

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Office of Human Resources Frequently Asked Questions for staff and managers

Please note these FAQs were archived on 22 June 2020 and are no longer in operation

The new coronavirus, COVID-19, was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organisation in January 2020. As the virus continues to spread Public Health continue to monitor the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

The answers to these Frequently Asked Questions are designed to give a summary of information for staff and managers.

Further guidance and the most up to date information regarding the outbreak is available on the government website at <https://covid19.gov.im/>. This includes links to other sources of information.

As things develop these FAQs will be updated to reflect the rapidly evolving situation.

Version 2.7

These FAQs have been updated to support updated Isle of Man Government Public Health advice and travel advice.

Public Service COVID-19 related guidelines are available on the Office of Human Resources website at the following link <https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/>

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers	
1	<p>Will I get paid if I have to self-isolate because of COVID-19 but remain well?</p> <p>Yes, subject to the provisions of the Pay Scheme for COVID-19.</p> <p>However, a manager can disallow paid special leave under the Pay Scheme for COVID-19 where they can evidence that an employee has failed to follow Public Health advice or a reasonable management instruction.</p>
2	<p>What should I do if I think I have symptoms of COVID-19?</p> <p>If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and think you may have been infected you should stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days, avoid contact with others and do not come into work.</p> <p>Check if you have coronavirus symptoms here: https://covid19.gov.im/about-coronavirus/symptoms/</p> <p>If you develop any of the symptoms, please complete the Isle of Man COVID-19 Screening Assessment: https://services.gov.im/covid-19</p> <p>Completion of this assessment will decide whether a further telephone assessment needs to be undertaken by calling the Isle of Man COVID-19 111 telephone service or if no further action is required.</p>

	<p>Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.</p> <p>You <u>DO NOT NEED</u> to contact your GP or MEDs to tell them you're staying at home.</p> <p>There is comprehensive advice and guidance available on the Isle of Man Government COVID-19 Coronavirus webpage including information on the symptoms of and testing for COVID-19.</p>
3	<p>Will I get paid if I am off sick with COVID-19?</p> <p>Yes, subject to the provisions of the Pay Scheme for COVID-19. The Pay Scheme allows up to 14 calendar days of paid leave.</p> <p>Should you remain absent after the 14 calendar days of paid leave allowed in the pay scheme your normal sick leave and sick pay provisions, based on your terms and conditions of service of employment, will then apply.</p>
4	<p>I am a bank / casual / relief / supply worker, am I eligible for the COVID-19 Pay Scheme?</p> <p>Yes, if you have scheduled or rostered work commitments at the time of your absence you will be paid for those that were to be undertaken during your period of absence. You will not be paid for the full 14 days if you were not scheduled to work on all those days.</p>
5	<p>I live in the same household as someone who has developed symptoms COVID-19 but I do not have symptoms and Public Health advice is I should self-isolate, am I eligible for the COVID-19 Pay Scheme?</p> <p>Yes, as your absence is as a consequence of COVID-19 you would be eligible for the COVID-19 Pay Scheme.</p> <p>If you live with someone who is displaying symptoms, such as a new continuous cough or a high temperature or anosmia – this is the loss of or a change in your normal sense of smell, everyone in the household must stay at home. If you do not have symptoms you can go out for exercise, making sure you stay 2 metres away from people outside your household or continue to use your garden, if you have one. You must not leave your home for any other reason.</p> <p>If anyone else in the household develops symptoms during that time they should seek clinical advice using the online assessment to determine whether they need to call the COVID 111 helpline. They must then stay at home for a period of 14 days from the onset of symptoms, regardless of whether the test result is positive or negative and regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.</p> <p>There is comprehensive advice and guidance available on the Isle of Many Government COVID-19 Coronavirus webpage regarding self-isolation for those with symptoms and what to do.</p> <p>The COVID-19 Pay Scheme has therefore been amended to provide managers with greater flexibility when determining the duration of absence under the scheme.</p>
6	<p>Do I have to provide a Drs Note if I have to self-isolate because of the COVID-19 and my absence is more than 7 days?</p> <p>No. The Pay Scheme for COVID-19 operates outside sick pay provisions so there is no need to provide a Drs Note.</p>

