

Welcome! This is our new weekly Covid-19 edition of The Pulse which is focused on giving you a quick summary of everything West Midlands Employers has issued or launched this week to support all of our public sector colleagues, as together we work to manage the Covid-19 crisis.

We are here to support you and provide additional capacity to your organisations during this difficult time. Alongside this we are still operating all our normal services, albeit virtually, should you need them.

Take care and stay safe during this difficult time,

From the WME Leadership Team



## HR Support

## HR Employment Advice

Our new Covid-19 microsite is live and is your one stop website for all information and FAQ's relating to terms and conditions for public sector employees at this incredibly challenging time. We are updating this daily and all national circulars and guidance issued are on here for your ease of access. <https://wmecovid19.org.uk/>

The WME HR Helpdesk has been working overtime to provide timely and accurate response to you and this week we have responded to over 150 questions so far from organisations and schools relating to Covid-19.

If you have a specific question or require advice and are one of our membership organisations,

please email [info@wmemployers.org.uk](mailto:info@wmemployers.org.uk) and we will get back you with a response.

Our weekly Employment Law Webinar is growing in popularity with over 70 people registered to attend. It takes place on a Thursday at 9:30am and you can register here [GotoWebinar](#). It is led by our Covid-19 lead consultant and this week we had guest speakers, Darren Newman, Employment Lawyer, and Harry Honnor and Phil Bundy from the LGA. You can listen to this week's webinar here [Webinar 2nd April](#) with a focus on furlough, casual workers and annual leave.



## Workforce Data

As the Regional Employers' Organisation (REO) we have been tasked by the LGA to collate information about the regions' public sector workforce and the impact that absences and absences will have on service delivery; we aim to provide these updates regularly to the LGA so the national bodies can leverage resources and support into the Region where necessary.

We are inviting all Councils and other public sector organisations to share daily (or twice daily) updates

on the following data sets, which we are recording and using to inform discussions with organisations.

- Number of staff self-isolating
- Number of staff self-isolating and working from home
- Number of staff self-isolating and unable to work
- Number of confirmed cases

Where appropriate we will share high-level, non-attributable insights in our weekly Covid-19 bulletin.

To submit your data to us, we are asking that you automate the process by adding [info@wmemployers.org.uk](mailto:info@wmemployers.org.uk) to your regular internal distribution list to make it easy and seamless for you.

## HR Guidance Issued

This is a fast-paced and changing landscape for organisations and we recognise you need access to guidance fast in order to implement it. This week we have launched the following guides for you:

- Annual Leave Guidance [Annual Leave](#)  
This is a guide to your options on how to manage annual leave fairly during this time, and how to consider implications for return to BAU
- Vulnerable Workers Guidance – [Implementing NJC Circulars](#) This is a guide on how to implement the NJC guidance notes on vulnerable workers, how to act in a fair and compassionate way whilst still ensuring you can deliver services where they are needed

All our guidance is practical and includes easy to follow information and additional guides which you can issue directly to managers to help them follow the right process, and ask the right questions, at the right time.

## Interpretation of NJC Circulars

In the past 10 days 3 NJC Circulars and other national advice has been issued:

- Mobile Working Risk Management system from the Chartered Institute of ergonomics and Human Factors

- WISH guidance on social distancing and PPE for Refuse workers
- NJC General bulletin 27<sup>th</sup> March 20202 with a general update on the national position
- DfE guidance for schools on vulnerable children and school closures

These are provided as '[guidance](#)' only and have a degree of discretion in the way they are implemented locally. are not mandatory to implement. WME will be issuing an advice note following each NJC circular where necessary which provides a regional interpretation of the guidance for practical local implementation.

## HR Support for Councils

We have an established network of support for HR professionals in our membership councils to make sure you are still connected and can network, collaborate and share challenges. As we are all now working remotely, this regular weekly dial-in will be invaluable to us all.

