this on your behalf.

- You should discuss with your line manager about whether you can work from home to undertake work activities. See below further advice on working from home.
- Note that this is recorded as a period of special leave, therefore, you will have to record leave around bank holidays as you cannot have two types of leave on your record at the same time.

3.4. Confirmed COVID-19 – unfit to work

- If an employee has **tested positive for COVID-19** you must follow the Council's sickness absence policy and notify your line manager. This absence will count towards your sickness absence record (for pay purposes, not towards absence triggers for AIP/FCH) and as such **MUST** be recorded using -
 - Primary Absence: "Infectious Disease"
 - Secondary Absence: "COVID-19"
- Staff or management may also contact Occupational Health to seek advice where there is a confirmed case.
- At the end of the absence period, the absence record **MUST** be closed immediately.
- If you are currently absent from work due to a different sickness reason, that absence period should be ended on the Intranet/People Solutions and replaced with the COVID-19 absence, until recovery. If you continue to remain absent due to the previous sickness reason, your line manager will need to end the COVID-19 entry and add a new absence reason to continue the previous absence (line managers please note that the dates must run consecutively).
- Absence relating to COVID-19 will not be a trigger for an AIP or FCH and will be disregarded.
- Managers must notify BCCCovid19@Birmingham.gov.uk of confirmed cases

3.5. Confirmed COVID-19 – fit to work

- If you have confirmed COVID-19 but are fit to work, you must up-date your HR/Payroll record on the Intranet/People Solutions via [this link](#).
- You should record this period of special leave under the category 'self-isolating – COVID-19 fit for work'. This will not count towards your sickness absence record. If you do not have access to the intranet/people solutions your line manager can record this on your behalf.
- You should discuss with your line manager about whether you can work from home and undertake work activities. See further advice on working from home.

- Note that this is recorded as a period of special leave, therefore, you will have to record leave around bank holidays as you cannot have two types of leave on your record at the same time.
- Managers must notify BCCCovid19@Birmingham.gov.uk of confirmed cases

4. What can managers do to help?

This isn't a normal work from home situation, it is an emergency situation where we are required to be at home during lockdown of a pandemic. Our priority is to save lives.

Managers should be familiar with this staff guidance and should consider the impact of working in the current situation, particularly with regard to the potential impact on their employees.

As part of our business continuity planning, we should all be supporting more flexible working patterns, including home working. It is important that you have ensured that all members of the team know how they can work remotely. IT&D Services have created a range of online technical advice and guidance to support remote working, which can be accessed here, and there is also further information on the ModernWorkplaceHub at <https://birminghamcitycouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/ModernWorkplaceHub>

Managers should support staff who are caring/self-isolating, to work as flexibly as possible, including outside of normal working hours - potentially working evenings and weekends. Managers must agree the hours that an employee can reasonably work given other caring commitments and ensure regular contact with employees as well as when and how this contact will be maintained.

It is important that staff do maintain a record of the hours they have worked, and ensure they maintain their wellbeing, further advice has been provided on this. A template is provided for this purpose for staff without access to Borer time recording. Note that we are requesting Borer to be configured to allow staff to record hours working from home over a 24/7 period. It is important that staff ensure that they use the web clocking facility to record hours in Borer.

It is also important that you have thought through how staff who cannot deliver their role home working can be redeployed from home to support other areas of the business. This should be worked through within your directorate as part of the directorate business continuity planning.

Where staff are on site, reinforce the clean desk policy. This is essential to enable our cleaning staff to clean down the desk areas regularly. We are asking all managers to enforce this strictly to make our workplaces safer. We must also reduce sharing of desks during and seek to allocate staff to use the same operating area/vehicles to minimise risk of cross-contamination.

Where a family member dies due to COVID-19, managers should show empathy and compassion to support the employee. Any death of a family member is devastating, but particularly where we are in social distancing as this will impact on organising funeral arrangements and trying to console each other. Further guidance is provided in the 'Health & Wellbeing' section of this document, and a link to the Compassionate Leave guidance and policy is here:

https://intranet.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/leave_and_time_off/596/personal_commitments_and_emergencies

5. What can all staff do to help?

We are asking all staff to follow government guidance on social distancing and continue to follow good hygiene guidance – catching coughs/sneezes and washing hands regularly with water and soap, and avoiding touching your face.

There is a lot of information to help employees contained within this staff guidance and also on the intranet and internet COVID-19 Coronavirus.

You should inform your manager if you have any pre-existing health conditions, so that managers can support you and seek Occupational Health advice.

Please work with management and your colleagues and be as flexible as possible to support services to citizens.

6. Advice for carers

Currently there is no additional advice for carers and there is no additional risk to being in the workplace if staff are practicing good hygiene before returning home. However, if a member of staff lives in a household with someone who is in the shielded group, they should only attend work only if social distancing can be adhered to; Managers should allow staff who live with someone in the shielded group to work from home where possible. For reference, the highest standard of infection control – for clinical professionals in hospital settings - recommends:

When your shift finishes

- Wash hands and forearms with soap and water and dry them
- Remove uniform/clothes and bag these, changing into fresh clothes

When you arrive home

- Wash your hands again
- Keep your clothes bagged, or immediately put them in the machine and wash by itself at the highest temperature fabric can tolerate. Then iron or tumble dry
- Throw away the plastic bag that you carried your uniform in
- Wipe down your phone

You may want to plan at this time for how the individual you care for would manage if you needed to self-isolate due to symptoms and start to think this through with relatives and friends.

The City Council funded Carers Hub is a one-stop shop for all age, citywide carer support service. They can link carers to a number of specialist bespoke services, such as Young Carers, Dementia, and Mental Health support. We recognise the city's unpaid carers as 'partners in care' and it's important that carers are recognised as 'Key Workers'. Carers who register with the Hub can benefit from a wide range of support and services. The 'Birmingham Carers Card' is a photo ID, that supports the council's logo and confirms a carers status as a key worker. Carers are benefiting from priority access to supermarkets and access other discounted goods and services. Our lead Commissioner for carer support services is a carer himself. Gordon Strachan is hosting a weekly BCC working carers Teams Meeting drop-in. 12-1 PM every Friday. The meeting goes by the name of the 'The Decompression Chamber for working carers' and by all accounts it does exactly what it says on the tin! Birmingham Carers Hub Can be contacted on 0333 006 9711 and their website address is: www.forwardcarers.org.uk

7. If a colleague is diagnosed with COVID-19

The risk of spread within the workplace is relatively low as we rarely are within 1m of a colleague for a prolonged period of time (more than 15-20mins). Therefore, there is unlikely to be a need for colleagues to self-isolate if they have been in contact with the person, however if a member of staff then becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home and, for critical staff, advised to arrange a COVID19 test and follow the stay at home guidance.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough and/or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop

symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection.

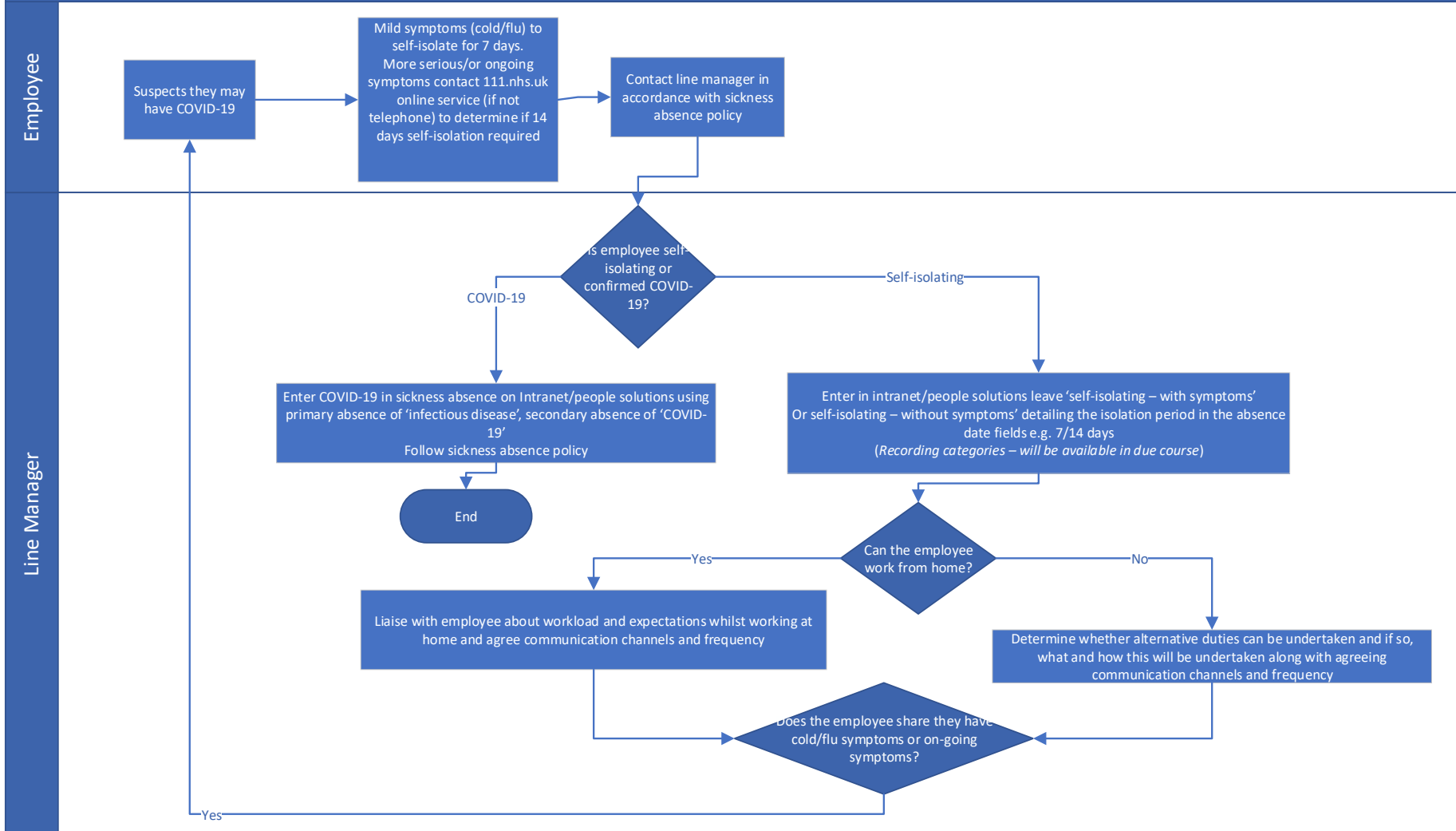
Managers should notify BCCCovid19@Birmingham.gov.uk of confirmed cases and seek any additional advice and guidance from occupational health where necessary Occupational.Health@birmingham.gov.uk regarding risk assessment, finally, building management should be informed to ensure that appropriate cleaning activity is prioritised.