	<p>If you are off work on sick leave utilising sick pay provisions, regardless of whether your symptoms are related to COVID-19, at the moment medical evidence (e.g. Drs note) is now not required for the first 14 days of sickness.</p>
7	<p>Can I claim Incapacity Benefit?</p> <p>No, there is no need for you to claim Incapacity Benefit. The COVID-19 Pay Scheme operates outside sick pay provisions and you will be allowed up to 14 days of paid leave.</p> <p>You should only claim Incapacity Benefit when you go on to half or nil sick pay.</p>
8	<p>If I have to self-isolate because of COVID-19 can I use annual leave instead?</p> <p>Yes as an alternative to the Pay Scheme for COVID-19 you may choose to utilise annual leave whilst you self-isolate. This will need to be agreed and approved in the usual way with your manager.</p> <p>If you become unwell during your period of annual leave, sick pay provisions will then apply. You should follow the usual arrangements for telling your workplace of your sickness absence.</p>
9	<p>If I have to self-isolate because of COVID-19 will the period of absence be counted towards my Bradford Factor score?</p> <p>No. The Pay Scheme for COVID-19 operates outside of sick pay provisions so any absence under the pay scheme will not count towards your Bradford Factor score.</p>
10	<p>What if I don't have any sick pay or annual leave left and am self-isolating because of COVID-19?</p> <p>As indicated above, the COVID-19 Pay Scheme for self-isolation operates outside sick pay provisions.</p>
11	<p>Are there any alternative arrangements for me to work?</p> <p>Anybody who can do so is encouraged to work from home, subject to obtaining line management consent.</p> <p>Where you are attending a place of work you must follow the current guidance on hygiene and social distancing which can be found here: https://covid19.gov.im/social-distancing/</p> <p>See also question 27.</p> <p>As current restrictions are eased adaptations may be required to workplaces to ensure hygiene and social distancing requirements can be achieved to allow for a gradual return to the workplace. Any specific arrangements will be made by your Department, Board or Office with support from the Health and Safety team, OHR and/or Occupational Health as appropriate and you will be advised of these by management.</p>
12	<p>If I am working from home and, during my working day, I have to travel to my usual place of work can I claim travel time and mileage expenses?</p> <p>No, your normal place of work as stated in your Statement of Written Particulars (contract of employment), is still your normal place of work.</p>

	<p>Therefore, as before the pandemic when you travelled to your normal place of work every day, you would not be able to claim mileage and travel time the same applies now no matter what part of your working day you make a journey to your normal place of work.</p> <p>Mileage claims can be made for official journeys, based on any requirements set out in your terms and conditions and/or the Payment of Members Expenses Act. The cost of travel between your home and your normal place of work is your own responsibility.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>What if I can't work from home?</p> <p>Where employees occupy roles that do not readily lend themselves to working at home, but they can no longer perform their duties (e.g. due to changed use of work premises, closure, health and safety reasons or on Public Health advice) consideration should be given to options for redeployment into other roles. See the COVID-19 Workforce Mobilisation & Redeployment Guidelines here: https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/</p> <p>If that is not possible, managers must accept that some employees can neither work at home nor be redeployed/seconded etc and, as a last resort, must therefore be allowed to stay at home on full pay until a suitable alternative role is identified.</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>During the pandemic I have worked extra hours, will I be paid for these or can I take the time back?</p> <p>Management can either allow a greater carry over from one flexi leave period to another or to buy out excess time at plain time rates. If work has been done outside of flexi periods (e.g. after 1830) and/or at weekends or on public holidays, and the time has been agreed in advance, employees may also be entitled to overtime/premium pay. Terms and conditions entitlements remain in place.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Will I be asked to work elsewhere or be redeployed?</p> <p>Your usual work will continue unless you are told of a change by your line manager. It will only be if people are needed to assist with maintaining essential services that are not part of their usual duties or where they can no longer perform their usual duties (e.g. due to changed use of work premises, closure, health and safety reasons or on Public Health advice) that they may be asked to change their place or type of work.</p> <p>For further information on this refer to the COVID-19 Workforce Mobilisation & Redeployment Guidelines and FAQs available here https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/</p> <p>It is important to the Isle of Man as a whole that Government continues the delivery of critical public services. For this reason staff are requested to cooperate.</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>Can I be prevented from taking my annual leave / flexi-leave / TOIL? If I am prevented from taking it can I carry it forward or receive payment for it?</p> <p>Yes, planned absences such as annual leave / flexi-leave / TOIL, may need to be cancelled or rearranged to ensure sufficient cover can be maintained or allow for key public services to continue to be delivered.</p> <p>As it is necessary to balance the need for work and rest during a prolonged period, this does not mean leave should be automatically cancelled. However, leave can be cancelled and turned down, where it is considered operationally necessary, and alternative dates will have to be agreed.</p>

