

Interim Policy – COVID 19 Returning & Clinically Vulnerable Colleagues

All Returning Colleagues

Any Colleague returning to the workplace following the coronavirus pandemic impact – furloughed, clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable colleagues - should be briefed on all measures currently being implemented in their workplace to control the virus and their responsibility in implementing and maintaining these measures, ideally prior to their first day on site.

They should also be directed to the current COVID-19 related risk assessment should they require it.

Clinically Vulnerable Colleagues

Although our sites are considered to be "COVID Safe" and measures are in place to control the spread of the virus, our Clinically Vulnerable and Extremely Clinically Vulnerable colleagues will require a further assessment of the risks associated with their work place **prior** to their return to identify where current measures may need to be altered or changes made to allow them to adhere to the latest Government advice.

The colleague's line manager must complete the assessment using the form "Risk Assessment COVID-19 RTW Vulnerable Colleagues September 2021" discussing their findings with the colleague. Where adjustments are required and practicable these should be agreed and implemented as part of the agreement to return to work.

It is important that both the colleague and line Manager are comfortable with the colleague's return to work and that the risks are controlled.

Pregnant Colleagues

Although there is no evidence that pregnant women who get coronavirus are more at risk of serious complications than the general population or that coronavirus increases the risk of miscarriage, as a precaution, pregnant women have been identified as a vulnerable group for coronavirus. Pregnant women should follow the same guidance on COVID-19 as everyone else (for example about testing or self-isolation), though some pregnant women may wish to take extra precautions.

Vaccination is recommended in pregnancy. You can get vaccinated against COVID-19 if you're pregnant and aged 18 or over. Receiving two doses of the vaccine is the safest and most effective way of protecting you and your baby from COVID-19 infection

Colleagues - less than 28 weeks

Pregnant colleagues within their first 28 weeks, nursing mothers or colleagues who have had a baby within 6 months of their proposed return to work date will require both the Society's "ML2 return to work" form as well as the " Risk Assessment COVID-19 RTW Vulnerable Colleagues September 2021" document to be completed as soon as possible following notification.

Where necessary and practicable, adjustments should be made to mitigate any identified risks that the Colleague may face in returning to the working environment.

Colleagues - more than 28 weeks

Pregnant women who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, may choose to limit the close contact they have with those they do not usually meet with in order to reduce the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19, particularly if they are in the third trimester and when COVID-19 levels in the general community are high.

Where the risk assessment identifies that this cannot be assured in the workplace, Colleagues may be advised to stay away from work.

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Concerns raised by returning colleagues

Situations where identified risks cannot be addressed, or the Colleague has concerns about returning to their work place, should be directed to the Health & Safety Team in the first instance.

In the event of non-resolution, the case will be passed to HR for consideration.

Risk Assessment Reviews

All risk assessments should be reviewed regularly to ensure any necessary changes to circumstances and operations are identified and accommodations are met

Further Reference

Full details from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists can be found at:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>