**HOW TO ASSESS A WORKER’S VULNERABILITY TO COVID-19**

**Background**

Scottish Government have recently issued [guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-individual-risk-assessment-for-the-workplace/) on the COVID-19 risk assessment process for staff. This should include both a workplace and individual risk assessment. This recognises the combined risk of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace and an individual’s clinical vulnerability to the virus.

The guidance is particularly relevant to the following groups:

* staff members who are returning to work after shielding
* staff who are returning to normal duties after COVID-19 related restrictions
* staff returning to the workplace after working from home
* anyone who has a concern about a particular vulnerability to COVID-19.

This guidance requires employers to:

* Complete a [general workplace risk assessment](https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-for-employees/coronavirus-staying-safe-while-working/) and implement measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 as much as possible. These are in place for all [critical services](https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Aberdeen-City-Council-critical-services.pdf) and are required for all services [proposing](https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-for-employees/reinstatement-of-services/) to reinstate. proposing to reinstate.
* Support staff to use the COVID-19 age Occupational Risk Assessment Tool to identify the staff member’s vulnerability level. This will be **low, moderate, high** or **very high**. This can be achieved by the manager and employee completing the form together or by an employee completing it and either sharing the form or advising their manager of their Covid-19 age. A word version of the form can be found [here](https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/COVID-19_Occupational_Risk_Assessment_Tool-Word-format.docx)
* Follow this up with a constructive conversation with each employee about how they can do their job safely.

**How do I use this guidance?**

1. Complete the questions within the COVID-19 risk assessment tool and share the results with your line manager. You are not required to disclose any information to your line manager if you’re not comfortable doing so.
2. Where your COVID-19 age places you in the **low** or **moderate** category there is no requirement to complete an individual risk assessment. The controls within the general workplace risk assessment will reduce any risk to an manageable level.
3. Where your Covid-19 age places you within the **high** or **very high** category, arrange to discuss this with your line manager to agree how you can do your job safely, and [complete an individual risk assessment](https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Checklist-and-Risk-Assessment-for-Individual-Worker-re-Covid.docx). An agreement should be reached regarding working duties and both employee and manager should complete the risk assessment and resulting action plan.
4. Complete the fields in Core HR. These are currently being amended and will be available to complete shortly.

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| **What is ‘vulnerability’?**  The risk that someone will die from Covid-19 infection is a combination of the risk that they will get the infection, and the risk that, once infected, they will develop serious illness and die (‘vulnerability’).  The risk that someone will get the infection through work can be reduced through control measures that minimise workplace exposure and through use of personal protective equipment. If the risk that someone will get the infection through work remains higher than their risk of becoming infected outside work, then, for the individual worker, their personal vulnerability becomes important.  **What is Covid-age?**  Covid-age is a simple, easy to use tool that helps assess an individual’s vulnerability to Covid-19. It is based on published evidence for the main risk factors. That evidence indicates that vulnerability to Covid-19 increases exponentially with age  Covid-age summarises vulnerability for combinations of risk factors including age, sex and ethnicity and various health problems. It works by “translating” the risk associated with each risk factor into years which are added to (or subtracted from) an individual’s actual age.  This then gives a single overall measure of vulnerability. It can be used in people with no underlying medical conditions or multiple medical conditions. One measure combines all of an individual’s risk factors with their actual age.  **How do I use Covid-age?**  To calculate Covid-age, take the person’s actual age and add any additional factors from Table 1 below. We have now expanded these tables substantially, so to do this you should first find their actual age along the top line of the table, then follow the column down to find the estimated impact (i.e. years to add or subtract from their actual age) for each risk factor that applies to that person. |

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| **Your COVID-age** | **Your risk** | | | **Things to think about when getting ready to return to work** | | | | |
| **Very high**  COVID-age 80 to  85 and above | You’re at very high risk from COVID-19.  You should take additional, sensible precautions when leaving your home to minimise your risk of contracting COVID-19 as much as possible. | | | * Ideally you should work from home if possible * If there is no alternative to attending the workplace, a very detailed personal infection risk assessment should be undertaken and controls should be implemented. These controls may need to be in excess of the controls used in the workplace for lower COVID-19 vulnerability groups to reflect the level of personal vulnerability * Maintain strict physical distancing. Ensure you can maintain good personal hygiene with low likelihood of coming into contact with objects and surfaces that may transmit COVID-19 * Occupational Health Assessment may be required | | | | |
| **High**  COVID-age around 70 to 85 | You’re at high risk from COVID-19. | | | * You are OK to attend work. You should maintain strict physical distancing. If you cannot physically distance, you should keep the risk in your workplace as low as you can by making changes to the type of work you do, where possible, or by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) * Clinical work, care work and working closely with others (such as sharing a vehicle, using public transport) may be possible, but you should protect yourself by using screens or wearing PPE * If you’re a key worker, you may be asked to accept a higher risk and agree to do so where there’s a good reason | | | | |
| **Moderate** COVID-age around 50 to 70 | You’re much less likely to develop severe disease if COVID-19 infection occurs. | | | * You can attend work * Clinical work, care work and working closely with others (such as sharing a vehicle, using public transport) may be possible, but you may want to protect yourself by using screens or wearing PPE * A slightly higher risk of infection may be accepted in the workplace, if it’s hard to reduce any risks to you because of the type of work you do. This is because there is much less likelihood of you becoming very ill after getting COVID-19 * This includes clinical work with higher hazard and risk levels, or roles where physical control or restraint is required | | | | |
| **Low**  COVID-age below around 50 | You’re at very low risk from COVID-19 | | | * Increased risk of infection may be accepted - the likelihood of you becoming very ill from COVID-19 is low | | | | |
| **Pregnancy** | There’s no current evidence that you or your baby are at any increased risk from COVID-19, unless you have an underlying health condition | | | * You should keep any risk as low as you can by physically distancing from others and regularly washing your hands. You should also have some choice about whether to attend work, or whether you can change the type of work you do at work to   keep risks low. You can find out more from the [Royal College of](https://www.rcog.org.uk/coronavirus-pregnancy)  [Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](https://www.rcog.org.uk/coronavirus-pregnancy)   * You’re advised to try and avoid roles where a degree of risk cannot be avoided, such as clinical work, care work and working closely with others | | | | |
| **Vulnerability group selected after discussion with the worker:** | | | | | | | | |
| Very high | | |  | | | Moderate | |  |
| High | | |  | | | Low | |  |
| **Agreed course of action, including any control measures needed:** | | | | | | | | |
| **Name of manager:** | |  | | | Signature of manager: | |  | |
| **Date of assessment:** | |  | | | Signature of staff member: | |  | |