

CIPD Coronavirus webinar series

Returning to the workplace

11 May 2020

Welcome

Katie Jacobs, Senior Stakeholder Lead, CIPD

CIPD



Today's speakers

Katie Jacobs

Senior
Stakeholder
Lead, CIPD

Rachel Suff

Senior Policy
Adviser, CIPD

Nick Pahl

CEO,
Society for
Occupational
Medicine

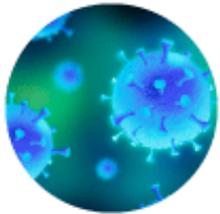
Simon Jones

Director, Ariadne
Associates

Andrew Willis

Head of Legal &
Advisory,
HR-inform

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**Covid-19
resources**



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being helpline**



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Context: Government guidance

Rachel Suff, Senior Policy Adviser, CIPD



Key people issues to consider

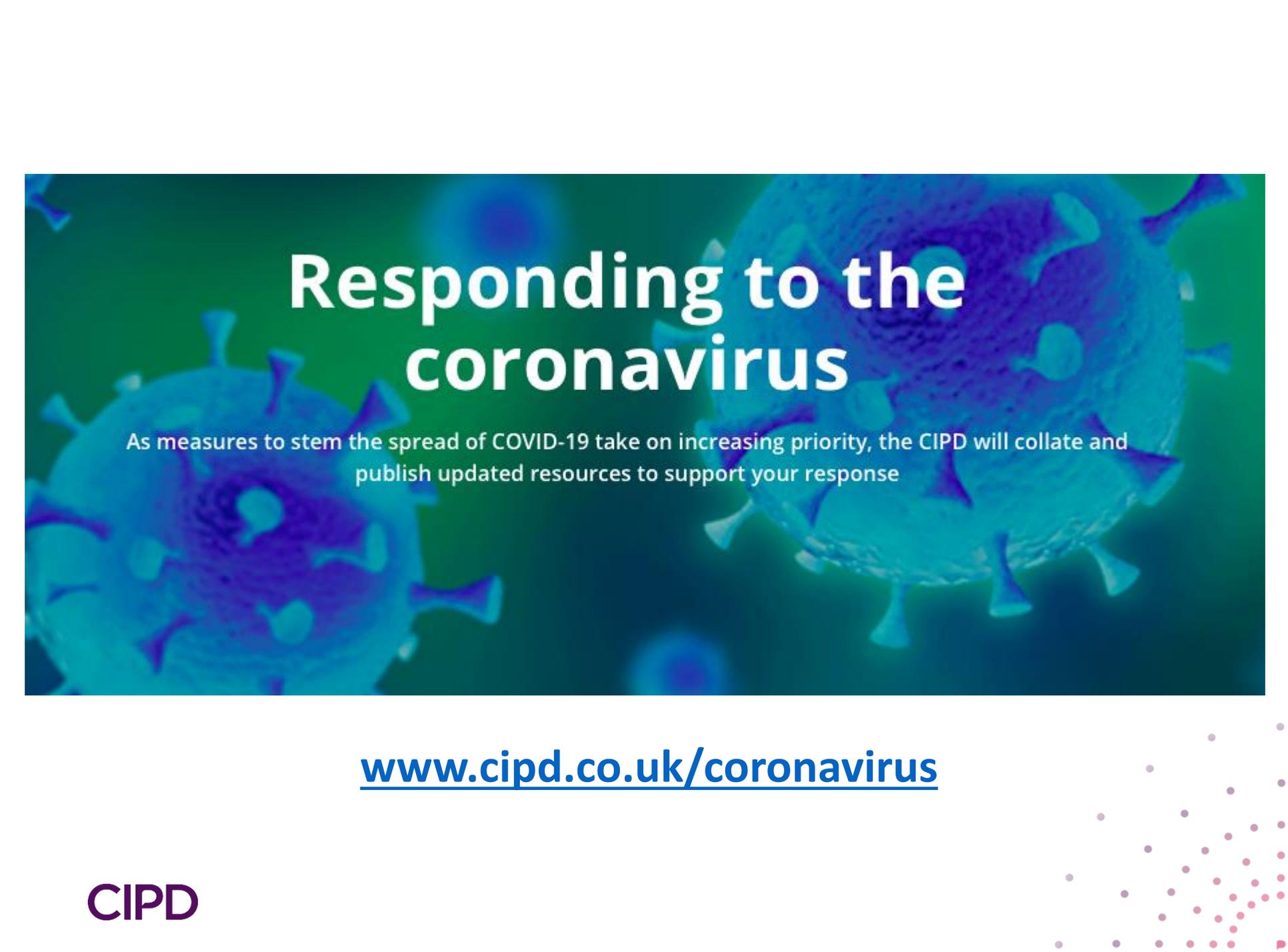
- **Health and safety** - People's health, safety and well-being is paramount; protect people from physical risk of infection - work closely with occupational health, health & safety teams, and consult/communicate with staff
- **Mental health** – the risks to people's health are also psychological, and are manifold; ensure a strong focus on supporting mental well-being
- **Diversity and inclusion** – the pandemic is having an unequal impact across the workforce; be very mindful of equalities law and ensure practices are non-discriminatory



