

Managers Guidance on completing a Individual Staff Risk Assessment (ISRA) – September 2022

Why conduct this risk assessment?

Risk assessments are part of the management of risks in the workplace, enabling employers to decide upon reasonable steps to protect their staff. It allows employers to fulfil their legal duty of care to protect their staff from harm, injury, or illness. It is important to consider and support all your staff within your organisation and carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments, where there is a risk to the health, safety, and welfare of employees when they are at work.

Certain groups of employees maybe more vulnerable to serious illness (and death), so risk scoring and individual risk assessments will help employers to assess the level of risk to their workforce, in particular staff that fit at least one of the criteria's outlined further below.

Who needs this risk assessment?

Managers should discuss and complete an Individual risk assessment(s) (ISRA) with new and current employees who may be at high risk of complications from respiratory infections such as influenza, and severe illness from COVID-19 (please see below)

Bank and agency staff will also have an ISRA completed if they fit at least one of the below criteria's. This will be managed by Head of Nursing - Corporate and Rostering Services Team Manager.



ISRA Form updated
September 2022.docx

The ISRA form

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) identify people who are at higher risk from COVID-19 and other respiratory infections as:

- older people (Over 65 years as defined by NHS England » Improving care for older people)
- those who are pregnant
- those who are unvaccinated
- people of any age whose immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness
- people of any age with certain long-term conditions.

*This list may be subject to change.

Underlying health conditions are listed below:

- Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), emphysema or [bronchitis](#)
- Chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)
- [Chronic kidney disease](#)
- Chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)
- Chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- [Diabetes](#)
- Problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](#) disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)

It is recognised that age, weight, gender and those staff members from an ethnic minority background are at an increased risk of severe illness and suffer more longer term effects due to COVID-19. Therefore, sensitive conversations should take place with individuals when completing an ISRA.

Who should conduct this risk assessment?

The line manager/supervisor should conduct the risk assessment and file the completed form on the staff member's personal file, and ask if the staff member would like a copy.

If the staff member is redeployed to another area of work, we recommend the local manager carries out the ISRA as they understand the work environment, however if the staff member is more comfortable for their substantive line manager completing the ISRA then this is recommended in order to support the staff member in having an open discussion.

Once the ISRA is completed line managers need to record on ESR/Health Roster. Further details can be found at Recording Covid Individual Risk Assessment on ESR Guidance

Medical Managers:

Medical managers/Heads of Service are expected to carry out the ISRA for their medical staff which would include the Consultants and Speciality Doctors, and the Educational Supervisors would complete the ISRA for Junior Doctors who fit at least one of the above criteria's.

There is some guidance issued from the Royal College of Physicians on how to carry out risk assessments for medical staff. Please click on the link for further details on this guidance: <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/education-practice/advice/how-carry-out-effective-covid-19-risk-assessments-medical-staff>

Top tips for managers when having conversations regarding risk assessment:

It important to have open, honest and compassionate conversations with all your staff, including regular and on-going bank staff, about the risks they may be exposed to.

Some staff may be feeling extremely vulnerable because of underlying health conditions or due to their protected characteristics. Ensuring staff can have this discussion and raise their concerns with their manager will help to reduce any apprehension they feel.

It's important to prepare for the conversation and remember to be sensitive. We all have different perspectives and ways of showing distress or anxiety. This may include being quieter, more vocal or wanting private space.

Acknowledging that some people will be deeply and directly affected by the effects of COVID-19, this is a time to reach out and understand some of the challenges our staff might be feeling.

Ensure your staff member is included in any decision making about them and that the conversation is culturally sensitive by taking into account their culture and traditions, religion or beliefs and language.

