Returning to the Workplace.

Supported by Be Well @ Work.

Here are some helpful hints, tips and links to further support for Business Owners & Managers to secure the wellbeing of your staff and increase productivity as you manage the return to work of home and furloughed workers.

We have included some links to further support and further information to help you get back up and running as quickly as possible.

Why?

For many staff the impact of lockdown may include:

- depression and anxiety

- MSK issues

- poor diet

- poor sleep

- increased alcohol intake

- financial concerns

- feeling isolated

- fear and panic of returning to work

- loss of some skills / rusty doing some tasks

Points to consider:

What are the business processes you need to be up and running first?

- Its highly likely that social distancing measures will be required for sometime which will require risk management approaches to be undertaken prior to return to work get these in place quickly so you can plan around them.

- You may want to seek the views of customers, suppliers and other stakeholder groups as well as those within the organisation in terms of your approach.

- Be clear on what tasks need to be completed in order of priority and who you need to do them.

- To achieve your priorities will you need to redeploy staff to tasks not previously part of their job description?

- Can any relevant documentation checks be conducted remotely before a return to work?

- If you are changing business processes building in time for training as part of a phased return could minimise down time.

- If new job practices need to be allocated how do you/your managers establish which are the most appropriate staff that can be redeployed?

Points to consider:

Staffing:

- If new job practices need to be allocated how do the managers establish which are the most appropriate staff that can be redeployed?

- Consider whether you are giving your staff the option to take on a new role – can they refuse? What will you do if that happens?

- Are there any contract issues that need to be worked through before a return to work?

- Creating an induction process back into your return to work plan could support a managed return to productivity quickly.

- You may also need to consider your current health and wellbeing strategies and whether they need adapting.

- Staff are likely to be a bit rusty on some elements of their job, building time in for them to refresh skills/access some training could get things moving quicker.

- For any wellbeing concerns identified signpost staff to the appropriate support service or to the occupational health provider.

Points to consider:

Consistent, regular communication will make a difference:

- Agreeing a consistent set of messages to be communicated to your staff in terms of returning to 'business as usual in advance of getting back up and running.

- Do your managers have the skills to communicate the change to your staff? Are you all clear on their role in this process? Where can they get help and support?

- Increasing your Keep In Touch meetings/ One to One's to keep track of wellbeing concerns, listening to your staff will ensure your productivity remains consistent.

- Encouraging your staff to discuss mental health issues with their manager/team and recognise that ' its ok not be ok'.

- Considering questions that may encourage employees to 'open up', people struggle with change keeping dialogue going with your team will reduce this.

- Take the time to 'celebrate' and 'reward' success - people need to feel good about their achievements, however big or small they are.

Consult with employees:

Some questions you could include in your return to work discussion:

- How did you find furlough working, did you miss the company of colleagues did you manage to find a structure to your day?
- What are your thoughts on home working, did you manage to find a good structure to your day, did you miss the company of colleagues?
- How are you feeling about returning to work?
- What do you think went well during lockdown that you feel you would like the opportunity to continue with? e.g. the flexibility of home working
- Is everything ok with you and your family?
- Did you do anything different whilst you were off work?
- Has the time away from work impacted on anything that is worrying you?
- Do you feel any adjustments need to be made to your work?
- Is there anything that you feel you need help within terms of additional support?

Considering Health and Safety:

The Health & Safety Executive have produced guidance on how to work safety throughout COVID 19:

- A short guide on working safely https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm
- Managing risks and risk assessments https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm

- Detailed sector specific guidance https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

Helpful checklist:

Learning from lockdown and planning for a new normality:
Putting staff wellbeing at the centre

This checklist is a suggestion for how employers might approach the challenge of coming out of lockdown. It is intended as a starting point and may not be exhaustive for every company's needs.

1) Complete a review of lockdown
- What adaptions/changes have been implemented?
- What worked and what didn't?

2) Ask staff how they feel
- How has lockdown been for them?
- How do they feel about a return to the workplace?
- What concerns and anxieties do they have?

3) Make the workplace safe
- What is needed to maintain social distancing measures?
- What is needed to ensure a pleasant and comfortable workplace?
- How can anxieties be minimised or controlled?