	<p>The Annual Leave Regulations require that you should be given notice at least twice the period of leave to be cancelled e.g. if you have 5 days leave you should receive 10 days' notice of it being cancelled. However, we would hope that you are willing to waive that requirement if asked to do so.</p> <p>If you have to cancel leave already booked, you can claim reimbursement for any loss you incur that is unable to be reclaimed via your insurance, credit card or ATOL arrangements.</p> <p>Given the exceptional circumstances you will be able to carryover annual leave / flexi-leave / TOIL in excess of any usual carryover limits for your terms and conditions of employment.</p> <p>Alternatively you may make a request to your manager to receive payment for the leave you have been unable to take, in excess of any usual carryover limits, subject to any specific provisions within your terms and conditions.</p> <p>New leave requests should be considered based on the exigencies of the service ensuring there is sufficient cover to allow key public services to be delivered. Employees should be encouraged to take their leave proportionately through the leave year, including the period of time the state of emergency remains in force. This is important because taking a holiday helps employees to get enough rest and keep healthy, both physically and mentally.</p> <p>The fundamental purpose of annual leave is a non-working period of rest and relaxation. Employees should be prompted to book leave and be reminded of the restorative value of simply taking the time to be 'offline' or away from the work place, even if this doesn't involve leaving the Island.</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>I am on annual leave and develop symptoms of COVID-19 or have to self-isolate based on Public Health advice, am I eligible for the COVID-19 Pay Scheme and to claim back my untaken annual leave?</p> <p>Yes, you would be eligible for your absence to be under the COVID-19 Pay Scheme. You should notify your manager immediately of any change in circumstances.</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>If I am on sick leave and develop symptoms of COVID-19 am I eligible to switch from sick pay provisions to the COVID-19 Pay Scheme?</p> <p>If you are currently sick regardless of the reason and therefore unavailable to work your sick leave and sick pay provisions continue to apply.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>Does the COVID-19 Pay Scheme provide for vulnerable people such as those with underlying health conditions or who are pregnant?</p> <p>Decisions about an employee's working arrangements, caring responsibilities and eligibility for the COVID 19 Pay Scheme will be made in compliance with the latest public health advice.</p> <p>Particular consideration should be given to vulnerable people including those who are pregnant, those aged 70 and older (regardless of medical conditions) and those with underlying health problems. Staff may fall into at least one of these groups and these staff should discuss this situation with their line manager who should complete a risk assessment to consider whether arrangements could be put in place to reduce the risk, for example, working in existing role where social distancing and any other measures identified can be maintained or working from home.</p> <p>Managers should refer to the COVID-19 Vulnerable Persons – Management Guidelines available at this link: https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/.</p>

