

## ALL EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR - COVID-19, NO 22, 19 JUNE 2020

I hope that this latest briefing finds you and your family well. Yesterday I welcomed the decision by the Scottish Government to lift some more of the restrictions previously imposed and to move us onto Phase 2 of the Route Map. Although as outlined by the First Minister we need to proceed with caution given that the virus has not been eradicated, it is pleasing to be able to move forward in our recovery and start providing more of the services that we are in existence to provide to our three constituent Councils and the communities of Tayside.

The purpose of this briefing is to provide you with information on shielding, our position on quarantine after travel outside the UK and to draw your attention to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document which has been developed to answer some of your queries and can be found on our COVID-19 website page [here](#).

### Shielding

There appears to be some confusion over the difference between 'shielding' and 'self-isolating' and so I would like to provide some clarity around this for both employees and managers.

There are 2 categories in relation to those at higher risk of developing severe illness with coronavirus. The first list relates to those who are considered 'higher risk' and this includes people who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 and instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds
- pregnant

And those with:

- chronic (long-term) 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), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- problems with their spleen, for example sickle cell disease
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- a BMI of 40 or above who are seriously overweight

Then there is the second list which relates to those who are considered to be at 'extremely high risk'. These are the individuals who received the 'shielding letters' from the Chief Medical Officer (CMO). This group includes people with:

- cancer and are receiving active chemotherapy
- lung cancer and are either receiving or previously received radical radiotherapy
- cancers of the blood or bone marrow, such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment

- severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, severe COPD, severe bronchiectasis and pulmonary hypertension
- rare diseases, including all forms of interstitial lung disease/sarcoidosis, and inborn errors of metabolism (such as SCID and homozygous sickle cell) that significantly increase the risk of infections
- an absent spleen or have had their spleen removed
- significant heart disease (congenital or acquired) and are pregnant

And those that have had:

- solid organ transplants
- bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs

Or receiving:

- immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- immunosuppression therapies that significantly increase the risk of infection
- renal dialysis treatment

Further information on both categories can be found [here](#).

Those who are categorised into the first list i.e. those who are in the 'higher risk' group are strongly advised to work from home if possible. If working from home is not possible, these individuals can attend work but they must strictly follow physical distancing and hand washing measures.

Those who are categorised into the second list i.e. those who are in the 'extremely high risk' group should not attend work and these individuals should be shielding until 31 July 2020. These people can work from home but cannot attend work out with their home.

To date, Tayside Contracts has not required anyone who is in the first list to attend work (out with their home) but we are starting to ask these individuals to return to work as more services come back on line and the workload increases.

Any employee who believes that they should be shielding until 31 July because they are categorised under the extremely high risk list will be asked to produce their letter from the CMO (if they have not already done so). These employees will continue to be paid their full contractual pay.

Any employee who does not have a letter and does not come under the 'extremely high risk' list and is asked to return to work but has concerns about returning to work, should discuss these concerns with their line manager who will, where necessary, refer them to Occupational Health for advice on their fitness for work. These employees will continue to be paid their full contractual pay pending the outcome of this process.

In relation to those employees who were given priority for furlough due to them defining themselves as shielding, there is no intention at this stage to ask them to clarify their status in terms of list 1 or 2 and we will leave these employees on furlough as long as we do not need them operationally.

## Difference Between Shielding and Self-Isolating Terminology

At the outset the Government advice was that all those in the higher risk categories should 'self-isolate' but as the situation progressed, they changed this terminology to 'shielding', provided further clarity on the different risk groups and introduced the 12-week shielding period (now extended to 31 July). Now the term self-isolating is only relevant in relation to those who are having to self-isolate because they have symptoms of COVID-19, have been in contact with someone who has tested positive (the Test and Protect approach) or are required to quarantine after travel.

I hope this clarifies the position regarding shielding and self-isolating but please refer to the [FAQs](#) resource on our website or get in touch with your line manager or an HR Adviser for further advice should this be necessary.

## Quarantine After Travel Outside the UK

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) continues to advise British nationals against all but essential international travel. As of Monday 8 June, residents entering the UK are subject to [new measures](#) due to COVID-19. Under these rules you will:

- need to provide your journey and contact details when you return to the UK
- not be allowed to leave the place you are staying for the first 14 days after you arrive home except in very limited situations.

If you chose to travel internationally whilst these Scottish Government measures are still in place and therefore have to quarantine for 14 days on your return, you will be required to request annual leave and/or unpaid leave from your line manager prior to leaving the UK to cover all of your time away from work, i.e. your actual travel/holiday period and the quarantine period (14 day self-isolation period). Employees may also request to work from home where this is practicable.

Again, should you have a query or concern in relation to travel outside the UK and how this relates to work, please get in touch with your line manager or an HR Adviser for further advice should this be necessary.

Should you have any questions about any of the topics covered in this briefing or are seeking support please do not hesitate to contact your Line Manager. Please continue to refer to Tayside Contracts' website [www.tayside-contracts.co.uk](http://www.tayside-contracts.co.uk) on a regular basis to check for further updates.

If you have not already done so and wish to provide your email address to us in order to benefit from electronic access to communications such as these, please forward your email address to [Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk](mailto:Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk). We will not forward your email address onto any third parties or use it for any other purpose other than to communicate with you.

**Iain C Waddell, Managing Director, 19 June 2020**