Advice for Managers – Considering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
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Managers are encouraged to consider the impact the current situation may be having on the teams they manage, in particular any specific EDI related considerations. Employees may have different needs during this period and good open conversations will help managers to establish what those needs are. The unusual situation that we currently face means that people will be dealing with many challenges that may affect their physical and mental health. Many employees will have strong support from their personal social networks, but others may not. As a priority managers should assess and identify any higher risk employees and take steps to support them during this time.

Throughout this resource click on the blue links – they may open in a separate browser.

If you are using a laptop track pad you may need to curser hover over the link, right click the link then select 'open link'. 
Remote Working Considerations

Ensure employees have the right equipment and technology to enable them to work remotely. If they do not have access to equipment which enables them to work comfortably or safely, discuss with them what additional needs they might have, or how they can prioritise different work tasks to help them to manage their health.

Review health and safety arrangements and work with your colleague to make any changes to their work to ensure they are able to work safely. It may be useful for them to conduct a risk assessment.

Visit the remote working webpage for more information - remote working and the Leadership and Management Academy Hub - remote working
Remote Working Considerations

Consider whether you need to make reasonable adjustments for any employees with protected characteristics. Remember that when working remotely issues of loneliness, issues with self-confidence, pressures from caring responsibilities or absence of a close friendship network at work may be felt particularly acutely. Discuss with your employees how they can balance their needs with being able to work as much as they are able.

Remember that for some employees, particularly those with disabilities, moving to delivering teaching material online, and communicating online may be particularly challenging and could feel overwhelming. Encourage colleagues to raise any anxieties they have, and provide them with as much support as you can.

Visit the remote working webpage for more information - [remote working](#) and the Leadership and Management Academy Hub - [remote working](#)
Communication

Make sure there are opportunities for regular catch ups with employees (by telephone or using video conferencing technology/Microsoft Teams etc.,) to ensure they are coping with any extra demands or workloads.

Make the effort to particularly contact employees who may be finding working at home particularly difficult – even a short phone call or a quick email could make all the difference.

Encourage regular remote social interaction within your team (Microsoft Teams may be helpful here).

Many teams sites are being implemented around the University e.g. staff are holding virtual coffee breaks, helping each other out with learning new technologies, or even hosting virtual evening book clubs and quizzes.
Consider how you will communicate and engage with employees who have learning differences, for those who have English as a second language and for those who may find remote communication methods harder to engage with/use.

Use accessible language, avoid jargon or long words that might be hard to understand, be prepared to use different communication tools, follow the lead of the employee and go at the pace of the employee you’re communicating with. Most of all, emphasise that there is no such thing as a stupid question – if people are struggling with working remotely, encourage them to voice their concerns. It may be useful to consider all team members having a ‘buddy’ who can particularly look out for them.

Further information about communicating with employees with disabilities can be found here.

Clearly outline expectations over work plans and objectives to ensure employees know what their work priorities are, recognising that flexibility may be required for employees who are self-isolating and/or have caring responsibilities due to school closures/caring for others.
Supporting Mental Wellbeing

- Be aware that some employees, understandably, may be very worried about catching the virus, while others will have concerns about their family or friends, which may cause increased anxiety.

- Listen to employee’s concerns and reassure them that any measures taken are to protect people and there is no need to panic.

- Communicate regularly with your team and ensure employees are regularly informed about the University’s contingency plans.

- Signpost employees to further advice or support, such as employee assistance programmes (EAP), the University's Counselling Service and any other wellbeing resources.
Supporting Mental Wellbeing

- Keep checking in on employee’s workloads and stress levels and offer support where possible.

- Remember that normal networks, such as religious groups, are not currently able to meet in person.

- Regularly communicate how much you value everyone’s contribution. If some people are taking on additional responsibilities to bridge gaps, make sure they feel appreciated and remind them that this unusual situation is for a relatively short time.

- Make sure that you are not putting unacceptable levels of demands on employees and that they have the support and resources in place to fulfil their tasks, particularly any additional duties.

- Employees from diverse backgrounds may be fearful of experiencing hate crime or harassment. Anxiety around this, or experience of harassment, may lead to increased fear or anxiety. Ensure that employees are aware of harassment reporting mechanisms, and reassure them of the support they have from the University community.
Reasonable Adjustments

Further information about supporting employees with disabilities including reasonable adjustments can be found here. Some reasonable adjustments which are routinely applied when working in the University setting may be difficult to apply at home please discuss any of these directly with the member of staff to see if alternatives can be found.

Consider how work can be managed flexibly, building in regular breaks. Discuss with your employees what reasonable adjustments might be necessary to enable them to continue working effectively.

If needed seek advice and guidance from the Employment Relations Team.
Practical Considerations

- Remind employees that they remain entitled to their annual leave and encourage them to continue to agree leave dates with you. It is important that colleagues have time away from work, even whilst working at home.

- Encourage those who work part-time to clearly signal (e.g. through a shared calendar or a note on a teams site) when they have non-working days, so that their colleagues do not unintentionally contact them or ask them to work on a non-working day.