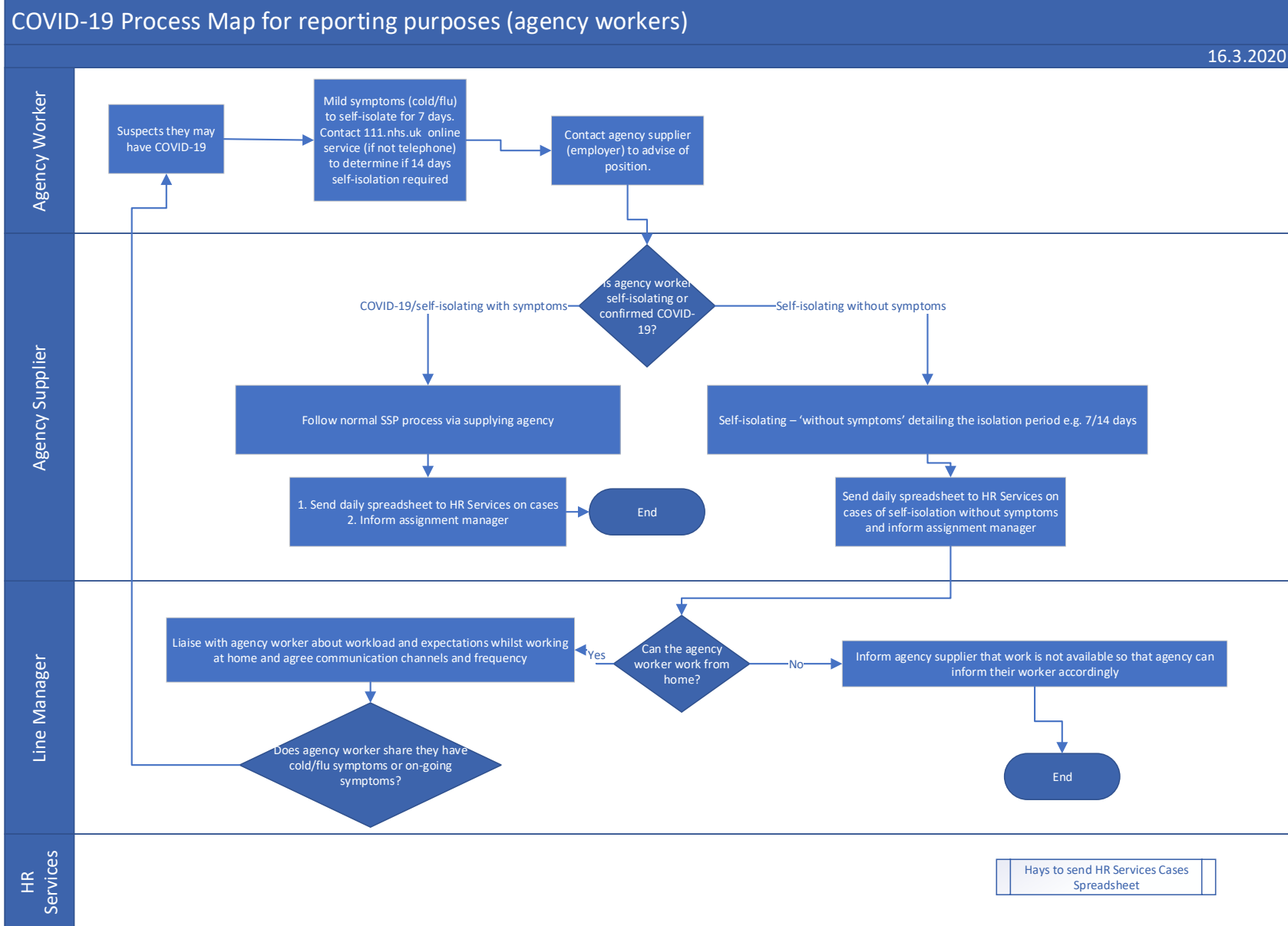
Therefore, unless there is knowledge that an employee has spent an extended period in very close proximity with colleagues or citizens, it is not recommended to advise people of a confirmed COVID19 infection.

8. Process maps for reporting absence

COVID-19 Process Map for reporting purposes (employees)

16.3.2020





COVID-19 Coronavirus – Staff Guidance on Working from Home

This guidance covers:

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1. Working from home

National guidance states that **all staff should be temporarily working from home**, unless providing front-line critical services.

The council is following the guidance both on social distancing and self-isolating. Managers are enacting their business continuity plans which include homeworking arrangements. All staff who can work remotely from home should be doing so in line with these national guidelines.

There is a variety of work that can be undertaken at home, some tips and examples are below:

- Update your preferred telephone contact number on Outlook (especially if you haven't already diverted your council work landline number to your mobile)
- Make sure your email signature includes your contact details including a telephone number (where you have BCC telephone equipment)
- Do not use out of office auto responses if you are working from home – this is not necessary and is driving up email volume
- If you are absent (ill/on leave) activate your 'Out of Office' message to signpost support in your absence, detailing when you are not available
- Check that your signature on the bottom of your emails is accurate, which should include your preferred telephone contact number whilst you are working from home
- Virtual meetings using Office 365 tools like Microsoft Teams or Skype – hints and tips on using these tools can be found [here](#) and on the [Modern Workplace Hub](#)
- 10 Mandatory iLearn e-learning courses (note new deadlines in the Learning & Development section): <https://birmingham.learningpool.com/login/index.php>
- Other iLearn modules for self-development
- Read information/guidance/policies on the Intranet: <https://intranet.birmingham.gov.uk/>

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- ODP development, including Peer to Peer coaching meetings and workbooks
- Other online training, e.g. with professional bodies, industry guidance etc.
- Background reading related to work activities
- Updating departmental policies and procedures;
- Apprenticeship related work;
- Support other colleagues to deliver council work, e.g. report writing, making calls, reviewing documents, data entry etc.
- Check out the Government Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp
- Check in with work colleagues so that you have contact on a regular basis.

You must ensure that you protect confidential information and comply with council policy and procedure – guidance can be found [in the 'Data Protection and GDPR' section of the Intranet](#). It is acceptable for staff to utilise personal shredders to dispose of confidential waste.

Line managers will maintain contact with employees about workload and expectations whilst working at home and agree communication channels and frequency of contact. The business continuity plan for your service will advise contacts if you are unable to speak to your line manager. You must remain in contact with your line manager and be available during your normal working hours.

If you do not wish to work from home, there may be limited opportunities to work in the few critical council offices that remain open – this should be raised with your line manager who can explore with the directorate business continuity representative ([included in the HR and Payroll section of this document](#)).

It is important to recognise that for most staff costs associated with travel to/from work will cease during this period. The council will not reimburse utilities costs relating to homeworking during the COVID19 crisis. However, you may be able to apply for tax relief on £6 per week, you can find out more and fill out a P87 form here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-income-tax-relief-for-your-employment-expenses-p87>

Support on Finance issues

It is important that during the COVID19 epidemic, we are capturing the financial and procurement implications of work we are undertaking and ensuring we pay suppliers in the most effective way.

The finance team have created a site with some useful information here: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/staff_finance_guidance

If you have additional content you wish to see, please email simon.tovey@birmingham.gov.uk

Support on ICT issues

It is important that during the COVID19 epidemic, we are making the most of our ICT hardware and software, the ICT&D team have created a site with some useful information here: <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/staffitguidance>

Updating passwords

You can check when your network/ADDM password expires on your desktop. Please ensure that you change your password before it expires; if your password does expire, then you must directly connect to the BCC network to set up a new one – this will require travel to a BCC property.

2. Employees that do not have technology to work from home

If the employee's role is such that working from home is not possible (because of little or no ICT, or involves tasks that cannot be carried out from home), then in such instances staff will be expected to be available to work in alternative roles, otherwise they remain at home during the period of lockdown without having to register this as sick leave or special leave, and without any impact on their contractual pay.

However, in such instances it is expected that a discussion will take place with their manager about work activities a staff member could complete from home. Each service area/team business continuity plan will have critical activities and you should refer to this and talk to your manager about tasks you can complete. Where staff unreasonably refuse to work this may be considered a disciplinary matter.

All managers must ensure that staff are only required to travel for business-critical and key/critical worker activity. Directorates have identified key/critical workers and these staff will be prioritised for access to IT kit, whilst supplies are awaited. This is necessary to keep the organisation going.

[Bring Your Own Device](#) - or BYOD – has now been introduced to enable staff to access the council's Office 365 applications including email accounts, Teams and Yammer by downloading the apps to their own personal device. There is also useful guidance on [how to connect with no access to broadband](#).

Staff having difficulties with IT access should report issues in the usual way, either online via the [IT&D Portal](#) or by phoning the IT&D Service Desk. Further online advice is available [here](#).

3. Top 5 tips for managing remote workers

Tip 1: Establish new ground rules for communication

As soon as possible agree with your team how you will work together effectively in this new virtual environment. Agree as a team which method; (email, instant messaging, text, phone, video, Teams etc.) you will use for the various types of interaction you need to have over the coming weeks and the frequency of this e.g. daily, every couple of days. As an added tip, for conversations involving heightened emotions, (either positive or negative), commit to avoiding email and conveying your message with voice and face instead.

Tip 2: Be clear on roles, goals and outcomes

Working virtually can feel more confusing and unpredictable than working in an office. Keep productivity and performance high by giving crystal clear direction to your team on objectives and outcomes, so that they understand what's expected and are able to work independently, or more likely - *interdependently*. Feelings of uncertainty will be trickier for you to detect in the virtual world, so ensure you check-in regularly with your team, help them see how their activities can be carried out in new ways, and ensure they know how to remotely access the resources they need to do their jobs from home.

Tip 3: Stay regularly connected

Humans are wired to socially connect. So, having remote working suddenly enforced could leave many experiencing negative feelings of loneliness. Stay in touch with team members regularly and informally, (not just to check on work progress) and encourage them to do the same with each other. Face-to-face interaction can never be replaced, so use video calling, where facial expression and body language continues to feature, as the next best thing for achieving a sense of connection.

Tip 4: Don't lose the human touch

Many will become increasingly anxious over the weeks to come. Be proactive in reaching out to your team, actively listening to them and showing them compassion. Virtual working can sometimes feel a bit transactional and soulless, with team members only contacting each other for a scheduled call or when they desperately need a question answered. Use of emojis can help but they only go so far in conveying what's really on our minds! :-). Dial up the human touch by making personal time for others. Make sure your team's efforts don't go unnoticed or

unrecognised and let them know that just because they may be out of sight, they're certainly not out of mind.

Tip 5: Embrace the opportunity that home working brings

Despite the tough challenges that this period will bring, offset these where possible by promoting autonomy and flexibility for your team. Show them that you trust them to deliver their goals in their own way, and in doing so – you may just help them grow and achieve more, for themselves and for you, in the process!

Useful links	Description
Essential IT guidance	A wide range of essential technical information and advice when working remotely – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential cyber security information • Reporting IT issues or IT requests • Advice on council network access • Password resets Quick reference guide to working from home
Modern Workplace Hub	A central place for guidance on how to use Office 365 tools and Windows 10. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O365 - the-Basics • Microsoft Teams • Yammer • One Drive • Collaborative working and other Microsoft packages.
Office 365 Guide	This contains guidelines on basic navigation tasks around Office 365 including logging on, connecting to the internet and accessing applications.
Bring Your Own Device	A new service offering that enables an employee to access Office365 applications including email through using their own personal device. Useful for those who have not received council IT equipment such as laptops.

4. Social media

Staff are still expected to follow the council's code of conduct. Any comments on Social Media which may be viewed as bringing the council into disrepute will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

5. Health and safety guidance for temporary working at home

Whilst working at home on a temporary basis, you must take reasonable care for your own health and safety, otherwise it is an act or omission.

There are many things that we can do at home to look after our own health and safety, including not sitting in one position for too long; taking regular breaks; setting up a suitable workstation; using items around the house such as boxes to ensure that laptops are at the right height; using a cushion to support your back.

Please see the diagram below:



Further comprehensive council guidance on agile working and health and safety working at home can be found [on the Intranet here](#).

Temporary Working from Home

With many of us now working from home on this temporary lockdown basis, it is important that we try to maintain our health and comfort as best we can and proportionate to the work we are doing.

It is acknowledged that for those staff working from home for the first time, there may not have been the provision of a full and traditional office workstation.

However, the key aspects of the Display Screen Equipment training and assessments that you will have done are still relevant. The goal being to achieve the most neutral posture possible and to take regular breaks. This is readily accomplished in a home setting with limited equipment.

Looking After Your Physical Wellbeing

- Identify a dedicated space within your home, if possible, so you can keep it set up as a separate workstation.
- Use any equipment that it has been possible to provide and follow the advice and guidance for working safely from home.
- Adapt what you already have at home if you do not have access to standard office furniture and equipment
- Refer to BCC Agile Working Guidance and i-Learn Display Screen Equipment Course
- Report any resulting ill health concerns, or issues regarding existing conditions, to your manager as soon as possible.
- If any work equipment becomes damaged or faulty, cease use immediately and let your manager know as soon as possible

You can find a Health and Safety Executive video about temporary working from home here: <https://youtu.be/Af7q5j14muc>

Looking after your Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Make the Switch - Keep to your usual daily routine as far as possible with a clear distinction between work and home mode.
- Keep in Touch - Make regular contact with your manager and colleagues by phone, email, Skype etc. to avoid feeling isolated.
- It's good to talk – share your feelings if you need to and notify your manager if you require any additional support or advice.
- Stay Active – Take regular, short breaks, eat proper meals, get plenty of fresh air and natural light and do some gentle exercise.
- Know Your Stuff - Keeping yourself updated using official sources for information will help to keep anxiety to a minimum;
- Follow the plan – Use BCC intranet and other corporate systems to find out the latest information and instruction.

COVID-19 Coronavirus - Staff Guidance on Wellbeing

This guidance covers:

1. Wellbeing	27
2. Employee Health and Wellbeing Support	28
3. 10 Tips to Manage your Health & Wellbeing	29
4. External Resources	32
5. Bereavement	33
6. Domestic Abuse	34

1. Wellbeing

The council is offering advice on health and wellbeing to employees during the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus), especially around mental and psychological wellbeing, social wellbeing, and physical wellbeing.

It is recognised that employees may be concerned, anxious and stressed before, during and after any epidemic. It is important for all employees to support each other and to do the best for our citizens to enable the council to continue to deliver as many of the key services as possible. The ongoing commitment and support of fit and well employees to maintain these services during this time is essential.

With line manager approval, where there is an opportunity to engage with the mindfulness / e-learning / wellbeing content, you are able to access this during work time provided it does not impact on your essential duties.

Trade Union members can also seek support from their Union:

- GMB - 0121 303 4123, Website: www.gmbb01.org.uk/contact-us
Paul.coombes@gmbactivist.org.uk; Janice.wadrup@gmbactivist.org.uk;
lftkahar.umar@gmbactivist.org.uk
- UCATT – Bob Grubb - 07989 597001
- Unison – 0121 2003331
- Unison Branch Secretary – Caroline Johnson – 07584 707260
(info@birminghamunison.co.uk)
- Unite - 0121 675 1862
- Unite Branch Secretary – Harry Harris – 07766 923860

2. Employee Health and Wellbeing Support

As an employee of Birmingham City Council, you have access to the following health and wellbeing support services:

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

This is a free, confidential service that will provide information, expert advice by telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service gives employees a place to turn for support any time of day or night, 365 days a year for whatever issues you might be facing. To use this service, you can contact the freephone number **0800 111 6387**, the email facility on their website (helpline.wellness@vhg.co.uk) or via the website (<https://my-eap.com/>) using password **Bhamwell**.

Watch and listen to a presentation of the EAP support and additional information on the [intranet](#).

Mental Health First Aiders

Mental Health First Aiders are volunteers who have completed training designed to equip them with the skills and knowledge to spot signs of a range mental health issues and give them the confidence to support colleagues or team members affected by them.

They are not counsellors or therapists, but they are trained to listen, reassure and respond, so that they can provide initial support to those experiencing mental health difficulties, and guide them towards professional help, if appropriate.

A list of Mental Health First Aiders is available on the [intranet](#).

Chaplains

Chaplains work within Birmingham City Council to support council employee's health and wellbeing. The council chaplains have a broad background of managing wellbeing and coping with life's ups and downs.

They work in collaboration with the council's [Wellbeing Team](#), and have support of senior management, trade unions and corporate networks, but what they offer is wholly confidential and independent of them.

Chaplains are there for everyone, those of any or no faith. They affirm and encourage. They do not make judgements or preach faith.

Contact the Chaplains:

peter@birminghamcouncilchaplains.co.uk

val@birminghamcouncilchaplains.co.uk

rachel@birminghamcouncilchaplains.co.uk

or call 07746299 676

Visit the [intranet pages](#) for more information on the Chaplains.

For more wellbeing help and support see the links below:

- [Coping with anxiety during COVID-19](#)
- [Eating and drinking well during COVID-19](#)
- [Looking after yourself and others](#)
- [Smoking and COVID-19](#)
- [Staying active during COVID-19](#)
- [Managing money during COVID-19](#)

3. 10 Tips to Manage your Health & Wellbeing

The Wellbeing Team have produced health and wellbeing advice for employees of Birmingham City Council in the form of regularly updated top tips including looking after our wellbeing, connecting virtually using Teams, and has embedded audio commentary from our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) about the independent support they offer. - https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50234/covid-19_staff_guidance/2148/covid-19_health_and_wellbeing/2

If you have any other useful internal and external resources that can be featured in future top tips, then please contact wellbeingteam@birmingham.gov.uk

The government has provided some useful tips on how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. The full guidance is available [on the GOV.UK website here](#).

- **Consider how to connect with others:** Maintaining relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family via telephone, video calls or social media instead of meeting in person – whether it's people you normally see often or connecting with old friends.

- **Help and support others:** Think about how you could help those around you – it could make a big difference to them and can make you feel better too. Could you message a friend or family member nearby? Are there community groups that you could join to support others locally? Remember it's important to do this in line with guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19) to keep yourself and everyone safe. And try to be accepting of other people's concerns, worries or behaviours.
- **Talk about your worries:** It is quite common to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember that this is a difficult time for everyone and sharing how you are feeling and the things you are doing to cope with family and friends can help them too. If you don't feel able to do that, there are people you can speak to via [NHS recommended helplines](#) or you could find support groups online to connect with.
- **Look after your physical wellbeing:** Your physical health has a big impact on how you are feeling emotionally and mentally. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour which in turn can make you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise inside where possible and outside once a day, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs.
- If you are able to go outside, consider walking or gardening (keeping the recommended 2 metres from others as outlined in the [social distancing guidance](#)). If you are staying at home, you can find free easy [10 minute work outs](#) from Public Health England or other exercise videos to try at home on the [NHS Fitness Studio](#). Sport England also has good tips for keeping active at home.
- **Look after your sleep:** Feeling anxious or worried can make it harder to get a good night's sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally and physically, so it's important to get enough.
- Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment. The [Every Mind Matters sleep page](#) provides practical advice on how to improve your sleep.
- **Try to manage difficult feelings:** Many people find the news about coronavirus (COVID-19) concerning. However, some people may experience such intense anxiety that it becomes a problem. Try to focus on the things you can control, including where you get information from and actions to make yourself feel better prepared.

