

Absences and Pay (10/03/20)

The RCS is keen to take whatever measures it can to ensure that its practices support staff to minimise the spread of viral outbreaks and to promote wellbeing during a period of heightened stress. On this basis, the CSMT has agreed the following, in order to alleviate concerns and provide clarity wherever possible:

Staff presenting with illness:

Any staff presenting with symptoms similar to those of Covid19 will be asked to refrain from attending work until medical advice has been sought either via their GP or NHS111.

If the staff member wishes to work remotely and feels well enough to do so, the RCS will support this wherever possible. If the staff member is not well enough to work remotely, the absence will be treated as a sickness absence but would not be included in any absence monitoring processes or prompts.

If the individual is able to work remotely, they will receive full pay. If they are unable to work remotely, they will receive the appropriate sick pay. Given the potential demands on NHS resources during this time, the RCS will temporarily implement that staff will be able to self-certify for a period of 14 days if the absence is related to a condition presenting symptoms of Covid19, which is the same period of time as the self-isolation period.

Any extended sickness absence thereafter would need to provide a GP certificate, however this could be submitted electronically by taking a photo of the GP certificate and emailing it to the HR department. This applies to full time, pro rata and part time staff.

Building closure:

In the event that the RCS takes the decision to close the building for two weeks or less, or that a closure of the building is enforced by external factors, full time, pro rata and part time staff will be asked to work remotely where it is possible and safe to do so, based on the contingency planning exercise undertaken within the department and any guidance issued by the Government and Health Protection Scotland.

In the event that staff are unable to work remotely as identified in the contingency planning exercise, staff will be asked to provide any handover information available to facilitate work being covered, and will receive their normal pay during the period of closure. On their return to work, a meeting will take place with their manager to discuss how best to catch up on the work. This could include agreeing whether some or any missed hours could be worked over an agreed period, where possible. Advice will be available from HR on a case by case basis.

For staff who had been due to undertake fee paid work during the period of closure, a cancellation payment of the percentage of the fee will be processed in lieu of the work being undertaken, unless the work can be undertaken remotely.

In the event that the building is required to be closed for a period longer than two weeks, the CSMT will review the situation and ensure communications to staff are issued as soon as possible thereafter.

If a staff member were absent due to ill-health prior to the period of closure commencing and becomes fit to attend work, but is unable to do so because of the closure of the building, this will be treated as exceptional and the staff member will receive full pay, provided that communications with HR have taken place via email / phone.

Schools closures

It is possible that as a mechanism for containment, the government takes the decision to close schools temporarily to prevent spread of Covid19. If this should occur, departmental contingency plans should be implemented. Where staff are able to continue working remotely during the period of closure, they should liaise with their manager to agree what they can reasonably provide in terms of work, and assist in the prioritisation of activities. This may be on a reduced hours or flexible hours basis. Where staff are unable to work due to primary caring responsibilities, staff will receive their normal pay for the duration of the period of closure.

On their return to work, a meeting will take place with their manager to discuss how best to catch up on the work. This could include agreeing whether some or any missed hours could be worked over an agreed period, where possible. Advice will be available from HR on a case by case basis.

Travel

If you have recently travelled to a country which has since been affected by Covid19, please contact your manager to discuss any concerns or actions that may be required. The RCS may request that:

- You seek medical advice before returning to work / entering the building(s) or
- You work remotely if it is possible for you to do so for an agreed period

In the event that you are required to remain away from the workplace for an agreed period but you are unable to work from home, you will receive your normal pay during the period of absence.