

COVID-19

Guidance on Maximising Attendance and Sick Pay Provisions



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Introduction

We appreciate the efforts of our workforce during these unprecedented times and thank those who have changed roles or taken on different duties to make sure we're able to continue to deliver essential services and support the most vulnerable. During times like this it's vitally important that we as an employer maintain our duty of care to our employees.

Whilst we have vital services to deliver we cannot deliver them without an able and effective workforce. **This guidance provides employees and managers with details of the approach we will take in relation to maximising attendance and sick pay provisions during COVID-19.**

1. Key Principles

During the current COVID-19 pandemic:

- our maximising attendance arrangements will continue to support employees to manage their health and wellbeing
- current sick pay provisions will continue for non COVID-19 sickness absence
- those absent due to COVID-19 will be supported throughout their absence with full pay
- COVID-19 absence will not be counted towards sick pay entitlement
- COVID-19 absence will not form part of attendance management decisions such as capability.

2. Council Position

- The duration of the COVID-19 situation is unknown, however, during the current period, existing maximising attendance arrangements and sick pay arrangements remain in place, albeit at a lower priority.
- Additional COVID-19 specific arrangements as outlined below require to be followed.

There is a distinction to be made between those employees who have sickness absence as a result of being unwell through COVID-19 symptoms and those who are unable to present for work as a result of following the Government's Self Isolating Stay at Home and Shielding guidance.

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3. Self-Isolating

- Those employees absent from work due to compliance with the Government's self-isolating stay at home guidance will be paid full pay and this will not count against full pay/half pay entitlement.
- The duration of such absence may vary depending on the status of others in the employee's household. It will be a minimum of 7 days.

Note: An employee may experience more than one period of self-isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- Those that are self-isolating who are not symptomatic should work from home where possible.
- Those who are self-isolating who have very mild symptoms may be fit to work from home, this should be considered on a case by case basis.
- Employees who are self-isolating and are unwell should be considered to be sick and not be home working.
- You should continue to report your self-isolation absence in the normal way and to your line manager, when you have symptoms, someone in your household has symptoms or you've been contacted by Test and Protect service.
- You should also go online at NHS Inform and get an isolation note as proof you need to stay off work. You don't need to get a note from a GP.
- If you need any support to self-isolate then you should discuss this with your manager. You can also contact the **National Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000** if you can't get any help from friends and family.
- While self-isolating you should maintain regular contact with your line manager and in particular keep them informed if you exhibit any symptoms and receive a subsequent positive diagnosis of COVID-19.

4. Test and Protect

The government has now rolled out Test and Protect, which is NHS Scotland's approach to controlling the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the community.

- Everyone aged five and over who has COVID-19 symptoms of a new continuous cough, temperature or loss or change in sense of taste or smell should book a test via **NHS Inform** online or by calling **0800 028 2816**.
- Our [staff briefing](#) should be followed, which provides key information on who, when and how staff can be tested. It also outlines the internal support routes to help staff get tested and provides answers to some **frequently asked questions**.

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5. Underlying Health Condition

- At an earlier stage, we asked our employees with underlying health conditions to go home as they were at risk. Those that were enabled to work from home have continued to do so but for others it was not possible to enable them to work from home.
- Employees with an underlying health condition will be paid full pay for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak – whether you are able to undertake homeworking or not.
- Managers should make sure that where ever possible reasonable adjustments are put in place to make sure that staff with an underlying health condition are supported to enable them to continue to work from home.
- The guidance in connection with underlying health conditions will be regularly reviewed.

6. Shielding

- Our most vulnerable employees may be required to following 'Shielding' guidance and in effect should not leave their home at all. The current guidance advises that this should be for a period of 12 weeks but will be regularly reviewed.
- The NHS will issue individuals in the shielding category with written confirmation of this.
- Shielding employees may be requested to provide a copy of their letter to confirm their shielding status.
- Employees who require to shield may currently be at work or on periods of sickness absence and should discuss their shielding status with their line manager.
- Employees who are shielding will be paid full pay for the duration of shielding.
- During the period of shielding, home working arrangements should be considered where possible.

7. Non COVID-19 sickness absence

- Where a period of sickness absence is not directly related to COVID-19, normal maximising attendance and sick pay arrangements will apply.

8. Terminally ill employees

- In circumstances where an employee is terminally ill, as is normal, reasonable steps should be taken to explore with the employee how to secure the best outcome for the employee and family.

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- Social isolation, limited staffing levels and restricted access to medical practitioners may make this difficult.

9. Long Term Absence and Capability

- The COVID-19 situation adds to the complexity of managing absence cases which are approaching a capability decision.
- Maximising attendance arrangements and capability cases should continue to be progressed during the pandemic.
- COVID-19 related absence should be disregarded in making capability decisions.

As the pandemic develops these arrangements will be subject to review.