

## **Covid-19 – Updates to our HR Policies and Processes**

In light of Covid-19 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 update 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

### **4. Guidelines for employees with 2nd job**

## **1. Amendments to Sickness Absence**

Covid-19 is having an impact on people 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 over 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:

Type	Compassionate Leave		
Category *	Self-isolating <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Comments	<input type="text"/>		
<u>Dates</u> <u>Full Day</u> <u>Part Day</u>			
From *	25/03/2020 <input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To *	31/03/2020 <input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Total Time	hours <input type="text" value="37"/>	mins <input type="text" value="0"/>	hrs decimal <input type="text" value="37.00"/>
<input type="button" value="Confirm planned work time"/>			

### Pay

- Full pay will be maintained for the duration of self-isolation (usually 7 to 14 calendar days) and where possible arrangements will be made for the employee to work from

home.

### **1.3 Requested to Shield – updated 27.07.2020**

#### 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 will be furloughed on PDSA's furlough scheme
- Where the option to furlough is no longer available (new furlough claims close from 10 June), 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

**Please note that with effect from 1 August 2020 people in England & Scotland will no longer be required to shield and can return to the workplace. We are expecting a similar approach to be taken in Northern Ireland – whilst shielding will end in Wales on 16 August.. The option to be furloughed for reasons of shielding will therefore be removed from these dates.**

**If a colleague believes they shouldn't return to work they should speak to their GP and obtain a fit note to cover their absence. This will be recorded in MyView as sickness absence in the usual way and will count towards triggers.**

#### Pay

- Whilst on furlough the individual will receive normal pay (salary & fixed allowances as at 28 February 2020) during the first 3 weeks of your furlough period. The job retention scheme will provide support to the organisation of 80% of salary (capped at £2500). PDSA will top up the 80% to allow you to continue to receive full-pay for this period.

With effect from week 4 of your furlough period you will receive 80% of your normal pay (uncapped) (salary & fixed allowances as at 28 February 2020) to remain at least at National Living Wage, where a drop to 80% would take an individual below this level, PDSA will continue to top up salary in order that they receive no less than the National Living wage. If furlough is not applicable normal sick pay will be applied

## **2. Amendment to Dependent Leave Policy – updated 27.07.2020**

### Policy up until 31 August 2020

- Whilst some schools and nurseries will start to open from June, we recognize that it currently a choice whether parents chose to send their child to school and we know that there may be some colleagues who can't get to work because they have to look after their children. Likewise there may be some colleagues unable to work due to their caring responsibilities, resulting from COVID-19, for dependents other than children (e.g. a close family member, someone living in the same household or someone who reasonably relies on them for assistance). Under our current policy all colleagues have the right to request a reasonable amount of dependency leave which in most cases would be one or two days, we have changed this to enable individuals to take unlimited time off to look after their dependent during the pandemic
- Alternatively **Up until 10 June 2020** there is also the option for you to request to be furloughed. Any furlough requests will be looked at on an individual basis

As schools across the country gear up to return after the summer holidays, and with shielding ending next month, we'll be ending our temporary policy at the end of August and will be returning to our standard policy of allowing up to two unpaid days dependency leave from 1 September.

As with all of our policies, we will obviously keep this under continual review, especially if an area was to go into a local lockdown further down the line

### Process up until 31 August 2020

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

The screenshot shows the pdosa HR system interface. The left sidebar has a teal background with various menu items. The main content area has a light grey background. At the top, there are tabs for 'Annual Leave', 'Compassionate Leave', 'Unpaid Absence', and 'Sickness Absence'. Below these tabs is a table titled 'Absence / Attendance' with columns for 'Type', 'Description', and 'Action'. A row for 'PDEP2' (Paid Dependency Leave - 2 weeks) is highlighted in yellow. The 'Action' column for this row contains a 'Request New' button, which is also highlighted in yellow. Below the table are buttons for 'Back', 'View Entitlement Details', and 'View Team Calendar'. The main content area also contains a form for requesting leave, with fields for 'Comments' (School closures - Covid), 'Dates' (Full Day, Part Day), 'From' (23/03/2020), 'To' (23/03/2020), and 'Total Time' (7 hours, 0 minutes, 7.00 decimal). A 'Confirm planned work time' button is at the bottom of this form. At the very bottom of the page are 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons.