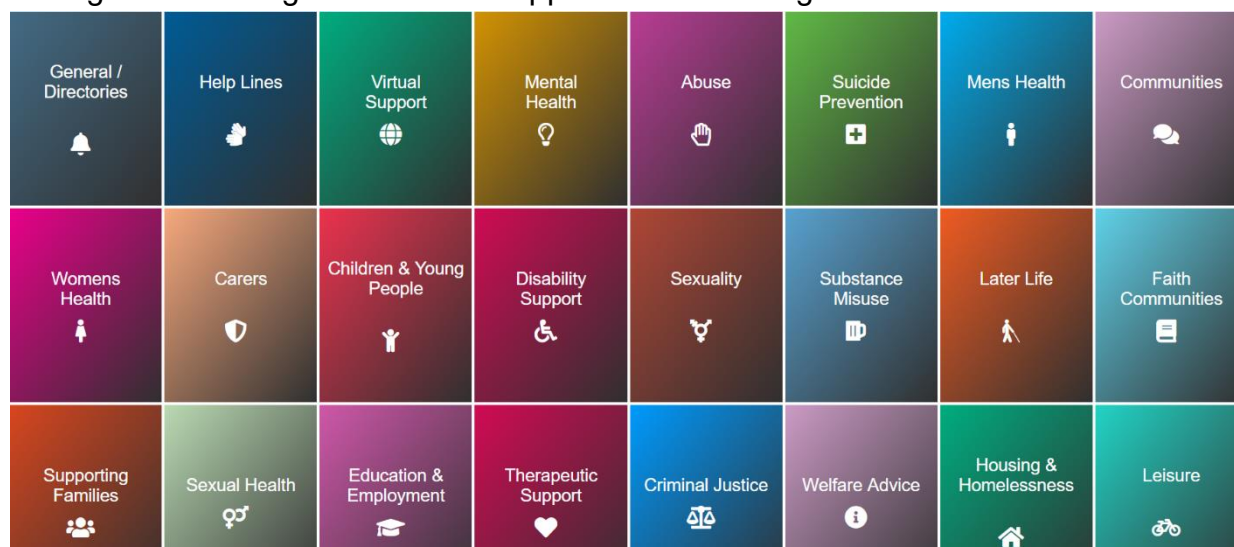
- It is okay to acknowledge some things that are outside of your control right now but constant repetitive thoughts about the situation which lead you to feel anxious or overwhelmed are not helpful. The [Every Mind Matters page on anxiety](#) and NHS [mental wellbeing audio guides](#) provide further information on how to manage anxiety.
- **Manage your media and information intake:** 24-hour news and constant social media updates can make you more worried. If it is affecting you, try to limit the time you spend watching, reading, or listening to media coverage of the outbreak. It may help to only check the news at set times or limiting to a couple of checks a day.
- **Get the facts:** Gather high-quality information that will help you to accurately determine your own or other people's risk of contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as [GOV.UK](#), or the [NHS website](#), and fact check information that you get from newsfeeds, social media or from other people.
- Think about how possibly inaccurate information could affect others too. Try not to share information without fact-checking against credible sources.
- **Think about your new daily routine:** Life is changing for us all for a while. Whether you are staying at home or social distancing, you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine.
- Think about how you can adapt and create positive new routines – try to engage in useful activities (such as cleaning, cooking or exercise) or meaningful activities (such as reading or calling a friend). You might find it helpful to write a plan for your day or your week.
- **Do things you enjoy:** When you are anxious, lonely or low you may do things that you usually enjoy less often, or not at all. Focussing on your favourite hobby, learning something new or simply taking time to relax indoors should give you some relief from anxious thoughts and feelings and can boost your mood.
- If you can't do the things you normally enjoy because you are staying at home, try to think about how you could adapt them, or try something new. There are lots of free tutorials and courses online and people are coming up with innovative online solutions like online pub quizzes and streamed live music concerts.

- **Set goals:** Setting goals and achieving them gives a sense of control and purpose – think about things you want or need to do that you can still do at home. It could be watching a film, reading a book or learning something online.
- **Keep your mind active:** Read, write, play games, do crossword puzzles, sudokus, jigsaws or drawing and painting. Find something that works for you.
- **Take time to relax and focus on the present:** This can help with difficult emotions, worries about the future, and can improve wellbeing. Relaxation techniques can also help some people to deal with feelings of anxiety. For useful resources see [Every Mind Matters](#) and [NHS' mindfulness page](#).
- **If you can, once a day get outside, or bring nature in:** Spending time in green spaces can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. If you can't get outside much you can try to still get these positive effects by spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight, or get out into the garden if you can.
- Remember that [social distancing guidelines](#) enable you to go outside to exercise once a day as long as you keep 2 metres apart from others who are not members of your household group.

4. External Resources

[The Waiting Room \(URBRUM\)](#)

A range of wellbeing services and support within Birmingham and Solihull



[Mind Infoline](#)

Telephone: 0300 123 3393, (9am-5pm Monday to Friday)

Email: info@mind.org.uk

The Infoline gives information on types of mental distress, where to get help, drug treatments, alternative therapies and advocacy.

[Samaritans](#)

Telephone: 116 123 (Free 24 hours a day)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Provides confidential, non-judgmental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. You can phone, email, write a letter or in most cases talk to someone face to face.

[NHS: Every Mind Matters](#)

Expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

[Health and Safety Executive](#)

Advice on lone working without supervision, working with display screen equipment, stress and mental health.

Carers Support: Supporting carers and advice on any issues affecting you.

[NHS Social Care & Support Guide](#)

[Carers Trust](#)

[Carers Direct](#)

Financial Wellbeing: seek advice on managing your money, e.g. budgeting, saving

- Check your credit score for free at [Clear Score](#)
- [Mind advice](#) on the link between money and mental health.

5. Bereavement

During this time, many will unfortunately experience the loss of loved ones under very different and difficult circumstances. Support is available on the council website for [managing grief and trauma during Covid-19](#).

The Employee Assistance Programme have also produced articles to support yourself and others during a life transition, which is available on [the Covid-19 staff guidance pages](#).

There is an e-learning course on iLearn that cover aspects of bereavement in the Life Transitions module. Not everything in life is certain, and changes both big and small,

are inevitable. A life transition is usually a life changing event that causes us to re-examine our present realities. This module aims to support your health and wellbeing and should help you cope with any life transitions that you or someone you know may be going through.

Access this module here:

<https://birmingham.learningpool.com/totara/coursecatalog/courses.php>

6. Domestic Abuse

(includes controlling, coercive, threatening, violent or abusive behaviour)

The government's advice on self or household-isolation will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 but for many victims of domestic abuse staying at home may not be the safest option.

We know that any external factors that add stress and financial strain can negatively impact victims and create circumstances where their safety is further compromised. As always, **if you or someone else is in immediate danger please call 999 and ask for the police.**

If you or someone you know are experiencing domestic abuse and are under quarantine amid the coronavirus outbreak, local and national organisation's want you to know: **You are not alone, and help is still available.**

#YouAreNotAlone. If you are at risk or experiencing #DomesticAbuse you can still seek refuge and support is still available to you. The National Domestic Abuse Helpline is free to call 24/7 on 0808 2000 247.

Find out more: <https://bit.ly/DomesticAbuseMids> @HMGMidlands

At home shouldn't mean at risk. If you or someone you know is suffering from #DomesticAbuse, isolation rules do not apply. Police response & support services are available.

Visit: <https://bit.ly/DomesticAbuseMids> or call 999 if you are in immediate danger.

#YouAreNotAlone @HMGMidlands

Information below provides details of key contacts providing local support across the West Midlands as well as some key regional and national helplines available during the coronavirus outbreak.

Birmingham		
Name	Phone	Website
Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid	0808 800 0028	www.bswaid.org
Birmingham Housing Options Hub	0808 169 9604	https://www.birmingham.gov.uk
BCC Council Housing	0121 303 7410 or 0121 303 2296/4806	https://www.birmingham.gov.uk
BCC Adult Social Care	0121 303 1234 or 0121 675 4806	BCC Adult Social Care website
BCC Children's Social Care	0121 303 1888 or 0121 675 4806	Birmingham Children's Trust
Bharosa (provides culturally appropriate and sensitive support to women and families experiencing domestic abuse)	0121 303 0368/0369	bharosa@birmingham.gov.uk

Coventry		
Name	Phone	Website
Safetotalk	0800 111 4998	
Coventry Haven	02476 444 077	https://www.coventryhaven.co.uk/
Coventry Council Housing Options	02476 834 025	Coventry Council Homelessness website
Coventry Council Adult Social Care	024 7683 3003	Coventry Council Adult Social Care website
Coventry Council Children's Social Care	024 7678 8555 or out of hours: 024 7683 2222.	Coventry Council Children's Social Care

Dudley		
Dudley Single Point of Contact (SPOC)	01384 455411	https://www.dudleysafeandound.org/domesticabuse
Dudley Council Housing	0300 555 2345	Dudley Council Housing website
Dudley Council Adult Social Care	0300 555 0055	Dudley Council Adult Social Care
Dudley Council Children's Social Care	0300 555 0050	Dudley Council Children's Social Care

Sandwell		
Black Country Women's Aid	0121 553 0090	www.blackcountrywomenaid.co.uk
Sandwell Council Housing Solutions	0121 368 1166 or 0121 569 6883	Sandwell Council Housing website
Sandwell Council Adult Social Care	0121 569 2266, out of hours: 0121 569 2355	Sandwell Council Adult Social Care website
Sandwell Children's Trust	0121 569 3100	https://www.sandwellchildrenstrust.org/