	<p>The date of sickness absence will be recorded from no earlier than 23 April 2020¹ (but have no effect on pay, where applicable, until 1 June 2020 and thereafter). This sickness absence will be recorded on PiP as Covid-19 – Shielding and will not count towards an employee’s Bradford factor score.</p> <p>People who care for someone who is extremely vulnerable should refer to the guidance for employees with caring responsibilities: https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/</p> <p>Public Health guidance is available at this link: https://covid19.gov.im/general-information/vulnerable-groups/</p>
20	<p>Can I be paid for more than one period of absence through the COVID-19 Pay Scheme?</p> <p>The COVID-19 Pay Scheme is normally only available for one period of absence.</p> <p>However, as set out in the scheme, Accounting Officers have discretion to apply an exemption to this in extenuating circumstances. See also Q17 above.</p>
21	<p>Will I get time off work for caring responsibilities?</p> <p>Firstly, as usual, if you have caring responsibilities then you should consider how you can get support from outside of work. You should also make sure your line manager is aware of these responsibilities now.</p> <p>If you need to make arrangements for your child to be cared for, notify your line manager as soon as possible and at the very least on the first day of absence. Consideration will be given to flexible shift patterns, home working, flexi time, annual leave and special leave as appropriate.</p> <p>Further guidance is provided in the COVID-19 Caring Responsibilities – Guidelines which is available here: https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/</p>
22	<p>What if I have caring responsibilities and what if that person is ill or self-isolating?</p> <p>Firstly, as usual, if you have caring responsibilities then you should consider how you can get support from outside work. You should also make sure your line manager is aware of these responsibilities now.</p> <p>If you need to make arrangements for the person to be cared for notify your line manager as soon as possible and at the very least on the first day of absence. Consideration will be given to flexible shift patterns, home working, flexi time, annual leave and special leave as appropriate.</p> <p>Further guidance is provided in the COVID-19 Caring Responsibilities – Guidelines which is available here: https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/</p>
23	<p>Will I get time off work if someone who helps me with my caring responsibilities is ill or self-isolating?</p>

¹ Date on which advice changed regarding sick notes/DHSC shielding letters. Prior to 23 April, absences have been recorded as COVID 19 Special Leave.

	<p>If you need to carry out your caring responsibilities and your support network for assisting with this is affected by illness, notify your line manager as soon as possible and at the very least on the first day of absence. Consideration will be given to flexible shift patterns, home working, flexi time, annual leave and special leave as appropriate.</p> <p>Further guidance is provided in the COVID-19 Caring Responsibilities – Guidelines which is available here: https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/</p>
<p>24</p>	<p>What should I do if I have travelled recently?</p> <p>The Island’s border closed on Friday 27 March 2020, except for a very limited number of people necessary for the Island’s critical infrastructure or the preservation of human life.</p> <p>The Isle of Man Government has implemented emergency powers regulations to allow Isle of Man residents to return (or leave and return for compassionate reasons) under specific circumstances.</p> <p>Further details about the repatriation processes can be found on the Isle of Man Government COVID-19 website here.</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>I plan to travel off the Island in the near future, what should I do?</p> <p>Colleagues are strongly advised not to travel off-Island unless they have permission from a manager at director level or above, as to do so may lead to them being unable to return to the Island, in view of the entry restrictions. This, in turn, may result in staff being in breach of their contract of employment (as an unauthorised absence) and they would not be paid for such an absence.</p> <p>There is a temporary policy on Off-Island Travel to advise staff and managers of the details of the restrictions in place in respect off-Island travel, and how this will be managed procedurally. The policy applies to all Isle of Man Government employees regardless of their terms and conditions of employment (including staff on individual contracts), and to retained, bank, casual, relief and supply staff. The policy can be viewed on the OHR website here: https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/</p> <p>The Isle of Man closed its borders to everyone with effect from 6am on Friday 27 March 2020. This stay in period is in effect until further notice. This will be kept under review in light of the spread of infection on the Island and the situation across in the UK.</p> <p>The only exceptions to these travel restrictions is a very limited group of people who are necessary for the Island’s critical national infrastructure or for the preservation of human life. These people will need prior written approval.</p> <p>Those who are allowed to travel will be subject to a rigorous process when they arrive and will not be able to circulate freely.</p> <p>Residents returning through the repatriation process will also be allowed to travel but will be required to follow a strict quarantine procedure.</p> <p>There is comprehensive advice and guidance available on the Isle of Many Government COVID-19 Coronavirus webpage regarding travel and what to do.</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>Will procedures such as disciplinary, capability, grievance and fairness at work be stopped during this health emergency?</p>

