Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for employers and employees

Current government advice is for everyone to stay at home wherever possible and limit contact with other people.

This includes:

- only going outside for food, exercise, medical reasons or work (where this cannot be done from home)
- staying 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people ('social distancing' or 'physical distancing')
- avoiding busy commuting times on public transport where travel is essential
- washing your hands regularly
- not leaving home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms

What you can and cannot do depends on whether you're in England, Scotland or Wales. For the latest government guidance:

- in England, see coronavirus advice on GOV.UK
- in Scotland, see Scottish Government advice
- in Wales, see Welsh Government advice

If the workplace is open

Employers have a 'duty of care' for staff, customers and anyone else who visits the workplace. This means they must do all they reasonably can to support their health, safety and wellbeing.

To make the workplace safe, employers must:

- encourage staff to work from home, wherever possible
- have completed a 'risk assessment', and taken reasonable steps to prevent harm in the workplace
- follow the government guidelines on safer working on GOV.UK

To get advice on working safely during coronavirus from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) you can:

- find coronavirus advice on the HSE website
- find information on risk assessments on the HSE website
- use HSE's online enquiry form
- call 0300 790 6787, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 10pm

Which workplaces can be open

The rules on which workplaces can open are different for England, Scotland and Wales. For the latest government guidance:

- in England, see businesses and premises that must close on GOV.UK

- in Scotland, see Scottish Government advice on business closures
- in Wales, see Welsh Government advice on business closures

If the workplace is closed

While the workplace is closed, employers should talk to staff about whether or not they can work from home.

If working from home is not possible, staff might:

- be put on 'furlough' (put on temporary leave)
- use paid holiday
- use other paid or unpaid leave

Keeping in touch

This can be a difficult time for both employers and staff. It's important for employers and staff to keep in touch while the workplace is closed.

Employers should have regular calls with staff to:

- check on their health and wellbeing
- update staff on any actions they've taken
- talk as early as possible about plans to return to work

Employers should signpost staff to any health and wellbeing support available. For example:

- support your workplace provides, for example through your employee assistance programme (EAP) if there's one available
- support that's available outside your workplace, for example mental health support from Mind

Find out more about supporting mental health.

Working from home

For any employee working from home, the employer should:

- pay the employee as usual
- keep in regular contact
- check on the employee's health and wellbeing

Find out more about:

- working from home
- health and safety for homeworking from the Health and Safety Executive

Avoiding discrimination

Employers must not single anyone out unfairly. For example, they must not treat an employee differently because of their race or

ethnicity.

They should look out for any bullying, discrimination or harassment happening in their workplace and address it immediately.

[Find out more about discrimination, bullying and harassment](#).