Solihull		
Solihull Council Housing	0121 717 1515	Solihull Council Housing website
Solihull Council Adult Social Care	0121 704 8007 or 0121 605 6060	Solihull Council Adult Social Care website
Solihull Council Children's Social Care	0121 788 4333	Solihull Council Children's Social Care website
Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid	0808 800 0028	www.bswaid.org

Walsall		
Black Country Women's Aid	0121 553 0090	www.blackcountrywomenaid.co.uk
Walsall Council Housing	01922 652250	Walsall Council Housing website
Walsall Council Adult Social Care	0300 555 2922	Walsall Council Adult Social Care website
Walsall Council Children's Social Care	01922 658170	Walsall Council Children's Social Care website

Wolverhampton		
The Haven Wolverhampton	08000 194 400	https://www.havenrefuge.org.uk/
Black Country Women's Aid	0121 553 0090	www.blackcountrywomenaid.co.uk
Wolverhampton Council Housing Homelessness	01902 554747	Wolverhampton Council Housing Homelessness website
Wolverhampton Council Adult Social Care	01902 551199	Wolverhampton Council Adult Social Care website

Wolverhampton Council Children's Social Care	01902 555392	Wolverhampton Council Children's Social Care website
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Regional/National Helplines

- West Midlands Forced Marriage (24hr helpline): 0800 953 9777
- [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) (24hr helpline): 0808 2000 247
- National Centre for Domestic Violence: text 'NCDV' to 60777 or call 0800 970 2070
- National LGBT+ domestic abuse helpline: 0800 999 5428
- Rape Crisis England and Wales: 0808 802 9999
- Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327
- Respect helpline (for anyone worried about their own behaviour): 0808 802 0231
- [Citizens Advice](#)
- [Women's Aid](#)
- Useful Apps for victims: [Hollie Guard](#), [Bright Sky](#)

There are two e-learning courses on iLearn that cover aspects of domestic abuse. These include:

- **Coercive control:** Coercive control is when a partner or family member continually behaves in a way which makes a person feel controlled, threatened, isolated or scared. People who are victims of, or are at risk of, domestic abuse are most likely to be at risk of coercive and controlling behaviour.
- **Domestic Abuse Awareness:** This eLearning module will help you to recognise domestic abuse and help you to understand your responsibilities in safeguarding people

Access the e-learning module at:

<https://birmingham.learningpool.com/totara/coursecatalog/courses.php>

Wellbeing Team contact address: wellbeingteam@birmingham.gov.uk

COVID-19 Coronavirus - Staff Guidance on Leave & Absence

This guidance covers:

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2. COVID-19 testing	38
3. Key/Critical workers	38
4. Caring for children when schools are closed	39
5. Annual leave	40
6. Flexi Time	43
7. Term time only staff requesting to work in School Holidays	43
8. Working over 7 days	43

1. Leave and absence

It is crucial that staff absence and leave records are kept up to date. For more information on absence related to COVID-19, please refer to the 'Self-Isolation Guidance' earlier in this document and also on [the Intranet Covid-19 staff guidance pages](#). Employees should continue to record sickness and other absence not attributed to COVID-19 in the usual way.

2. COVID-19 testing

The government has made testing available for critical workers as defined here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

Staff in critical roles (if you are not sure if you are in a critical role ask your line manager who will consult the directorate Business Continuity representative) can self-refer for a test here:

<https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/>

3. Key/Critical workers

If you are considered a key/critical worker, you should be available to work if you are fit to work. Managers will consider personal circumstances, and staffing resource requirements, in line with business continuity plans. If staff choose not to attend work this may be considered as a disciplinary matter. As key/critical worker details are finalised managers will communicate with staff as soon as possible.

We have agreed with West Midlands police that Birmingham City Council staff identity passes will be accepted as evidence of critical worker status whilst travelling

around the city. Staff are advised that they must protect identity passes (ensuring these are hidden in public) as there is a potential risk of people wanting to steal these.

Please note that ID passes are only being produced for business continuity critical services for key/critical workers. If you require an ID pass, the process to follow is detailed [in the 'New Starters' section of the Intranet.](#)

In addition, where staff are working in identified critical roles, managers can request a letter from the Directorate Business Continuity Representative that will confirm critical worker status.

4. Caring for children when schools are closed

The council will support staff who have caring responsibilities throughout this crisis, with an extended period of paid compassionate leave in the shorter term, until there is more clarity. Managers are expected to allow staff to work from home, and to work flexibly, and make the best use of flexi-time/time owed and annual leave to maximise contribution whilst minimising disruption to services.

However, where this is not possible, and in the first instance, managers should approve compassionate leave (paid) where staff have caring responsibilities and cannot continue to work. As this is a health and medical emergency situation - the most paramount importance is that we are observing national guidelines for social distancing and self-isolation (as applicable) for our employees, therefore managers should be considerate that the pressures on employees with caring responsibilities will have an impact on productivity – especially if the employee is working from home. Managers and staff should agree what is reasonable in terms of the amount of availability an employee can commit to, working around childcare commitments.

Key/Critical workers and childcare

The government has published guidance on workers whose children will be able to continue to attend school: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Staff are urged to follow these key principles:

- If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
- If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.

- Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
- Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
- Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

If your work is identified by the council as key/critical worker according to the COVID-19 response, and you cannot keep your child safe at home, then your children will be prioritised for education provision. Each school is reviewing how this will operate and working closely with the Education and Skills directorate.

Now key/critical roles have been agreed, we will work with staff to identify any gaps and look at staff deployment to support critical services, with appropriate training, support and risk assessments in place.

Anyone that has been identified as a key/critical worker, and who requires a letter for their children to remain in school, or to travel for work purposes should contact their manager who will liaise with their Directorate BCG representative ([included in the HR and Payroll section of this document](#)) and if doing this by email, should put KEYWORKER in the subject – that way a letter can be prioritised for that employee as soon as possible.

5. Annual leave

If managers grant annual leave, employees need to be made aware that it is conditional on the council being able to support the absence at the time. If annual leave is refused the appropriate amount of notice must be given, for example, if an individual has requested one week's leave they must be given at least one week's notice that the leave has not been approved – assuming the employee has provided the appropriate notice in the first place. Failure to give the requisite notice in these circumstances may constitute a breach of the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Managers can ask employees to cancel or postpone annual leave if it is necessary to maintain critical service delivery. However, they must give the appropriate notice as above. Managers may also agree to employees carrying over or being paid for leave they were unable to take by the end of their leave year; due regard should be given to individual circumstances and the impact of booked leave being cancelled. At the end of the annual leave year, managers should consider where staff have not been able to take their annual leave due to Covid-19. In this exceptional circumstance the

council will allow staff who have been asked to cancel, or not take leave, in order to meet unexpected demands in critical services, to carry forwards 10 days A/L in 19/20 and 20/21. This change does not impact on the carry forward of statutory annual leave (under working time regulations) where staff have been absent due to long term sickness.

Where staff had booked leave, and now wish to cancel, as they cannot go on holiday, this can be agreed by management, however, **managers and staff must recognise the wellbeing benefits of time away from work**. Staff must recognise that whilst they are being paid, they must be available to work, and may be deployed elsewhere in critical services.

Staff who are not key/critical workers must continue to take annual leaving during the lockdown period. It is recommended that managers and staff seek to agree planned leave which ensures the equivalent of at least two days leave each month as staff should take breaks to support their wellbeing during a challenging period. Managers should encourage staff to schedule leave over the next three months to help plan activity and make sure that people are not working constantly over an extended period. This also avoids building up a large amount of untaken leave, and lots of employees requesting significant amounts of holiday during a short period later in the year, if this situation arises it would not be appropriate for managers to approve the carry forward of additional leave.

Quarantine on returning to or entering the UK from abroad

The Foreign Office advice currently remains unchanged – **people should not travel abroad other than for essential purposes**.

From 8 June 2020, any person entering or returning to the UK from abroad is required to provide contact details and remain at the contact address provided for a period of 14 days from the date of entering the UK.

Booking & Approving Annual Leave

Employees should ensure that when they [book annual leave](#), they disclose whether or not they are travelling abroad in the comments section - this information is required to ensure that employees do not return to work following travel abroad without the manager's knowledge therefore putting the health, safety and welfare of colleagues at risk.

Approval of annual leave is still at the employer's discretion and should follow the normal principles of ensuring service delivery. When approving leave consideration should be given as to whether the employee is required to adhere to any [period of quarantine in the country they are travelling to as well as the UK rules on returning](#).

Special consideration should be given to the reason for travel and whether there are any extenuating circumstances. The following situations may require additional flexibility in arrangements:

- Travel abroad for a family funeral or the serious illness of a close family member
- Holiday booked prior to the quarantine regime where cancellation would result in financial loss for the employee
- Pre-booked holidays where the tour company have rescheduled for a fixed date where cancellation by the employee will result in a financial loss

In extreme circumstances it may not be possible to approve the leave request at the time because of the additional pressure the additional quarantine period places on the service. Employees should be encouraged to speak with their manager at the earliest opportunity and prior to booking travel abroad in order that a mutually convenient time and quarantine options can be agreed.

Options for Employees during a Quarantine Period

The manager should consider all options with the employee to work from home during the 14-day quarantine period. This will include considering redeployment for 14 days for employees who cannot undertake their normal role at home (taking account of the individuals skills and experience, and their wishes). Individual arrangements must be agreed with the employee prior to sign off of annual leave requests. Only where all options for homeworking have been exhausted should other measures be implemented such as:

- Taking additional annual leave from the employee's entitlement
- Flexi leave/TOIL
- Unpaid leave
- Option to make up some or all of the 14 days over a period of time to avoid a drop in pay
- Purchase Annual Leave
- Special leave – for extenuating circumstances only, as detailed above.

Sickness during the Quarantine Period

Should an employee become sick during the quarantine period, for any reason, they should report the absence in the normal way and sick pay will be applied. The employee will be paid sick pay only for the days on which they would be unable to work due to sickness absence.

Employees falling sick at any time during the quarantine period may be required to undergo a [test for coronavirus](#).

