

ADJUSTMENTS BULLETIN 13.03

UPDATE 25 AUGUST 2020 – RETURN TO WORK HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 1) **Context.** This bulletin contains information about return to work health risk assessments for School of Medicine Staff. In this context “staff” covers the following groups:
- a) Regular office-based and lab-based staff who work in a “socially distanced” manner
 - b) Clinical staff teaching in clinical skills and DR staff, where close proximity working (less than 2 m) is necessary, including those with an honorary status (eg. GCMs)
 - c) Simulated patients, who may be required to be in clinical skills sessions with close proximity working (paid hourly)
 - d) Clinical Tutors who teach in primary or secondary health care settings. These may be regular staff, honorary staff, or external clinical tutors who are paid on a per session basis.
- 2) **All staff** should consider their own health status in relation to Covid-19 vulnerability and potential severity of infection in the context of returning to the building. The University’s Occupational Health team have issued guidance (Appendix 1) about what resources are available to assist in staff returning to work. Appendix 1A of the Occupational Health guidance outlines the traffic-light system of categories and in which situations staff should self-refer to Occupational Health for an assessment. A summary table is below:

Category (as per NHS inform website)	Traffic light system	Action
Extremely high clinical risk (Shielding)	RED	Contact occupational health
Very high clinical risk	RED	Contact occupational health
High clinical risk	RED/AMBER	Contact occupational health
Increased clinical risk	AMBER	Contact occupational health
Low/standard risk	GREEN	No action required

All staff are to self-assess their health risk using this schema (Appendix 1A).

When to contact Occupational Health: as per the information in Appendix 1.

How to contact Occupational Health: as per information in Appendix 1.

- 3) Only staff teaching in a clinical setting or those who undertake close proximity working (less than 2 m) have the **additional requirement** of screening using the Scottish Government “COVID Age” screening tool. (link in Appendix 2). The following staff groups are required to undertake this additional screening:

Setting	Group
Clinical Skills	Teaching/support staff regularly working in close-proximity: School staff, GCMs, honorary staff
	Simulated patients
Anatomy	Anatomy teaching (and technical staff)
	Medical Demonstrators
Clinical placements	Teaching staff, honorary staff who teach in placements, external clinical tutors

Many of our clinical teaching staff will already have undertaken this screening as part of their clinical work. There is no need to repeat this screening if has already been done as part of other roles.

Threshold for Occupational Health assessment based on COVID Age tool: If your survey returns a COVID age of >70 (“very high” or “high” categories) you are asked to contact either the university Occupational Health team or the regional NHS Occupational Health team as appropriate for follow up.

If you use the university Occupational Health team, email a digital version of your completed survey to Janey Watt (jw235@st-andrews.ac.uk). Given the sensitive nature of the content please password protect your survey with a password following the format: <First Initial Last Initial 2020> (e.g. Helen Clark would be HC2020). If preferred a hard copy can be sent to the university Occupational Health team in the internal post. Include a contact number to help Occupational Health get in touch if a follow up assessment is needed.

4) Monitoring completion of health risk assessments. The School will not keep a record of the outcome of individual health risk self-assessments and will not have sight of this information. It is incumbent on all staff to take action as appropriate for their own situation. For audit purposes please complete a quick survey to confirm you have completed the risk assessment exercise and accept the risks.

[Link to survey](#)

APPENDIX 1

Occupational Health Advice for Return to Work - Medical vulnerability assessment

Guidance for managers

The aim of this guidance is to promote access to the resources available in assisting managers and employees who may have concerns with their health in relation to COVID 19 and returning to work.

The expectation is that returning to work will be a staged approach. Managers' support will be critical in ensuring a safe return to work, providing reassurance on how the return will be managed, the support available and the control measures in place.

During the staged return, at any one time, managers are likely to have staff in a variety of work situations such as: staff returning to work, staff working at home, furloughed staff, staff with caring responsibilities, staff with a shielded household member and shielding staff.

Occupational Health is able to provide a range of services to support both the managers and their staff including:

- 1. Assessments of fitness to return to work for any employee who may feel they are in a clinically vulnerable group**
2. Advice for new staff arriving from out-with the UK that may need to quarantine
3. Advice for staff who have possible symptoms of COVID 19
4. Advice for staff who have been in the vicinity of an employee with symptoms
5. Advice for staff who have had symptoms and wish to return to work
6. Support for staff who have mental health issues, including anxiety, regarding returning work
7. Support for staff who have suffered a bereavement
8. Ongoing support for wellbeing.

1. Assessment of fitness to return to work

If an employee has a health concern in relation to returning to work, they should be advised to contact Occupational Health by email on jw235@st-andrews.ac.uk or by calling on 2752, giving a brief description of their health concern and a contact number. **Appendix 1A** gives an outline of the various health issues that may place an employee in the vulnerable category and therefore need advice from Occupational Health regarding a return to work.

