

Deployment of Staff in During the Covid 19 emergency
Model Policy for use by Local Authorities / other public sector bodies

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1. Framework Introduction

- 1.1. This framework is intended to take precedence over normal HR policies if there is any conflict.
- 1.2. In an emergency such as the one currently being experienced from the Covid 19 pandemic there may be a necessity to reallocate and redeploy staff without warning and without consultation. This may include asking staff to undertake duties outside their normal professional area and/or at a different location. Additional staff may also be rehired, sourced potentially from recently retired staff, employment agencies, volunteers and partner organisations.
- 1.3. It is recognised that during such a situation, functions which are not identified as a core critical functions may have reduced service or stop service delivery altogether. Core critical functions should continue wherever possible, but it is recognised that they may be impacted by staff shortages. To ensure critical services remain operational, council staff may need to be redeployed into other areas of work, work in different ways, and potentially in different locations
- 1.4. This paper sets out the safeguards and rules that should apply if the council needs to redeploy staff in the event of an emergency.
- 1.5. This document should be used in conjunction with business continuity plans.
- 1.6. This framework is not designed to replace permanent or very long-term redeployment which is usually dealt with in line with the council's normal organisational change procedures.

2. Redeployment and Reallocation of work for existing staff

2.1. Key considerations

- 2.1.1. In an emergency where staff may need to be redeployed or work may need to be reallocated, managers will assess:
 - a) Whether it is necessary for staff to report to their normal place of work and the extent to which redeployment of staff or reallocation of work is necessary to ensure that adequate cover is provided for essential services. Managers will try, wherever possible, to direct staff to sites which minimise travel and allocate staff work with which they are familiar.
 - b) The location of staff, their access to public/private transport, any reasonable constraints on their flexibility, as appropriate.
 - c) Depending on service requirements and the availability of any necessary supporting technology, the feasibility of staff being able to work from home to undertake either the same or different work as a priority where this is possible.
 - d) Depending on service requirements, the feasibility of staff being able to work at a different site closer to home, either to undertake the same or different work.
 - e) Depending on service requirements, the feasibility of staff being deployed to essential services provided by another local authority, one of the council's partner organisations or reallocated work normally conducted by a partner organisation.
 - f) The duration of any arrangements and whether these will apply to all or part of the individual's normal contractual hours.



- g) If any temporary role attracts a higher rate of pay or other enhancements, then these should be paid for the period of temporary redeployment.
- h) Whether the council can comply with its legal obligation to ensure employees' health, safety and welfare at work as far as is reasonably practicable or its duty of care to others. In doing so, managers will take account of:
 - any known/stated restriction on work that could safely be undertaken by an individual on health grounds. This may include, for example, pregnancy and specified underlying health conditions
 - the capacity of individuals to undertake alternative work e.g. if the work involved heavy lifting or was physically demanding.
 - any training or professional qualification that would be a prerequisite to carrying out certain duties safely.
 - any other circumstance that may make working unreasonably unsafe, for example, severe staff shortages.
 - any official communication from bodies with emergency powers by law, for example, advising against travel/other activity in all/some circumstances. The council will provide advice to staff on interpreting such communications. For example, workers assigned to essential services would normally be expected to travel to work in light of advice to refrain from **non-essential** travel.

2.1.2. When redeploying or reallocating duties managers will have regard to the ability of individuals to undertake different work and the level of supervision that may be necessary under such circumstances. In the event of an individual disagreeing with the assessment of their manager over their suitability to be redeployed or reallocated duties, the matter should be referred to the relevant head of service, director or executive director. Use of the employee complaints procedure to resolve such a matter is not normally considered appropriate during an emergency, and councils should work in conjunction with Trades Unions to come to mutually agreed arrangements.

2.2 Communication

2.2.1 It is critical at this time that we take into consideration that personal circumstances of employees who may already have caring responsibilities or those who are self isolating due to having a vulnerable person in the household. These particular employees may find it more difficult or impossible to comply with requests to redeploy into critical roles.

2.2.2 For all other employees a clear statement of the Councils expectation of them from the Chief Executive, Leader or Director of the relevant service will be important in ensuring concerns are allayed, questions answered and any potential for future issues are dealt with in the initial stages of redeployment. An example FAQs which is a summary of the key points of this document is attached on [page 8](#) for you to share with employees as part of wider communications out to staff.

2.3 Excess travel expenses

2.3 1 Any member of staff who is redeployed and incurs additional travel expenses will be reimbursed for the excess cost upon provision of the relevant receipts in the normal way. It may be helpful to ask employees to record "redeployment mileage" on the claim so that you can keep track of and report on any additional costs.



2.4 Working hours

- 2.4.1 Part time staff may be invited to increase their contractual hours for a specified period of time and are encouraged but will not be obliged to do so.

Staff on other flexible working arrangements may be asked to temporarily suspend or alter these arrangements in response to the emergency situation. Flexible working solutions will also enable as many staff to continue working as possible (e.g. through home working).

Staff would not normally be asked to work in excess of 48 hours per week, work without appropriate rest breaks or have the opportunity to take annual leave. In an emergency situation, this may be unavoidable for short periods but should not be sustained. It will be important to ensure that staff continue to receive appropriate daily and weekly rest breaks.

- 2.4.1 It will be important for both staff and managers to monitor working time and ensure that excessive working time without appropriate rest does not occur, as this could adversely affect staff's health and therefore their ability to remain at work to support colleagues and the running of services.

2.5 Sickness

- 2.5.1 All authorities have arrangements in place for sickness absence reporting as well as guidance on self-isolation. Staff are expected to fully follow the guidance but keep in touch with their manager to update them regularly. Where staff are well and able to work then they will be expected to, noting that agile working is the default position which should apply where possible.

- 2.5.1 Where staff are sick/infected due to Covid-19, although details should be recorded as sickness absence, this will be waived from the sickness absence procedure.

2.6 Leave

- 2.6.1 The council may need to limit requests for leave (including annual leave, special leave, leave for public duties, parental leave, shared parental leave, unpaid leave, sabbatical leave and study leave) during a pandemic. All requests will have to be considered on merit and the council's normal arrangements for requesting the leave will apply.

- 2.6.2 New requests for annual leave may need to be more tightly controlled and staff may not be able to take leave at the exact times they request, depending on service needs. However, staff will remain entitled to take their annual leave allocation. It may be appropriate to relax or suspend rules on annual leave carry over.

- 2.6.3 Where employees have booked leave they may be asked if they are able to cancel the period of leave booked and provisions will be made for employees to take annual leave at another time, mutually agreed by the employee and the manager.

- 2.6.4 Where staff have booked to take annual leave but are unable to fulfil their original plans the council may still need the leave to be taken at that time. Cancellation of leave will be according to service needs and the availability of work.

2.7 Non-attendance at work

- 2.7.1 It will be important in an emergency situation to ensure that all staff able to work do so as directed, to ensure services run smoothly and colleagues are not unnecessarily overburdened by their absence. Unauthorised absence without good reason will need to



be addressed. Following consideration of the circumstances, such absence may be considered unpaid and a breach of the employment contract that could lead to disciplinary action. Disciplinary action will only be taken after following the appropriate disciplinary procedure. Depending on the availability of resources and the duration of the emergency, disciplinary action may not be taken until the emergency is over or resources enable the matter to be dealt with.

- 2.7.2 In relation to redeployment/reallocation of work, if staff refuse without good reason to follow a management request that is reasonable in the circumstances, this may lead to disciplinary action being taken, in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. Again, such action may be stayed until the end of the emergency or until resources allow the matter to be dealt with.

2.8 Staff support

- 2.8.1 To enable staff to continue working, it will be important to ensure they are appropriately supported during and after an emergency e.g. counselling, referral to occupational health or other support groups. Managers will play a key role in identifying concerns, supporting their staff and ensuring their health, safety and well-being at work and by arranging de-briefing sessions. Where appropriate, staff will be given paid time off to receive any necessary support intervention.

3 **Staff with health conditions/ staff who are pregnant**

- 3.1 Staff with underlying health conditions or those who are pregnant will continue to be supported. There will be instances where managers will not be aware of underlying health conditions and staff will be asked to speak to their manager so that they can be supported. Staff who are pregnant do not need to inform their managers until 15 weeks before the baby is due but they are urged to let their managers know as soon as possible particularly in the event of a major incident so that appropriate support is put in place and an appropriate risk assessment can be undertaken.
- 3.2 During a period of business disruption normal or non-urgent Occupational Health appointments/activities may be suspended in order to ensure that Occupational Health is able to more effectively support staff, particularly response staff during a major incident.
- 3.3 Managers have the discretion to redeploy staff to suitable roles/away from front-line duties or place them on paid special leave where it is deemed to be appropriate. This should be for a short period and reviewed as soon as possible, ideally on a weekly basis.

