

## Appendix 8 HR Policy and Procedure for Business Continuity as of 02/07/2020

As Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread, we have made some temporary changes to internal policy and processes to reflect the current situation.

Our aim is to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and safeguard the welfare of our staff during the COVID-19 outbreak, while continuing our operations as normally as possible.

This policy explains what temporary changes we are making to our usual internal policies and procedures for [sickness absence](#), [flexible working](#), [working arrangements during an emergency](#) and [annual leave](#) during this time.

Please also note that it may be necessary to prioritise work to ensure that business critical activities can be sustained during potential periods of high employee absence. If this happens directors will meet as necessary to prioritise and delegate key tasks to employees. It may be necessary for some employees to take on different responsibilities/roles for an agreed period of time if they have the relevant skills or experience and, in this situation, normal pay and benefits would remain unchanged.

**Symptoms:** During the COVID-19 situation, it is vital that you do not attend work if you experience symptoms of COVID-19 associated with the infection and virus. If you live alone you are advised to self-isolate for seven days if you are symptomatic. If you live with others in your household and one of you develops symptoms you are advised to all self-isolate for 14 days. This is because it takes on average 2-5 days for symptoms to show and following this 7 days for people to not be infectious. Evidence suggests 14 days helps to reduce the risk of onward transmission. Please ensure you remain aware of the symptoms to look out for by visiting the government's [website](#)

<b>Current policy</b>	<b>During COVID-19 – temporary changes</b>
<p><b>Sickness absence reporting</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Under our normal <a href="#">short-term sickness absence policy</a>, if you fall ill and cannot attend work, you would be required to:</p> <p>notify your line manager before you are due to start work by phone, or as soon as possible if that is not practical; and</p> <p>provide medical evidence (typically, a fit note from your doctor) for sickness of more than seven calendar days' absence.</p>	<p>You should still notify your line manager by phone of your absence before you are due to start work, or as soon as possible if that is not practical.</p> <p><b>All employees that are unable to work for more than seven days because of COVID-19 should obtain an isolation note through a new online service.</b></p> <p>Isolation notes will provide employees with evidence (for their employers) that they have been advised to self-isolate due to COVID-19, either because they have symptoms or they live with someone who has symptoms, and so cannot work.</p>

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As isolation notes can be obtained without contacting a doctor, this will reduce the pressure on GP surgeries and prevent people needing to leave their homes.

For the first seven days off work, employees can self-certify so they don't need any evidence for their employer. After that, employees should be obtaining evidence of sickness absence. Where this is related to having symptoms of COVID-19 or living with someone who has symptoms, the isolation note should be used to provide evidence of the advice to self-isolate.

People who need to claim Universal Credit or [Employment and Support Allowance](#) because of coronavirus will not be required to produce a fit note or an isolation note. More details on coronavirus and claiming benefits can be found [here](#).

The isolation notes can be accessed through the [NHS website](#) and [NHS 111 online](#). After answering a few questions, an isolation note will be emailed to the user. If they don't have an email address, they can have the note sent to a trusted family member or friend, or directly to their employer (line manager). The service can also be used to generate an isolation note on behalf of someone else.

These isolation notes should be sent to your line manager in the usual sickness absence reporting way.

Given the COVID-19 situation, you must make sure that your contact details are up-to-date on SelfServe4you and your line manager has a telephone number and email address where they can reach you if you are in self-isolation.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that the Council keeps track of the daily availability of our workforce. In order to do this, it is required that an absence log is kept up to date for you and your service on a daily basis. This is to include **all** types of absence, whether it is related to the virus or not. This will allow us to manage resources to support critical service and complete mandatory daily reporting.

