

## **Guidance for managers – holding conversations with employees who have child care responsibilities to discuss potential temporary working arrangements due to the impact of Coronavirus**

Managers will need to carry out conversations with staff to discuss if there are any temporary working arrangements that can be put in place if an employee considers they are unable to work in their normal place of work or work their normal hours because of child care responsibilities.

It is imperative that business continuity needs to be maintained as far as possible in the best interest of delivering key services during a particularly difficulty and unprecedented time.

### **Practical considerations:-**

- can the work your team performs or an element of the work be carried out at home?

### **Points to discuss with the employee:-**

- If the employee is a critical worker you can issue them with a [letter](#) confirming their status to enable the employee to get access to childcare provision and to provide evidence of need to travel to fulfil their role.
- is the employee able to make any alternative child arrangements with friends/partners/extended family to cover their caring responsibilities? (where possible in line with national guidance in relation to social distancing)
- can they share the caring arrangements with their partner?
- what would that arrangement look like and how long do they consider it could be put in place?
- if no alternative child care arrangements can be put in place are they available to work a varied working pattern to enable to work (e.g. evenings/weekends), if so what could that be and how would that work? How would that impact the service?
- if the employee is able to agree to a temporary alternative work pattern/hours, you will need to agree how these hours will be recorded and also ensure the employee is taking regular breaks
- if the employee is unable to work their full contractual hours discuss and agree if they will take the contractual hours they are unable to work as unpaid/annual leave/or will make the hours up as soon as possible (where not excessive)
- you should agree with your employee the timescale within which you will review the temporary alternative working arrangements/hours
- you should agree what tasks will be undertaken at home and ensure they have the appropriate access to equipment, databases etc., in order to complete their work
- are there other activities they can support with
- agree how you will keep in regular contact with your employee and how they will keep in regular contact with their colleagues
- ensure the employee is aware of the confidential employee wellbeing helpline number (01225) 713147 that can be accessed for support for example if employee

has heightened feelings of anxiety. Calls are screened and assessed by an Occupational Health Adviser. Calls may be signposted to relevant external providers or specialist counselling services

- it is expected that managers will be as flexible as possible when agreeing temporary alternative work patterns/hours whilst ensuring they maintain business continuity of critical services

**If an employee is unable to make alternative child care arrangements and is unable to work at all despite all alternative measures as outlined above being offered – points to discuss:-**

- are they eligible to request a period of unpaid [Ordinary Parental Leave](#)
- is unpaid emergency leave an option [Family Emergencies Policy](#)
- could they take a period of [Annual leave](#) or [Unpaid leave](#)
- if the employee has already had annual leave booked and agreed then this should be taken

If there is a requirement to adjust the employee's pay to reflect an agreement to reduce hours or take unpaid leave you should contact [HRPayroll@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:HRPayroll@wiltshire.gov.uk)

For support or guidance please contact [HRAdvisory@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:HRAdvisory@wiltshire.gov.uk)