

Absence

- Employees displaying symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate for 10 days
- Provided symptoms do not worsen, they can return to work after this time
- Arrange a return to work meeting with them a couple of days before they are due back
- Ask them to visit the NHS website to arrange a test
- Follow up to ensure they take the test and to discuss the results
- If they are ill for some other reason, encourage them to get better before returning
- Anyone self-isolating is still eligible for Statutory Sick Pay from day 1 of absence
- Ask employees to obtain a self-isolation notification from the NHS website

Absence Management

- Do not include COVID-19 related absences in your triggers for absence management
- Keep accurate records of COVID-19 related absences and carry out return to work meetings
- Be considerate of other illnesses due to lowered immune systems
- Remember grief and mental health problems may also be COVID-19 related
- Be sensitive to individual circumstances when reviewing absence levels

Test & Trace

- Test & Trace will contact any employee who's been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19
- They must then self-isolate for 14 days from the last day of contact with that person
- This period of isolation will be on Statutory Sick Pay
- They will be asked by Test & Trace to take a test.
- Even if the test is negative, they must still self-isolate for the full 14 days before returning

Shielding Employees

- Shielding employees can return to work on 1st August 2020
- Start communicating with them now to ensure a safe and effective plan is in place
- Carry out a robust return to work meeting to talk through their concerns and show them how you are going to keep them safe at work
- Most shielding employees will be classed as disabled, so all reasonable adjustments need to be considered in their return
- If they still have concerns, encourage communication with their medical team

Quarantine

- When returning from other countries, must quarantine if not coming from an approved place
- You can legally cancel holiday arrangements, but it's not advisable
- Employees who have to quarantine are not eligible for SSP
- Can they work from home, use up more holidays, take unpaid leave or make the time back?

Reluctant Employees

- Employees may still feel anxious about returning to work – listen to their concerns
- Carry out effective return to work meetings with all the team – include:
 - How do they feel about returning?
 - What safety measures are in place?
 - Is there anything making them reluctant to return?
 - What have they missed about work, what have they enjoyed about furlough?
 - How is their mental health and how will they tell you if they aren't OK?
 - Plans for the future of the business and their role
- Those with childcare issues due to closed schools are still eligible for furlough
- If you've offered all the support you can, and they still won't return ask HR for advice

Home Working

- Employees with over 26 weeks' service can submit a flexible working request
- You can say no provided you have a legitimate business reason
- You'll need to do a home working risk assessment
- Agree on who'll pay for equipment, frequency of contact, security, etc.

Contract Variation

- Employee's have to agreed to changes to their contract
- Communicate your reasons and ask for their agreement
- Where agreement is not forthcoming, consult and try to resolve any concerns
- Ultimately you may need to dismiss and re-engage (which is risky)

Restructure & Redundancy

- You must have a legal reason and strong rationale to make redundancies
- Its never about the person, always about the role
- You may need to use a selection matrix to ensure fairness
- Consultation period depends on the number of redundancies so plan ahead
- You can still use the CJRS grant for notice periods (but not for redundancy payments)
- You can enforce annual leave during notice periods if you give the right notice

Useful Websites

NHS 111 Self-Isolation Note <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/screener-question>

NHS 111 Get A COVID-19 Test <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>

NHS info on Test & Trace Service <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>

If you need any help with any of the above please contact us on 01282 678321 or email us at lisa@cubehr.co.uk. You can also visit our website www.cubehr.co.uk