4 **Temporary workers, volunteers and additional resources**

- 4.1 The council may need to consider engaging additional employees, agency workers and/or volunteers in emergency situations. Local Authorities are developing emergency recruitment protocols in order to allow speedy and safe recruitment recognising that existing procedures (including DBS checking, procurement and financial approval processes) for engaging such resources may need to be relaxed.
- 4.2 Staff due for retirement, recently retired staff and recently engaged interim staff may be contacted and asked if they would be prepared to work during a major incident.
- 4.3 Both full and part-time staff could be asked if they would consider working additional hours including weekends. Staff working additional hours that are over and above standard practice will be paid appropriate rates or granted subsequent time off. Where full-time staff agree to work additional hours then appropriate time for recuperation will be arranged.



5 Mutual aid and partnership working with multi-agencies

- 5.1 Emergencies may require public service organisations to co-operate in providing essential services. During such an event the council may need assistance in terms of external staff and resources and may request support from partners such as the NHS, council contractors and other agencies. The council may in turn be requested to help another public service organisation and to provide staff and/or resources. This may mean that staff are asked, temporarily, to work within a partner organisation or undertake work not normally within the remit of their council.

6 Health & safety training

- 6.1 Volunteers, temporary workers, recently retired staff and staff assigned from partner organisations may be required to attend a special induction/Health and Safety training session to ensure the council complies with its legal obligations, including its duty of care to its own workers and service users.

7 Safeguarding

- 7.1 In maintaining the council's duty of care, particularly towards vulnerable adults and children, the normal standards of safeguarding will continue. In this regard, employees redeployed to working with vulnerable adults or children will only have unsupervised access to these client groups if the appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring (DBS) clearance is in place.
- 7.2 Staff with up-to-date DBS checks should be prioritised to redeployed posts that require DBS clearance at a given level including those that care for vulnerable children and adults.
- 7.3 Temporary changes to DBS ID checking guidelines have been put in place to enable ID documents to be viewed over video link and scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted. This will better enable fast-tracking of staff into critical roles. A link to the DBS guidance on DBS ID checking is available [here](#)
- 7.4 It should be noted that where redeployment is required in order to maintain critical services, but DBS clearance has not been obtained then a risk assessment must be carried out as normal and subject to approval staff can work within the service whilst they await the necessary clearance.

8 Childcare or Dependant Care

- 8.1 Local Authorities will regularly review the government guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining educational provision which includes definitions of critical sectors and workers. This will need to be considered as long as schools, nurseries, etc. remain available for qualifying staff to send their children to during the current COVID-19 pandemic situation.

9 Recruitment/ Resourcing

- 9.1 It is sensible for authorities to keep recruitment under review and in some cases rescind or pause a job offer until the new starter can sensibly and safely be given appropriate induction into the new role. This should be reviewed and a focus maintained on critical services, and other recruitment activities may be suspended where required.
- 9.2 Where recruitment is required, this can be done virtually / remotely, but any processes and safeguards in place to avoid discrimination on any grounds must be robust and ensure they will not lead to a future discrimination claim. Particularly when applicants have particular needs in terms of adaptive technology this will need to be managed closely to ensure a fair



outcome.

10 Data Protection

- 10.1 Council staff are obligated to comply with the principles of Data Protection and the General Data Protection Regulations in any work location.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 Local Authorities have various statutory duties in delivering its services including at times of emergency. This agreement supports the council's business continuity and emergency planning arrangements and demonstrates how the council will manage human resources to facilitate a quick response to, and effective management of emergencies. It should be communicated that councils are optimistic that all staff will fully cooperate with all reasonable measures and instructions and expects that staff will not unreasonably refuse to do so. It is also recognised that councils are aware that some staff may have personal caring commitments which cannot be changed/substituted and will bear this in mind when making requests to individuals.



Staff FAQs for redeployment template

- 1) I have been asked to move to undertake another role different from my normal duties, what choices do I have?

In the current situation staff are being asked to move away from their normal duties and into roles which are critical for the maintenance of essential services. Where possible staff will be asked to move to a role with similar duties or in a related area. This may not always be possible however, and we are asking staff to be flexible and responsive in these difficult times. A risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure the appropriate training and support is given to you, as well as any Personal Protective equipment (PPE) and safe working practices you will need to abide by whilst in your alternative work role.