4) Where can flexibility continue?
- Where have you introduced flexibility during lockdown?
- How has this flexibility impacted on business, service delivery, performance, and wellbeing (pros and cons)?
- Where can policies be adapted to facilitate long-term flexibility?
- How can you continue to respond to individual vulnerabilities and circumstances?

5) Plan for post-traumatic stress and ongoing mental health and wellbeing needs
- What internal support can you put in place (e.g. EAP, increased line management and support, risk assessments/WAPs, training)?
- What support can you outsource/signpost staff to (e.g. bereavement counselling, individual/group therapy, financial advice)?
- How can you promote wellbeing and rebuild or strengthen a positive workplace culture?

6) Enable and encourage positive relationships
- Is there a need for increased interaction/socialising amongst colleagues?
- Is there a need for peer support (at all levels)?
- Do managers feel confident discussing mental health and emotionally sensitive subjects?

7) Invest in effective communication
- Is your internal communication regular, timely, honest, consistent, and clear?
- Does it inspire trust and reassurance (where possible)?
- Does it convey empathy, understanding and appreciation?

Wider support:

ACAS have developed guidance that considers:-

- Holiday entitlement
- Working safely at social distance
- Carers support
- https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-to-the-workplace

CIPD have also developed guidance that advices on:-

- Wider health and wellbeing concerns
- Developing flexible resource plans
- https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/emp-law/health-safety/coronavirus-factsheet

Available Health and Wellbeing Support:

Support for Mental Health Support

Rotherham

Rotherham and Barnsley Mind www.rbmind.co.uk

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) https://iapt.rdash.nhs.uk/

Rethink Rotherham Support Group https://www.rethink.org/help-in-your-area/support-groups/rethink-rotherham-support-group/

Support:

Support for Mental Health Support

- **Able Futures** **-** Delivers the Access to work Mental Health Support Service on behalf of the Department for Work and Pension. Call Able Futures free on 0800 321 3137 from 8am to 10.30pm, Monday to Friday or apply online.
- **Every Mind Matters -** Created by Public Health England gives tips and advice on how to manage mental health developed by experts approved by the NHS
- **Mental health in the workplace -** Developed by ACAS details the law and the duty of care of employers in relation to mental health and how employers can promote positive mental health at work
- **Managing staff experiencing mental ill health -** Developed by ACAS details the managers role in supporting employees with mental health and how they can spot the signs
- **Dealing with stress in the workplace -** Developed by ACAS and details the steps employers should take to reduce work related stress
- **Five ways to mental wellbeing -** Evidence suggests that a small improvement in wellbeing can help to decrease some mental health problems and help people to flourish. This document, produced by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) on behalf of Foresight, sets out 5 actions to improve personal wellbeing.
- **Workplace Anxiety & Work-Related Anxiety -** Developed by ACAS details what causes workplace anxiety and what steps employees can take

Support:

Domestic Abuse
- **Independent Domestic Abuse Services** (IDAS) on 03000 110 110 or visit idas.org.uk to find out how you can safely plan, receive advice or access services.

Bereavement Support
- **Listening Ear-** Someone to talk to. Support for those bereaved during the Coronavirus Pandemic. A service for anyone who has lost a loved one and who needs support, advice or guidance. Telephone 0800 048 5224 for meaningful support, advice and guidance

Coping with debt
- Money Advice Service (0800 138 7777)
- National Debtline (0808 808 4000)
- Step Change Debt Charity (0800 138 1111)
- Citizens Advice (03444 111444)

Homelessness
- **https://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/looking-for-a-home/housing-options-and-homelessness/**

Smoking
- Get Healthy Rotherham - Email: PARKWOOD.gethealthyrotherham@nhs.net Tel: 01709 718720

Support:

Alcohol

- Get Healthy Rotherham - Email: PARKWOOD.gethealthyrotherham@nhs.net Tel: 01709 718720

Drugs

Sexual Health

- MESMAC Rotherham - Email: rotherham@mesmac.co.uk Tel: 01709 242202

Thank you

For further information please contact:

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