

Covid-19 – Updates to our HR Policies and Processes

Updated 4th January 2021

In light of the ongoing Covid-19 situation we have reviewed our current policies to ensure that our colleagues are supported in the unfortunate event the virus impacts on them and/or their families. These changes will remain in place during the Covid-19 pandemic and will be regularly updated as advice and guidance changes

The following document provides an update on the policy amendment, associated pay and the supporting process and covers:

1. Sickness Absence

- 1.1 Off sick with Covid-19
- 1.2 Requested to self-isolate
- 1.3 Requested to shield

2. Dependency Leave

3. Holiday entitlement

- 3.1 taking & carrying over holiday
- 3.2 Requirement to quarantine
- 3.3 Buying and selling holiday

1. Amendments to Sickness Absence

Covid-19 is having an impact on peoples ability to attend work due to either being unwell and unable to work or through the requirement to isolate/shield. We have made some amendments to our normal sickness & absence rules & pay to reflect this

1.1 Off sick with Covid-19

Policy

- Should an employee be off sick, unable to work and confirmed as having Covid-19 this will not count towards their sickness triggers, (this is due to the fact that self-isolation is likely to be 10 days, impacting on our current trigger timescales).

Process

- It is important that we are able to identify this period of absence as Covid-19, please record this in MyView as you would any other sickness absence selecting the Covid -19 as the reason. An isolation note covering the absence can be obtained from <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/> Line managers will need to speak to the HRSS team should there be any problem with obtaining medical proof. The isolation note can be uploaded to MyView in the same way as a Fit Note.

Pay

- Normal sick pay will be applied

1.2. Requested to Self-isolate

Policy

- If an employee is fit for work but has received government/medical advice to self-isolate (this may be through Test and Trace) it is important that this government advice is followed and therefore we would not allow the employee to return to work. Employees can return to work at the end of the self-isolation period. If they aren't well enough to work, or have a high Coronavirus symptoms, the government advice will still prevent them from returning. They will need to be recorded as sick as above and get tested as soon as symptoms are displayed.

Process

- Anyone self-isolating should be recorded in MyView as Compassionate leave to ensure that they receive full pay, if following isolation symptoms have emerged, and the employee is no longer fit for work, the status will need to change to sickness absence and be recorded in the usual way.

The entry in MyView for self-isolation will look as below:

The screenshot shows the 'Leave' section of the MyView software. The 'Type' is set to 'Compassionate Leave'. The 'Category' is 'Self-isolating'. There is a 'Comments' field which is empty. Below these, there are 'Dates' buttons for 'Full Day' and 'Part Day'. The 'From' date is 25/03/2020 and the 'To' date is 31/03/2020. The 'Total Time' is 37 hours and 0 minutes, totaling 37.00 hours. A 'Confirm planned work time' button is visible.

Type	Compassionate Leave		
Category *	Self-isolating		
Comments			
Dates			
From *			
25/03/2020			
To *			
31/03/2020			
Total Time	hours	mins	hrs decimal
	37	0	37.00
Confirm planned work time			

Pay

- Full pay will be maintained for the duration of self-isolation (usually 7 to 10 calendar days) and where possible arrangements will be made for the employee to work from

home.

1.3 Requested to Shield

Policy

- If an employee has received government/medical advice to social distance, it is important that this government advice is followed and therefore we would not allow the employee return to work. Where possible arrangements will be made for the employee to work from home and in this instance full pay for the duration will be maintained.
- Where working from home is not possible, the employee should provide medical evidence of their requirement to shield and with agreement if eligible will be furloughed on PDSA's furlough scheme
- Where the option to furlough is not available, or where agreement to be furloughed cannot be reached, the employee will be recorded as sick and the normal sick pay rules will apply apart from the fact that the period of absence will not count in any triggers.

