## Coronavirus (COVID -19) Guidance for Employers

## May 2021 Edition

Since the COVID-19 pandemic begun, the LMC HR team have provided advice and guidance for various queries on the topic of COVID and the various issues it has brought up.

In providing advice on these matters the HR team are relying significantly on the following sources of guidance which are now attached for the benefit of Practices:

* Guidance provided via the [ACAS website](https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus)
* Freeths Solicitors [Coronavirus: FAQs for Employers | Freeths](https://www.freeths.co.uk/2020/03/16/coronavirus-qa-for-employers/)
* Government Guidance on the GOV website

All the above reflect the base line legal position and continuing updated guidance and clarification.

**Shielding Guidance (including pregnant employees)**

Shielding was a temporary measure put in place to protect the clinically vulnerable and extremely vulnerable during peaks of the pandemic, as the latest peak has now passed, it is advised that people no longer need to shield as from the 1st April 2021.

Although the advice to shield has been lifted, it is still advised that extremely vulnerable people to take extra precautions to protect themselves, for example:

* To continue to work from home where this is possible
* To continue practicing social distancing both in and outside of work
* Wearing appropriate PPE equipment
* To sanitise hands and workstations regularly

The above advice is relevant to all employees.

**Pregnant Employees**

All pregnant employees are considered clinically vulnerable to COVID-19, and some may fall in the extremely vulnerable category. Where possible, employees must work from home.

For employees who are *less than 28 weeks* should only continue working in-practice, if the risk assessment advises that it is safe to do so. This means that your employer should remove or manage any risks. If this cannot be done, you should be offered suitable alternative work or working arrangements (including working from home) or be suspended on your normal pay.

For employees who are 28 weeks and beyond, similar to employees who are less than 28 weeks, should work from home where possible, however, where this is not possible to explore whether there is the option to be re-deployed. Where adjustments to the work environment and role are not possible, and alternative work cannot be found, employers should suspend such employees on paid leave.  Advice on suspension and pay can be found in [HSE guidance](https://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/index.htm).

Further guidance on pregnant employees can be found via the following GOV link - [Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for pregnant employees - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees)