



Scottish Police Federation

5 Woodside Place Glasgow G3 7QF

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Ref: CS/DH/LS

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Attachments:
Supplementary Scottish Police Federation Guidance on
Shielding

Dear Colleague

Supplementary Scottish Police Federation Guidance On Shielding – Information

Please find attached guidance document for your information.

Yours sincerely

Calum Steele
General Secretary



SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION

Established by Act of Parliament

SUPPLEMENTARY SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION GUIDANCE ON SHIELDING

The following builds on the previously circulated **Shielding Guidance** issued by the People and Development team. We are keen to assist managers in any way we can to meet the needs of our members and follow what was articulated by the **Gold Commander DCC Malcolm Graham** in his Gold Strategy that the safety of officers was a key Strategic objective.

Strategic Objective 2

To protect and support our officers and staff, safeguarding their health, safety and wellbeing, through the provision of appropriate PPE, hygiene products and other relevant equipment.

It is also crucial the communication to line managers and their staff is clear and concise

Strategic Objective 4

Maintain officer, staff and public trust and confidence through effective, Proactive internal and external communications.

We have tried to supplement the Guidance with elements from the Gold strategy, discussions and qualifications that have been sought by senior members of People and Development.

It is imperative, therefore that managers are given full autonomy to treat officers and their families appropriately and according to their needs, protected or otherwise, and are afforded the opportunity to make decisions centring on those individual needs without placing them at undue risk, and are made fully aware of their responsibilities under **Health and Safety Legislation** when carrying out risk assessments for their staff, with additional emphasis given to the relevant statutory requirement surrounding **pregnant officers**.

The Scottish Police Federation have been encouraged by the various discussions we have had regarding the Shielding Guidance Document. These discussions have involved Divisional Commanders, members of the Executive and senior members of **People and Development** yet it has been slightly surprising that our previous observations have not been captured within the final draft.

We would therefore like to draw line managers attention to our observations and encourage all to take cognisance of the content along with the current Shielding Guidance document as well as the guidance contained within the **NHS Inform Website** (link attached). This will ensure all decisions are people focused and in line with the Gold Strategy set by DCC Graham.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice>

OBSERVATIONS

Initial Assessment - The position around shielding in the current climate is not as clear cut as it may seem, much of what we are about to highlight has previously been described as the '**grey area**'. It's very clear for officers receiving 'shielding letters', however those without not so.

'Those without Shielding letters must return to work' is language suggesting otherwise.

It's crucial before any decision cognisance must be taken of the individual and family needs of the officer.

The flowing link from NHS Inform provides detail of those who fall into this category, those who are 'Higher Risk of Severe Illness' - People who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus should strictly follow physical distancing measures.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-distancing>

It is very important to note previous conversations with members of the Executive and senior members of People and Development have made it clear that any risk to an individual officer or member of their family must be mitigated prior to them returning to work so as not to put them or their families at undue risk.

They understand the challenges faced by line managers when making decisions and are keen to ensure First Line Managers are supported so will work with individuals where the FLM response doesn't follow the guidance from NHS Inform.

As such all options must be considered, home working, shielding at home, adjustments within the workplace, risk assessments, special leave etc.

Pregnant Officers and other Vulnerable Categories - The cases under discussion will no doubt require adjustments to be made within the workplace, these will include appropriate risk assessments. PNB Guidance and as indicated previously, Health and Safety legislation governs this with regard to Pregnant Officers.

It is crucial appropriate risk assessment are carried out for every pregnant officer to meet their individual needs. Attention must also be drawn to and guidance sought from the relevant NHS, Government and Force Guidance in respect of the workplace, including any guidance or process surrounding 'Hot Desking' within the work place and the strict cleaning regimes therein.

This is not limited to the workplace, relevant Risk Assessments must be carried out for officers returning home from their respective work place, considering those who may be more vulnerable within the home.

"Maximising attendance" does not mean all officers must work from a Police Station, it includes officers working from home and the opportunity should be taken to reassess

risk assessments already in place and establish if they are fit for purpose and use these as a mode for decisions.

The Grey Areas - It has been made clear during our conversations there is latitude for case by case consideration with the facility to refer individual cases to the respective Business Partner. This can be time consuming and as such the reason every effort should be made to allow line managers to make decisions centred on the individual needs of officers and their families to make people-based decisions before being passed to the respective HR Business Partner.

The Hidden Risk - Returning vulnerable officers into the working environment, could pose an additional unseen risk at the outset, increased numbers causing an increased risk of cross contamination, a further consideration when seeking to return officers to the workplace.

Medical Certificates - It will be very difficult under these circumstances to obtain physical documentation from local GPs for those deemed at risk and must shield. For these officers, OH assistance and advice would be helpful in the first instance to help with any complicated decisions that cannot be made at source or perhaps are not covered within the NHS Inform Web pages.

Special Leave - This must be utilised to its maximum, officers must not be placed at a disadvantage due to unprecedented circumstances out with their control. If a partner is immuno-compromised, the Force does not expect officers to be putting themselves or any members of their family at risk by going to work with the risk of spreading? The default position should not be Annual Leave, Toil, RRD's.

It has been agreed by all that these are unprecedented times and there is learning for us all. There may be a requirement for adjustments, and perhaps Occupational Health support and/or risk assessment and importantly a considerable amount of understanding and adaptability. As such Special Leave or Home Working is most appropriate, hence the need to ensure support for line managers is there to make people focussed decisions.

Duty Changes/Flexible Working - Any change in duty should be at the officer's request and subject to usual flexible work plan procedures. Split shifts in particular are discouraged and should only be at the officer's request. However, agility and flexibility within the working environment at this time is key as the need to change could happen at any time. As such some changes could also be made to suit individual needs at that specific time, line managers have the capability to do this in the short term without the need to move through a rigid process.

The Role - The role you are asking officers to carry out must be taken into account, there is no point making calls to officers encouraging them to return to work when there are no meaningful roles for them or there has been no thought around what adjustments would be required. Positive discussion to identify what could be achieved while ensuring individual needs are met.

There is capability for officers to work from home, using mobile devices and/or one of the 1,500 laptops purchased. Are you asking for an officer classed as vulnerable to return to work when they could carry out a function at home?

The role should also be Business Critical and the travel and attendance at a Police station deemed as essential, as per the relevant Guidance.

To paraphrase senior colleagues within People and Development, the Shielding Guidance is a guide and it is there to provide support, it is not intended to be exhaustive or instructional in nature as each case needs to be assessed on its own merits, each will vary according to individual needs. The 'what's' and the 'how's' will be bespoke and based on each individual case/circumstance.

It is important line managers follow Health and Safety Legislation to mitigate the risk to our colleagues during these unprecedented times.