Below are some top tips to consider when preparing and having a conversation with your diverse staff groups in order to keep the risk assessment discussion factual, positive and effective:

1. Start with an open two way conversation; maybe explore what the best way is to communicate with them. As you may have staff who are working from home.
2. Ensure your staff know you are approachable on this subject, be authentic and open in your concern.
3. Ask open questions about how they are feeling (they may respond with feelings of anxiety, anguish or anger). Ask how they feel the team is working together and whether they have any concerns or solutions they would like to raise.
4. Depending on how the conversation goes, you may decide to reschedule carrying out the risk assessment and give your full attention to the general wellbeing conversation. If you do decide to reschedule, make sure to book a further discussion as soon as you can.
5. Keep staff updated of any changes to duties, or new areas of work. Be mindful not to overload staff who are working from home, as home working can feel isolating to some.
6. Ask questions and if the staff member asks you questions and you don't know the answer, be honest and confirm you will get back to them with a response.
7. Show understanding as their concerns are real, validate their concerns and show compassion, try to remain positive and solution focussed.

Actions/support following the completion of the risk assessment:

If the risk assessment determines that the individual needs an Occupational Health assessment you can refer the staff member using the Occupational Health referral form that can be found on the Intranet.

If a staff member is not happy to disclose details of their underlying health condition with their manager then it would be appropriate to refer to Occupational Health who will be able to address the issues in a confidential environment and offer an opinion without the need to share personal details. Occupational Health can also advise if it is not clear if the individual is at increased risk.

The risk categories above cover a wide range of severity and include some people who are only at very slight increased risk. Nonetheless when you are considering who does what within a service/department it is important to consider individual's risk and aim to reduce it if possible even if their risk is low.

It is not possible to avoid all risk and the aim of the risk assessment is to avoid unacceptably high risk activities and to reduce the risk in other areas as far as reasonably practical. Most people in the risk categories will be able to continue working but it is still important to consider how you could reduce their risk.

Managers need to consider reasonable adjustments that could be put in place for staff that allows them to continue working within their role and within their work area; however by making a reasonable adjustment you are minimising the potential risk.

Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:

- Working from home for all or part of the role, especially if it will be difficult to maintain social distancing in the work environment or when travelling to and from work.
- Adjusting work times to facilitate travel at off-peak times.
- Adjusting the work environment, times or duties to reduce the risk of exposure, for example working in a separate office, not using shared telephones, carrying out telephone rather than face to face interactions.

If you feel a staff member is unable to work safely in their normal place of work and there are no reasonable options for working in a modified way, for example, working from home then temporary redeployment needs to be considered.

If reasonable adjustments and temporary redeployment cannot be locally supported then advice from Occupational Health can be sought via the referral form mentioned above. Managers should still consider reducing the risk as discussed above but recognising that this may not be possible in certain cases. If it is felt that an unacceptable level of risk remains then escalate the case to Senior Management and seek Occupational Health and HR advice.

If HR support or advice is required please contact your relevant Divisional People Lead or Deputy Divisional People Lead.

Review of the ISRA

The ISRA is a working document therefore it is good practice to record the main findings of the risk assessment in this form, and proposed actions to be undertaken to reduce or eliminate the risk. The ISRA can be used as a basis for a later review of working practices or any reasonable adjustments that may be implemented. It is important to regularly review the ISRA in line with any change in guidance.

A completed ISRA should be placed on the employees personal file with a copy passed to the employee.

ISRA detail is to be recorded in ESR as per the guidance

Risk assessments should be reviewed three monthly as a minimum, or when there is a significant change in local or national guidance or earlier if a need arises, for example following an Occupational Health Review or advice that may have been sought regarding PPE.

Useful contacts:

People Partner Team: sfh-tr.hrbpteam@nhs.net

Occupational Health: sfh-tr.occupational.health@nhs.net
Ext. 3780/3781

People Operations Team ext. 4633

Health & Safety: Rob Dabbs robert.dabbs@nhs.net
Ext. 4172

Rostering Services: ext. 3951

Key Resources:

NHS Employers website: Guidance on risk Assessments:
<https://www.nhsemployers.org/covid19/health-safety-and-wellbeing/risk-assessments-for-staff>