Process

- A colleague requesting furlough for the reason of shielding should speak with their line manager who in turn will contact HR for the furlough process to be applied. The individual will receive confirmation of the furlough arrangement in writing and will be asked to confirm agreement
- Where a colleague is off work 'sick' this should be recorded in myview in the normal way

Pay

- Whilst on furlough the individual will receive normal pay weeks of the furlough period. With effect from week 3 of the furlough period they will receive 80% of 'normal pay' (at the furlough reference point) capped at £2,500. If furlough is not applicable normal sick pay will be applied

2. Amendment to Dependent Leave Policy –

At the start of the pandemic when we went into national lockdown, we changed our Dependency Leave policy to allow people who were struggling to get childcare or other caring commitments to access up to 10 days of paid Dependency Leave if they needed it. It is important that requests for dependency leave are discussed with line managers and that alternatives are explored, such as changing working hours.

Policy

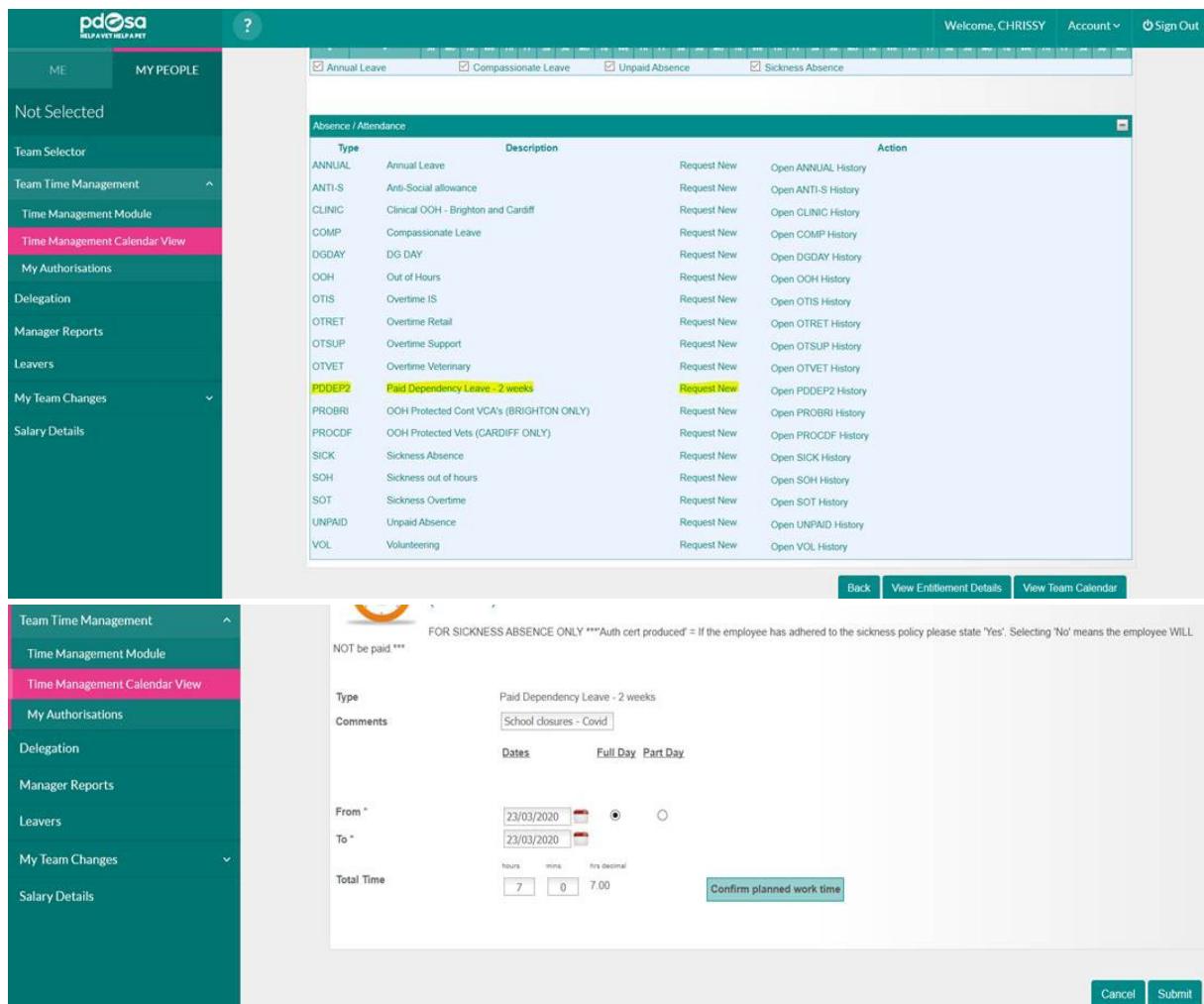
10 days paid Dependency Leave (pro-rated for part-time employees), can be used during school closures. Please note that the 10 days are for the period of impact due to Covid-19 and do not re-set at the start of the New Year.