Employees and managers must follow all sickness absence reporting procedures. The frequency of contact between the employee and manager will depend on the reason for absence, but should ensure that the point at which the employee would be fit to work is identified, and where applicable sick pay arrangements should cease during the 14 day quarantine period if the employee is fit to work but cannot resume work due to ongoing quarantine.

Failure to follow or abuse of the above guidance could lead to formal disciplinary action being taken against you.

Purchased Annual Leave

If you have PAL for the 19/20 leave year, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, you may carry this leave over to the following holiday year. If you wish to request a refund or carry this leave forward you should notify your line manager who should raise an [AskHR query](#).

Please see further guidance which can be found here:

https://intranet.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20292/purchase_annual_leave_scheme/557/purchase_annual_leave_scheme

6. Flexi Time

Currently the Flexi Scheme provides that the maximum number of hours that can be carried forward in an 8 week accounting period is 7.18. Recognising that in some critical services, staff may be accruing significant additional hours, staff should alert managers where they are concerned that they may lose flexi hours as a result of undertaking management directed activity. Managers should liaise with business continuity link officers to explore options to support staff in this scenario.

7. Term time only staff requesting to work in School Holidays

Where this is requested, we will seek volunteers to take this work on as additional hours in the first instance. If we require more staff, we may need to create a rota to cover services. Some schools-based staff, where schools are remaining open for key/critical workers are likely to be affected by providing cover over the Easter holiday period.

8. Working over 7 days

Where there is a need for 7 days service provision during the major incident period suggested good practice would be for a rota arrangement:

- Establish and communicate clear deputy arrangements for people (so people know who to talk to when a decision is required)
- Ensure two weekdays off for staff who are covering weekends
- Prepare a weekly rota for 7 days provision with clarity about supporting roles
- Limiting annual leave to 1-week blocks.

COVID-19 Coronavirus - Staff Guidance on Health & Safety

This guidance covers:

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1. Protecting yourself when working with the public

For critical roles providing a service to our citizens, it is important to follow social distancing advice wherever possible – keeping two metres away from others and maintaining good hand/respiratory hygiene (washing hands and catching coughs/sneezes in tissues). Short periods of interaction following this advice have negligible risk of infection.

Public Health guidance on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has been developed which advises the PPE recommended in a wide range of workplace scenarios. This can be found [online on the Covid-19 Staff Guidance Pages](#).

2. Staying safe – specific circumstances

I provide care in people’s homes; how do I stay safe?

Each client needs to be risk assessed, and this work will be ongoing as the situation changes; appropriate safe working practices need to be adopted including social distancing and good hygiene wherever possible. PPE which is in short supply, and should only be utilised where there is an identified, significant risk. Additional PPE has been ordered, and will be delivered where there is a priority need, based on public health guidance on scenarios that require PPE.

I am a security guard in a building; how do I stay safe?

As your daily contact with individuals is usually for only a few minutes at a time, and visitors should be less and less whilst observing social distancing guidance, you should continue with your usual duties. If you have concerns talk to your line manager.

I am a front-line refuse worker/housing operative; how do I stay safe?

Management are working with staff and regional waste management networks to agree an approach, following guidance on appropriate risk assessment. Employees

should practice social distancing where possible and minimise interactions whilst maintaining good hygiene. Additional PPE has been ordered and will be delivered where there is a priority need, based on public health guidance on scenarios that require PPE.

I need to commute to work as a key/critical worker; how do I stay safe?

It is important to stay safe and vigilant whilst travelling, and you should talk to your line manager if you have any queries or concerns. Conversations are occurring to utilise car parks closer to the buildings that may be required to remain open. It has been agreed with WM Police that Birmingham City Council identity badges will be sufficient (in the short term) whilst moving around the city for key worker roles, we will also provide letters for staff where required. Staff may choose to use their own vehicles whilst car parking charges are waived for key/critical workers.

I am a lone worker visiting vacated council buildings; how do I stay safe?

Speak to your manager about a risk assessment and options for support as the particular hazards associated to the task that you are carrying out should be considered and appropriate control measures made clear. It is recommended that you ensure colleagues are made aware of your schedule, and in particular, develop a plan of action should that schedule be disrupted for some reason. Whilst a significant number of staff are home based currently, consider the potential to arrange to call a colleague when you reach your destination and stay on the line whilst conducting the site visit. Remember that control measures should include a consideration of the need to achieve social distancing when conducting visits. Your risk assessment should detail what actions to take if you are on site and have any concerns. Detailed lone working guidance and resources can be found [in the 'Employee Guidance' section of the Intranet](#).

3. Protocol for home visits

Individual service areas will have guidance for specific situations and client groups and risk assessments for this activity. In general, if an employee is due to make a home visit to a citizen/household who are in self-isolation, they should ascertain whether or not anyone in the house has shown symptoms of coronavirus (as per current PHE guidance), e.g. call the resident/tenant to identify symptoms related to COVID-19.

If everyone in the house has shown no symptoms then service critical visits may go ahead as normal, whilst following PHE guidance on social distancing good hand and respiratory hygiene. If anyone in the household is symptomatic, then:

- Avoid any physical contact with the person, if you can – maintain social distancing of 2 metres. The person should remain in the room with the door closed. Belongings and waste with which they have come into contact should remain in the room;
- Advise anyone with you not to enter the room. If a travel or clinical history still needs to be obtained or completed, do this by phoning the patient in the room;
- Ask the patient or their representative to call NHS 111 from their room;
- Inform your manager so that a full risk assessment can be undertaken with an infection control specialist to decide the next course of action.

4. Staff Data Protection

As the pandemic lockdown restrictions start to ease and council offices begin to reopen, the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) has set out key steps for dealing with personal staff information.

Data protection does not prevent managers asking staff if they have COVID-19 symptoms or introducing appropriate testing, as long as the principles of the law - transparency, fairness and proportionality - are applied in accordance with the [GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018](#).

As personal data that relates to health is more sensitive and is classed as '[special category data](#)' it must be protected even more carefully.

The data protection steps listed below will help enable you to keep staff and the public safe and supported during the present public health emergency, whilst ensuring that personal data is handled correctly.

- Keep personal data collection to a minimum – do not collect unnecessary personal data or retain it for longer than required. Some information only needs to be held for a short period, with no need to create a permanent record. Go to the ICO [guidance on data minimisation](#) for more information.
- To determine if collecting and using people's health data is necessary in order to keep staff safe, you should consider the following -
 - How will collecting extra personal information help keep your workplace safe?
 - Will testing help you provide a safe environment?
 - Could you achieve the same result without collecting personal information?
- You must clearly demonstrate to staff that your approach is reasonable, fair and proportionate to the circumstances and is in accordance with the [GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018](#).

What you need to do

Be clear, open and honest with staff about their data –

- to alleviate staff concerns, you must advise why you need their personal information, including what the implications for them will be.
- you should advise how their information will be used, shared and how long it will be retained for.
- staff must have the option to exercise their information rights and discuss any concerns with you – for more details go to the [general data protection regulation](#).

Treat people fairly - your approach for making decisions about your staff based on the health information you collect, must be fair, non-discriminatory and actions taken must not be detrimental to staff.

Keep personal information secure - any personal data you hold must be kept [securely](#) and only held for as long as is necessary, in accordance with the council's [retention policy](#).

5. Risk reduction

Further information about the [Risk Reduction Framework](#) can be found at the beginning of this document, and on the [Covid-19 Staff Guidance web pages](#).

5.2 Generic Home visit Risk Assessment

A sample generic risk assessment for home visits is provided on the next page – managers should work with staff to develop a specific risk assessment relevant to the service area, roles and client groups.

Sample generic staff visit risk assessment

What are Hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?
Exposure to symptomatic individuals (COVID-19) in home/third party environment (e.g. non-healthcare setting, healthcare setting)	BCC staff/ Volunteers, e.g. students	<p>Assess Business Continuity Plan whether critical for staff to attend, e.g. safeguarding, statutory duty to fulfil</p> <p>Map out number of providers to attend to allocate capacity to meet demand, especially if staff reduced due to self-isolation</p> <p>Managers to communicate and discuss with staff latest BCC HR guidance & FAQ's</p> <p>Limit non-essential travel by staff</p>	- Discuss with operational staff viability of control measures to put in place	Manager
			- Call setting/provider beforehand to identify if anyone is symptomatic or whether anyone has been symptomatic in the setting within the last 72 hours.	Manager/ Staff
			- Allied questions may relate to cleaning schedule in place. - Is setting/ accepting visitors?	
			<p>If visit & symptomatic people are present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -have they contacted NHS 111 online/telephone? -keep 2 metres apart -wash hands onsite -use hand sanitiser if available -adhere to respiratory control measures, e.g. cough/sneeze in arm/tissue (catch it, bin it, kill it) -consider if PPE necessary -limit touching high contact points -ask symptomatic person to remain in separate room behind closed door -advise anyone with you not to enter the room -obtain travel or clinical history by calling person in room -Review with manager 	Staff

			Consider the need to draw upon other agency services or community services to support	Manager
			If not critical, can alternative intervention be carried out, e.g. telephone, assessment from other service provider who has visited, video calling, etc	Staff

5.3. COVID-19 home visit (non clinical) risk assessment tool

A further sample COVID19 risk assessment guide and template has been developed with Public Health as well as the latest guidance on appropriate PPE. The Latest guidance can be found [on the 'Health and Safety' section of the Covid-19 Staff Guidance pages.](#)

For this risk assessment there are 4 groups of people:

- Those who are not self-isolating
- Those who have symptoms of covid19
- Those who do not have symptoms of covid19 but are self-isolating because someone else in the household has symptoms
- Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable and are being identified by the NHS as being at high risk of complications of covid19

Links to national guidance can be found in the ['External Resources'](#) section of this document.

Before visiting a property

When you make an appointment check if the individual you are visiting or anyone else in the house is self-isolating because of coronavirus or is in the NHS high risk group. If anyone in the household is worried they might have COVID-19 then advise them to use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do next. If you made the appointment more than 24h ago then call the person again to check they are still not self-isolating.