	<p>Standards of conduct in the workplace will continue to apply and managers will continue to deal with any individual incidents of misconduct or performance using the normal workplace procedures as far as is practicable. This will depend on how workplaces and staff may be affected by the virus. It could delay progress of procedures due to staff and/or union representatives' availability.</p> <p>Where staff absence is due to the COVID 19, caring responsibilities or other personal problems due to the pandemic, allowances will be made for this in the handling of individual cases which might arise or where procedures may be ongoing.</p>
<p>27</p>	<p>What can I do to prevent the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19?</p> <p>Social Distancing – good practice Social distancing is where you try to avoid crowded places, large gatherings of people or close contact with a group of people. In these situations, viruses can easily spread from person to person.</p> <p>Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In general, a distance of two metres (6 feet) will slow the spread of a disease, but more distance is more effective.</p> <p>Hand Washing Good hand washing is an effective way to prevent the spread of infection. Sometimes the simple things work best – please take extra time to practice thorough hand washing.</p> <p>Washing your hands thoroughly usually takes 15 -30 seconds ideally using soap and water. It is not necessary to use anti-bacterial soaps or detergents. Alcohol hand gels can be used if water is not available but where there are visible signs of dirt they must be washed with soap and water.</p> <p>Hand towels are the preferred means of drying hands but hand dryers can be used where hand towels are not available. Always ensure your hands are thoroughly dry whichever method is used.</p> <p>Isle of Man Handwashing video.</p> <p>Catch it – Bin it – Kill it!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze • put used tissues in the bin straight away • wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available • try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell • clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces • do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
<p>28</p>	<p>Will I be issued with a mask?</p> <p>There is increasing evidence that people with no or only very mild symptoms may have COVID-19 and be at risk of spreading it to others. Wearing a face mask in public may help reduce the spread of infection from people who may be carrying the virus, without knowing it, to others. Wearing a mask has not been shown to protect the wearer from infection.</p> <p>In addition, because employers have a duty of care to their employees there will be some occasions where a risk assessment identifies that it is difficult on occasions to follow social</p>

	<p>distancing guidelines in the workplace. When undertaking essential tasks only, in such circumstances staff may be asked by their manager to wear face masks at times and will be encouraged to do so in these cases.</p> <p>Guidance has been issued to managers on the carrying out of risk assessments for these purposes.</p> <p>Guidance on social distancing can be found here: https://covid19.gov.im/social-distancing/</p> <p>There is further information on the wearing of face masks in the COVID19 Guidelines on the Wearing of Face Masks for Public Sector Employees which are available on the OHR website here: https://hr.gov.im/policiesprocedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/</p>
<p>29</p>	<p>Where can I find out more?</p> <p>Comprehensive and the most up to date information is available on the Isle of Man Government COVID-19 webpage.</p> <p>This includes links to other sources of information on a variety of topics relating to the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak such as prevention, travel advice, isolation and testing amongst a host of other things.</p> <p>Should you require any specific advice or guidance as an employee or manager on a HR matter relating to COVID-19, please contact a HR Advisor in the Office of Human Resources.</p> <p>Contact details are available here:</p> <p>https://hr.gov.im/about-us/divisions/office-of-human-resources/human-resources-division/</p>

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