

Isle of Man Government

COVID-19 Guidelines on the Management of Self-Isolation

1. Introduction

These guidelines are intended to assist staff and managers in the Isle of Man Government to manage absences from work during any required period of self-isolation for whatever reason relating to Coronavirus COVID-19.

These guidelines apply 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.

These guidelines will remain in place until self-isolation for any reason in relation to COVID-19 is no longer a requirement.

2. Self-Isolation Following Off-Island Travel

2.1 Principles

These guidelines apply to any travel off-Island, whether work related, on leave or for personal or medical reasons. Travel off-Island on holidays, requiring self-isolation on return, should be kept to a minimum and not lead to repeated periods of self-isolation on return.

The standard self-isolation period is 14 days on return to the Island and should be used as the basis for employee discussions.

From 6 January 2021 a new testing regime was implemented with a COVID-19 test on arrival to the Island, a second test on day 6 or 7 of self-isolation and a third test on day 13 of self-isolation. Employees are encouraged to take this option if they are unable to work from home for the 21 days¹.

The cost of the COVID-19 test will only be covered by the employee's Department, Board or Office if the reason for travelling off-Island is work related. In all other circumstances an employee must pay for the COVID-19 testing themselves.

Employees who do not wish to undergo testing will be required to self-isolate for 21 days.

Employees are strongly discouraged from travelling off Island and those who do travel off-Island are required to consider the implications of mandatory self-isolation periods when requesting leave and must ensure that advance agreement is gained from their line manager regarding how the period of self-isolation will be managed.

Options available will depend upon the operational requirements of specific roles and could include one or a combination of those listed at section 2.2 below.

¹ The period of self-isolation required if someone does not wish to have the COVID-19 test <https://covid19.gov.im/general-information/travel-advice/border-changes-with-effect-from-wednesday-23-december-2020/>

Where an employee's role can facilitate homeworking this may be undertaken during a period of self-isolation, but there is an expectation that employees will utilise annual leave, flexi leave or TOIL in respect of at least a proportion of time in self-isolation. Homeworking must be agreed in advance by management and is available to an employee in accordance with the Public Service Homeworking Guidelines².

Employees who travel off-Island who are contracted to attend work at specific times of the year (e.g. people working term time or annualised hours) must return to the Island in sufficient time to complete any required period of self-isolation and be available to attend work by the date they are required to recommence work. Local guidelines may be produced by individual Departments in this regard.

2.2 Options to Consider for Self-Isolation Following Travel

a) Annual Leave, Flexi Leave or TOIL³

An employee may utilise their annual leave, flexi leave or TOIL allowance or a combination of these to cover the period of self-isolation.

b) Temporary Redeployment and Homeworking

Where there are suitable redeployment opportunities available which allow an employee to work from home in an alternative role and where the employee has the technology and skills available this can be considered. Any period of homeworking must be agreed in advance by management and will be in accordance with the Homeworking Guidelines.

Wherever possible redeployment should be accommodated within the employee's existing Department/Board/Office. However, where OHR is notified of potential redeployment opportunities for employees in self-isolation, this information can be circulated to managers on request to LEaD@gov.im.

However, if there is no suitable work available for an employee to be redeployed to work from home, this option is not available.

c) Sick Leave

Where an employee is required to travel off-Island to receive medical treatment a period of self-isolation on return may be treated as sick leave, subject to GP certification as necessary (currently an employee may self-certify for up to 14 days⁴). Where an employee travels off-Island to accompany someone receiving medical treatment a period of self-isolation on return will not be treated as sick leave, but in accordance with the other options contained within these guidelines.

d) Alternative Options

Where the circumstances of the employee do not lend themselves to any of the options above, the following additional options may be considered:

² <https://hr.gov.im/media/1860/homeworking-guidelines-august-2020-v2-w-pdf-formfinal.pdf>

³ Time Off in Lieu

⁴ <https://www.gov.im/media/1368888/changes-to-social-security-arrangements-as-a-result-of-coronavirus-240720.pdf>.

- Approving a period of paid⁵ or unpaid Special Leave
- Continuing to pay the employee their ordinary pay during the period of leave with written agreement from the employee in advance to either:
 - repay for the hours of absence over an agreed time period (not to exceed 3 months); or
 - undertake additional hours on return, to be worked over an agreed time period (not to exceed 3 months)

If these options are required the individual must make arrangements directly with their manager, who should keep a record of what is agreed.