Virtual Network Meetings take place on:

- Heads of HR Counties/Unitaries/Mets – every Wednesday at 1pm till 2pm
- Heads of HR District Councils – every Wednesday at 11:30am till 12:30pm

Attendance is by invitation only and confidential notes are circulated each week. To request an invitation link to attend these meetings please email Lesley Shore [l.shore@wmemployers.org.uk](mailto:l.shore@wmemployers.org.uk)



## Education and Schools

This has been a challenging time for schools and headteachers and we have provided a significant amount of support during the recent school closures.

- We launched our Covid-19 Education microsite that contains information, guidance and FAQ's that are bespoke to those working in an education setting and we are providing regular direct updates to the 1,900 schools in the West Midlands.  
<https://wmeschools.org.uk/>

WME has written specific guidance for schools this week:

- **Template letter for keyworkers** that can be used – [Template letter for Key Workers](#)
- We have hosted two webinars for headteachers with over 140 attendees and these recordings are available to listen to on the site. [Schools Webinars](#)

We have provided access to free coaching for members of the leadership teams through our education coaching partners, Leadership Edge.

[Leadership Edge Coaching offer](#)

## Resourcing Support

The recruitment and resourcing services have a key role to play in supporting organisations in this challenging time.

## Volunteers

Our Police Forces, County, Metropolitan and Unitary Authorities are all seeking to support their community response to Covid-19 through recurring volunteers. WME has developed a one stop site for citizens to find out about all the volunteering opportunities in the Region in one place, directing people to their appropriate Council, NHS or Police Force. <https://wme covid19.org.uk/volunteering/>

## Supporting Care Provider Services

We know that the issue of maintaining and growing the social care workforce is one of the biggest challenges during Covid-19. The majority of social care services are delivered through the independent sector, whether this be residential or nursing homes, domiciliary care, supported living or other services. Many of these services are run by Small and Medium sized enterprises. In addition, more care staff will be needed rapidly to support the care centres that are being established in local authorities around the region to care for newly discharged patients.

To support the care provider services;

- We have relaxed our WMJobs advertising restrictions to enable private sector care homes, nursing homes and those providing domiciliary care services access to the site to recruit for staff. We have also extended all adverts to run for up to 6 weeks and applied at 10% discount for all adverts. We are working with WM ADASS and other regional partners to build awareness of this offer and would urge Councils to share with their local providers.  
[www.wmjobs.co.uk](http://www.wmjobs.co.uk)

## Adult Social Care in Partnership with ADASS

We understand that one of the biggest challenges facing the region is how we continue to support vulnerable adults, both in the short and medium term. Across the region in total there is a short supply of social workers, carers and other care professionals (Occupational Therapists). We are working closely with ADASS as we recognise that our sector needs an alternative approach to attract and on-board the staff we will need.

In the coming weeks, we will be launching 3 campaigns; **#SupportWestMidlands** (former social workers ready to return including those currently retired), **#Time2Care** (final year students ready to support us), and a **recruitment drive for unemployed** to come join care provider services. We are also engaging with the West Midlands Teaching Partnership, Skills for Care and academic partners to offer regional on-boarding and induction support to councils.



## Executive Recruitment – rewriting the rule book

Our entire delivery of executive recruitment has gone 'virtual'. We recognise you still need to recruit to senior and critical vacancies, so we responded quickly to rework our 'search and selection' service so that we can now offer:

- A fully online virtual process
- Online shortlisting and panel discussions
- Virtual assessment centres
- Virtual panel interviews

All our technology has been tested and we are proud to have delivered this successfully in recent weeks with some of our councils

The cost of our virtual executive search and selection is discounted to reflect our new approach to service delivery. And the added bonus is a reduction in your carbon footprint for travel when adopting a virtual process.

## Virtual Onboarding

In Partnership with our TalentLink service provider SABA we hosted training on 'Virtual Onboarding' and have launched new functionality in our systems to support this. We will be following up with all 10 organisations who attended to commence configuration and provide support.

