**Covid-19 Individual Risk Assessment Form, Guidance and FAQS**

This guidance applies only to front-line employees or employees who are required to physically be in work for some or all the time. We are aware that many managers of front-line services have already undertaken risk assessments and good arrangements are in place. If individual risk assessments have been done, there is no requirement to repeat this but they will need to be updated to include specific Covid-19 risks. The process has been introduced to make sure that no one has been missed, and in particular to ensure that in advance of ongoing research by Public Health England on the risk factors for BAME employees that individual health risk assessments have been undertaken and are in place.

**Risk assessments for staff who are currently home working will not be undertaken at this stage but will of course be required once a decision has been made for the service to return to a physical work location.**

**Protecting front-line staff**

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic we have:

* Undertaken risk assessments for many roles and staff groups, taking into account the need for Covid-19 secure workplaces.
* Applied Government and Public Health England (PHE) guidance for PPE in our own visual guides for key workers which help staff work safely; ensure staff feel supported in their work and protect local services.
* Advised employees in specific groups that are potentially more vulnerable to practice robust social distancing measures.
* Closely followed all relevant Government and PHE guidance about social distancing, self-isolation and shield and protect arrangements
* Ensured that key workers are aware of testing arrangements and supported for a safe return to work.

We have put in place creative solutions to enable social distancing at work, by such measures as:

* changing the layout of workplaces
* adjusting shift patterns
* staggering commute times
* reducing risks such as virtual contact with residents as opposed to home visits where this is possible.

**At risk groups**

Coronavirus (Covid-19) can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher.

There are 2 levels of higher risk groups - individuals that are **high risk** (clinically extremely vulnerable) and those that are **moderate risk** (clinically vulnerable). See more on this at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>.

It is important that the line manager explains this with individual employees to help them take more personal responsibility for managing risks.

**Employees at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)**

Staff who are in a clinically extremely vulnerable group [COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19) should have received a letter from the NHS, and they should be shielding. GP fit notes are not valid confirmation of this status. This group of employees should not be physically in work under any circumstances and must robustly follow shielding measures to keep themselves safe.

The following arrangements apply:

* If the employee can work from home, they will continue to do so. In some cases, work can be reorganised to facilitate this.
* In other situations, some key workers (such as loaders, drivers and caretakers) will be unable to work from home; they are expected to stay at home on full pay. A letter setting out these arrangements should be provided, and they will be kept under review pending government and PHE guidance. Alternative work will also be explored, subject to a skills survey and review.
* We are expecting government to confirm future arrangements later this month, as current guidance applies until the end of June 2020.

**Employees at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)**

If employee is at moderate risk from coronavirus, they can go out to work (if they cannot work from home) and for things like getting food or exercising. But they should try to stay at home as much as possible. It's very important that they follow the general advice on social distancing, including staying at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from anyone they do not live with. Unlike people at high risk, they will not get a letter from the NHS. Individual Risk Assessments are vital for this group of employees to ensure that all the right levels of controls can be put in place.

The health and individual characteristics include the following:

* have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
* have heart disease (such as heart failure)
* have diabetes
* have chronic kidney disease
* have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
* have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
* have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
* are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
* are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)

**Covid-19 and Pregnancy**

NHS guidance states that there is no evidence that pregnant women are more likely to get seriously ill from coronavirus. But pregnant women have been included in the list of people at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable) as a precaution. This is because pregnant women can sometimes be more at risk from viruses like flu. It is not clear if this happens with coronavirus. But because it is a new virus, it's safer to include pregnant women in the moderate-risk group.

**Other Risk Factors: BAME staff**

Emerging UK and international data suggest that people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are also being disproportionately affected by Covid-19 and Public Health England have recently published a report on the disparities in the risk and outcomes. Until there is clarity about the risks, we advise that BAME staff may be additionally vulnerable to Covid-19.

On their own these factors may not require restriction from any particular activity. Considering if there any underlying health conditions present as well this would reinforce the need to apply stringent control measures which include social distancing and/or the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The Individual Risk Assessment has been designed to help identify the control measures that need to be agreed and put in place.

**Other Risk Factors: Age and Gender**

Similarly, those in an older age group and male gender also seem to confer increased risk and these facts should be taken in to account in the health risk assessment.

**Advice on undertaking an Individual Risk Assessment**

When you are reviewing work activities it is important to consider individual risks and aim to reduce them if possible, even if the risk is low.

In undertaking an individual risk assessment, the standard hierarchy of risk management should be followed.

