

Return to work – all change or more of the same?

The Government has announced that its workplace guidance will change with effect from 1 August and its “work from home” message will be removed.

20 July 2020

Please note: the information contained in this legal update is correct as of the original date of publication

The Government has announced that its workplace guidance will change with effect from 1 August and its “work from home” message will be removed. Instead, employers are to be given more flexibility – or more responsibility, depending upon your view point – to determine whether their staff should come back to work. The decision is stated by the Prime Minister to be up to employers with their employees to decide.

Public transport restrictions have also been lifted, with everyone now able to use it, if they wish.

Homeworking is by no means being taken off the table and for many employers and employees it is proving to be a very workable solution that can continue after 1 August. However, for other employers who wish staff to return, removal of the “work from home” message will be helpful. Those employers will, however, need to focus on ensuring that their workplace is “Covid-Secure” and be able to reassure employees of the same.

The relaxation of the rules around public transport will provide more commuting options – however, employers will need to be mindful that social distancing capacity requirements (or conversely the lack of social distancing) may affect the suitability of public transport as a safe or practicable means of travel to work.

Employers will also need to remember that 1 August sees changes to the rules around shielding and so will need to factor into their workplace risk assessments and plans any employees who have been shielding and the particular concerns or risks that they may have.

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