Managers' briefing
Return to the workplace planning

April 2021

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** following this guidance that will detail how and when we can restart services and most importantly, how we do this safely. Heads of service will provide you with direction for the plan in your area.

The health and safety of our workforce and citizens is paramount as we prepare for services to get back to normal capacity and more staff return to the workplace. For some time to come, everyone will need to continue to observe physical distancing and good hand hygiene.

Clearly our workplaces and working arrangements are going to be different while we are still dealing with this pandemic and following the government's guidelines. The capacity in our buildings will be reduced to maintain physical distancing which means that fewer people can return to the workplace, in the first instance.

It is likely that in some cases we may need to change how and where we work including a continuation of working from home, for those who can do so safely and where the service can be provided in this way.

Our guidance follows the government's guidance for businesses, you can read the guidance on the website [here.](#)

Your role

You have a responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing of your staff at work. The following guidance will help you to plan for a safer return to the workplace in line with the renewal plan for your service.

- **Plan interim working arrangements,** talk to your teams with a focus on health and wellbeing.

- **Understand the changes in the workplace and review the risk assessment,** keep everyone safe and stop the spread of the virus.

- **Follow the return to the workplace discussion checklist** with everyone to support your conversations

- **Complete an individual risk assessment,** if required, to look at the specific risk of covid19 in the workplace for staff who were previously considered to be more at risk from coronavirus or have a concern or vulnerability about returning to the workplace during this time.

- **Encourage staff to complete the display screen equipment assessment** on GOLD if they are working at home.

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- **Communicate the changes in the workplace** and interim working arrangements before anyone returns to the workplace.

Plan interim working arrangements

You should have a **one to one discussion** with your staff where a key focus is on health, safety and wellbeing and supporting a safe return to work.

This will involve a sensitive and open discussion with every individual to discuss any adjustments and/or ongoing support to facilitate an effective return to the workplace or continuation of working from home, following the renewal plan for your service and based on the current government guidance.

This is especially important for those who have been not been working for some time or those who are in at-risk groups.

You should cover topics such as, changes to the workplace capacity, any potential changes to work duties or tasks, staggered start/finish times to avoid busy public transport, flexible working patterns and child care.

We are consulting with trade unions on all risk assessments and return to work plans through the local liaison groups with prior consultation with heads of service and HR Managers.

Flexible working arrangements

Using a range of flexible working arrangements will help you to make sure that the workplace remains safe, physical distancing guidance is met, and the needs of the business are considered before suggesting and agreeing to any changes.

You'll find information about the council's **interim flexible working arrangements here**.

In the current circumstances, you can agree changes to work patterns and schedules locally on a temporary basis. It is **not** anticipated that any change to working patterns would attract any NSWP payments even if it includes working at weekends or beyond 8pm. This is because any changes will be arrangements which you can offer to your employees as a reasonable adjustment in these exceptional circumstances to help support individuals fulfil their contract of employment.

Although these interim arrangements may be outside their normal terms and conditions, they are agreed to support employees and with their full agreement.

You must remain within conditions of service unless you have employee agreement to these temporary modifications. If you need any guidance on these matters, then please refer to your Service HR team.

We've created the following guidance/templates to help you plan around these considerations and document your plans:

- **Return to the workplace discussion checklist** - helps to guide these conversations and now includes an **individual risk assessment**, following the current Scottish Government guidance, which is useful for the discussions with staff who were previously considered to be more at risk from coronavirus or have a particular concern or vulnerability about returning to the workplace during this time.

- **Return to workplace considerations and planning** - helps to map out the plan for your team

- **Return to workplace rota** – helps you to plan capacity in the workplace.

Review homeworking arrangements

Remember, a continuation of working from home for now, for those who can do so safely and where the service can be provided in this way, is still the government advice throughout the route map out of lockdown.

You should follow the **guidance for managers - managing a team at home** during the interim period and make sure your staff have received the **interim homeworking guidance.**

You can assess and discuss whether working from home arrangements are still suitable for staff and the service by using the **interim homeworking DSE assessment**. This assessment is now online in GOLD.

You should create and keep a record of any IT or office equipment currently removed from the workplace for use at home.

You can remind your staff to read the **guidance for staff - working from home and using display screen equipment.**

Any longer-term opportunities and arrangements for continued homeworking will be kept under review by the council.

Exceptional individual circumstances

You may have individuals who have specific constraints due to the current circumstances which affect their ability to carry out their contractual role at all or in part. Not every member of staff will immediately be able to carry out their full contractual role, but the aim would be to do so whilst providing appropriate support to each team member.

You will also need to consider completing an **individual risk assessment**, following the Scottish Government guidance.

If your service has additional information or requirement to support individual risk assessments, then this will be communicated to you locally.

You will also need to consider those with ongoing caring responsibilities, those with disabilities which affect their ability to adjust to the new ways of working and other scenarios which will require to be dealt with sensitively and supportively, exploring all options to help them.

Support options could range from adjustments to the role/workplace/attendance/timing, for example and potentially could include redeployment options to another role either on an interim or longer-term basis. In these cases, you can receive guidance from your Service HR team.

Changing how you manage your team

You may want to consider the activities and processes that you have in your structure and look at potential new ways of working to ensure the safety of your staff and the needs of the service are met. We've created this **guidance about changing how you manage your team**, whether they are at home, in the office or a mixture of both, to help you consider implementing new ways of working, tracking outcomes and managing your teams.