If the person is now self-isolating or in the NHS high risk group:

- Speak to your manager to decide whether a visit is essential during the self isolation period
- Complete the home visit risk assessment

- If it is not essential then take into account the amount of time that they have already self-isolated. Plan to call back closer to the time when the 7-day isolation period ends, check the person feels better before visiting. If there are other people in the house this will need to be extended to 14days.
- If they are in the NHS high risk group assess whether the visit can be delayed until after the pandemic, or if anything can be dealt with by phone.

If the individual has symptoms of COVID-19 or is in the NHS high risk group and you have to visit them at home:

Any member of staff who is higher risk should not visit anyone with confirmed Covid-19 unless advised otherwise by their occupational health team. In this situation arrange with another member of staff to carry out the visit. If the individual receiving care and support has symptoms of COVID-19 or is in the NHS high risk group, then the risk of transmission should be minimised through safe working procedures:

- Phone when you are near to the property to advise you are about to arrive
- If it is a shared house, ask the person with COVID-19/NHS high risk group if there is anyone else who you can speak to with their consent. If so, ask the individual to isolate themselves in another room.
- If there is no other house-mate/resident, ask the person to put on a face mask if they have one before they answer the door
- Ask the person to stay at least 2 metres away from you during the discussion
- Use any PPE that you have been advised to by your service manager. Dispose of this after each home visit.
- Minimise any items that you take into the home, only take what is necessary.
- Ensure hands are washed with soap and water before and after each visit. If you touch anything on you way out of the home, use antibacterial hand gel.
- If soap and water aren't available, then antibacterial hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol content) is an alternative if hands are visibly clean. Otherwise hand wipes should be used, followed by antibacterial hand gel.

What to do when the person is not self-isolating or in NHS high risk group:

This is business as usual. Follow the usual hygiene advice below when in properties. In addition, follow the general advice on how to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus (below).

General advice on how to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus can be found on the national government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

COVID-19 Coronavirus - Staff Guidance on Rewards & Benefits

This guidance covers:

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2. Car park season tickets	52
3. Childcare vouchers	52

1. Travel cards

The following information applies if you have a travel card that you are not using as a result of not travelling into work.

- **Transport for West Midlands (Rail / Bus & Rail)** - To suspend or cancel your pass, complete the online form located [here](#) or call 0345 303 6760
- **National Express (Bus and Metro)** - To suspend or cancel your pass email: corporatesales@nationalexpress.com or call 0121 254 7272
- **If suspending, you will need to contact the provider again to reinstate the pass.**

Please note that refunds for those who pay for their pass via salary deduction will be refunded through Payroll, however as payments are in arrears, you should contact TravelCards@birmingham.gov.uk to clarify any queries. All Travel Pass Renewals for April 2020 have been suspended.

2. Car park season tickets

All monthly payroll deductions for car park season tickets have been suspended from 1st April until further notice. We will let you know when the deductions will be restarted, you do not need to return your pass.

3. Childcare vouchers

If you are an existing member of the Childcare Voucher scheme, you can login to your account and manage your vouchers by visiting <https://childcare.mysodexo.co.uk/login>.

Childcare vouchers are valid for 18 months from the date of purchase, vouchers that you have recently purchased will remain available to make payments to your child carer when you need. However, if you would like to request a refund for any vouchers you have received recently, please see the steps below:

Step 1. Please put your request in writing and send it to hr.ops@birmingham.gov.uk stating you would like a refund for the recent vouchers received (March 2020 for example). Please include confirmation that you happy for us to approach Sodexo and confirm the voucher amount in your account with them.

Step 2. We will get in touch with Sodexo and confirm the vouchers are there in your account, and then will begin the process with them to get the vouchers returned.

Step 3. Once Sodexo have processed the credit, and have removed the amount from your account, the council will then process the refund back to you as soon as possible

Step 4. We will notify you when the refund has been processed and when the amount will be returned to you.

Please note that using this process does not affect your membership of the Childcare Voucher scheme in any way and has been put in place during the current circumstances to reduce any financial pressure you may experiencing. All refunds are subject to tax and NI deductions.

This process is only for refunding recently paid vouchers, if you no longer need any of the childcare vouchers in your account, and don't need to be in the scheme moving forward, just follow the same steps above but let us know you want to be removed from the scheme and have the remaining balance refunded to you. This will be processed in the same way and you will be notified when the amount will be paid back to you.

Further details of the scheme including eligibility to remain in the scheme can be found [here](#). In the meantime, you'll be contacted by the Childcare Voucher provider Sodexo via email with further advice & guidance.

As of 5 October 2018, no new parents can join the childcare voucher scheme. If you are looking for help with childcare costs take a look at [tax free childcare in the 'Salary Sacrifice Schemes' section of the Intranet](#).

COVID-19 Coronavirus - Staff Guidance on HR & Payroll

This guidance covers:

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1. Payroll

May and June payroll deadline have been bought forward to 4th May and 2nd June to ensure time to process payments with limited staffing. HR and payroll teams are working hard to ensure that as much as possible is processed on time, so it is important that information is sent to them in a timely manner and not last minute just before the deadline, as this will have an impact on ability to process on time.

2. Working additional hours

Increased sickness absence may create a need for other employees, if willing, to work longer hours to keep your business going. If this happens, you will need to comply with the Working Time Regulations 1998 to ensure appropriate length of daytime working hours, night shifts and rest breaks. Where it may be necessary to work over 48 hours (with staff agreement) a Working Time Opt Out agreement ([available on the Intranet](#)) should be signed.

The council has agreed that during this extraordinary period overtime payments will be made to staff Grade 1-7, with prior management approval. This will be reviewed by the relevant Director at regular intervals. Managers need to clearly identify that the overtime is attributed to dealing with COVID 19 so that provision can be recorded accurately in budgets.

3. Recruitment

Managers must record the proposed start date for new hires in Talentlink, or send an AskHR message with this information, to enable prioritisation of new hire equipment

for critical roles. Managers are also asked if new starters can operate via own devices or via access on mobile phones during the emergency time.

Recruitment to critical roles will be prioritised – managers should contact the Directorate Business Continuity Group representative regarding approval to recruit ([names at the end of this section](#)).

Completing right to work checks for new hires remotely

In order to support employers to easily carry out right to work checks, the Home Office have announced a temporary adjustment to the process in response to Covid-19 with effect from 30 March 2020.

What recruiters need to do now

Ask the candidate to submit their right to work documents (scanned or photo) via the Talentlink portal Talentlink.

- Schedule a video call with the candidate
 - The candidate will need to hold the original documents to the camera
 - The employer will need to check these against the digital copies
- The date the check is undertaken needs to be recorded as “adjusted check undertaken on [insert date] due to COVID-19”.

If the candidate has a current Biometric Residence Permit or Biometric Residence Card or status under the EU Settlement Scheme you can use the [online right to work checking service](#) while doing a video call - the applicant must [give you permission to view their details](#)

Should a candidate be unable to provide any of the relevant documents, you are required to use the [Employer Checking Service](#) - If a candidate is unable to provide evidence of their right to work, all efforts must be made to ensure that they are not discriminated against. Guidance on [avoiding unlawful discrimination](#) while preventing illegal working can be found on Gov.uk.

Right to work checks remain mandatory and guidance on carrying out the checks can be found [here](#). Please be aware that it is still an offence to employ anyone who does not have the right to work in the United Kingdom.

What recruiters need to do after lockdown ends

You will be notified when the measures end and after that date, you should follow the

right to work checking process set out [here](#). You will be asked to carry out retrospective checks on existing employees who:

- Started working for you during these measures
- Required a follow-up right to work check during these measures.
 - You should mark this check: “the individual’s contract commenced on [insert date]. The prescribed right to work check was undertaken on [insert date] due to COVID-19.” (On TalentLink ensure this is created as a field that enables reporting)

The retrospective check must be carried out within 8 weeks of the COVID-19 measures ending. Both checks should be kept for your records.

4. HR activity

The council has determined that only HR activity in serious cases will continue at this time, with most non-urgent investigations and hearings being paused. Staff re-organisations and service redesigns may also be paused, however, implementation of planned changes (appointments to new roles and rolling out new ways of working) will continue in critical services. Trade Unions will be consulted before any redesign and re-organisation activity is proposed. Current TUPE activity has been reviewed, and the majority of cases will be paused.

When considering if HR activity should continue, the following factors will be considered on a case-by-case basis:

- Severity of issue – gross misconduct or misconduct
- Where the case is current and is near resolution
- Impact on service provision
- Wellbeing of, and impact on the individual involved
- Wellbeing of colleagues – impact on managers and colleagues
- Ability to conduct a fair process remotely
- Does the process affect a JNC officer (who have different terms & conditions)
- Agreement of parties to adjustment of the processes

5. DBS ID checks

A temporary relaxation of the checking guidance has come into force as of 19th March for the DBS standard and enhanced ID checks. The change will enable:

- a) ID documents to be viewed over video link and
- b) scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted

Electronic copies of documents can be stored on the Talentlink applicant record. The applicant will be required to present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role.

When an application for an enhanced DBS check comes in and has been identified as an application for critical roles to respond to COVID-19, the DBS will do a check of both barred lists, within 24 hours and if there is no match against the barred lists, the applicant can be recruited in advance of receiving the full DBS certificate.

6. Processing a leaver

In order to process a leaver, complete a SLAM form so that all ICT access can be ceased. Failure to do so, could result in a serious data breach.