Any particular concerns should be addressed to your line manager in the first instance, who will consider individual circumstances on a case by case basis. You cannot refuse a reasonable work instruction, and at this time we are taking a view that asking all employees to support the emergency response is reasonable under the extraordinary circumstances.

- 2) I am part time and have been asked to work additional / extra hours in another role, what will happen to my pay?

You may be asked to work additional hours if you are part time. You will still be provided with sufficient rest breaks to ensure you are safe to undertake your role, so if you have more than one job (either within the council or with multiple employers) please make sure you discuss this with your manager before undertaking any additional hours.

You will be paid additionally for the duties you undertake at the appropriate rate. We will not normally redeploy staff into higher graded roles, however if this does happen (and you are qualified / competent to undertake higher level duties) you will be paid at the higher rate for the role, whether you are moved fully into the new role or only for the additional hours.

- 3) Where can I expect to be redeployed to?

Service managers will be reviewing where they have gaps in service provision and identifying numbers / types of staff they need in the upcoming days and weeks. This is a rapidly evolving situation, so the types of work needed now in the short term may change over time and will need to be kept under constant review. Managers needing resources will complete a form with details of the work, location and amount of resource they need, and this will be co-ordinated centrally to ensure resources are prioritized and approached on a "best fit" basis.

- 4) What will happen about any additional costs I incur as a result of a move in location?

If you redeployment involves any additional travel expenses / mileage you will be able to claim these at the standard rate for the additional miles you do in working in another location. These should be claimed through the normal process, but please indicate on the claim that it is "redemption mileage" so we can track this.



5) How long will the redeployment last?

At this time we don't know, however managers will keep the arrangements under constant review, as the requirements may change, and staff may be redeployed into more than one role as the situation develops before returning to your normal duties.

6) What will happen to my booked annual leave?

We recognise that this is a stressful time, and people will still need time off to recharge. Where possible services will honour annual leave if you wish to take it, and in some cases may ask you to take annual leave to support efficient working.

If, in extreme situations, we are unable to honour your leave this will be withdrawn and it will be added back into your entitlement to be taken at a later date, and in some cases may need to be carried over into the next leave year.



Appendix b - Redeployment Business Requirements Template

This form is to support critical service areas within Local Authorities, to capture any additional resources they require to deliver critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This form has been created to assist managers in assessing and ‘thinking outside the box’ on how they can provide further support within their service and what additional support, resources and skills they require. This will inform the deployment process and allow the council to consider and deploy the support and assistance required.

Directorate:						Date:	
Name & Role (completed by):						Review date	
Service Area/Team							
Email address:							
Mobile Telephone number:							
	Example	Critical Job 1	Critical Job 2	Critical Job 3	Critical Job 4	Critical Job 5	
Critical role	Recruiter (for emergency recruitment)						
Are there any statutory requirements, formal training, qualifications or vetting that would normally be a prerequisite to carrying out certain duties? If so what?	No						
If yes, do you think they can be relaxed safely and/or legally?	N/A						



<p>If yes, do you have any recommendations for relaxation of statutory/qualification/vetting requirements that you feel could be safely relaxed on a temporary basis? If so, please provide details.</p>	<p>N/A</p>					
<p>Does the work involve activity that restricts whether it can be undertaken safely by an individual on health grounds, e.g. higher risk of infection, heavy lifting?</p>	<p>No</p>					
<p>Could the work be 'carved up' to allow a non-qualified/non-expert redeployee to take on certain duties? If so, please provide details.</p>	<p>Yes - safeguarding vetting could be carried out by more experienced team members and redeployees could support with admin, notes, interviews</p>					
<p>What sort of skills are required to do these duties?</p>	<p>General administration, note taking, use of Microsoft office and general IT skills</p>					
<p>What kind of ongoing support/supervision would the redeployee need to undertake the work?</p>	<p>Initial direction on what to do, but minimal ongoing supervision required.</p>					



Could any elements of the job be carried out remotely even if other aspects can't? If so, please provide details.	Yes - all interviews / assessments can be managed by web/telephone					
Please estimate the minimum training requirements to allow deployment, including time required	1 day					
Do training programmes already exist and can they be deployed remotely?	There are online packages for recruiting managers					
Are there specific staff groups in lower priority areas who are likely to have transferable skills making redeployment easier?	HR teams, project managers, general administrators					
Additional information						

Please return this form to (name) Deployment Officer who will be coordinating a skills match of the details provided.

