

NHS Trade Unions' Blueprint for Return

As we enter what could be the start of a gradual easing of lockdown restrictions, discussion has turned to how the NHS restarts those services that were stepped down during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the pressure that staff have been under and the risk to their health and well-being – and that of their families – that has resulted from dealing with this pandemic, their concerns must be understood and addressed before any decision to bring services back to full capacity is made.

Keeping staff and patients safe and ensuring that the NHS is properly resourced to meet the current and future demands placed on it – are the priorities. That is why 17 NHS trade unions are asking UK governments and employers to work with us to deliver our **Blueprint for Return**. We want them to:

1. Guarantee that there is enough suitable PPE to give staff the equipment they need to protect them when being in contact with the coronavirus is unavoidable – and that all communal staff areas are safe to use.
2. Ensure that proper risk assessments are carried out for all staff – to apply social distancing, to help avoid contact with Covid-19 wherever possible and to manage that contact safely when there is no alternative. This must include access to all information on every risk factor, including on ethnicity, and proper training for the managers who will conduct them.
3. Give staff and patients/clients unlimited access to testing and rapid results, so that resumed services can stay virus free for staff and patients.
4. Extend the current Covid-19 pay arrangements so that staff get paid properly for all the hours they work – including applying overtime rates to hours over 37.5 a week.
5. Make sure that staff get a proper work/ life balance by recording and controlling excess hours, reviewing long and rotating shifts, enforcing working time regulations and encouraging staff to take rest breaks and annual leave.
6. Use additional capacity from the Bring Back Staff initiative to support rapid establishment of safe staffing levels.
7. Make sure that staff know about the support that is available to those most affected by the impact of the virus and encourage them to ask for help if they need it.
8. Facilitate and support access to childcare, particularly for staff with pre-school children.
9. Make a clear statement of intent that the contribution of all NHS staff, whatever their jobs, in dealing with this pandemic will be reflected in future conversations about pay.



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