- Some employees may not have home internet, or may have poor connections. Work through with them what can be done, and that once employees are allowed again to work in the office they can be prioritised.
Returning from furlough / to campus

It is important to recognise that the pandemic has had different impacts across the workforce. Our employees will have been affected in a diverse range of ways depending on their job role and individual circumstances. It is therefore important to ensure that our culture is inclusive, and that every employee feels they are returning to a supportive and caring environment.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Coronavirus Guidance may be useful in supporting you to make inclusive decisions to support staff back to work / campus.

- Consider the impact of returning to the workplace on an individual’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Even if staff have carried on working from home during this time, they may still need to adjust to working in a shared environment with colleagues.
- Some of our colleagues may have suffered bereavement, increased anxiety from living under threat of the virus, a strained homelife, financial pressures etc.
- Some may take more time than others but it’s likely most people will need some period of readjustment. For example BME employees may feel more concerned about returning to campus due to the increased impact of Covid-19 within the BME community.
- As many of the usual support mechanisms are still unavailable (e.g. gym, social contact, places of worship), please consider referring staff to the University's Staff Wellbeing pages for additional support.
• **Have a re-orientation or re-induction process for returning staff which is focused on health, safety and wellbeing.**

• You should openly discuss any changes and/or ongoing support required to facilitate an effective return to the workplace. Some employees may require a phased return to their full role, or want to discuss a new working arrangement, especially if their home situation has changed because of the pandemic. It is important to be flexible and to consider accommodating working patterns which are outside the 'norm', particularly for those with caring responsibilities.

• **To discuss this further, please contact the Employment Relations team.**

• **Continue to check in with staff on a regular basis.**

• Make the time to have more one-to-one conversations with staff than usual. Whilst individuals may be ok on their return to work/campus, after a few days, anxieties or issues may arise.

• Take the time to explain changes which have been made and how they will impact on your staff at work, providing time for any questions they may have. Whilst this is helpful for all staff, it is particularly important for staff who are neurodiverse.

• **Consider how you will continue to communicate and operate as a team once staff start to return to work / campus.**

• It may be the case that some, but not all your staff are returning, which will impact on how the team might operate. This may be due to some employees continuing to be furloughed or due to voluntary redundancy.

• It is therefore important to communicate how workloads will be managed and to ensure team members can raise any issues that may arise.
Returning from furlough / to campus

- Consider any reasonable adjustments that are required for an employee to return to the workplace.

- Changes to the working environment such as office layouts, access to buildings, one-way systems etc. that have been introduced due to social distancing measures may impact on staff with mobility issues or reduced vision etc.

- Consider these changes and how they might impact on your staff.

- For more advice, please refer to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's coronavirus guidance for making reasonable adjustments.

- Consider the need to review an employee’s Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs).

- PEEP must be reviewed in light of Covid-19 control measures as previous required assistance measures may not be in place if the building is not fully staffed.

- If the PEEP states that the PEEP holder will require assistance, and this assistance will no longer be available due to Covid-19 workplace changes, then the PEEP holder should be advised that they should not access the building until an alternative safe working arrangement can be identified and agreed.

- For more advice, visit the University's Health and Safety workspace page.
• You should consider the need to make any changes to the role and responsibilities of those people the government class as clinically vulnerable.

• These include pregnant people, people aged 70 and older and those with underlying health conditions. Some people in this group will be ‘disabled’ under the Equality Act 2010, therefore it is not only your duty, but it is best practice to accommodate reasonable adjustments wherever possible.

• There may be some parents who are unable to return to work on campus because schools / nurseries haven't opened or because their children or someone in the household is classed as vulnerable and advised to continue to shield.

• Appreciating this may be very concerning for some staff, you should have an open conversation about the options available to them which might include continuing to work from home, remaining furloughed, changes to working patterns, a temporary reduction of hours or using annual leave. More information and advice can be found in the University's Covid-19 Return to Operations - Managers Guide (HR).
We recognise that managers will also have diverse EDI related issues and that in supporting others in this period they may experience their own wellbeing issues that they hadn’t experienced before or recognised previously.

Managers are encouraged to also prioritise their own wellbeing and discuss the support networks/opportunities identified within this document with their own manager.
Additional Resources

- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) confidential and free on-line counselling and telephone information service - (access via the Employee Hub)
- University Counselling Service
- Resources including; effective remote working, equality, diversity and inclusion toolkit and wellbeing programme - Leadership and Management Academy Hub
- Information about the University’s wellbeing provision - Wellbeing Hub
- For advice and help - Human Resources Helpline
- Contact the Employment Relations Team hrer@Nottingham.ac.uk
- Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPD) - Getting the most from remote working
- Mind – resources on Corona Virus and Wellbeing
- Mind – resources on Mental Wellbeing
- University Guidelines - Equality Diversity and Inclusion
- No Place for Hate campaign and blog
- Staff networks
- Chaplaincy and Faith Support