

# Managers' Briefing

## Update on our commitment to supporting key staff groups during Covid-19



### OFFICIAL

## Your role

Over the past few months support arrangements were put in place for staff to provide continued employment during Covid-19. This was alongside contractual and pay arrangements for our flexible workforce - in place until the end of June 2020.

This briefing provides an update on:

1. the HR process to support key groups of 'at risk' staff as we prepare to return to the workplace
2. changes to the arrangements for our flexible workforce
3. the ongoing support for council graduates and Modern Apprentices.

**Please take the time to continue your discussions with members of your team who are within the key groups outlined below and communicate the support process and/or changes.**

## 1. Supporting key groups in preparation for the return to the workplace

We appreciate and understand that staff will be anxious about returning to the workplace and it is important that they are aware of our plans towards supporting them, that they are involved in discussions and can input throughout this process.

The re-opening of our services will be phased following the government's [route map](#) out of lockdown. All services are working on **renewal plans** that will detail how and when we can restart services and most importantly, how we do this safely.

### • Staff who are Shielding

In March, we initially advised staff who received a 'Shielding' letter from the government to go home and stay home. Of course, some staff have been able to work from home as they were in a role where they could work - providing they had suitable technology to do so. This was for an initial period of 12 weeks, which was reviewed on 18 June 2020 with a further requirement to stay home until 31 July 2020.

The Government advice, refers to those that are 'Shielding' as those that are **people at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)** from coronavirus for example, people who have had an organ transplant or are having chemotherapy. A full list of the high risk categories can be found [here](#).

As part of our continued support for staff who have been 'Shielding', as we plan towards our renewal phase we will continue our regular contact with this group to reassure and remind them that:

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- they should continue to stay at home
- they will continue to be paid, out with the sick pay scheme
- we will begin to ask for a copy of the shielding letter they received to make sure that they continue to receive support as an employee in the 'Shielding' group.

We will continually support this staff group, in line with the Scottish Government position on **people at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)**.

#### • Staff who have an Underlying Health Condition

In March we initially advised staff who had an Underlying Health Condition (UHC) to go home. Of course, some staff have been able to work from home as they were in a role where they could work - providing they had suitable technology to do so.

The Government advice, which was reviewed on 28 May 2020, defined staff who had an Underlying Health Condition (UHC) as **people at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)**, with the ability to consider a return to work option, as and where appropriate, where the degree of clinical vulnerability might enable reasonable adjustments/ alternative roles to be considered.

**People at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)** from coronavirus include people for example who have a medical condition such as asthma or diabetes. A detailed list of medical conditions can be found [here](#).

As part of our continued support for staff with an UHC, as we plan towards our renewal phase, we will continue our regular contact with this group to establish their fitness to potentially return to work.

**Where staff with an UHC are unable to return to work** due to a medical condition we will:

- continue to pay them out with the Sick Pay Scheme
- undertake any reasonable adjustments that would be necessary to enable a safe return to the workplace, in readiness for their potential return to duty
- agree to set a date (this will usually be within a 2 week period from the start of conversations with the member of staff outlining all considerations of return to work protocols) to determine when they will return to work or when they will move back into the Sick Pay Scheme.

#### • Staff who are over 70 years old

In March we initially advised staff who were over the age of 70 to go home. Of course, some staff have been able to work from home as they were in a role where they could work - providing they had suitable technology to do so.

The Government advice, which was reviewed on 28 May 2020, defined staff over the age of 70 as **people at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)**, with the ability to consider a return to work option, as and where appropriate, where the degree of clinical vulnerability might enable reasonable adjustments/ alternative roles to be considered.

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As part of our continued support for staff who are over 70 years old as we plan towards our renewal phase, we will continue our regular contact with this group to establish their fitness to potentially return to work.

**Where staff over 70 years old are unable to return** to work due to a medical condition we will:

- continue to pay them out with the Sick Pay Scheme
- agree to set a date (this will usually be within a 2 week period from the start of conversations with the member of staff outlining all considerations of return to work protocols) to determine when they will return to work or when they will move back into the Sick Pay Scheme.

### • Staff who are Pregnant

In March we initially advised staff who were pregnant to go home. Of course, some staff have been able to work from home as they were in a role where they could work - providing they had suitable technology to do so.

The Government advice, which was reviewed on 28 May 2020, defined pregnant workers as **people at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)**, with the ability to consider a return to work option, as and where appropriate, where the degree of clinical vulnerability might enable reasonable adjustments/ alternative roles to be considered.

As part of our continued support for pregnant workers as we plan towards our renewal phase, we will continue our regular contact with this group to establish their fitness to potentially return to work.

**Where staff who are pregnant** are unable to return to work due to a medical condition we will:

- continue to pay them out with the Sick Pay Scheme and
- Undertake a Pregnant Workers Risk Assessment, which will now include COVID-19 Risk Assessment and will also include transport arrangements to and from work (New Government Guidance), in readiness for their potential return to duty
- agree to set a date (this will usually be within a 2 week period from the start of conversations with the member of staff outlining all considerations of return to work protocols) to determine when they will return to work or when they will move back into the Sick Pay Scheme.

### • BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)

It is recognised that BAME staff may have personal views/ concerns about risk given the media attention during Covid-19.

BAME staff with underlying health conditions and disabilities, who are over 70, or who are pregnant, will require appropriate workplace adjustments to be considered. This could include

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considering reasonable adjustments, change of roles, or asking staff to work from home, where this is possible.

Consideration should also be given to the individual's psychological wellbeing and personal views/concerns about risk. If required, staff can access dedicated health and wellbeing support through Workplace Options.

## 2. Changes to the arrangements for our flexible workforce

### • Fixed term temporary staff

We agreed that fixed term temporary staff would receive an average pay between April and June 2020. We have been reviewing fixed term temporary staff Statement of Particulars and these fall into three areas:

- **Identify those staff that are linked to temporary fixed term roles where there is no longer any work requirement for them within the foreseeable future** – managers will be contacting those staff and will be advising that they will be released from the service of the council.
- **Identify those staff that are linked to temporary fixed term roles where there is currently no work requirement for them, but we believe that there will be a work requirement early on in our renewal phase** – we will extend the average pay arrangement until the end of July and continue to review where we may have a work requirement for them.
- **Identify those staff that are linked to temporary fixed term roles that there is currently no work requirement for them, but over a further period of time there may be work opportunities as we move through our renewal phase** – we will extend the average pay arrangement until the end of July and continue to review where we may be able to consider utilisation of the average hours they receive against our resourcing gaps.

### • Temporary staff

We agreed that temporary staff would receive an average pay between April and June 2020. We have been reviewing temporary staff Statement of Particulars and these fall into three areas:

- **Identify those staff that are linked to temporary roles where there is no longer any work requirement for them within the foreseeable future** – managers will be contacting those staff and will be advising that they will be released from the service of the council.
- **Identify those staff that are linked to temporary roles where there is currently no work requirement for them, but we believe that there will be a work requirement early**

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**on in our renewal phase** – we will extend the average pay arrangement until the end of July and continue to review where we may have a work requirement for them.

- **Identify those staff that are linked to temporary roles that there is currently no work requirement for them, but over a further period of time there may be work opportunities as we move through our renewal phase** – we will extend the average pay arrangement until the end of July and continue to review where we may be able to consider utilisation of the average hours they receive against our resourcing gaps.

### • Casual / Bank staff

We agreed that casual staff would receive an average pay between April and June 2020. We have been reviewing casual staff and they also fall into three areas:

- **Identify those staff that are linked to casual roles where there is no longer any work requirement for them within the foreseeable future** – managers will be contacting those staff and will be advising that they will be released from the service of the council.
- **Identify those staff that are linked to casual roles where there is currently no work requirement for them, but we believe that there will be a work requirement early on in our renewal phase** – we will extend the average pay arrangement until the end of July and continue to review where we may have a work requirement for them.
- **Identify those staff that are linked to casual roles that there is currently no work requirement for them, but over a further period of time there may be work opportunities as we move through our renewal phase** – we will extend the average pay arrangement until the end of July and continue to review where we may be able to consider utilisation of the average hours they receive against our resourcing gaps.

### • Part-time staff that work regular additional hours

We agreed that part-time staff in this group, who regularly and consistently work additional fixed hours that are not within their contractual hours, would will receive a relevant number of additional hours pay on a 4 weekly basis - and that this would be subject to renewal at the end of June 2020, which covered up to the natural end of term arrangements for part-time staff.

**Therefore the review of these payments will be discussed at local TU liaison forums to confirm appropriate arrangements beyond June.**

### • Agency workers

We agreed that agency workers would be offered an average pay based on previous 12 weeks earnings, enabling agencies to continue to invoice the council subject to renewal at the end of June 2020.

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Some agencies reached a decision in agreement with its individuals to 'furlough' some or all of their workers. For those that were not 'furloughed', we have been reviewing our agency worker arrangements and again they too fall into three areas:

- **Identify those agency workers that are linked to roles where there is no longer any work requirement for them within the foreseeable future** – managers will be contacting those agencies to advise that they will no longer require this agency worker.
- **Identify those agency workers that are linked to roles where there is currently no work requirement for them, but we believe that there will be a work requirement early on in our renewal phase** – we will extend the period that agencies can continue to invoice the council, subject to renewal at the end of July 2020 and consider where best to deploy the agency workers skills.
- **Identify those agency staff that are linked to RACH roles that there is currently no work requirement for them, but over a further period of time there may be work opportunities as we move through our renewal phase** – we will extend the period that agencies can continue to invoice the council subject to renewal at the end of July 2020. We will consider utilisation of the agency workers hours against our resourcing gaps.

### 3. Ongoing support for council graduates and Modern Apprentices

#### • Modern Apprentices

Most importantly, we have agreed an extension to enable Modern Apprentices to complete their programme.

For those that are due to complete their Modern Apprenticeship between July 2020 and September 2020 we are working hard to find temporary employment opportunities so that they can retain and develop their skills over the next few months.

#### • Corporate Graduates

For our graduates that are due to finish this summer, we have agreed an extension to the graduate arrangements, or where available, we have offered them temporary positions over the next few months. This will enable them to continue to seek suitable employment opportunities now that they have successfully completed their graduate programme.