

Contact and support of Vulnerable staff

The Return to Work programme is now planning for the phased return of staff to Highland Council workplaces (dependent on service priorities). Managers should now contact staff, currently unable to work from home, regards returning to work. This includes staff who were advised early on to stay at home having indicated an underlying health issue.

Further support is available from Attendance Support Officers and [Occupational Health](#).

Where an employee identified as Vulnerable is unable to work from home and, is able to satisfy their line manager that they are fit to return to work, they should do so. This is also dependent on the relevant workplace being risk-assessed and all appropriate safety measures being implemented prior to their return i.e. social distancing, PPE being made available (where appropriate) etc.

The following guidance sets out the approach for managers contacting staff in the Vulnerable group.

NB the following guidance does NOT apply to staff who are Shielding.

Managers should familiarise themselves with the [Coronavirus – Information, guidance and support for Highland Council employees and their managers](#) Before contacting staff.

Managers should use the questions and responses below (where appropriate) to help form a positive conversation around staff return to work.

When contacting staff, managers should provide some helpful context and explain purpose of getting in touch (see example below)

“As the Council prepares for some staff to return to the workplace, I wanted to contact you to see how you are and, agree a plan for your own return to work...”

Questions	Reponses
1. How are you?	Pick up on how the employee is both physically and mentally. (You may wish to share the support for Shielding staff information – or parts of) (This may require a personal e-mail – reassure staff that this will be used for this purpose only)

	NB Information can be tailored to suit individual staff needs		
<p>(to determine that the employee is not Shielding)</p> <p>1. Have you received a Shielding letter?</p>	<p>If YES:</p> <p>Have they had to contact the Shielding helpline or HAC for support?</p> <p>(Specific information is available for staff who are Shielding).</p> <p>Is there any specific support you require? (please contact HR helpline for further advice or see FAQs)</p>	<p>If NO:</p> <p>Has anyone in your family received a Shielding letter?</p> <p>How are they doing?</p> <p>(You may wish to share the support for Shielding staff information - or parts of)</p> <p>(Be mindful that the employee may have multiple underlying conditions which may put them at higher risk)</p>	
<p>2. Are you able to work from home?</p> <p>How is that going?</p>	<p>If YES:</p> <p>Providing you are able to work from home safely, we'd like you to continue to do so for the time being.</p> <p>The guidance from Scottish Government is where people can work from home, they should do so. The priority is to get staff who are <u>unable</u> to work from home safely, back to the workplace.</p> <p>(Check DSE assessment has been completed – available on My Online Learning > Induction all staff)</p> <p>It's important that we continue to keep in regular contact and that you let me know of any changes to your situation please?</p>	<p>If NO:</p> <p>Vulnerable:</p> <p>Providing you feel fit and well to come back to work you should. The priority is to make sure you are safe when you come back and I'd like to make you aware of the measures we have/are putting in place (cover risk assessment and social distancing etc. Make employee aware of requirement for a re-induction to the workplace on their return)</p>	<p>If NO:</p> <p>Shielding:</p> <p>That must be very frustrating, but you are doing the right thing by Shielding and there should be further Scottish Government guidance soon about how much longer you will be expected to Shield.</p> <p>It's important that we continue to keep in regular contact and that you let me know of any changes to your situation please?</p>

	NB where staff are only able to work up to 50% from home, they may be able to support other work from home		
3. If you've not been able to work from home) have you registered with the Deployment Portal?	<p>If YES</p> <p>I'm working on..</p> <p>I've registered but not heard back..</p> <p>There is likely to be continued demand across the organisation going forward as different services are re-introduced. You may well be contacted later dependent on the requests for resource received. The Resourcing and Deployment Team will be happy to provide an overview of the types of roles likely to arise.</p>	<p>If NO</p> <p>Providing you are feeling well, there may be some roles that are suitable for home-working that you could do (can provide some examples i.e. supporting helplines). The Resources & Deployment team will be happy to provide an overview of the types of roles likely to arise.</p> <p>(You may wish to share the support for Shielding staff information - or parts of)</p> <p>Please let me know if there is anything else that you require.</p> <p>Thanks for your time. Keep in touch and stay safe.</p> <p>(Consider OH contact where appropriate)</p> <p>End</p>	
<p>Vulnerable staff only who are NOT Shielding</p> <p>4. How do you feel about coming back?</p>	(Aim to reassure and alleviate any concern – there is a defined programme of work taking place to provide assurance of safe working practices e.g. Risk Assessment, social distancing, cleaning and hygiene practices and facilities, PPE as appropriate, code of conduct in workplace with disciplinary sanctions if not followed etc.)		
5. When could you return?	(Acknowledge that some staff may need to make arrangements i.e. caring responsibilities)		
	(Aim for 5 days max notice where possible)		
	(Agree return to work date and outline any temporary change of hours/flexible working arrangement - where required and as appropriate, including when this will be reviewed)		

(Complete form attached and copy to employee)

(Thank the employee for their time)

(Send on any information agreed)

Where Vulnerable staff are resistant to return to work

The priority is to ensure they are fit to return, and the workplace is fit and safe to return to.

Reassure the employee of the preparatory work being carried out to the workplace to ensure their safety and explain that this will be monitored and managed.

Offer to send information about risk assessment/specific measures in place and suggest a follow up conversation once they have been able to access this.

In some cases there may be a requirement for Occupational Health involvement. Your service HR BP can provide further guidance.

Pre-return to work discussion with (Employee name) on (date)

Manager checklist:

- Employee confirmed as NOT Shielding (has not received a Shielding letter)
- Employee is not able to work from home
- Employee is aware of the workplace Risk Assessment carried out
- Employee is aware of the safety measures put in place
- Employee and manager agree that employee is fit to return to work
- Employee is aware of the requirement of a re-induction to workplace on his/her return

Manager name:

Staff Name:

Date of return to work:

Location of workplace (this may be different to work base):

Hours: [Specify if there are to be temporary changes to hours]

Date of review: [Outline when any temporary changes are to be reviewed]

Responsibilities upon return:

Re-Induction to workplace