

SUPPORTING YOUR EMPLOYEES AFTER CRITICAL ILLNESS

Return to work checklist

Do you have an employee returning to work after sepsis, COVID-19 or any other critical illness? This simple checklist includes brief pointers on good practice, your employees' rights and your responsibilities as an employer. For more details, please see our downloadable '[Returning to Work Following Critical Illness](#)' guide at sepsistrust.org/RTWGuide.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A MEDICAL EXPERT TO OFFER SUPPORT

It's useful to get a basic understanding of your employee's illness, the treatment they've received and what they've been through. This knowledge will help you to be supportive, and plan and recognise issues that may come up at work.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE SYMPTOMS SOMEONE WILL HAVE, OR HOW THEY WILL AFFECT THEM

Commonly experienced problems include: fatigue; breathlessness; memory and concentration problems; muscle weakness and anxiety.

EVEN THOUGH YOUR EMPLOYEE MAY LOOK WELL, SOME PROBLEMS DURING RECOVERY ARE INVISIBLE

You may not be able to see how your employee is affected. Problems you may notice include: changes in vision and hearing; short-term memory loss; judgement and decision-making; speech, for example finding the right words; loss of concentration and difficulty performing tasks that were previously simple. Your employee could also experience psychological and emotional issues which may go unseen.

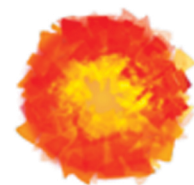
PEOPLE RECOVER AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS

Some have few or no problems following critical illness. Age, medical history and length of hospital stay in critical care can influence recovery. For people who have suffered organ damage, recovery can take longer and involve ongoing treatment.

PATIENTS MAY HAVE NO MEMORY OR CONFUSED MEMORIES OF THEIR TIME IN CRITICAL CARE

This is extremely common and can make moving forward difficult. Sometimes people are happy not to remember much, but for others, this can be upsetting.

JUST ASK
"COULD IT BE SEPSIS?"



THE UK
SEPSIS
TRUST

SUPPORTING YOUR EMPLOYEES AFTER CRITICAL ILLNESS

Return to work checklist

TRY NOT TO MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT YOUR EMPLOYEE CAN AND CANNOT DO

They may or may not be able to continue doing their job as usual, without any additional support.

SUPPORTING YOUR EMPLOYEE WHO IS RECOVERING IS NOT EXPENSIVE

Changes to an employees workspace or daily routine may cost little or nothing. It may mean moving their desk to a location with a more suitable ambient temperature, allowing a longer lunch break or later start or finish times to avoid the rush hour. These changes are known as 'reasonable adjustments'.

EMPLOYERS MUST CONSIDER MAKING 'REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS' TO ANY POLICIES OR PRACTICES WHICH CAUSE DISADVANTAGE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE EMPLOYER'S PREMISES

This is based on the Equality Act 2010. The Access to Work scheme may help you cover costs of specialist equipment or adaptations to existing equipment. If your organisation has access to an occupational health service, then this will be invaluable in supporting the process of returning to work.

KEEPING AN ONGOING CONVERSATION WITH YOUR EMPLOYEE CAN HELP YOU FIND OUT WHAT THEY NEED

As the effects of critical illness often change over time, it's good to have regular chats about how things are going and whether your member of staff needs extra or different support.

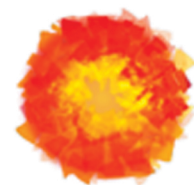
DONATIONS

To donate to the UK Sepsis Trust, a registered charity, so that we can support more people who are, or have been critically ill, please visit sepsistrust.org/donate or call **0800 389 6255**. Thank you.

DISCLAIMER

This checklist is not a substitute for legal advice. For more details or legal advice, please contact a solicitor. The UK Sepsis Trust will not accept any liability for the use, or inability to use any information in this checklist.

JUST ASK
"COULD IT BE SEPSIS?"



THE UK
SEPSIS
TRUST