



Pennine Acute Health Branch

Summer Newsletter 2020

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Coronavirus Risk Assessment: Staying Safe at Work



COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of risk assessment in the workplace. During the pandemic employers should make every reasonable effort to enable staff to work from home in the first instance, this has often not been possible for those working in the NHS. This means a robust and transparent risk assessment is vital to ensure the safety of those working in the NHS and to try to make NHS workplaces COVID-19 secure.

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is the process of identifying what hazards currently exist or may appear in the workplace. A risk assessment defines which workplace hazards are likely to cause harm to employees and visitors. Employers must identify all those for whom they have a duty of care, whether they are staff or service-users who are classed as being either at most or moderate risk from COVID-19. The risk assessment should also outline action being taken to reduce risk and have a clear strategy for improving health and safety in the workplace.

Risk assessments and you

The trust should provide you with information on the nature of the risk assessment being undertaken and the support that is available to you. You should also have access to the local risk assessment tool or guidance so that you can identify if you are in an at risk group. They must also provide you clear routes for you to raise concerns about the risk assessment. If you are not sure you have a risk assessment or have not seen it you can request to see it from your manager.

If you have concerns regarding your risk assessment or you do not feel safe at work UNISON is available to help your raise concerns. You can contact your local organiser on 07852 292 874 or drop them an email at r.purnell@UNISON.co.uk.

Covid-19 Risks for Black Staff and other Vulnerable Groups

Black Employees

UNISON is concerned about the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black workers. And our concerns have been borne out by the publication of the Public Health report “Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19.” This report proves that Black workers are much more likely to suffer worse outcomes, including serious illness and death, from being infected by COVID-19 than their white colleagues. **The report says that Black men are 3.9 times more likely to die than white men, while Black women are 3.3 times more likely to die than white women.** These risks are especially acute for older Black men and women, or those with underlying health conditions.

UNISON’s advice is that a risk assessment should be carried out for Black staff, and staff who live with a Black person, based on ethnicity, and taking into account other factors such as what work they do, age and other medical conditions.

Clinically Vulnerable Employees (People at High and Moderate Risk)

The government says that all people with serious health conditions, those who are 70 or over and those that are pregnant are in high risk or moderate risk groups. Staff should inform their employer they are in this category. You should say that you cannot attend work but are available to work from home. Even if your role cannot be carried out from home, you should be able to stay at home on full pay.

If a staff member who is clinically vulnerable chooses to return to the work place, they should only be asked to work in roles where strict social distancing can be applied. Those that are high risk (shielding) must not return to work until advised by their health care professional.

Further information for black members of staff and those in vulnerable groups can be found at: <https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/>

UNISON There For You:



supporting UNISON members
when life gets tough

UNISON There for You, is your national charity, supporting members in times of need. We offer a unique confidential advice and support service just for UNISON Members and their dependants. Whether it’s just a chat and a listening ear, advice or more concrete help you’re seeking, we may be able to help.

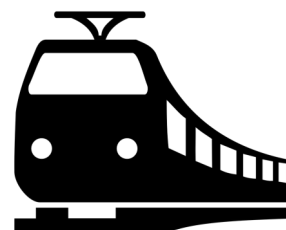
The charity offers financial assistance, debt advice, and support and sign posting information to other partners where required.

You can contact UNISON There For You 020 7121 5620. or email them on thereforyou@UNISON.co.uk.

Your local branch can help with applications but are not involved with the administration of the charity.

Trouble with Transport?

Let your employer know if you’re struggling or unable to get to work because of transport closures. Government advice is that people should work from home, unless it is ‘absolutely necessary’ that they travel to work. If home working really isn’t possible then your employer should agree flexible working hours to allow access to public transport, access to free parking or consider providing private transport, for example, taxi.



UNISON: Always With You

UNISON members are entitled to all these fantastic benefits:



A strong voice in your workplace



Support from reps in your workplace



Discounts including money off cars and holidays



Legal help for you at work and your family at home



Training to help develop your career



And lots more

To find out more about the benefits and to join UNISON visit <https://join.unison.org.uk/>

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