Occupational Health will undertake the individual health assessment via a telephone/teams meeting, discussing both physical and psychological wellbeing and, with the individual's consent, provide the manager with the appropriate guidance on fitness to return to work.

It is the manager's responsibility to undertake the appropriate risk assessment, detailing that the risk factors for transmission of COVID-19 infection have been considered and that practicable control measures have consequently been implemented.

Specifically, in the context of this document, it is the risk of transmission of COVID-19 through work activities that needs assessed. The completed risk assessment should be forwarded to Occupational Health. This ensures that the employee's

health in relation to the risk, the control measures implemented, and the guidance given can be properly assessed. It is anticipated that, with the correct control measures in place, the overall residual risk in the working environment will be sufficiently low to allow many employees, even in the increased vulnerable group, to be able to be present in the workplace.

A return to work recommendation would be on the proviso that the manager maintains control measures and the employee complies with those recommendations until such time that the community and workplace risks from COVID-19 infection are reduced.

2. Advice for new staff arriving from out with the UK that may need to quarantine

Managers should advise new staff arriving from out-with the UK to contact Occupational Health to ensure that any health issues can be supported. Advice on registering and on how to access various NHS facilities can also be provided.

3. Advice for staff who have possible symptoms of COVID 19

All staff who have any symptoms are advised to refrain from work and follow the gov and NHS advice. If an employee becomes unwell with coronavirus symptoms at work. The employee should inform their manager and should leave work to self-isolate straight away and if possible, wear a face covering on route and avoid public transport. Staff can contact www.nhsinform.scot or, call 0800 028 2816, to arrange to get tested.

The U.K. Government site www.gov.uk/coronavirus offers helpful advice that, if followed, can reduce the risk to others when an employee comes out of isolation with a possible COVID 19 infection. Occupational Health will give advice on any adjustments required to assist a return to work. Occupational Health will provide the manager with the appropriate guidance on fitness to return to work, with the employee's consent.

4. Advice for staff who have been in the vicinity of an employee with symptoms

Managers or employees can contact Occupational Health for advice if they feel they may have been in contact with someone who has symptoms of COVID 19.

5. Advice for staff who have had symptoms and wish to return to work

If staff have been self-isolating due to Covid 19 symptoms or if someone in the household has had symptoms and they are unsure of when a return to work would be safe, then Occupational Health will advise on fitness to work. With the employees' consent, a fitness to work report will be undertaken for the manager following the consultation.

6. Support for staff who have mental health issues, including anxiety, regarding returning work

Staff can self-refer and receive appropriate support and advice in confidence. If a manager has concerns with an employee's health and wellbeing, then the manager can undertake a management referral with the assistance of human resources. Managers should be particularly aware that additional psychological support may be required for those who have had a hospital admission with COVID symptoms. This group may require a long recovery period including, if necessary, reasonable workplace adjustments.

7. Support for staff who have suffered a bereavement

Managers should be aware that there may be staff who have experienced bereavement during this period. Staff may not have been able to access the same support network and therefore may require counselling support which they are able to obtain via Occupational Health.

8. Ongoing wellbeing support

There is a vast amount of information on the university's wellbeing page to assist staff in improving and maintaining their wellbeing. For individual support staff can self-refer to Occupational Health where tailored advice to meet the individual's health needs will be undertaken.

Appendix 1A

Assessment of those staff in the vulnerable groups

Below is an overview of the various categories of vulnerable groups so that both managers and affected employees are aware of how to access support from Occupational Health prior to returning to work. The categories are listed using a traffic light system, with those whose headings are in red text having the highest risk through to those in green having the least risk.

Extremely high Clinical risk (Shielding) – Requires home working

This group are easily identified from the UK Government guidelines on shielding groups <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-shielding> who are regarded as clinically extremely vulnerable – advised to contact Occupational Health.

Very high clinical risk – home working required

Staff who have multiple relevant co-morbidities and risk factors but may not meet the government guidelines for shielding who nevertheless may still have a very high risk – advised to contact Occupational Health

High clinical risk - Can work in a low risk Environment

Staff who have underlying health conditions, including those outlined by the UK Government as increased vulnerability, or co-morbidities and risk factors (eg, age, gender, weight) – advised to contact Occupational Health

Increased clinical risk

Staff who have an underlying health condition but do not meet the any of the above criteria. An example would be stable asthmatic or stable diabetic – advised to contact Occupational Health

Low/standard risk

Staff who have no underlying health conditions- do not require to contact Occupational health.

Janey Watt

Occupational Health Adviser

APPENDIX 2 (COVID AGE RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL)

[Click here to access the online version of the COVID Age self-assessment tool](#)