The CIPD's five guiding principles

- **Know your business** – there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach
- **Put people first** – provide a safe and supportive environment
- **Be flexible** – adjust working practices to suit individual need
- **Be inclusive** – support managers to support teams
- **Be open** – ‘return to work’ must be a two-way conversation



The background of the slide features a dark blue and purple gradient with several stylized, glowing coronavirus particles. These particles are spherical with numerous small, conical spikes protruding from their surfaces, characteristic of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The particles are rendered with a soft, ethereal glow, giving them a three-dimensional appearance as if they are floating in space.

Responding to the coronavirus

As measures to stem the spread of COVID-19 take on increasing priority, the CIPD will collate and publish updated resources to support your response

www.cipd.co.uk/coronavirus

CIPD



Preparing for recovery – build back better

Nick Pahl, CEO, Society for Occupational Medicine

COVID-19 and Occupational Health now – in the UK

- Certain industries e.g. retail, telecommunications, transport and emergency services continue to function
- Occupational Health providers involved in providing advice to in terms of protecting employees and service users in accordance with Government guidance.
- SOM has produced blogs on topics such as [working from home during challenging times](#) and [technology and COVID-19](#)

Return to work - background

What data will guide the decisions in the UK?

Evidence of “flattening of the curve” in relation to identification of new cases. If start to rise, need to increase social distancing once more.

Testing and identifying those who currently have the infection and those who have been infected and are now immune. Need to share results with OH

Essential to consider the data held by employers in coming to decisions, such as absence data - that will give an indication of the amount of the workforce who may have experienced or is currently experiencing COVID-19.

Reopening workplaces is likely to put staff members at risk of encountering the COVID-19 infection, so occupational health input in relation to protecting the most vulnerable members of the workforce needs to be considered.

Return to work – general issues

- Working environment is going to change and may not return to normality
- Key role of leaders in setting expectations and company wide goals
- Risk assessment for particular health issues
- Different personality types may need additional support:
 - motivation of people who need to go back but have got used to working at home
 - people who are returning following mental and physical health issues e.g. with COVID-19 or death of loved one - extra effort to be made/ support needed
 - readjusting following redeployment
 - returning following furlough
 - implications -recognising that some people will decide not to return to work

Vulnerable staff

Employers should seek to identify staff who may be vulnerable (at risk) or extremely vulnerable (at high risk) and for whom adjustments to their work or alternative deployment may be required.

Managers should agree with OH the most appropriate and practicable process for identifying such vulnerable staff and completing a risk assessment.

This may lead, in discussion with the employee, to a decision about alternative work arrangements.

UK guidance identifies two groups of people with increased vulnerability:

- 1) Those defined on medical grounds as 'extremely vulnerable from COVID-19'
- 2) Those defined as 'at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19' - include those aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions), those with the defined conditions listed in PHE's guidance, and pregnant women up to 28 weeks. They are advised to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

Return to work – planning and physical environment

Preventive measures should be established to promote and enable prevention measures in terms of physical distancing, hand washing, respiratory etiquette, Teleworking, staggered shifts, and other practices should be encouraged to reduce crowding.