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<p><b>Sickness Absence form</b></p>	<p>Previously the sickness absence form completed by the individual and line manager on the return to work / or when the employee was off on long term sick was paper based. On its completion it would be sent in the internal mail to payroll or posted in the post box within payroll on level 3, Gun Wharf.</p> <p>As pay clerks are working from home you are asked that wherever possible you send sickness absence forms electronically to <a href="mailto:payrollsection@medway.gov.uk">payrollsection@medway.gov.uk</a> with sickness form as the subject.</p> <p>If you are unable to send them electronically then please be advised that paper forms are still accepted.</p>
<p><b>Acceptable levels of absence</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Under our <a href="#">short-term sickness absence policy</a>, we would normally invoke a formal review of your absence levels when you reach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 separate occasions in any 3 month period; or</li> <li>• 6 days or more in a six month period (only when the absence is on one or more occasion; or</li> <li>• 5 separate occasions in a 12 month period; or</li> <li>• Any pattern of absence that causes concern</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>If you have to self-isolate or develop COVID-19, we will not take this absence into account when determining whether or not we are taking formal action under our absence management procedure.</p>
<p><b>Sick pay</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Under our <a href="#">short-term sickness absence policy</a>, you would normally receive, if eligible, normal pay which consists of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and Occupational Sick Pay (OSP). OSP is for a prescribed period based on length of service as indicated below. The Statutory Sick Pay Scheme gives employees who are too ill to work a right to a minimum payment from their employer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the first year, one month's full pay, after completing 4 months service, two months' half pay</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>If you self-isolate or develop COVID-19 you will be paid full OSP/SSP pay from day one, for the duration of the time you are self-isolating.</p> <p>Those on zero hours and casual contracts will receive at least SSP on their average pay of the last 12 weeks, from day one of sickness or self-isolation rather than day four. However, they must still meet the lower earnings limit of £118 per week as an average of the last 12 weeks for SSP to be payable. For those earning less they can now more easily make a claim for Universal Credit or Contributory Employment &amp; Support Allowance (CESA) CESA is payable at a rate of £73.10 per</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During the second year, two months' full pay, and two months' half pay</li><li>• During the third year, four months' full pay and four months' half pay</li><li>• During the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of service, five months' full pay and five months' half pay</li><li>• After 6 months of service, 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay</li></ul>	<p>week (over 25's) for eligible people affected by COVID-19 or self-isolating from day one rather than the usual day eight.</p>
<p><b>Flexible working</b></p> <p><b>Requests for flexible working</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Under our <a href="#">flexible working policy</a>, you can normally agree informally with your line manager to one-off or short-term changes to your working patterns or periods of homeworking.</p> <p>However, if you wish to change your working patterns or work from home for an extended period, we normally ask you to make a formal request for flexible working and follow the procedure set out in our <a href="#">policy on employees requesting flexible working</a>.</p>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>As long as the business operational needs continue to be met, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• adapt your working patterns, for example to allow you to travel on public transport at less crowded times; or</li><li>• work from home (if your role allows) on occasions.</li></ul> <p>You can do this without having to follow our formal procedure. You can agree these changes informally with your line manager.</p> <p>You should speak to your line manager if you wish to take advantage of either of these options, or any other flexible working options that may help you at this time, your line manager will individually assess your request and reasons. The decision as to whether or not to agree to your request for flexible working remains with your line manager.</p> <p>Once agreed, the temporary flexible working arrangement will continue with weekly reviews. If circumstances change, your manager will discuss with you any adaptations to, or the withdrawal of, the flexible working arrangement, with the final decision remaining with your manager.</p>