Periods of unpaid special leave should be requested by the employee through PiP and approved through the standard process. The link to PiP is here:

https://pipforme.gov.im/tlive_ess/ess/index.html#/login

The step by step guidance notes are here: <https://hr.gov.im/media/1776/how-do-i-book-otherleave.pdf>

If continuation of payment is to occur the OHR11 Undertaking to Repay Form must be completed in advance. This form is available under Coronavirus (COVID-19), Guidelines, Schemes and Policies here: <https://hr.gov.im/policies-procedures-codes-guidance-and-forms/>.

When the individual returns to work the manager will then either:

- Calculate the number of hours owed and plan with the individual how these will be worked as additional hours over an agreed period.
- Calculate the number of hours owed and submit this to payroll@gov.im to calculate the repayment plan period and amounts, using the form which can be obtained from Payroll Section, Office of Human Resources.

3. Self-Isolation due to COVID-19 Symptoms

An employee who has symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home, self-isolate and complete the online COVID-19 screening assessment. An employee must follow the advice they are given by the 111 Service and if they are required to self-isolate stay away from the work place. The employee should keep in touch with their manager and share the advice they receive from the 111 Service to assist with managing their absence from work.

An absence for an employee who is absent from work with symptoms of COVID-19 or having received a positive COVID-19 test should be recorded as sick leave. An employee can currently self-certify a sickness absence for up to 14 days. Where sick pay has been exhausted consideration should be given to extending it.

⁵ Paid special leave would only be appropriate in exceptional circumstances (e.g. persons with disabilities receiving regular medical treatment off-Island).

4. Self-Isolation due to COVID-19 111, Contact Tracing Advice or Direction Notice

An absence for an employee who does not necessarily have symptoms of COVID-19 and remains well but has received advice from the COVID-19 111 or the Contact Tracing Team, Cabinet Office and/or a Direction Notice to self-isolate and is therefore absent from work, would normally be recorded as sick leave or as one of the other options available at section 2.2 above, if appropriate⁶.

An employee can currently self-certify a sickness absence for up to 14 days. A sickness absence as a result of following advice from the COVID-19 111 or Contact Tracing Team or a Direction Notice to self-isolate should be recorded as COVID-19 – Self-Isolation and will not be included in the Bradford Factor score calculation.

Where an employee has exhausted full sick pay, full sick pay will be extended if no alternative is available for those who have been advised to self-isolate by the COVID-19 111 Centre.

5. When Self-Isolation is not required – Cold or Flu Symptoms

Self-isolation and a COVID-19 test are not advised for employees who have cold or flu symptoms⁷ and do **not** have at least **one** of the three main symptoms of COVID-19. The probability of them having COVID-19 is extremely low.

The three symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a temperature of more than 37.8C (100F)
- a new and persistent cough - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- anosmia – this is the loss of or a change in your normal sense of smell. It can also affect your sense of taste as the two are closely linked.

If an employee is well enough and it is appropriate for them to do so with the symptoms they have they may continue to work.

If there are any concerns an employee's symptoms are related to COVID-19 they should take the online COVID-19 assessment <https://services.gov.im/covid-19> and follow the advice given.

If it is determined by the 111 Service that a COVID-19 test is required an employee should stay away from the workplace until they have their test result. If their test result is negative the employee should contact the 111 Service to explain the situation and discuss the options for their return to the workplace. A second test may be required or a referral may be made to Occupational Health for more detailed consideration if required.

⁶ If an employee's role can be carried out whilst at home self-isolating homeworking should be considered. Homeworking must be agreed in advance by management and is available in accordance with the Public Service Homeworking Guidelines. If an employee's role cannot be undertaken at home but where there is a suitable temporary redeployment opportunity available which allows an employee to work from home, homeworking could be considered – see 2.2, b) above.

⁷ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/>

An employee should keep in touch with their manager about their absence from work and return to work and share any advice they receive from the 111 service.

An employee's absence from work should be recorded as sick leave if they are unwell or have COVID-19 symptoms.

Each case should be considered on an individual basis based on the circumstances.

Issued by the Office of Human Resources on behalf of the Cabinet Office

January 2021