A return to work conversation with managers should occur e.g. for sudden return, preparing to return to work, what will the first day look like, what to expect etc. Role of Occupational Health to carry out risk assessments and to support testing

Physical work-environment issues:

- Social distancing e.g. use of elevators
- Working in teams, close contact etc and implications of distancing
- Workplace design - desk spacing, office protocols
- Communicate these changes before return to reduce anxiety; establish and agree protocols before return/ on return to help ensure safe practices.

Return to work – mental health

- Connection between wellbeing and productivity and competitiveness
- Need managers who are confident and capable to support people's mental well-being and prevent stress
- Job design to improve employee health and wellbeing
- Many of returners are going to return with depleted mental health
- Support - directing to reputable sources of advice e.g. EAP, CBT, counselling.
- Home working may continue – further risk on mental health
- Balance the trauma of the situation and the opportunity for lessons to be learned

Ensure Occupational Health with HR colleagues can support and guide managers so that they feel equipped to have sensitive and supportive discussions with staff, reminding about the importance of communicating regularly with their team and asking how they are

A mental health strategy will encourage staff to practise self-care such as a healthy routine for diet, sleep and relaxation and signpost people to counselling helplines or other support

Insight

Simon Jones, Director of HR consultancy Ariadne Associates



Questions

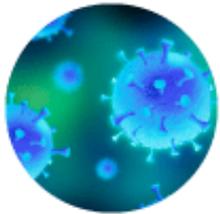
Please submit your questions for:

- Rachel Suff, Senior Policy Adviser, CIPD
- Nick Pahl, CEO, Society for Occupational Medicine
- Simon Jones, Director of HR consultancy Ariadne Associates
- Andrew Willis, Head of Legal & Advisory, HR-inform

Please use the Q&A function to submit your questions



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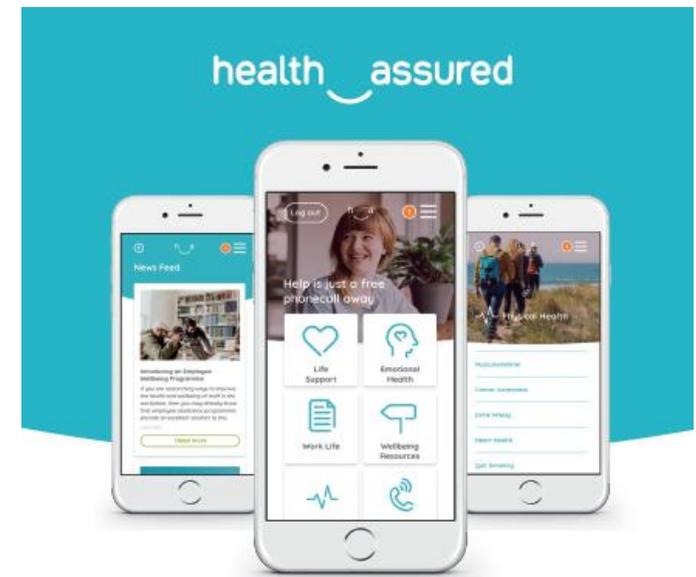
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New Well-being Resources

- We've partnered with **Health Assured** to support members mental health and well-being
- Unlimited free 24/7 confidential telephone helpline, online portal & Health e-Hub app
- The resource provides:
 - Legal information
 - Debt and financial information
 - Manager consultancy and support
 - Information on work and home issues
 - Factsheets, advice, information and self-help tools
 - Links to specialist support organisations
 - A resources area with; programmes, videos, webinars, medical information and mini health checks.



Health e-Hub from Health Assured
Support in the palm of your hand

[Download the Health e-Hub now](#)

Further information

[NEW well-being helpline for CIPD members](#)

cipd.co.uk/coronavirus

[CIPD COVID-19 workforce planner](#)

[CIPD community](#)

[HSE guidance on homeworking](#)

[Gov.uk/coronavirus](https://gov.uk/coronavirus)