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<p><b>Requirement to work remotely</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Except by prior agreement with us, we do not normally require you to work remotely for an extended period.</p> <p>There is normally no expectation that:</p> <p>if you use a laptop, you always take it home with you after work each day; or</p> <p>if you use a desktop, you access your emails remotely while away from the workplace.</p> <p>The current remote working procedures can be found <a href="#">here</a></p>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>Given the COVID-19 situation, you may be asked to work remotely at short notice. This could be the case if your workplace closes unexpectedly as a precaution or public health measures, such as an area-wide lockdown, are introduced or because you are well but self-isolating.</p> <p>This could mean working from home, although you may have the option to work remotely from one of our other work sites if it remains open.</p> <p>If it is not possible for you to work from home, you should discuss your options with your line manager. There are other options available, for example, Continuing Professional Development, e-learning, research etc. where relevant as staff are expected to ensure that you know how to log in to our systems remotely. If you require access/guidance on how to remote in from home please <a href="#">click on this link</a>.</p> <p>ICT advise that staff begin to test remoting in from home, <b>as soon as possible</b> to ensure that you are able to remote in and have access to the correct files and applications.</p> <p>Should you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the service desk on 01634 332888.</p> <p>If you require access to a particular folder or documents on a shared drive, <a href="#">please click on this link</a>.</p> <p>If you have a mobile phone it is possible to direct your phone extension from most devices and computers via <a href="#">Jabber</a>.</p> <p>It may be necessary to prioritise work to ensure that business critical activities can be sustained during potential periods of high employee absence. If this happens Directors will meet as necessary to prioritise and delegate key tasks to employees.</p> <p>It may be necessary for some employees to take on different responsibilities/roles for an agreed period of time if they have the</p>
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	<p>relevant skills or experience and, in this situation, normal pay and benefits would remain unchanged.</p>
<p><b>Annual leave</b></p> <p><b>Changing your holiday plans</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Once you have booked annual leave, we normally allow you to cancel or change annual leave only in limited circumstances. These circumstances include where:</p> <p>your personal circumstances warrant it and the cancellation or change does not inconvenience the organisation; or you fall ill shortly before or during annual leave.</p>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>During the COVID-19 situation, you may change your mind about travelling, or be unable to travel to your planned destination, and may wish to cancel or change annual leave that you have already booked.</p> <p>If you would like to cancel or change planned leave, please speak to your line manager as soon as possible. We may allow you to change or cancel booked holiday, taking into account the COVID-19 situation. However, this will continue to be a decision for your line manager, depending on the circumstances.</p> <p>For example, if we have arranged cover for you, or arranged shift patterns on the basis that you will be on leave, we may require you to take the leave as booked.</p>
<p><b>Unused annual leave</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Our organisation's normal holiday year runs from 1 April to 31 March.</p> <p>Normally, we require you to take your holiday entitlement in the relevant holiday year and we allow you to carry over no more than three days (with exception five) annual leave into the following leave year.</p>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>We recognise that you may be unable to take your remaining annual leave before the end of the leave year. For example, you could have an increased workload because of the COVID-19 situation, or you may have cancelled or changed planned annual leave.</p> <p>We are suspending our usual rule that you can carry over no more than three days (with exception five) annual leave into the following leave year for the leave year 2019/2020.</p> <p>While you should endeavour to take your holiday entitlement in the relevant holiday year, you should speak to your line manager if you think that you will be unable to do so.</p> <p>As long as your line manager agrees, the annual leave can be taken later. The timing is a matter for discussion between you and your line manager.</p> <p>The Government has introduced a temporary new law to deal with the COVID-19 disruption. Employees can carry over up to 4 weeks' paid holiday over a two year period because they have been unable to take it due to coronavirus. Examples of this could be:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the employee has been self-isolating or has been too sick to take holiday before the end of their leave year</li><li>• the employee has not been able to take paid holiday as they have had to continue working</li></ul> <p>Please see the annual leave hot topic for further detail and guidance insert link</p>
<p><b>Caring for dependants</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Our organisation recognises some employees need to take time off to care for their dependent children, for other dependants or disabled relatives.</p> <p>Normally, we apply the statutory right to unpaid time off to care for dependants under our Time Off for Dependents which can be found in the <a href="#">Emergency Working Policy</a> This can include flexi, leave or unpaid leave as well as working from home by agreement.</p>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>During the COVID-19 situation, you may find a school or care establishment is temporarily closed due to the virus or the support you would normally receive is unable to fulfil their role.</p> <p>There's no statutory right to pay for this time off, but consideration will be given to other methods of taking time off from work which may not result in a loss of pay, for example, annual leave, flexible working, working at home, compassionate leave (<a href="#">Emergency Working Policy</a>)</p> <p>Please discuss with your manager whether flexible working can enable you to accommodate a temporary change in your caring arrangements.</p>
<p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p><a href="#">current recruitment process</a></p>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>During such incidents, we have an obligation to maintain service delivery of all critical core functions.</p> <p>All recruitment activities will be reviewed to ensure recruitment is focused upon critical core functions and interviews for these posts should take place using the most appropriate technology, ie via telephone, skype or face time.</p> <p>Normal recruitment processes for all non-critical core functions will be suspended</p>

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**Appraisals**

*What is our normal policy?*

MedPay is Medway Council’s appraisal scheme which measure individual performance and rewards employee’s based on their competence to do the job. It also allows recognition for those staff who make a wider contribution to the council.

