

NHS Wales

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Temporary redeployment / alternative duties principles

Context

The Covid-19 pandemic is placing unprecedented challenges on NHS Wales. Services have had to be reconfigured to respond to the increase in the demand and therefore the way in which many of our services are provided has had to change and adapt to fit in with this response. These rapid changes have led to significant changes to many roles and there are areas where normal NHS services have been reduced or which have been suspended for the duration of the pandemic. Accordingly, there are staff whose roles have or will temporarily diminish during the period of the response to the pandemic and who have skills and or the ability to take up a different role on a temporary basis in NHS Wales to help with the unprecedented challenges facing the service.

To respond to this challenge, NHS Wales staff may therefore be required to work differently or outside of their usual job description for a temporary period. Health Boards and Trusts will coordinate such temporary redeployments either internal to the organisation or between organisations through processes which will be guided by a common set of principles.

Principles

1. It is the expectation that during the Covid-19 crisis that any NHS Wales employees who are no longer required to perform their current roles will be open to redeployment to an alternative role on a temporary basis, until such time as the Covid-19 crisis has concluded.
2. Individuals will have the opportunity to consider the role(s) being proposed and organisations should ensure that there is partnership involvement in the strategy and approach which the organisation is using to temporarily redeploy staff.
3. Staff will either self-identify or will be identified by managers/service leads if their current role has temporarily diminished or may not be required, during the response to the pandemic.
4. Organisations will identify the roles where additional capacity is required and put in place a process to align individuals to those needs.
5. If organisations do not have any roles for temporary redeployment or if there are more employees requiring temporary redeployment then consideration will be given to temporary redeployment to another NHS Wales organisation.

6. It is essential that staff are flexible when responding to redeployment requests, even if they only have the basic abilities required.
7. Organisations will ensure that staff have the necessary induction and introductory training in their new department/service, they will be clear on what is expected of the member of staff being redeployed and inform them of what additional on-the-job training and support will be provided. This will include any necessary health and safety requirements for the role.
8. Organisations will consider and mitigate (e.g. a non-shift worker being required to work shifts,) any changes to working patterns and travel which may affect the employee's ability to effectively commit to the role. Individual risk assessments should be carried out where requested or required and any reasonable adjustments made in accordance with the Equality Act.
9. Pay (including any enhanced elements of pay) in all instances will be protected, even where staff are fulfilling a lower banded post.
10. It is recognised that some staff will be worried about putting their own and their family's health at risk if particular roles and the location of those roles are proposed for them whilst Covid-19 prevalent. In respect of these redeployment principles there are no circumstances where employees who do not usually provide direct patient care will be expected to do so, or will be expected to undertake roles in patient care areas if they do not wish to. Such roles may be offered and it will be for individuals to determine for themselves whether they wish to take up such roles on a temporary basis. Similarly, staff working in patient care areas may be offered work in another patient care area and the same principles apply.
11. Where an employee considers that the temporary alternative employment is not suitable, the reasons will be explored with them and where possible, alternative roles will continue to be sought.
12. If an employee declines to undertake all available suitable alternative roles presented to them, then the matter will be discussed with the employee, in partnership with their trade union representatives if requested, and other avenues and opportunities explored e.g. home working on different tasks and duties or re-deployment to another Health Board/Trust.
13. At the end of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in all circumstances the employee will be guaranteed a return to their substantive job with their employing Health Board or Trust. Any necessary support will be provided to ensure a smooth return to their substantive job.
14. Throughout this process all staff will be treated with dignity and respect in accordance with the Core Principles of NHS Wales.