

Coronavirus - Guidance to Employees and Line Managers

Further to our last update in October, the UK Government and others in Europe have announced new restrictions in an attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

The UK Government have advised, for those living in England, of new restrictions coming into force from Thursday 5th November.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november> - Extracts below;

COVID-19 case numbers are rising rapidly across the whole of the UK and in other countries. We must act now to control the spread of the virus. The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home, to protect the NHS and save lives.

When we reduce our day-to-day contact with other people, we will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why, from Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December, the Government is taking the following action:

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for specific purposes.
2. Preventing gathering with people you do not live with, except for specific purposes.
3. Closing certain businesses and venues.

There are some reports that Scotland may follow suit, and Wales, which is currently in their 'Firebreak' lockdown until 9th Nov, may now also extend some restrictions.

All Business Unit Managers will review the local implications, however as in the previous lockdown businesses like ours remain open and we envisage this will continue. In terms of working patterns, working from home etc., common sense will prevail and local managers will review operations and engage with people to decide how best to maintain their business and support those who will be working in the factory or on site.

Extended Furlough Scheme

The furlough scheme has been extended for 4 weeks (as of Monday 2nd November, everyone affected were due back as the scheme had ended). We had intended to utilise the new Job Support Scheme but were still evaluating the eligibility and mechanisms associated as detailed by HMRC.

Managers will review current activity levels and discuss with you the options available dependent on current/future workload.

Pay during Flexible Furlough

Hours worked and any holidays will continue to be paid at normal rate of pay and furlough pay will be covered by the furlough scheme which remains 80% of normal pay, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for usual hours not worked (i.e. on a pro-rata basis).

We hope this will be a short-term issue although clearly it is dependent on ability to reduce the 'R' number across the country.

We appreciate this remains a period of uncertainty, the impact on the economy is still unclear however it is clear that decisions taken to date have helped and as intimated in our last update the future looks positive for the business however these latest changes have unknown impacts. The Business Unit Managers remain focussed on promoting the business and using all efforts to remain sustainable in their area.

Protecting yourselves and others

It is important that everyone understands their responsibility to minimise risk of infection to others.

- **If you do not feel well do not come into work**
- **Please obey social distancing guidelines**
- **Good hygiene – regular hand washing, use of sanitisers etc.**

We do also recognise that there are a number of vulnerable people in our workforce or in their families and every effort will be made to accommodate changes to working practices. Government has clearly identified those that are *Clinically Vulnerable* and *Clinically Extremely Vulnerable* and we will work with the affected people to find the most appropriate solutions. Please discuss with your line manager and/or HR.

If you need medical advice:

- England: NHS 111 online coronavirus service
- Scotland: NHS inform
- Wales: NHS Direct Wales
- Northern Ireland: get advice from a GP or GP out-of-hours service
- Overseas – contact your local health care provider

If you are unsure or concerned about this current lockdown please keep in touch and discuss with your peers, management or contact HR.

Government advice is constantly being updated, and there are ongoing updates on government websites. If in doubt please review the latest government information in your area and discuss with your line manager and/or the HR Department.

Stay safe everyone