For all new managers, you will need to attend the mandatory training before undertaking any PDRs which can be accessed through iShare.

**MedPay Cycle**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
April	PDR targets set for the year ahead
May	PDR scores finalized and shared with staff for previous year
September / October	Mid-year PDR reviews
January	PDR review meetings should be booked for February / Mid-March
February / March	PDR review meetings

***What is changing temporarily?***

We understand that part of the disruption COVID-19 would have caused is the pausing of the appraisal scheme cycle and the objective/target setting meetings that would normally have taken place around April.

As lockdown begins to ease it is recommended that these meetings now take place where possible, ensuring that employees are still given the time to prepare.

Any objectives should be tailored to the year ahead so there would be shorter timeframes to make sure objectives align with the MedPay Cycle. As such the objectives and targets set should be realistic, they should stretch the individual but still be achievable within the remainder of the cycle.

Further information can be found on the MedPay intranet pages.

**Disciplinary, Grievance and Capability Procedures**

*What is our normal policy?*

***What is changing temporarily?***

Please discuss any concerns with HR



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Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employer. This procedure allows employees to raise genuine workplace grievances and have them dealt with fairly, consistently, promptly and objectively and with a view of trying to achieve an agreed resolution.

Complaints of harassment and/or bullying are a specific type of grievance and are also dealt with under this procedure. The process for dealing with a complaint of harassment and/or bullying is attached as appendix one.

**Redeployment**

*What is our normal policy?*

There are a number of reasons why employees can be registered for redeployment these are as follows:

- Staff that are **in a formal consultation process which may result in a redundancy situation.**
- Staff where the Occupational Health Service has advised they are not fit to carry out duties of their original post on medical grounds but they are fit for alternative employment.
- Staff where action under the Council's Capability Procedure is being taken but only where Human Resources consider this appropriate.
- Staff returning from a career break.
- Staff who are prevented from carrying out the duties of their post due to statutory changes that impact on their terms and conditions.

***What is changing temporarily?***

Service delivery is likely to change during such a period. In particular, areas of the business, which have been identified as a non-critical core function, may shut down or reduce service delivery.

It is essential that the delivery of our critical core function continues but, with the likelihood of there being staff shortages, this may prove difficult. To overcome staff shortages, and ensure efficient use of staff in the areas of business which need support, there will be a need to redeploy staff into different roles to help manage the situation.

Therefore, during this period, staff may be asked to fill gaps in the service which may arise from staff shortages due to sickness or any other reason and to work flexibly, possibly working at different sites, in different roles but always within their skills base and within the boundaries of safety and competence.

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<p><b>Standard and enhanced DBS ID checking guidelines</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Currently, when validating ID documents, it is best practice to carry the examination out face-to-face. The ID checker must be in physical possession of the original documents so they can be checked for indicators of fraud.</p>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>Due to current measures that have been put in place as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, we're aware that services are having difficulty following the DBS ID checking guidance. Staff shortages and working from home are causing difficulties in receiving the physical documents which in turn is delaying applications, and in some cases, preventing applications from being submitted.</p> <p>To ensure that the necessary DBS checks can still be carried out, the DBS standard and enhanced ID checking guidance will be changed for a temporary period.</p> <p>The change will enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ID documents to be viewed over video link</li><li>• scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted</li></ul> <p>The applicant will be required to present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role. This change will come into effect from 19 March 2020</p>
<p><b>Expenses Claims</b></p> <p><i>What is our normal policy?</i></p> <p>Hard copy receipts for fuel and/or expenses showing VAT where appropriate should be submitted in an envelope to the finance payroll team.</p>	<p><b><i>What is changing temporarily?</i></b></p> <p>Whilst normal working patterns are disrupted and more people are working from home, payroll will allow scanned or photos of their receipts in support of claims submitted and authorised on SS4U by email to <a href="mailto:expensesandbenefits@medway.gov.uk">expensesandbenefits@medway.gov.uk</a></p> <p>There should be one email per claim with the subject heading "Expenses Receipts for online claim number {insert claim number} ERN {insert ERN number} {First name} {Surname}"</p> <p>Employees should copy in their manager as they will require sight of the receipts before they authorise the claim.</p> <p>Employees should retain hard copy receipts as these may be required if HMRC decide to inspect either us as an employer or the individual</p>