



COVID-19 Advice & Support

Fortnightly Update – 3rd August 2020

This update provides a summary of all the information and key developments relating to the workforce implications of COVID-19.

Sharing Information

We have attached the latest update compiled in conjunction with the other Regional Employers and the LGA. The main themes within this update are:-

- Self-Isolation Rules for Overseas Health & Care Workers
- PPE Update for Care Homes
- Shielding clinically extremely vulnerable people
- Quarantine: Travelling / Returning from Spain
- Job Retention Scheme Reminder
- Social Work Together Campaign Update

We will meet with the LGA's national workforce leads and our counterparts in other regions tomorrow. If you have any issues you would like us to raise on your behalf – just email us by close of play today.

The Exchange - A new way of sharing information and approaches

“**East Midlands Exchanges**” will give you the opportunity of discussing an issue and sharing information through a virtual meeting. The first Exchange will be at **2.00pm on Thursday 20th August** and will be focused on **topical workforce issues linked to COVID**. Where appropriate, we will arrange for a key speaker or will invite councils to lead on sharing their experience or policy by way of introduction to the discussion. This session will cover **casual and relief workers** – and we are pleased to confirm that Derbyshire County Council will share their approach. We will also look at **shielding and working from home policies/allowances**. If you would like to participate, then please email Mila at mila.pereira@emcouncils.gov.uk by end of **18th August** to register a place.

Information Request – Practice following changes for those Shielding

Following the change to guidance for those shielding, we have received queries from Councils looking for guidance or to share information urgently on this issue, ahead of the Exchange on 20th August. In terms of guidance, the Joint National Guidance issued on 12th June 2020 (available [here](#)) remains the relevant guidance to consider. The information that councils have asked you to provide is how you are dealing with the following cases:-

- Where staff can't work from home and where you can't provide a COVID-safe workplace including approaches to pay
- Where employees are refusing to work, despite risk assessments indicating it is safe to do so, including whether you are considering withholding pay.

Please provide your responses to Lisa by **close of play on Wednesday 5th August** at lisa.butterfill@emcouncils.gov.uk

National COVID Workforce Survey and Results

We'd just like to pass on a gentle reminder to those who haven't done so as yet to complete the latest national COVID workforce survey. The survey has been revised to ensure the questions cover relevant and current issues; the deadline for completion by close of play on **Wednesday 5th August**. **The most recent report showing the summary results published on 28th July can be accessed here: [latest results](#)**

Public Health England Chief Executive's Latest Weekly Message

Please see below the latest message from Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England issued on Friday 31st July:-

“Social care matters

Social care matters as much to good health as healthcare, and social care providers play a critical role in helping many enjoy a good quality of life including in the last years of their lives. This truth has been brought to the fore through the pandemic with brilliance exhibited by care workers and their leaders in caring for the most vulnerable. A clear example of this has been the sector's management of outbreaks. Any outbreak in a care home is one too many and in the first six months of the pandemic, almost half of England's care homes have experienced at least one. The good news is this is significantly better than the predicted 90% that modelling suggested and is a direct consequence of the care and attention of each home, whether they experienced an outbreak or avoided one. This has been supported through more rapid testing, the expansion of whole home testing, and coordinated action on infection control through the local Director of Public Health, Director of Adult Social Services, the NHS and PHE local Health Protection Teams.

The hard months are ahead of us given the pandemic is far from over, and whilst lots of good practice is being spread everywhere, there can be no complacency.

Hammersmith and Fulham

An exemplar of this has been the work of Hammersmith and Fulham Council and the leadership of Director of Public Health, Dr Nicola Lang and Lisa Redfern, Strategic Director of Social Care. They moved early and fast to put an enhanced level of protection around social care ahead of national guidance and based on the strength of their local relationships and knowledge about what works. Their achievements include enhanced testing, financial support to prevent loss of income for care home staff should they need to isolate, and as a social services director group in North West London, the development of 'hot hubs' – transitional beds for people being nursed in isolation until they test negative and can safely return to their own home or care home. There is even more to be recognised on their work delivering PPE, setting up a Community Action Network to support vulnerable residents, and on academic collaboration with Imperial College London.

I thank them and the whole council for a thoroughly instructive and enjoyable virtual visit this week. They have much to be proud of and have undoubtedly saved lives.

Better Health

This week we launched the [Better Health campaign](#), the country's first focusing on adult obesity and forming part of the Government's new obesity strategy. The campaign taps into the insight that many who have been in lockdown or isolated for months are ready to reset their lives by being more active, adopting healthier eating habits and losing weight, and aims to reduce our risk of serious illness including COVID-19.

The campaign will be targeted where it is most needed, at groups and communities disproportionately affected by excess weight and obesity, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) populations. It will reach these communities through advertising on a range of channels, radio stations and publications in multiple languages, with supportive voices from BAME healthcare professionals, nutritionists and community organisations. The messaging itself also recognises different types of food, diets and traditions around meal times, and is combined with



data-driven local targeting in areas where there is a high density of at-risk groups.

A new app for the free 12-week NHS Weight Loss Plan has also been launched as part of the campaign, which shot to number one in the app store – a good indicator that many are keen to get going and I encourage you to [download it](#) if you have not already. This is just the start and over time the campaign will focus on providing advice on other issues, such as quitting smoking and looking after your mental health.

Greenspaces

From the moment we are born, through to old age, the environments we live in shape our lives and there is increasingly compelling evidence showing that access to greenspaces really matters for our health. Greenspaces can support active travel, reduce loneliness, improve social cohesion and mitigate some harms in the environment, such as air pollution and excessive noise.

This week, PHE has published the [Improving Access to Greenspaces report](#), which was written before the COVID-19 pandemic and examines evidence showing that living in greener communities is associated with both mental and physical health benefits. Importantly, it highlights inequalities in access to greenspace across different socioeconomic groups, and provides new evidence and actions to help local areas consider how good-quality greenspace can support the delivery of health, social, environmental and economic priorities, at a relatively low cost.

Global disaster risk reduction

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the International Science Council's (UNDRR/ISC) [Hazard Definition and Classification Review technical report](#) was published this week, which will support countries to better assess the natural and human-induced hazards and risks they face, while also promoting a more effective governance of global and local disaster risk. This initiative could not be more timely given the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a reminder of how hazards within the complex and changing global risk landscape can affect lives, livelihoods and health. The report is the culmination of a year-long process chaired by PHE's Head of Global Disaster Risk Reduction, Professor Virginia Murray, and was developed collaboratively with over 800 scientists and technical experts including many from United Nations organisations and ISC Science Unions and partnerships, demonstrating the power of international engagement in shaping global science.

Performing arts

And finally, in support of musicians and artists, our scientists at Porton Down are conducting a series of experiments alongside professional singers from Salisbury Cathedral to estimate the spread of droplets and aerosols produced during performances by placing petri dishes and air samplers around the singers. We are also coordinating a second study on singing and musical instruments with Imperial College London and the University of Bristol, and in a few weeks the findings of these studies will inform how far apart performers must be. We are also advising the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on how to safely reopen theatres from tomorrow with socially distanced audiences.”

We hope this update, providing a round-up of all recent COVID-19 guidance in one place is useful to you.

Contact Sam Maher and Lisa Butterfill at EMC with any workforce queries or issues relating to COVID-19 at:

sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk and lisa.butterfill@emcouncils.gov.uk

All guidance relating to COVID-19 can also be found by visiting our website: [Workforce Information - COVID-19](#)