## Recruiter Guidance Issues

We recognise that with candidates and recruiters now working remotely, moving to a world of virtual recruitment may not have been the norm for many of your teams; coupled with changes to Right to Work and DBS Checks, here are some brief reminders of how our TalentLink system can support you manage your processes for:

- Right to Work
- Digital Recruitment
- Virtual Onboarding
- Social Care Express Selection Process, which has been configured in 10 systems for organisations,
- DBS Update (2<sup>nd</sup> April)

Further information on all of the areas above is available here [Recruitment Resources](#)

## Leadership and OD Support

We recognise how challenging this time is for Managers and Leaders in organisations and we are bringing you a virtual series of master classes to support and inspire you.

- **David Ulrich guest webinar** – Globally renowned HR guru David Ulrich will be joining us virtually from the USA on the **9<sup>th</sup> April** to talk about **HR's role in crisis management, from being reactive in the short term to ensuring a longer-term focus on the role in returning to business delivery.**

**This webinar is free to all public sector organisations** but attendance is limited – so please read the flyer [here](#).

- **Geary Sikich guest webinar** – Entrepreneur, consultant, author and business lecturer. Geary will be discussing **'How to deploy staff during a Pandemic'** on the **14<sup>th</sup> April** via a virtual conference. Geary Sikich is a seasoned risk management professional and is well-versed in contingency planning, risk management, human resource development, "war gaming," as well as competitive intelligence.

**This webinar is free to all public sector organisations**, but attendance is limited – so please read the flyer [here](#).

## Promoting the incredible work of our Local Government Heroes

The work that local government does is broad and varied and can often be overlooked by the public and not easily identified as to who provides the service. We recognise thousands of our 116,000 Local Government workforce are on the frontline delivering services to often vulnerable citizens and we want to raise the profile of the work they are doing.

We are working with associates to start our 'West Midlands Local Government Heroes' campaign. We are going to be collating personal stories and imagery that spans the breadth of organisations and job roles in Local Government, that are playing a vital role in our response to Covid-19.



We aim to work with news outlets and media channels to really champion our sector and our region.

If you are keen to be involved lead in this work with us and highlight your incredible staff, please email [info@wmemployers.org.uk](mailto:info@wmemployers.org.uk) and we will be in touch.

### Working with National Partners to Support You

WME is one of 9 Regional Employers Organisations and we are in a close working relationship with our sister organisations and the LGA workforce team. We are meeting virtually weekly on a Tuesday at 12pm as Chief Executives and Directors of these organisations.

If you have any national information requests please let us know in advance of this meeting by emailing Rebecca Davis [r.davis@wmemployers.org.uk](mailto:r.davis@wmemployers.org.uk)

### WME here for you when you need us!

Do let us know if there is any specific support you need that we can help you with:

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### WME Business Support

E: [info@wmemployers.org.uk](mailto:info@wmemployers.org.uk)

Click here to read our latest wider WME Newsletter [The Pulse March 2020](#)



# WME events

DATE	WME EVENTS 2020	VENUE
04 NOV	Strategic HR&OD Network	Lost & Found Birmingham
04 & 05 NOV	Inspire (Day 1 & 2)	BCEC
25 NOV	WM Coaching & Mentoring Conference; Creating Healthy & Effective Workforces	BCEC
02 DEC	Strategic HR&OD Network	Lost & Found Birmingham
03 DEC	WME Associate Consultants Network	TBC
03 DEC	Menopause 'a life event'	The Studio
DATE	WME EVENTS 2021	VENUE
06 JAN	Strategic HR&OD Network	Lost & Found Birmingham
07 JAN	Inspire (Day 3)	BCEC
08 & 09 JAN	Inspire - HRBP (Day 1 & 2)	BCEC
15 JAN	HOT Network	BCEC
22 JAN	WME Management Board	Sandwell Council House
03 FEB	Strategic HR&OD Network	Lost & Found Birmingham