If 10 days have been exhausted then colleagues can take one of the following options

1. Request to go onto dependency leave furlough (to be eligible colleagues will need to have been employed on or before 30 October 2020; furlough will be available to eligible colleagues until the end of April 2021) and can be used for the full working hours or part of their working hours where childcare cannot be arranged. Request for dependency leave furlough should be made by the line manager through HR Shared Services
2. Utilise holiday entitlement
3. Request unpaid dependency leave

Process

- For dependency leave please record in MyView using the Paid Dependency Leave absence type as follows:



The screenshot shows the pdosa MyView software interface. The top navigation bar includes 'pdosa', 'Help', 'Sign In', 'Welcome, CHRISSY', 'Account', and 'Sign Out'. The left sidebar has a 'Not Selected' section and a 'Team Selector' dropdown. Under 'Team Selector', 'Time Management Module' is expanded, showing 'Time Management Calendar View' (which is highlighted in pink), 'My Authorisations', 'Delegation', 'Manager Reports', 'Leavers', 'My Team Changes', and 'Salary Details'. The main content area has tabs for 'Annual Leave', 'Compassionate Leave', 'Unpaid Absence', and 'Sickness Absence'. A sub-table titled 'Absence / Attendance' lists various absence types with their descriptions and actions. The 'PDEP2' row is highlighted in yellow and shows 'Paid Dependency Leave - 2 weeks' as the type. The bottom section shows a form for creating a new absence record, with fields for 'Type' (set to 'Paid Dependency Leave - 2 weeks'), 'Comments' (containing 'School closures - Covid'), 'Dates' (set to 'Full Day'), 'From' (set to '23/03/2020'), 'To' (set to '23/03/2020'), 'Total Time' (set to '7.00'), and a 'Confirm planned work time' button. Navigation buttons at the bottom include 'Back', 'View Entitlement Details', 'View Team Calendar', 'Cancel', and 'Submit'.

Pay

- Dependent leave - you will receive full pay for up to two weeks (pro-rata for part-time employees). You don't have to take this two weeks in one go. For example, if you work full time, you may be able to get childcare for two days a week. In this scenario, you'd work for the rest of the week, and use three days of dependency leave.
- Furlough dependency – will be paid at the government rate of 80% capped at £2500

3. Amendment to Holiday entitlement

We acknowledge that 2021 is likely to continue to be challenging when it comes to planning holidays. There may be times when your personal plans change or where PDSA requires you to change your plans and therefore we are making the following amendments to our holiday policy

3.1. Taking and carrying forward holiday

Policy

- We encourage colleagues to book their holidays in advance in MyView and would expect a significant proportion of holidays to be booked in the system by the end of February to enable effective planning across teams
- Where local arrangements exist for booking of holidays, these should be followed
- we would encourage colleagues to take any pre-booked holidays to ensure that we do not create a backlog towards the end of the year, however changes can be made with line management agreement
- We will allow colleagues to carry over a maximum of 5 days holiday (pro-rated for part time colleagues) into 2022. However, we would expect this to be minimal as holidays need to be managed locally to maximise holiday entitlement to be taken within the year.
- Buying and selling holiday will be re-introduced in 2021 for 2022 however colleagues that have carried over holiday will only be able to buy or sell up to the 5 days inclusive of those carried over and this will be calculated in the normal way. More details on this will be available later in 2021.

Employees who are not working due to self-isolating

All colleagues should continue to take any pre-booked holiday as planned.

