**Reassignment for Existing staff**

Key considerations

In an emergency where staff may need to be reassigned or work may need to be reallocated, managers will need to assess:

1. Whether it is necessary for staff to report to their normal place of work and the extent to which reassignment of staff or reallocation of work is necessary to ensure that adequate cover is provided for essential services. Managers will try, wherever possible, to direct staff to sites which minimise travel and allocate staff work with which they are familiar.
2. The location of staff, their access to public/private transport, any reasonable constraints on their flexibility, as appropriate.
3. Depending on service requirements, the feasibility of staff being able to work at a different site closer to home, either to undertake the same or different work.
4. Depending on service requirements and the availability of any necessary supporting technology, the feasibility of staff being able to work from home to undertake either the same or different work.
5. Depending on service requirements, the feasibility of staff being deployed to essential services provided by another local authority, one of the council’s partner organisations or reallocated work normally conducted by a partner organisation.
6. The duration of any arrangements and whether these will apply to all or part of the individual’s normal contractual hours.
7. If any temporary role attracts a higher rate of pay or other enhancements, then these should be paid for the period of temporary reassignment.
8. Whether the Council can comply with its legal obligation to ensure employees’ health, safety and welfare at work as far as is reasonably practicable or its duty of care to others. In doing so, managers will take account of:
* any known/stated restriction on work that could safely be undertaken by an individual on health grounds. This may include, for example, pregnancy and specified underlying health conditions
* the capacity of individuals to undertake alternative work e.g. if the work involved heavy lifting or was physically demanding.
* any training or professional qualification that would be a prerequisite to carrying out certain duties safely;
* any other circumstance that may make working unreasonably unsafe, for example, severe staff shortages;
* any official communication from bodies with emergency powers by law, for example, advising against travel/other activity in all/some circumstances. The council will provide advice to staff on interpreting such communications. For example, staff assigned to essential services would normally be expected to travel to work if there was advice to refrain from **non-essential** travel.

**FAQ’s**

**How are the reassignment assignments being allocated/decided?**

The Council has considered the skillset and knowledge of its workforce and aligned these skills to the critical key roles required. In making this decision the Council has sought to reassign those staff who may have some capacity due to the impact of the current unprecedented position on their substantive role.

**I’m not certain I have the confidence to undertake this alternative role, what’s being done to support me?**

The Council understands that employees may be wary of undertaking a new and different role, however employees should be reassured that careful consideration has been given to each role. The council wants to protect both the employee and the council so that ‘the right people are in the right place’. Each role and employee would be considered a good match. Your new line manager will speak with you directly about the sort of support, guidance and training they will put in place for you.

**Will I be given any training for my new role?**

Where necessary, training will be given to ensure that employees can be confident of what is expected of them within their reassigned role. This training may take a different format to more traditional ‘face to face’ training, however it will ensure continued compliance. We also recommend that where appropriate a “buddy” system is put in place so that you are linked to someone in the alternative role.

**What if my circumstances have changed?**

The council would have considered the information that you provided to make their assessment on where to reallocate you, however if you believe that your circumstances have changed and this change will affect your ability to undertake this role, you must contact the Deployment Team (Covid19.StaffDeployment@barnet.gov.uk) to discuss further.

**What will the implications on my health and safety be?**

When considering the requirements of each role, the health and safety requirements will also be assessed, we have already had regard to the information you provided previously but you should discuss this with your new line manager so that they can make any necessary adjustments. As necessary, training will be given to ensure full compliance.

**Will I be insured to undertake this reassigned role?**

Please be reassured that as an employee you will be covered by the Council’s insurance policies, as you would if you were undertaking your substantive role.

**What if I don’t think I’m suitable for the role identified?**

Given the skills audit that has been undertaken and all the information you have provided, it is unlikely that you will not be able to undertake the reassigned role however, if an individual disagrees with the assessment of their manager over their suitability to be reassigned duties, the matter should be referred to the relevant Head of Service, Director or Strategic director for final consideration.

**What if there are additional travel expenses?**

Any employee who is reassigned and incurs additional travel expenses will be compensated in line with the guidance found on the Council’s intranet site. Where applicable, it is important to note that any possible travel expenses will be reimbursed after the current circumstances have concluded.

**Can I work my normal hours?**

Part time staff may be invited to increase their contractual hours for a specified period of time and are encouraged but will not be obliged to do so.

Staff on other flexible working arrangements may be asked to temporarily suspend or alter these arrangements in response to the emergency situation. Flexible working solutions will also enable as many staff to continue working as possible (e.g. through home working).

**What if I am sick during my reassignment?**

Staff should contact the Deployment Team before 830am on the day of sickness. The Deployment Team will contact your line manager and make arrangements for an altnernative member of staff to be deployed where appropriate.

**What will happen to my current workload?**

As far as possible the decision to reassign employees will consider current and necessary workload and those working in areas where they may currently have some capacity. You will not be expected to cover your substantive duties and, if appropriate, your current line manager will agree with you who will cover your work and how it will be diverted in your absence.

**What if I refuse to be reassigned?**

If employees refuse, without good reason, to follow a legitimate management request that is reasonable in the circumstances, this may lead to disciplinary action being taken. Any action will be in accordance with the Council’s Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure. Such action may be stayed until the end of the emergency or until resources allow the matter to be dealt with.

**What if I have an underlying health condition or I’m pregnant can I be reassigned?**

Staff with underlying health conditions or who are pregnant will continue to be supported. Therefore, their reassignment will be assessed based on this information. However, if these employees are self-isolating for their well-being, consideration may be given to reallocating their home working role so that critical role requirements can be undertaken at home.

There will be instances where managers will not be aware of the situation and employees must to speak to their manager so that they can be supported.

**What if I am reassigned to a safeguarding role?**

In maintaining the council’s duty of care, particularly towards vulnerable adults and children, the normal standards of safeguarding will continue. In this regard, employees reassigned to working with vulnerable adults or children will only have unsupervised access to these client groups if the appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring (DBS) clearance is in place.

**What if I don’t have a valid DBS for the role?**

Where reassignment is required in order to maintain critical services, but DBS clearance has not been obtained then a risk assessment must be carried out as normal and subject to approval staff can work within the service whilst they await the necessary clearance.

**Will my terms & conditions be affected during this time?**

Pay and conditions will be unaffected by this arrangement, as it is likely that employees will be required to undertake different duties during the emergency but to an appropriate level.

Where an individual has moved temporarily into a higher banded post, the Council will consider reimbursing the employee via the Acting up policy or Honorarium Policy, please refer to the Council’s intranet for further information.

**What do I do if I’m uncertain what is required of me in the reassigned role?**

You will be given clear instructions on what is required of you. However, if you have any queries, you will also be given a point of contact who will be assigned to assist you with any concerns. The Council understands that its employees are very resilient and resourceful, it is at this time that we ask all employees to draw upon this more than ever.

**What about Annual Leave I have already agreed with my current line manager?**

Please make sure your new manager knows and your leave will still be permitted if you wish to take it or you can cancel it if you prefer to take later.

**Where can I get help if I am feeling anxious or concerned about these unprecedented events?**

Please speak to your line manager who will be able to support you and provide advice. Alternatively the Council commissions an Employee Assistance Programme which all staff can access. Details can be found on the Council’s website.

**Will my performance in this role affect my substantive role?**

No. We understand that this ‘matching’ exercise is only a guide so if you have any concerns about your ability to undertake the reassigned role, please discuss these immediately with the line manager. This change in role does not reflect your capability in your substantive role.