



## How you can handle the 2nd wave of the corona virus as a manager

**Since 11 March 2020, society has been faced with a lockdown followed by a gradual reopening since Easter. Unfortunately, the corona virus is flaring up again, and therefore new restrictions have been imposed. All these changes may be difficult to navigate, which can result in a lot of confusion and unease.**

As a manager, you may currently be faced with a lot of work ahead in terms of figuring out how to structure the coming period in the best way possible.

An important part of your job will be to reduce panic if it begins affecting your employees. You need to consider how you can meet the guidelines from the health authorities in terms of reducing the risk of infection. Worries about potential ways the infection can spread are more pronounced than ever based on the latest infection rates, and your employees might still be worrying about losing their jobs due to potential job cuts or reduced productivity.

You are faced with employees who in the past many months have had very different working conditions, tasks and, not least, private lives:

### **Employees who have been physically present at the workplace throughout the crisis**

Some of your employees have been physically present at the workplace. Some have been really busy and might have had more tasks than usual, as they have had to fill in for others who you were forced to send home. Some might be feeling the pressure from all these changes, both at home and at work - they might be feeling lonely after having spent a lot of time alone at work, but, on the other hand, they might also worry about having to meet colleagues due to the risk of infection. It is time for you to sit down with your employees and show that you are curious about how the current circumstances have impacted them. Are there new tasks that need to be made permanent - that create value for your employees? Do your employees need to be given a break or extra help now that some of them may have taken on more than their fair share of the workload while others were sent home or working from home? When it comes to infection risks and worries, it can be useful to involve the employees in your considerations about how to handle the physical setting.

### **Employees who have been working from home**

A lot of your employees (perhaps even yourself) have spent the last period adjusting to working from home. At first, it may have been challenging, but lately it may actually have begun to work well.

Those working from home need your help to continue working from home to a great extent. It can be beneficial to hold physical meetings where you and your employees meet with proper distancing, allowing your employees to maintain the important social relationships and contacts with their colleagues.

There is a lot of focus on people being fired and higher unemployment levels in the media, both in Denmark and around the world, so many employees will be feeling somewhat powerless and will maybe despair or worry about whether they will be forgotten or become dispensable.

The employees working from home will, in particular, feel lonely, and it will seem to them that they are "missing out" - all while also worrying about the future. With these employees, you therefore have to be extra attentive to their well-being, which can be achieved via frequent 1:1 meetings.

## What more can you do as a manager?

### Create the space and time for reflection

You are facing a period where focus still needs to remain on adaptability and change. It is a time for even stronger leadership, but how can this be achieved? Create the space for yourself to reflect upon your employees, their situations and what your strategy for each individual should be. What do they need from you? Try to put more effort into running ideas by others and getting feedback, maybe from HR or your colleagues?

### Stay calm. We react - and that is perfectly normal

As humans, we react when the world around us and our working conditions change. Change management is the most important tool that you have as a manager during times such as these. Your job is to guide and support your employees as best as possible so that you also have effective employees who are doing well even after the corona crisis ends.

### Take responsibility - you are the one leading the way

Create clear expectations for how tasks are to be handled and assist with ongoing prioritisation. Signal that it is alright to make mistakes and that together you have to venture into unknown territory once again. Make it clear that you will support your employees. Display a calm demeanour and signal that there is a plan and that things will be okay.

### Take a step up the ladder and maintain your perspective

Focus on the big picture rather than being overwhelmed by individual tasks in the coming period. Create structure for your employees. Help them create concrete work routines in the period ahead where some might be physically present at work and others will not be. Delegate the tasks that other people can take care of - and postpone the ones that can wait.

### Put a stop to the negative stories, but allow for worries that might pop up

Be very clear with your employees that they need to bring problems and questions that they cannot answer themselves to you as a manager. Situations may arise where they are afraid of being infected or other issues you have not taken into account, and it is important that they notify you of such issues immediately. Create a setting where it is alright to talk about problems with each other - but keep it to a certain limited timeframe, so that the worries do not impact the whole workday.

Create a space for your employees where they can share their thoughts, experiences and impressions to create a common overview and a shared understanding of the situation you are. During times such as these, you need to keep your employees close. Focus on ensuring that there are not too many unclarified/unprocessed questions or experiences when they leave "the office".



Have you read the public guidelines for private companies? If not, have a look at them [here](#)

### **Communicate, communicate, communicate**

Let people know what you know - and also what you do not know yet.

Communicate frequently via the familiar channels and keep having frequent 1:1 meetings where you follow up with the individual employee.

### **Be available and be present**

Be understanding towards your employees - they are in a new situation as well.

Recognise the work that your employees do and accept that change takes time - show that you trust them to do their best.

Draw close to the individual employees when it comes to job tasks and their situation at home so you know what is going on.

### **Increase firmness but maintain flexibility**

Display decisiveness and respond quickly and effectively to new developments.

Monitor the situation and make decisions when needed.

Stand firm - even when it comes to unpopular decisions. As far as possible, exert mutual flexibility when it comes to solving tasks, scheduling working hours, etc. You will need your employees to be flexible in the coming period, so show that you can also be flexible. Listen to the needs of the individual employee so that you can find good solutions together.

### **Do not forget about yourself in all this**

Be mindful of your own resources and limits.

Seek advice from and run ideas and experiences by colleagues.

Make sure to take regular breaks - breathe and pay attention to how you are feeling.