

Guidance on changes to the national rules from 19th July for use by Local Authorities / other public sector bodies

1. Introduction

- 1.1. On 19th July the wider national restrictions are lifted by the Government as the pandemic runs its course. These rules apply to the wider general public and have implications for employers both in terms of their interactions with service users and the public, but importantly for this document for their management of employees.
- 1.2. Any actions implemented from this guidance should be discussed and where possible agreed with Trades Unions. These are suggested measures to meet your local situations and will need to be kept under review as the situation evolves.
- 1.3. There may be a National joint Circular published but as the rules change on Monday this guidance is issued for the interim and will be changed / updated if necessary once the national guidance is published.
- 1.4. The current Government advice is that whilst working from home is no longer an instruction, it advises businesses to act with caution and encourage a gradual return over the summer.

2 Masks and other PPE

- 2.1 The regulations for the wearing of masks in enclosed spaces has changed from mandatory to advisory. The current Government advice is that “the Government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas” and that fresh air and ventilation are important.
- 2.2 Councils should review their existing risk assessment for employees who are in offices or other council premises, the homes of clients or other workplaces and review whether masks, face coverings or other PPE is still appropriate – particularly where ventilation is restricted, social distancing cannot be maintained or other risk factors exist.
- 2.3 Where the risk assessment indicates that to protect other employees, clients or the public a mask is a proportionate safeguard, councils should issue a reasonable management instruction to the relevant employees for continued mandatory use of such PPE (unless medical exemption applies). Service managers should then discuss concerns with any employees who do not comply with the request in the first instance to understand their concerns and address any specific issues. It should be emphasised that the wearing of masks is primarily to protect other people and it is therefore important that staff understand the position regarding all colleagues, particularly where there may be someone in the CEV group who is in work, and has concerns for their own safety.
- 2.4 Other PPE, sanitiser and cleaning regimes may still be appropriate in workplaces and this should be updated on the risk assessment

3 CEV employees

- 3.1 Those employees who fall into the CEV category should continue to work from home wherever possible. Where they have not been able to work from home and returned to work at the end of the CEV isolation on 12th April the rules have not changed and an individual risk assessment needs to be in place to support them. This risk assessment may be impacted by



an increased number of people in the workplace or choices other staff make on mask wearing.

4 Self Isolation, track and trace and foreign travel

4.1 Paragraph 10.9 of the Green Book reads:

“An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay. The period of absence on this account shall not be reckoned against the employee’s entitlements under this scheme”

This provision applies to employees who are required to self-isolate due to contact or potential contact with an infected person and have been directly contacted or “pinged” via the NHS app. Whilst there is some indication that from 16th August the requirement to self-isolate will be removed for people who have been double jabbed, this will not apply to those who have not had any or only one vaccination. However in the interest of public health and ensuring those who are requested to self-isolate do so without detriment, everyone should be on paid absence if self-isolating for the required period.

4.2 This provision will not apply to employees travelling abroad with full knowledge of the current rules on quarantine when re-entering the UK. This fact must be communicated to the workforce and in that instance these employees will be required to take additional annual leave if they cannot work from home, or follow your own council procedures where you have different arrangements in place.