Plan your IT requirements

As your workplace will have changed with physical distancing and not everyone can sit at their own desk, you'll also have to consider your desktop IT requirements. Email any IT requests to your service contact below, requests will be dealt with as soon possible.

- Chief Executive's Department, Thomas.gourlay@glasgow.gov.uk
- Development and Regeneration Services, Pauline.Devlin2@glasgow.gov.uk
- Education Services, Mandie.running@glasgow.gov.uk
- Financial Services, Linsey.robinson@glasgow.gov.uk
- Health and Social Care Partnership, linda.carmichael@glasgow.gov.uk, ann.shaw@glasgow.gov.uk or Lesley.wiseman@glasgow.gov.uk
- Neighbourhoods and Sustainability, Iain.Paterson@glasgow.gov.uk
- Jobs and Business Glasgow, nicola.pinkerton@jbg.org.uk
- City Property, Mick.Wilkinson@citypropertyglasgow.co.uk

Microsoft Teams is available on suitable council devices, talk to your line manager who will liaise with the IT Business Partner about the roll-out plan.

Before staff return to the workplace

Before staff come back to the workplace you should have a full understanding of everyone's situation, including any underlying health conditions, caring arrangements and support required, domestic suitability for home working, any IT availability and restrictions, working patterns including any change to working hours.

If you need any guidance on these matters, then please refer to your Service HR Team.

Communicate changes in the workplace

You need to communicate the changes in the workplace to staff before they return. **A safe return to the workplace guide** and **staff video** has been created for you to communicate the changes to your staff.

Stay safe - health and safety in the workplace

Changes in the workplace are based on the council's physical distancing guidance, you can read the **guidance here.** This mainly applies to the office environment but the principles are the same in all our buildings. The main changes to our workplaces are summarised below.

- Where possible, there will be one way in and out of a building.
- Where possible, one-way systems will be in place to move around buildings and communal areas like kitchens.
- Physical distancing signage and markings will operate throughout buildings.
- Staff may not be able to use their own desk.
- A clear desk should always be maintained.
- Staff will be asked to wipe down desks at the start of the day, during the day, and at the end of their working day using the materials provided. This will apply to keyboards and telephone handsets also.
- Cleaning staff will continue to clean the areas as they did pre Covid-19 however particular attention will be given to toilets, all touch points such as door handles, light switches and lift buttons.
- Hand sanitisers will be available at the entrance to buildings.
- Cafes and communal seating areas will remain closed for the time being but rest areas will be provided wherever possible.
- Signage and posters in workplaces will help staff to stay apart, as much as possible.
- Meeting room capacity will be reduced or in some areas removed.

Maintain good hand hygiene

Everyone should continue with frequent hand washing (for at least 20 seconds each time or using hand sanitiser gel if soap and water is not available).

Keep making virtual meetings

To cope with the reduced capacity for meeting rooms and to reduce face to face contact in the workplace you should continue to promote virtual meetings with video and voice calls.

Covid-19 workplace risk assessments

Before anyone returns to the workplace the relevant Covid-19 workplace risk assessments will be carried out at the appropriate level in your Service and in conjunction with Health and Safety Teams, following the council's physical distancing guidance and in consultation with our trade unions.

You need to understand the changes in your workplace and actions you need to take as a result of the relevant risk assessment. This will make sure that the appropriate staff training, cleaning and maintenance regimes, and physical distancing measures are in place to protect everyone.

1. You'll get a copy of the city centre **office workplace risk assessment here.**

2. For other service specific workplace risk assessment arrangements read the **guide here.**

3. The floor plan indicating the space and desks you can use will be provided to you by your head of service or health and safety manager. This will clearly show the capacity you have in your area.

4. You should use these documents along with the **managers' checklist** to make sure you've covered all the actions required before staff return to the workplace.

5. You may manage staff with some individual workplace requirements or modifications, which may be affected by the building restrictions during this COVID period. In these circumstances, you should contact your local Health and Safety team if you require any further guidance.

The physical changes to the workplace including the signage will be completed for you by the relevant teams.

Health and wellbeing

Taking care of our mental health is just as important as protecting our physical health during this pandemic, particularly as we adjust to working from home or other new ways of working. Remind your staff about the support and guidance available **here.**

Staff with symptoms

Remind your staff what to do if they have symptoms:

- You and your household should not leave home, you should self-isolate straight away. You will need to request a test and, if the result is positive, you will be asked to help NHS Scotland to identify who you've had contact with. (This will be done confidentially.)

- If you are at work when you experience symptoms then you should leave work to self-isolate straight away, inform your line manager and, if possible, wear a face covering on route and avoid public transport.

If staff develop symptoms in the workplace you can read what to do **here.**

When staff report a positive test you can help stop the spread by following the **latest guidance on tracing contacts in the workplace.**

Keep going to **www.nhsinform.scot** for advice on symptoms and testing.

Your service may also introduce additional support measures and protocols for a return to work in your area, your Head of Service will keep you informed on any local requirements.

Questions and answers

You can send any question to insider@glasgow.gov.uk and these will be used to update frequently asked questions section at staff updates on the website.

KEEP UPDATED
at all times on the website

www.glasgow.gov.uk/staffupdates