



Dear colleague

We are writing to you today about your colleagues who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV). **We are asking you to support CEV staff by agreeing that they should work at home for the remainder of this term.**

Working collaboratively, school and college leaders and their staff have gone to extraordinary lengths to maintain education provision whilst also maintaining safety of pupils, staff and local communities.

Leadership colleagues in particular have worked heroically. We appreciate that this has not come without difficulties and strains on all of us working in education.

During the period of restrictions from 5 November, Government advice was clear that CEV people should not attend work or education. Following the end of restrictions, however, the DfE's advice for CEV staff in schools suggests that they might return to work if the workplace is safe for them to do so.

The National Education Union (NEU) does not think that there are any grounds to change the current position with regard to CEV staff who should now be working at home. The NEU believes that the DfE's advice puts CEV colleagues in danger and should be immediately withdrawn. We have asked the DfE to do so as a matter of urgency.

The attached briefing note sets out the basis for the NEU's position. As you will see, the continuing high infection and transmission rates in our schools and colleges mean that they are still not safe places for CEV staff to work. We do not believe that risk assessments, properly conducted, can support the conclusion that it is safe for CEV staff to be in school or college.

The data on pupil absence highlights the ongoing need to support a substantial number of pupils who are themselves at home. CEV colleagues can therefore continue to make a vital contribution while continuing to work safely from home.

We recognise that the situation will continue to evolve. **We therefore make what we think is a reasonable and responsible request that you allow CEV colleagues to work at home and that you also agree with them that the situation will be reviewed again with them when the next term has begun.**

We know that you will continue to work flexibly and imaginatively with your staff to ensure their safety and well-being in such testing times.

NEU members know that their union will always prioritise their right to work in a safe environment. We hope that the DfE will withdraw its advice.



Whether or not it does so, you can ensure that safety is maintained and disagreement avoided by agreeing that CEV colleagues should work at home, avoiding this becoming a divisive issue that distracts us all from the urgent task in hand of educating our young people.

We thank you for your commitment to your pupils and your staff colleagues. We commit to reviewing this request in light with emerging evidence on Covid infection rates.

With our sincere thanks,

Mary and Kevin

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mary W. Boustead . Kevin Courtney". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr Mary Boustead and Kevin Courtney
Joint general secretaries, National Education Union