When managing hazards and risks, the Hierarchy of Controls must be applied (working top down), as set out below

The standard hierarchy of risk management is as follows:

1. If possible, remove the hazard.
2. If not possible, seek to control the hazard.
3. If not possible, protect the worker.

Taking into account the potential for additional risk factors should therefore not concern boroughs or their managers.

**Elimination**

If possible, remove the hazard, task or activity.

**Substitution**

If not possible seek to control the hazard or process with a less hazardous one

**Engineering controls**

Isolate employees from the hazard

**Administrative controls**

Identify and implement procedures to maximise safe working.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Only to be considered if measures above would be ineffective to control risks

It is not possible to avoid all risk and the aim of the individual risk assessment is to avoid unacceptably high-risk activities and to bring down risk in other areas as far as reasonably practicable. Most people in the moderate risk categories will be able to continue working but it is still important to consider how you could reduce their risk.

The line manager should undertake an individual risk assessment with the employee and discuss the following:

* The issues and potential risk factors and how mitigation can be enabled in the way in which the work is undertaken. This includes safe systems of work, social distancing, hygiene measures and the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
* Any temporary or alternative working arrangements that can be put in place to enable the key elements of the job role to be done.

The individual risk assessment form provides a consistent framework to help you to undertake the process. If duties can’t be adjusted or the standard hierarchy of Covid-19 risk management cannot be followed (as outlined above), the manager must should consult the individual risk assessment with Occupational Health or HR or Health & Safety as appropriate.

**FAQs**

1. Do I need to undertake a risk assessment for staff now using the attached form and guidance?

Yes - for all current front-line staff. The deadline for completion is xxx. We will require confirmation that health risk assessments have been completed.

 2) What defines a front-line employee for the context of the individual risk

 assessment?

All those staff who are unable to do their jobs 100% from home; this would include staff that work the majority of their time from home but have to undertake home visits or attend court etc.

 3) Are there certain staff groups that the individual risk assessment should be undertaken for?

So that no one is missed, all front-line staff should have a health risk assessment. We are aware from Public Health England advice and guidance that some groups are at greater risk these include employees with some health conditions, age, pregnant employees and BAME employees.

1. How do I approach this with my employees?

We are asking managers to undertake health risk assessments for all front-line employees. In relation to employees from BAME communities, the research and statistics from Public Health England have shown that BAME communities are at a higher risk of contracting the Covid-19 virus with a disproportionate number of deaths, so we want to provide assurance that there is a formal opportunity to assess all the risks to protect our employees. This has been designed to look for solutions and to provide reassurance.

Government and Public Health England guidance has set out the groups at moderate risk and it is important that we provide a structured and consistent framework. It is recognised that some employees may have multiple health risk factors.

1. What if I already have an individual risk assessment for the member of staff, do I need to do another one?

No - but you must review and update the current risk assessment with the employee to ensure that Covid-19 concerns are discussed and addressed as to any potential risks.

1. If staff are shielding and are at home 100%, (either working or not working), I assume that they do not need an individual risk assessment at this time as they should continue to be at home until further advice is received?

Yes - these staff do not require a health risk assessment at this time, but this may be required, depending on government guidance, when the return to physical workplace is imminent.

You would use the form if you receive a new notification that the employee has received an NHS shielding letter. We are aware that the list of people required to shield has been reviewed by GPs and others, and new people contacted to say that they have now been included, and some who have been advised that they are no longer required to do so. Under current government guidance clinically extremely vulnerable staff must not come to work and should follow robust shielding arrangements.

1. If a team member is in a vulnerable group and I think that with minor adjustments they can now do all their work at home, do I have to carry out a health risk assessment?

Yes, the individual risk assessment will help you to identify what you can put in place. The minor adjustment could be for example swapping home visits to virtual visits where this is possible to do so.

1. Do Managers send the individual risk assessment to Occupational Health, HR or Health & Safety regardless of the outcome?

No – if you and the employee have agreed a range of control measures and they can safely work (with hazards removed) you will not need to ask Occupational Health, HR or Health & Safety to review further.

However, please ask Occupational Health, HR or Health & Safety for advice if you are unsure, or you and the employee can’t agree on what needs to be in place. If you need your risk assessment to be reviewed, we have a fast track Covid-19 referral arrangement in place.

If you don’t think that the person can work at all, as you can’t control the hazards and their job can’t be adjusted, refer to OH, HR or H&S for review as appropriate.

1. What if the member of staff refuses to co-operate with the individual risk assessment?

The process should be undertaken with sensitivity and be supportive. It shouldn’t be intrusive, and you should provide reassurance of confidentiality at all times.