- For furlough requests - Individuals 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

#### Pay up until 31 August 2020

- 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. Once your dependency leave runs out, you will be able to take annual leave or unpaid leave.
- Furlough pay will be based on the government rules which means that you will receive 80% of salary (as of 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020) capped at £2500 per month

### 3. Amendment to Holiday entitlement

### **3.1. Taking and carrying forward holiday**

#### Policy

- We recognise that we have a number of different colleagues in different circumstances and therefore don't believe that one approach to holidays will be appropriate.

#### **Employees (non-frontline) that are working**

All colleagues should continue to take any pre-booked holiday as planned. Where possible at least 75% of holidays should be booked into myview to enable effective planning of holidays in the second half of the year.

We would allow colleagues to carry over a maximum of 5 days holiday (pro-rata for part time colleagues) into 2021. 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.

#### **Employees frontline or business critical (in the crisis) who are working**

We may find ourselves in a position where we are asking colleagues to cancel pre-booked holidays. This will only happen where there is a clear business reason to do so.

Wherever possible we will honor pre-booked holidays, or where they are cancelled, we will look to enable them to be booked back in as soon as possible. It's really important that people are getting time away from work at this difficult time.

These colleagues will also be given priority for booking holidays in the recovery stage.

We would allow these colleagues to carry over a maximum of 20 days (pro-rata for part time colleagues) into 2021 and 2022 in line with the governments holiday carry over scheme.

However, we would encourage, wherever possible, for the maximum holiday to be taken within the applicable holiday year to ensure that our colleagues are able to get time away from work.

#### **Employees who are not working due to self-isolating**

All colleagues should continue to take any pre-booked holiday as planned. When they return to work the appropriate category above would apply

#### **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.

We would allow colleagues to carry over a maximum of 5 days holiday (pro-rata for part time colleagues) into 2021. 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

#### **Employees who are furloughed**

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

wherever possible book holiday during their furloughed period. Where possible at least 75% of holidays should be booked into myview to enable effective planning of holidays in the second half of the year.

We would expect colleagues to take their holiday entitlement within the same holiday year. Where this is not practical we will allow colleagues to carry over a maximum of 5 days holiday (pro-rata for part time colleagues) into 2021. 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.

#### 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 - effective 8 June 2020**

#### **New 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 14 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 14 days. This means that they should not go to work.

Whilst we do expect these rules to change based on the current situation as of 02 June 2020 our policy is as follows:

#### Policy

If a colleague travels abroad and is required to quarantine for 14 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 14 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 14 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 14 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
  - In order to support our colleagues we would enable them to bring 5 days holiday forward from their 2021 entitlement
  - If they use 2021 holiday entitlement, they would need to be clear that should they leave before this holiday is accrued this will have to be paid back to the organisation at the point of leaving or a payment plan put in place where there isn't enough final salary to deduct the overpayment
  - 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.
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

### **3.3 Buying and Selling Annual Leave**

We recognise that this was a really popular benefit last year, however, we believe that due to situation in 2020 colleagues we may have colleagues who are carrying over entitlement from 2020 into 2021. This additional holiday carryover will have an operational impact and therefore we have made the decision not to offer the holiday buying or selling benefit in 2021 due to these unprecedented circumstance. We will of course keep this decision under review

#### **4. Guidelines for employees with 2nd job**

Employees who have been granted permission to take a second job have always had a duty to ensure that they remain fit to do their job.

During the pandemic we would expect that our employees are ensuring that the environment where they are undertaking any secondary employment has strict working safely during Covid-19 policies in place in order to protect themselves and colleagues at PDSA from any transmission. Where safe measure are not in place then we would expect that they refrain from work.