

Guidance on Risk Assessment requirements for clinically extremely vulnerable, clinically vulnerable and employees of Black Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) Origin

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This document sets out the specific arrangements for those staff who are at a potentially higher risk should they contract Covid-19, along with the requirement to undertake an individual risk assessments where a return to working in school is being considered.

These higher risk groups are set out below along with the Local Authority advice on working arrangements and pay for these staff.

Please note that for our Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools where the LA is the employer we would expect this advice to be followed.

Academies, Trust/Foundation and VA schools can take their own decisions but this should be line with the DfE/national guidance as a minimum.

1. Employees in the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) category

CEV employees who were previously advised (by their clinician or via a letter from the NHS) to follow shielding measures should from 5th November 2020 be supported, where possible, to work from home. We understand that they should receive a further letter from the Government.

If they cannot work effectively from home they should be placed on a period of special leave. For those staff paid on Teachers Pay & Conditions or NJC Pay & Conditions (Support Staff) this should be paid.

For those of you using the MyView system this special leave should be recorded as (Paid Leave) COVID -19 – Self –Extremely Vulnerable. This should be recorded from the 5 November up to and including the 1 December in the first instance.

2. Employees in the clinically vulnerable (CV) category

Clinically vulnerable people are those who are:

- aged 70 or over (regardless of medical conditions)

- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year on medical grounds):
 - chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
 - chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
 - chronic kidney disease
 - chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
 - chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS) or cerebral palsy
 - diabetes
 - a weakened immune system as the result of certain conditions or medicines they are taking (such as steroid tablets)
 - being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- pregnant (see 3 below for further details)

Staff in this category are able to remain working in school, subject to Covid-Secure measures being in place. You should have previously undertaken an **individual risk assessment and this should now be reviewed** in light of the increase in the levels of infection and the tighter restrictions.

3. Pregnant employees

A risk assessment for pregnant workers is required if the employee is working, whether at home or outside of their home. This should be monitored and updated.

Useful information re pregnancy during coronavirus is available here

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

a) Pregnant employees who are under 28 weeks pregnant

These employees can continue to work in school unless they fall into the CEV category.

As with CV staff they should have an individual risk assessment or have this reviewed should one have already been completed. Please be mindful of those who may have other risk factors when undertaking this risk assessment.

b) Pregnant employees who are over 28 weeks pregnant

This is the position of Telford & Wrekin Council and should apply to all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools as we are the employer. Other schools are able to take their own position on this taking into account the national advice (see link above).

From 5th November these employees should be supported to work from home.

Should they be unable to work from home they should be placed on a period of special leave. For those staff paid on Teachers Pay & Conditions or NJC Pay & Conditions (Support Staff) this should be paid.

For those of you using the MyView system this special leave should be recorded as (Paid Leave) COVID -19 – Self – Vulnerable (pregnant). This should be recorded from the 5 November up to and including the 1 December in the first instance or up to the start of maternity leave (whichever is the sooner).

4. Employees who are over the age of 60

The guidance has been amended for the 2nd Lockdown to reflect that those over 60 or also at a higher risk, although they do not fall into the CV or CEV category by virtue of their age.

However, they are able to remain working in school.

We would advise that you have conversations with those over 60 to highlight this change to them and ensure they are aware of the government advice to be especially careful in following the full range of Covid measures within and outside of work.

There is no requirement to undertake an individual risk assessment but this should be supported if they make this request.

5. Employees from a Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority (BAME) origin

National data indicates that there is increased risk amongst BAME communities, in particular Black and Asian (African, Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Filipino, Chinese and Japanese). NHS guidance indicates that BAME employees over 55 may be at more risk than those of non BAME origin especially if combined with other risk factors, including being male. NHS Research also highlights that BAME employees are less likely to raise concerns they may have for example around FIT testing for PPE due to beards, veils, turbans etc. Managers should carry out an Individual Risk Assessment for **Potentially Vulnerable Workers** with BAME employees, to open up a conversation about what could be done to help them stay safe if they are working outside of their own home.

Risk Assessment for Potentially Vulnerable Workers

This will include

- Ascertaining whether social distancing measures can be maintained
- Considering any adjustments to the role e.g. limiting exposure to the public, working in alternative locations.
- Ensuring that adequate training regarding infection control has been received and understood and PPE required for the role is in place.
- Considering travel to work. Can the individual have different start times to accommodate use of public transport or use other means of travel?
- Considering different job roles or redeployment to a lower risk activity as a temporary measure.

Headteachers must regularly monitor and review the risk assessment with the individual to ensure that that it is operating effectively and adjust accordingly. Individuals should raise any concerns with their Headteacher as soon as possible.