Try to find out the reasons why and what their concerns are and resolve to address them. If, however they do not wish to discuss this with you, find out if they may be happier discussing directly with Occupational Health, HR or Health & Safety; if so, then refer them as appropriate using the relevant referral paperwork. If they still do not wish to engage please discuss further with your HR Adviser and make a note on the health risk assessment and their Personal File.

1. What should I do with the completed individual risk assessments?

This should be sent to HR to be placed on the employee’s Personal File.

1. Who is responsible for the health risk assessment?

As with all risk assessments, managers are responsible and accountable, even where you have asked advice from HR or Occupational Health, Health & Safety.

1. What kind of controls and mitigation have others put in place?

These are individual risk assessments and will depend on individual circumstances and job roles. The following have been suggested by others:

* Stagger start and finish times and introduce rota/shift practices to help practice social distancing
* Visits requiring face to face contact use virtual meetings if possible
* Where an onsite visit is absolutely critical call in advance and use a check list including asking about the opportunity to wash hands, and to find out if anyone unwell
* Access to Work could be involved for equipment and other resources
* Employee Assistance Programme can provide guidance, support and counselling
* If appropriate, car parking or cycle facilities could be made available
* Make sure that the employee is aware of the relevant PPE required for their role has been issued with the guidance and has ongoing access to PPE.
1. Do I keep the health risk assessment under review?

Yes, it is suggested that this is undertaken monthly as part of the one-to-one process or if any circumstances change.

**See Individual Risk Assessment form below for completion**

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL Individual Risk Assessment:** Exposure to Covid-19, impact on current heath condition

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **General Information** |
| **Employee Name(s):** |  | **Job Title:** |  |
| **Line manager** |  | **Managers’ job title** |  |
| **Building / Service:** |  | **Working hours:** |  |
| **Date of Assessment:** |  | **Review date:** |  |
| **Risk Group / other factors:** | *Please tick appropriate box:*  | **Yes** | **No** | **Current role involves:** | *Please tick appropriate box:*  | **✓** |
| **Clinically extremely vulnerable** - notified by NHS as in very high risk group requiring **Shielding** |  |  | Providing care within 2 meters |  |
| **Clinically vulnerable** – over 70 or underlying health condition as per the [NHS list](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/) |  |  | Visiting people’s home e.g. repairs |  |
| **Pregnant** |  |  | Working in the community e.g. caretaking, community safety  |  |
| **BAME**  |  |  | Meeting with residents in our buildings |  |
| **Mental health -** impact on mental wellbeing |  |  | Proving a support service (e.g. training) |  |
| **Other specific concerns** *e.g. caring for someone vulnerable, living in conditions where it’s difficult to social distance etc.* |  |  |  |  |

***Note:*** *There is no need for staff members living with a shielding individual to follow the shielding measures themselves however they can support them by following the* [*guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing)*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing)*.*

**If you have answered NO to all questions, no further action is required and this form will be**

**retained on your records**

| **Aspects** | **What are you already doing?** | **Additional action to reduce risk** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Can the work be done at home?  |  | *If the work cannot be performed at home then could alternative work be undertaken at home or elsewhere in the organisation?* |
| If you have to travel to work think about how and when you travel. |  | *To reduce potential exposure on public transport consider walking or cycling wherever possible. If you have to use public transport, you should try to avoid peak times and are advised to wear a face covering.* |
| If having to attend work then can face to face interactions be limited and/or social distancing be maintained? |  | *Adjusting the work environment, times or duties to reduce the risk of exposure, for example working in a separate office, not using shared telephones, carrying out telephone rather than face to face interactions.**If social distancing cannot be maintained then Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be provided.* |
| Has the individual had any sickness in the past linked to their health condition?  |  |  |
| What arrangements are you going to put in place to ensure regular contact / wellbeing? |  |  |
| Other considerations: |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Assessment**  |
| *Please tick appropriate box:*  | **✓** | Monitoring / further action: |
| Actions agreed as detailed above further reduce the risks of transmission |  | Local manager to review and monitor. |
| Actions agreed as detailed above do not further reduce the risks of transmission and some concerns remain. |  | [Contact your H&S Advisor](https://lbcamden.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/HR/Pages/Contact-your-Safety-Advisor.aspx) for further advice and support |
| **Additional notes** |
| *Please add any additional notes as appropriate:* |
| **Individual’s signature** |  | **Date signed** |  |
| **Print Name** |  |  |  |
| **Manager’s signature** |  | **Managers job title** |  |
| **Print Name** |  |  |  |