Employees who are off sick

For Employees who are off sick (which may include those that are social distancing) our current policy rules apply.

Holidays override sick absence and therefore holiday time should be taken as planned - apart from in exceptional circumstances where you may be able to claim your holiday back. Please see current sick policy on Pawtal.

Employees who are furloughed

All colleagues should continue to take any pre-booked holiday whilst furloughed. In addition to this PDSA will request that holiday is taken during periods of furlough. The amount of holiday will be dependent on the amount of time that colleague is furloughed for, however double the amount of notice will be provided for any time requested to be taken as holiday.

Process

- Holidays should be booked through the normal procedure using MyView. For our furlough colleagues, holidays will be booked on their behalf in line with the guidance that has been provided to them.

Pay

- All holiday is paid at full pay using our normal holiday calculations that take into account additional payment such as overtime – this is the case for all colleagues those on furlough and those working

3.2 Quarantine when returning to the UK – updated 15 December 2020

Rules:

On the 22 May 2020 the home secretary announced new public health measures for all UK arrivals in order to manage the risk of the virus being imported into the UK which could increase the spread of the disease.

The measures require (bar a short list of exemptions) individuals returning to the UK to self-isolate for 10 days.

People will be required to use personal transport, such as a car, to travel to their accommodation where possible. Once they arrive there, they should not leave their accommodation for 10 days. This means that they should not go to work.

Our policy is as follows:

Policy

If a colleague travels abroad and is required to quarantine for 10 days on the return back to the UK., PDSA will require them to follow the government instructions and our policy on quarantine will be dependent on an individual's current working practices and ability to accommodate their holiday and unpaid leave requests:

Process

Where someone plans to travel and where the 10 days quarantine will be applicable, then they

will need to follow one of the following process:

1. For colleagues who are not currently working from home and their role requires them to be onsite i.e. working in a pet hospital or shop
 - Share their travel plans with their line manager at the earliest opportunity
 - Discuss the need for an additional 10 days quarantine on top of their 'annual leave' that has been already authorised for quarantine purposes
 - Line manager will consider the request and operationally how this could be accommodated consider where possible if this person could work from home over those 10 days
 - Where working from home is possible then please see the working from home process
 - If working from home is not possible and operationally we are able to accommodate the extended leave, this additional time off can be requested as additional annual leave or unpaid leave
 - Where unpaid leave is agreed, individuals could request that the cost is spread over a maximum of 2 month period starting with the month the first period of unpaid leave is taken in.

From 15 December the Test to Release for International Travel scheme is introduced for people who need to self-isolate on arrival in England.

Under the scheme you can choose to pay for a private COVID-19 test. The earliest you can take the test is 5 full days after you left a destination not on the travel corridor list. If the result is negative, you can stop self-isolating.

Whilst this scheme is voluntary and applies to those self-isolating in England only, we would strongly encourage colleagues to follow this to shorten the duration of their absence from work and potential loss of earnings from unpaid leave.

2. For colleagues who are working from home, and these arrangements will remain in place on their return from holiday and enter the quarantine period they should:
 - Share their travel plans with their line manager at the earliest opportunity
 - Agree with line manager if they are able to continue to work from home and satisfy the quarantine arrangements.
 - However if any work cannot be fulfilled from home e.g. they receive a request to travel on business then this would need to be booked as additional annual leave or unpaid leave for the applicable days
3. For colleagues that are on furlough, and the furlough arrangements will remain in place on their return from holiday and enter the quarantine period they should:
 - Share their travel plans with their line manager at the earliest opportunity (even though they are on furlough)
 - If the furlough period continues during the quarantine period then they would be able to satisfy the quarantine period whilst on furlough
 - If there is a requirement for them to return to work from furlough during the quarantine period and they were unable to work from home then they would need to book additional annual leave or unpaid leave
 - If following their return they are working from home, and during the quarantine period

any work cannot be fulfilled from home e.g. they receive a request to travel on business then this would need to be booked as additional annual leave or unpaid leave for the applicable days

Pay

- Where people are unable to work due to quarantine additional holiday or unpaid leave will need to be requested

