

Returning to Work following COVID-19

After recovering from COVID-19, you may feel ready to return to work. However the effects of COVID-19 may impact your ability to do your job in the same way. You may require adaptations in the work place, a graded return to work, or a change in job role.

Returning to work

- You do not have to disclose or give details of your health status to your employer, but you might find it useful to do so.
- Under the Equality Act 2010, employers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace for someone with a disability or impairment.
- You can ask for a '*return to work interview*' before formally returning to a job.

Access to work scheme

This is a governmental scheme that offers financial support with returning to work with a disability or impairment.

Visit: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Preparing to return to work

- Seek support/advice from family, friends and professional services.
- Only return when you are ready e.g. a graded return to work.
- Prepare as much as possible and avoid rushing your recovery. Where possible avoid stressful situations and important decision making.
- Be positive, but realistic and set goals.
- Communicate with your employer and occupational health department.

It is advisable to:

- Make sure you understand your sick pay entitlement.

- If you have a DEA (Disability Employment Advisors) or a relevant healthcare professional, ask if they would be willing to talk to your employer.
- Make sure your employer is aware of any legal issues, such as not being able to drive

Mimic a working week:

Try and mimic a working week at home by creating a programme that reflects working hours and work related activities e.g.

- Practice working at a computer and concentrating for as long as you will need to at work
- Try to wake up/sleep at the times you will need to when you go back to work
- Practice activities that involve planning, organising and time keeping (e.g. *shopping or cooking a meal*).

Consider a staged return to work where you gradually build back up to your usual hours over a few days or weeks.

Practical strategies within the working environment

- Make sure the working environment and demands of the job are suitable
- Use compensatory strategies and external aids e.g.
 - *Diaries, To-do lists and Calendars*
 - *Breaking down task*
 - *Centre demanding task around when you feel most alert.*
- Arrange for careful monitoring and feedback with your employer, or seek guidance from occupational health.

If you feel like you are still struggling following this advice please contact your GP.