



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta, Acmhainní Daonna

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí Sláinte

Ospidéal Dr. Steevens'

Baile Átha Cliath 8

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Each Assistant National Director HR
Each Hospital Group CEO
Each Hospital Group Director of HR
Each Chief Officer CHO
Each CHO HR Manager
Head of HR, PCRS
Director National Ambulance Service
Each CEO Section 38 Agencies
Each Employee Relations Manager
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery
Each Group Director of Midwifery
Each Clinical Director

From: Anne Marie Hoey, National Director of Human Resources

Date: 5th February 2021

Re HR Circular 007/2021 re Update to HR Circular 007/2020, 008/2020, 018/2020 and 038/2020

Dear Colleagues

The purpose of this circular is to provide an update on COVID-19 absence codes as set out in HR Circulars 007/2020, 008/2020, 018/2020 and 038/2020.

Following recent revised guidelines from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) for Public Service Employers during COVID-19 outlined in HR Circular 05/2021 and HR Memo regarding Updated Occupational Health Guidance dated 14th January 2021, National HR has approved the following updates to COVID 19 absence codes as follows:

- i. **0403 COVID-19 Paid Leave.** Special Leave With Pay (SLWP) for COVID-19 will only apply when an employee is advised to self-isolate **and** is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or had a positive test. Appropriate medical/HSE confirmation of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required for the duration of the absence. Following a recent review of the existing SLWP arrangements, new provisions for SLWP

came into effect from 1 January 2021 in relation to employees who have contracted COVID-19/have a positive test. These new provisions apply to any new or current cases with effect from 1 January 2021 and are outlined in HSE Circular 05/2021 for which this code applies.

- ii. **0406 COVID-19 Available to work Cocoon** – HR Circular 05/2021 identifies a category of persons who are extremely medically vulnerable. The advice for this group is to “cocoon” and stay at home and not attend the workplace. Employees who are deemed to be extremely medically vulnerable and are required to cocoon during this timeframe should be facilitated to work from home to the maximum extent possible. Code 0406 relates to those in this group, **who are awaiting the assignment of work in the home.**

HR Memo *Updated Occupational Health Guidance* 14th January 2021, deems pregnant Health Care Workers (HCWs) to be as “High Risk” or “Very High Risk” given the increased risk of exposure in healthcare and provides that pregnant HCWs should be facilitated to work from home if possible. Pregnant HCWs who are available for work and awaiting the assignment of work in the home, are to be included in the code **0406 Covid-19 Available to work Cocoon.**

- iii. **0407 COVID 19 Available to work Caring arrangements** HR Circular 05/2021 sets out the working arrangements for those with caring arrangements. There is no special paid leave available for COVID-19 caring arrangements during this time. Code 0407 is only to be used for those in this group, who are awaiting the assignment of work in the home. Please also refer to HR Circular 02/2021 – Frontline Healthcare Employees with Childcare responsibilities during COVID-19.

Queries

Queries from individual employees or managers should be referred to local HR departments. For queries in relation to the Covid-19 absence codes, please contact nationalabsence@hse.ie.

Yours sincerely



Anne Marie Hoey
National Director of Human Resources



Need information and advice on COVID-19 Go to www.hse.ie/coronavirus