- Returning IT equipment and phones: during the current restrictions due to COVID19, there may be a need for the employee to retain kit until it can be returned safely. Managers must discuss this with the employee, ensure that they complete a SLAM form ceasing access and keep a log of what equipment the employee has and a date for review.
- Returning Security Badges when an employee leaves: post corporate ID and security badges to Paul Ellis, Curator, Council House, Victoria Square, B1 1BB

7. Voyager/SAP support

- For support or assistance in using MS Teams or Voyager/SAP please contact - SAPCCCTraining@birmingham.gov.uk
- All other Voyager support requests should be raised in the usual way via the [IT&D Portal](#)
- There will be no Voyager training scheduled for the foreseeable future

8. Directorate Business Continuity Representatives

Adult Social Care	Sally Marlow / Rebecca Bowley
Education & Skills	Tim O'Neill / Anne Ainsworth
Neighbourhoods	Mira Gola / Paul Lankaster
Inclusive Growth	Phil Edwards / Jaswinder Gandham
PIP	Varun Sitarum / Jonathan Tew

Human Resources	Helen Ward / Timothy Normanton
Digital & Customer Services	Peter Bishop / Wendy Griffiths
Finance	Rebecca Hellard / Sara Pitt
Legal	Anthony Farmer / Suzanne Dodd

COVID-19 Coronavirus - Staff Guidance on Learning & Development

This guidance covers:

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1. Appraisals

Holding regular one to one and appraisal conversations remains important for all employees, but we need to support these to be undertaken in different ways e.g. via Teams video link, via telephone calls or by face to face at a later time. We have therefore extended the deadline for appraisal conversations and the up loading of appraisal scores. The completion date is now 30th June 2020.

The Appraisal service is open. The deadline for uploading appraisal ratings has now been extended to 30th June 2020. The process has not changed, you will receive one rating: 'achieved' or 'not achieved'. [See the 'My Appraisal' guidance on the Intranet for more information.](#)

2. Probation/trial periods

For staff who are currently working through a probation period this will need to be reviewed. If staff are able to broadly continue to work, either in a frontline Critical/key worker position, or working from home, then probation can continue as normal. Where staff are unable to work, due to service closure, caring commitments or deployment elsewhere, then probation should be extended. This same principle applies for staff who are currently going through a redeployment trial period and also a professional assessment process – for example the social work Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

3. Your development

Continuing your professional development and following safe working practices is vital at this time as we support our colleagues, citizens and our families. This may mean possibly undertaking new tasks to ensure continuity of service and care for those around you. Where staff are redeployed to other activity there will be training and support to ensure the safety of staff and citizens.

Your Development offers a wide range of learning which you can access from home on your phones, laptops, tablets by visiting <https://birmingham.learningpool.com/>. Please discuss with your manager as part of your personal development planning and let's take this opportunity to build our confidence and capability to care and to be the best we can possibly be.

4. Mandatory training

The deadlines for mandatory training have now been updated - 'Protecting Information: Data Protection', 'Safeguarding People' and 'Equality in the Workplace' should now be completed by the 30 April. The deadline for completion of all other modules has been extended until 30 June.

5. Apprenticeships

For those currently undertaking an apprenticeship, you will have already or will shortly receive communication from your training provider regarding measures being put in place to support you through your apprenticeship during these unprecedented times.

Fortunately, most of the apprenticeships are delivered remotely and this will continue as normal. Where there are normally face to face sessions, providers are working to now make these sessions virtual by Webinar or uploading online content for you to access. These measures will hopefully mitigate any disruption to the delivery of your apprenticeship.

The Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency has released further guidance regarding apprenticeships during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular if a break in learning is required as there has been a disruption in learning due to COVID-19.

If you have, or are planning to, temporarily redeploy an employee who is currently completing an apprenticeship into another role (even within your directorate) for more than a period of 4 weeks, could you please contact Amarjit Sahota to discuss whether the employee is still able to provide evidence towards the apprenticeship or whether a break in learning is required. Any further queries regarding apprenticeships please contact Amarjit.Sahota@birmingham.gov.uk.

COVID-19 Coronavirus - Staff Guidance on Deployment & Volunteering

This guidance covers:

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| 2. Volunteering to support the NHS | 61 |
| 3. Volunteering in the national vaccine trials | 61 |

1. Volunteering with other services

We have developed a city-wide deployment approach to identify where we have staff that could help out in other council services, and where we need more staff – this is being managed through the business continuity cell. Where staff are available to be deployed elsewhere, we are compiling a list of staff and skills available to assist critical services.

Directorates are also doing this naturally when prioritising services according to their business continuity plans. We already have some great examples of this, for example Day Centre staff supporting vulnerable citizens in the community and some of our trade union colleagues undertaking work in substantive posts during this emergency situation and supporting service areas.

2. Volunteering to support the NHS

If you wish to volunteer to support the NHS, you should initially consult with the business continuity representative within your directorate who will liaise with your line manager and the Director. Our priority is to ensure that the council continues to offer our services to our citizens. This is particularly important staff in critical roles (identified in the service business continuity plan), as it may not be possible (particularly in small teams) to release staff from roles that are critical to the wider COVID19 response.

Where staff have up to date healthcare skills/registration, we will generally support staff to help the NHS services out on a temporary basis and wherever this is possible, however this should not be at the expense of any of our own critical services. Conversations should occur with your business continuity representative ([included in the HR and Payroll section of this document](#)) in the first instance. Safeguarding protocols will also need to be adhered to (as applicable).

3. Volunteering in the national vaccine trials

Where staff volunteer to take part in the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine trial drug which requires time to attend Hospital appointments at the Q.E for Screening, blood tests, assessments and examinations over the next 12 months, this time will be paid like other prescribed hospital appointments. Note that managers will need to consider service impact where a significant number of staff in a single team/service wish to volunteer.

COVID-19 Coronavirus - Staff Guidance on Agency Workers & Casual Workers

This guidance covers:

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| 2. Casual workers | 63 |
| 3. Re-engagement of former staff | 63 |

1. Agency workers

Agency workers are an important part of the council's workforce on a temporary or fixed term basis, and will continue to contribute whilst on assignment, however, as business needs change we will review staff deployment during this crisis, and we may stand down agency workers where council employees can pick up the work activity.

If there is a chance an agency worker could have COVID-19, they should take advice from NHS 111 and they should contact their agency provider (employer) and follow their advice.

Agencies have been instructed to notify line managers. Hays will be contacting agency workers regarding agreed arrangements for working from home. We are working with agencies to support furlough of workers where appropriate.

2. Casual workers

Long serving casual staff that have worked regular hours may be eligible for limited compassionate leave and SSP (where absent due to sickness). Staff should speak to their line manager if they think this may apply to them. BCC is not intending to furlough casual staff

3. Re-engagement of former staff

The council is working with the regional employer's organisation on a campaign to encourage people to return to care roles and support the response to COVID19 - <https://comebacktocare.org.uk/>.

In addition, staff who have left critical services in the past two years have been identified, and where there is a business need, approached to re-join the council via an agency contract.

COVID-19 Coronavirus – External Resources

Key resources
<p>NHS https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/ The latest Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice and guidance from the NHS</p>
<p>GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus The latest Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice and guidance from the Government</p>
<p>Public Health England (PHE): https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance The latest Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice and guidance from Public Health England (PHE)</p>
<p>Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/f94c3c90da5b4e9f9a0b19484dd4bb14 Public Health England (PHE) Dashboard of total UK Coronavirus (COVID-19) Cases</p>
<p>Coronavirus (COVID-19) Glossary: https://whatis.techtarget.com/reference/Pandemic-Glossary-for-Employers-and-HR-Managers A glossary for Coronavirus (COVID-19) produced by whatis.techtarget.com</p>
Other useful resources (by topic)
Governance
Guidance for local government
Covid-19 latest from Government
Government action plan
Workforce
List of key workers
Guidance for the self-employed
Guidance for all on social distancing

Guidance for health professionals and other organisations
Coronavirus Emergency Response
Covid-19 Hardship Fund guidance
Guidance on shielding and protecting the most vulnerable
MHCLG: Guide for Local Authorities and Local Resilience Forums on the system to support those who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19
Fraud control in emergency management: COVID-19 UK Government guide
Business and Economic Recovery
Updated guidance: COVID-19: guidance for employees, employers and businesses
Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund Guidance
Published guidance: Institute of Licensing issues new protocol
Guidance on business closures during lockdown
Support for businesses
Expanded retail discount guidance
Guidance on nursery business rates discounts
European Structural and Investment Funds: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response
Procurement Policy Note 01/20: Responding to COVID-19
Council tax: COVID-19 hardship fund 2020 to 2021 - guidance
Public Health
NHS guidance setting out which community health services should stop, partially stop or continue
COVID-19: guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing
Every Mind Matters guidance: Looking after your mental health
COVID-19: infection prevention and control
Social Care

Coronavirus (COVID-19): providing unpaid care
COVID-19: guidance for health professionals
COVID-19 health, care and volunteer workers parking pass and concessions
COVID-19: interim guidance on DBS and other recruitment checks
Coronavirus (COVID-19): admission and care of people in care homes
COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)
Adult social care ethical framework
Coronavirus (COVID-19): changes to the Care Act 2014
Guidance for care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
Education and Skills
Coronavirus (COVID-19): Closure of educational settings: information for parents and carers
Coronavirus (COVID-19): school closures
Coronavirus (COVID-19): financial support for schools
Coronavirus (COVID-19): apprenticeship programme response
GCSEs, AS and A level awarding: summer 2020
Guidance for further education providers
Coronavirus (COVID-19): free school meals guidance for schools
Guidance for schools and other educational settings
Guidance on vulnerable children and young people
Isolation guidance for residential educational settings
Implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings
Guidance on early years settings and childcare closures
Coronavirus (COVID-19): induction for newly qualified teachers
Housing/Neighbourhoods
Neighbourhood planning

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Energy Performance Certificates
Government advice on home moving during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
COVID-19 and renting: guidance for landlords, tenants and local authorities
Support for landlords and renters
Advice to households with possible Covid-19
Advice for accommodation providers
Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA): Guidance for housing providers during COVID-19
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
Information for hostels and day centre providers for rough sleepers
Community
Guidance for care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
Guidance on mass gatherings
Family courts guidance
Information for prisons and other prescribed places of detention
Coronavirus – Guidance on access to green spaces
COVID-19: guidance for domestic abuse safe accommodation provision
Digital
Microsoft: Guidance for Business Continuity and Crisis
COVID-19 guidance for telecommunications infrastructure deployment in England
Transport and Environment
Coronavirus (COVID-19): transport and travel guidance

This list was produced by the Strategic Policy Team
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